SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOL:

The role of the LEAs

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The terms of the Education Reform Act include the requirement that schools should assess and report pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum (NC). In order to ensure consistency across the country, assessment at the end of each key stage would be conducted by means of nationally devised assessment schemes, to be used by all schools.

The timetable established by the School Examinations Assessment Council (SEAC) provided for the phased introduction of assessment and testing in core and foundation subjects, in each key stage. (The detailed arrangements for testing are listed in Table A1 in the Appendix.)

Although the implementation of NC attainment targets and programmes of study began in 1989/90 the years focused on for the NFER project were 1990/91 and 1991/92. During that period a number of statutory activities were programmed to take place, as follows:

1990/91
> **Key stage 1**
> - teacher assessment and standard assessment tasks in *mathematics, English, science*

1991/92
> **Key stage 1**
> - teacher assessment and standard assessment tasks in *mathematics, English, science, technology*
>
> **Key stage 3**
> - teacher assessment and external tests in *mathematics and science*

However, in May 1991 the Secretary of State announced

> *proposals to reduce the number of attainment targets in mathematics and science while broadly maintaining the programmes of study ... Because of these changes the first statutory assessment of 14 year olds in mathematics and science has been postponed until 1993.*

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In 1992 there will be a voluntary national pilot of the key stage 3 assessment arrangements for mathematics and science against the new attainment targets. (SEAC, 1992)

In addition a small-scale pilot of test materials in English and technology was planned for the summer of 1992 with a few schools being invited to participate. LEAs and schools responding to the NFER enquiry were asked for information on arrangements for both key stages and all four subject areas.

Although testing material is being developed by the national testing agencies, the demands of Teacher Assessment (TA) ensure that there is still a vital need for LEAs and individual schools to devise their own policies and practices with regard to assessment. LEAs have a large number of responsibilities in terms of the organisation, moderation, and monitoring and evaluation of the National Curriculum and its assessment (NCA), as laid out in the relevant SEAC documents (listed on pp 91 and 92), and have had to put into place a range of systems and structures to enable them to provide appropriate support to schools. New LEA posts have been created, both permanent and temporary, to deal with the work arising from the new initiatives, and a substantial amount of INSET has taken place.

Schools, too, have had to take account of the new curricula and NCA, through externally provided tests such as the Standard Assessment Tasks, and through Teacher Assessment. At key stage 1 in particular, teachers tended to have limited experience of formal testing and assessment procedures and were in need of guidance and support, much of which was provided by the LEAs. In secondary schools teachers are more familiar with the demands of formal assessment through their involvement in external examinations at age 16, but the new arrangements have required schools to reflect on their policies and revise their approaches to carrying out and reporting on assessment.

1.2 The NFER project

In the light of the changes being introduced at LEA level and in the schools themselves, the NFER set up a research project in this area as part of its LEA Membership Programme and the project began in September 1991. The aims of the project were

♦ to identify the extent to which LEAs have developed policies for structuring support in the area of assessment

♦ to document the means by which LEAs provide support for assessment in schools

♦ to assess the impact of LEA policies on school assessment practices

♦ to examine the development in schools of policies and practices relating to assessment

♦ to examine the role of advisory staff with specific responsibility for assessment

♦ to investigate the arrangements made by LEAs and schools for allocating resources to develop assessment practices.

The methods adopted to collect data are described below.

1.3 The LEA questionnaire survey

In the first phase of the project, information on LEA policy and practice relating to assessment was elicited by means of a questionnaire sent to all LEAs in England and Wales. Documentation from LEAs, including written policy statements and guidance materials for teachers, was also collected.

In order to ensure that the questions put to LEAs were appropriate and relevant, a review of the documentation issued by SEAC, NCC and other relevant bodies was carried out, and informal discussions were held with advisory staff, teachers and others with an interest in, and experience of, one or more aspects of the implementation of the National Curriculum and National Curriculum Assessment.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

♦ resources, which covered the staffing arrangements and funding allocations at LEA level

♦ the support provided by the LEA in terms of training, materials, advice and guidance

♦ an evaluation of the effectiveness of the different types of support provided and required.

LEAs were also asked to comment on any other issues related to LEA support for assessment, which they felt would be of interest. Details of the sampling procedures and response rates are provided in Table A2 in the Appendix.

The total number of questionnaires received for analysis was 58. For some questions, the number of LEAs responding was less than this, so when a comment is made on the data, the number of LEA responses to that questions will be cited.

1.4 The school questionnaire surveys

In the second phase of the project a questionnaire survey was carried out on a sample of about 25 schools in each of 20 LEAs. Information was sought on school policy on assessment, the advisory support provided, the organisation of INSET, and arrangements for funding and cover.

The primary questionnaire consisted of a single booklet, whilst the secondary version comprised a main section to be completed by the Assessment Coordinator or equivalent, and four separate sections to be filled in by heads of departments of mathematics, science, English and technology. Special schools were sent a main questionnaire with separate sections relating to KS1 and KS3, allocated according to the age range of pupils in the school.

The questionnaires were split into several sections to make it easier for different members of staff to provide relevant information. Despite this variety of format, however, the topics covered were much the same.

Overall, 68 per cent of schools returned the questionnaire but the highest proportion of responses was from primary schools (73 per cent), with smaller proportions of secondary schools (68 per cent) and special schools (57 per cent) responding. A few schools gave reasons for not taking part in the survey, the most common being the lack of time/pressure of work. Details of the response rates are provided in Table A2 in the Appendix.

1.5 Interviews in schools

In the third phase, which took place during the summer term, 1992, interviews were carried out in 16 primary, secondary and special schools, in six of the 20 LEAs where the questionnaire survey had been conducted.

The schools were not intended to be a representative sample but nevertheless a range of factors was considered when the schools were identified. The LEAs could be characterised as two rural, two urban and two London boroughs and were of varying sizes. The schools also varied according to size and type.

The views of senior managers, heads of department (in secondary schools), assessment coordinators, and subject or class teachers, on the support needed and provided were elicited through semi-structured interviews. In each school, the aim was to interview as many staff as possible of those who would have been affected by the introduction of NCA. In some cases this involved staff who may have had

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little direct responsibility for testing but who may have been affected by changes brought about within the school since the introduction of NCA. Documentation on school policy and practice was also collected, where available.

The project was supported by an Advisory Group consisting of an LEA Inspector with responsibility for assessment, a primary head, a secondary head, and several NFER staff with relevant experience.

1.6 Dissemination

The preliminary results of the LEA questionnaire survey were summarised on a newssheet entitled, 'LEA Support for Assessment in Schools'. Two copies were sent to each LEA in England and Wales.

A similar newssheet, summarising the overall results, with particular emphasis on the school perspective, is also being sent to schools which participated in the surveys and to LEAs for wider circulation among schools.

1.7 Overview of the report

The issues which are reported on in subsequent chapters are those which have been investigated throughout each phase of the project:

* assessment policies at school and LEA level

* staffing allocations to take responsibility for aspects of assessment at school and LEA level

* support and training provided to LEA staff in order that they can carry out their roles effectively

* support and training provided to school staff in order that they can carry out assessments of their pupils' performance as effectively as possible

* resources available to support NCA and approaches to the deployment of funds

* the effectiveness of support provided, with comparisons between provision in the two years being examined (1990/91 and 1991/92)

* the kinds of activities and resource allocations that LEA and school staff would like to see in place for future years.

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introduction

One of the issues which the project set out to explore was the availability of policy statements on assessment, at both LEA and school level, and the uses to which they were put. Since SEAC and NCC have provided a great many documents related to NCA there could be a danger that LEAs or schools would see the development of their own policy statements as superfluous. LEAs were, therefore, asked if they provided copies of their policy statements to schools; schools were asked whether they had policy statements and if the LEA had provided support or guidance on what form they should take. This chapter reports on the responses to those questions, as revealed by the questionnaires, and describes the form and use that is made of such statements, drawing on the comments of teachers interviewed during visits to schools.

2.1 LEA policy on assessment

Of the 58 LEAs which responded to the questionnaire survey, nearly 80 per cent (n=46) indicated that they provided all their schools with copies of their LEA policy statements on assessment. A further 6 LEAs explained that their schools did not have copies as the policy was in the process of being drawn up.

Many of the LEAs who responded sent copies of their assessment statements (and indeed many other materials) with the questionnaire. A brief analysis of them shows that guidance was being provided in terms of:

♦ the LEA's own statement of the principles which underpin good assessment practice

♦ advice on developing whole school assessment policies

♦ the development of procedures for every aspect of conducting NCA

♦ recording and reporting procedures, often linked to Records of Achievement (RoA) information

♦ subject-specific guidelines for teaching, assessing and recording.

2.2 School policy on assessment

According to the questionnaire responses the overwhelming majority of schools have a policy statement or are in the process of developing one. At primary level, 96 per cent of schools indicated that this was the case, with 97 per cent of secondary schools and 87 per cent of special schools having existing or developing policy statements.

2.2.1 How the policies were devised

The most common approach adopted by schools developing assessment policies was through school-based working parties. However, a great deal of support and advice had also been provided by the LEAs, in the form of written guidelines and discussion with advisory staff. Table 2.1 shows the different ways in which schools devised their policies and illustrates that support came from within the school and from the LEA.

Table 2.1   How school assessment policies were devised

| | Percentage of Schools | | |
	Primary %	Secondary %	Special %
In-school working party	89	77	80
Advice/guidance from LEA	50	46	38
LEA written guidelines	47	33	30
Devised by Senior Management Team (secondary only)	-	44	-
Other	17	18	16
n =	162	88	50

N.B. Based on respondents with existing or developing policies

The interviews in schools revealed that teachers had been involved with developing the assessment policy in a number of different ways. These included:

♦   working parties set up especially for this purpose

♦   existing working parties which included discussion of assessment in their brief

♦   discussion and formulation of policies as part of INSET/professional development day activities

♦   discussion at meetings of year group or subject teachers.

In some schools the working party or Assessment Coordinator provided a first draft which other staff then discussed and amended, whilst in other schools the drafts and subsequent final versions were developed by a delegated working group. In theory, it appeared, all staff would have copies of the policy and could use it for reference. In practice however, researchers found that several schools were unable to provide a copy of their policy statement, and some teachers seemed to be unaware of its existence or unfamiliar with its contents. In secondary schools these tended to be subject teachers who had been involved in discussions with colleagues in their own department but who were not interested in or did not see the relevance of a whole school policy. In primary schools, teachers who were unsure about the existence of a policy or what it might contain tended to be those who had recently arrived in the school or were not involved in the relevant working groups.

2.2.2 LEA guidance on developing policies

As Table 2.1 showed, the LEA had provided both written and verbal guidance on drawing up assessment policies, and the interviews with teachers gave some indication of the range of approaches used, as described below.

In one LEA all three schools commented positively on the role of the LEA: in the first, the head had been involved in the LEA working party for several years, and had participated in drafting the guidelines for assessment policies. This draft had been sent out to all schools for comment prior to a final document being circulated. Interviewees in both the other schools had used the guidelines to work on developing their own policy.

In another LEA, in addition to holding meetings, the LEA had provided a book and video: 'Assessment - a whole school approach'. In one school visited the Assessment Coordinator had found this material useful in formulating a school policy. In a secondary school visited, subject staff had received advice and guidance about approaches to assessment from the advisory staff, and an LEA adviser had also provided support to the school in the development of records of achievement.

In a third LEA, a secondary school interviewee explained that their policy had been formulated by means of a professional development day and regular meetings of deputy heads, drawing on material circulated by the LEA.

2.2.3 Content and use of assessment policies

There were different interpretations as to what is actually meant by an assessment policy. Interviews suggested that staff who had been active in formulating policies, particularly where this had involved contact with LEA advisers, materials, or working parties, seemed to expect an assessment policy to contain some statement of aims and purposes. This might form part of a single document combining discussion of principles with details of procedures, or might stand alone. In some

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schools, the assessment policy was being devised in conjunction with the curriculum policy rather than as a separate document.

On the other hand, some class teachers in primary schools, and subject teachers in secondary schools, seemed to interpret an assessment policy only as a document which laid out the procedures to be used for marking, recording, keeping evidence, reporting and so on. In one school, a teacher said that there was no time at the moment to consider the broader questions, because there was a pressing need to get recording and reporting systems in place; when that had been done, then they could, 'stand back and do some more thinking,' about more fundamental aspects of assessment.

In more than one school, staff pointed out some of the contradictions of NCA with the principles laid out in their own policy documents, or at least the pre-NC versions. Schools which operated with principles of cooperation and 'positive profiling' found it difficult to reconcile this with the competitive nature of NCA.

In the five secondary schools visited, senior staff claimed that whole school policies and practices existed, but that each subject area had its own detailed approach. In one school, they had started by leaving each department to implement the overall policy in its own way but later came to realise that, particularly for reporting, it would be better to have a common format, with appropriate sections for subject-specific aspects. In the other schools, it appeared that each department or faculty had its own system of assessing, recording and reporting, with little discussion between them.

In nine of the schools visited it was stated that every member of staff had a copy of the policy and in a tenth school the head thought this was so but neither he nor his colleagues could lay their hands on one for the researcher on the day of the visit. In both the special schools visited, assessment approaches were tightly specified and careful records kept. In most of the other schools there was a clear realisation of the increasing need for detailed and accurate records to be kept so that not only the current teacher but also subsequent ones would be informed about individual progress and difficulties.

2.3 Summary

The position regarding policy statements on assessment seems to be as follows:

*   the majority of LEAs have distributed policy statements to schools

*   the majority of schools have produced or are developing their own school-based policies

*   some school policy statements included general principles whilst others only described procedures for recording and reporting

*   LEA guidance and support for schools to develop policies was provided through written guidelines and personal contacts between advisory staff and teachers

*   most staff appeared to be familiar with policy documents which concentrated on procedures, but interviews suggest that only senior staff and Assessment Coordinators (or equivalent) were fully conversant with documents focusing on more general issues and principles.

This final point reflects a similar difference between the views of different members of staff on what the priorities for training should be, as chapter 5 indicates, and may have implications for future training and support. This issue is discussed in chapter 8.

CHAPTER 3
STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY
FOR ASSESSMENT

Introduction

In order to fulfil all the new duties and responsibilities laid upon them, LEAs needed to recruit or redeploy staff to take on the tasks associated with NCA. The categories within the GEST funding suggest that there was a need to employ staff on a number of different activities, particularly in relation to quality assurance, whereby expenditure would be supported for:

> *The employment of and support for full-time and part-time inspectors and advisers and of full-time and part-time advisory teachers to support schools and teachers in the implementation of the NC assessment arrangements and to oversee the quality and effectiveness of assessments and assessment arrangements, including the undertaking of moderation duties.* (Para 94b. Activity 5(91): Implementation of National Curriculum Assessment Arrangements. DES 1990).

LEAs took up that funding to enable them to employ new staff or to reassign existing staff to new duties.

At school level, too, there was a pressing need for the increasing demands of NCA to be coordinated by one or more designated members of staff. This would ensure that regulations were conformed to and that appropriate information was disseminated to colleagues and others who required it, such as parents.

The project, therefore, set out to examine the arrangements made at LEA level to allocate responsibility for the various aspects of NCA, and the ways in which schools were delegating particular NCA-related responsibilities to different members of staff. This chapter reports on the posts established and the associated tasks in both the LEAs and the schools.

3.1 LEA staffing

Responsibility for assessment in the LEA structure was shared by a great many people, since subject and phase advisers also included assessment in their brief. Overall responsibility, however, rested in the hands of one or more senior officers.

Of the 55 LEAs for which information is available, 50 different job titles were given for the person with overall responsibility for assessment or Assessment Coordinators. In Table 3.1 these have been grouped for ease of comparison.

Table 3.1 Overall responsibility for assessment

Job Title	n
Inspectors	6
Inspectors with responsibility for assessment	12
Advisers	6
Advisers with responsibility for assessment	16
Assessment Coordinators and others	15
Total	55

For 25 per cent of these officers, all or virtually all (80-100 per cent) of their time was devoted to assessment. For 35 per cent, responsibility for assessment represented between 40 and 50 per cent of their time. Table 3.2 shows the amount of time allocated for assessment to the person indicated as having overall responsibility.

Table 3.2 Time allocated to assessment

Percentage of time allocated to assessment %	Percentage of LEA officers with overall responsibility for assessment %
10 - 20	10
25 - 30	17
40 - 50	35
60 - 75	13
80 - 100	25
	n = 48

In ten per cent of LEAs the post which covered overall responsibility for assessment had been established in September 1989, the time at which the first stage of National Curriculum came into effect. Many such posts existed before this, but from September 1989 onwards, posts were established in 35 LEAs (65 per cent of the LEAs which supplied this information).

Five of the current postholders were appointed to their posts in September 1989, with 36 officers appointed since then, seven of whom took up the post in September 1991. About a quarter of the posts established to cover assessment are fixed term posts, due to terminate at different points between April 1922 and March 1994.

3.2 LEA management structure for assessment

In most LEAs the overall responsibility for assessment was taken by one or, occasionally, two officers with a number of other LEA staff also having some responsibility. In recognition of the fact that advisory staff and others would have responsibility for a number of different areas, LEAs were asked to indicate the full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers rather than the numbers of individual people who might have some responsibility for assessment. In about three-quarters of the 54 LEAs which provided the information responsibility for assessment was held by one FTE Permanent Adviser/Inspector at the time of the questionnaire survey (November 1991). In most cases these permanent Advisers or Inspectors were supported by Advisory teachers, permanent or temporary, seconded teachers and administrative staff. Figure 3.1 shows the FTE numbers of different types of staff with responsibility for assessment.

Figure 3.1 LEA staff with responsibility for assessment

Numbers of FTE staff: □ None ▨ 1 ■ 2-3 ▨ 4-10 ▨ 11+
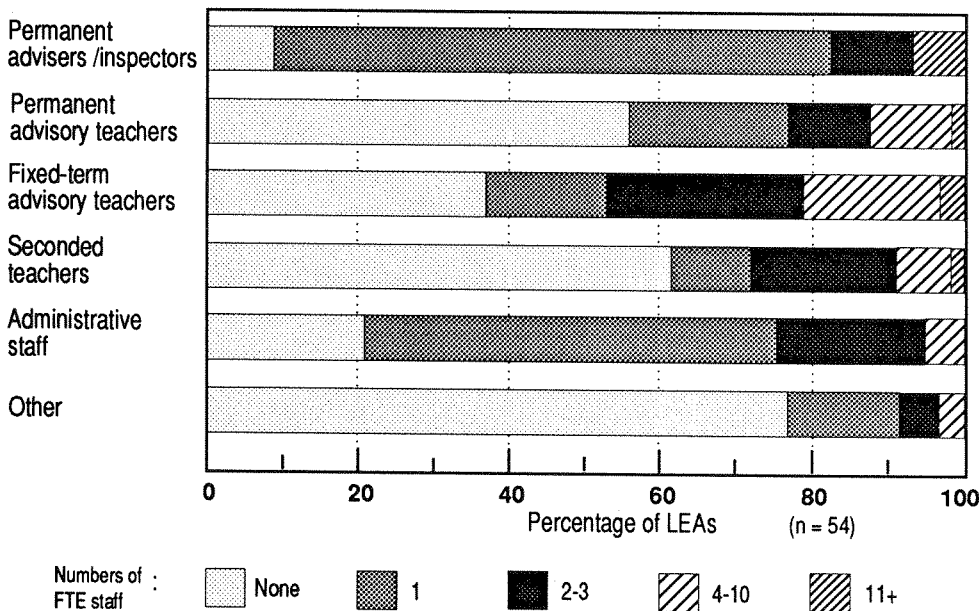
The total FTE numbers of staff with responsibility for assessment as indicated by the LEAs, ranged from two (reported by four LEAs) to 73 (reported by one LEA), although the highest numbers may represent real numbers rather than FTE numbers. These overall figures indicate that over three-quarters of LEAs have between two and 10 FTE staff with responsibility for assessment.

When the numbers of FTE staff with responsibility for assessment are looked at in terms of the size of the LEA, the results are as expected: the smallest LEAs tend to have fewer staff of each kind than the larger LEAs; the larger LEAs are more likely than the smallest LEAs to have two or more of the different types of staff.

Half of the LEAs responding to the questionnaire had set up separate units for the organisation of assessment. The different titles given to the units are listed in Table A3 of the Appendix.

3.3 Support provided to LEA staff

The most frequently cited form of training and support provided to LEA staff was that organised by either SEAC or the testing agencies, although the LEAs themselves did provide a number of other opportunities. Figure 3.2 shows the percentages of LEAs in which training activities were provided for each category of staff in 1990/91 and provided or planned for 1991/92.

It is clear from the figure that higher proportions of LEAs provided training of all kinds to the Advisers/Inspectors and advisory teachers than to the seconded teachers. The SEAC conferences held in October 1991 were well attended by Advisers/Inspectors and by Advisory teachers. These were the main opportunities for LEA staff to gain information on the 91/92 arrangements for KS1 testing and presentations were by SEAC representatives and members of the SATs development team. A limited number of places were available for these conferences so it is not surprising that seconded teachers from less than a quarter of LEAs had attended them.

Respondents were also asked to evaluate the support LEAs received from SEAC. They were asked to judge it on four counts: documentation for the use of LEA staff, documentation for the use of schools, training sessions for LEA staff and meetings for other staff. In each of these areas, over 80 per cent of the responses indicated that the provision was regarded as useful or quite useful by the recipients. Overall, they were most impressed by the documentation designed for the use of LEA staff, with 57 per cent of respondents saying that it was useful and only five per cent saying that it was not very useful. Figure 3.3 shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 3.2 Types of training provided to LEA staff

SEAC training 90/91

SEAC training 91/92

NFER training 90/91

SEAC conference 91

LEA training 90/91

LEA training 91/92

Other 90/91

Other 91/92

Percentage of LEAs   (n = 58)

advisers/inspectors   advisory teachers   seconded teachers   other
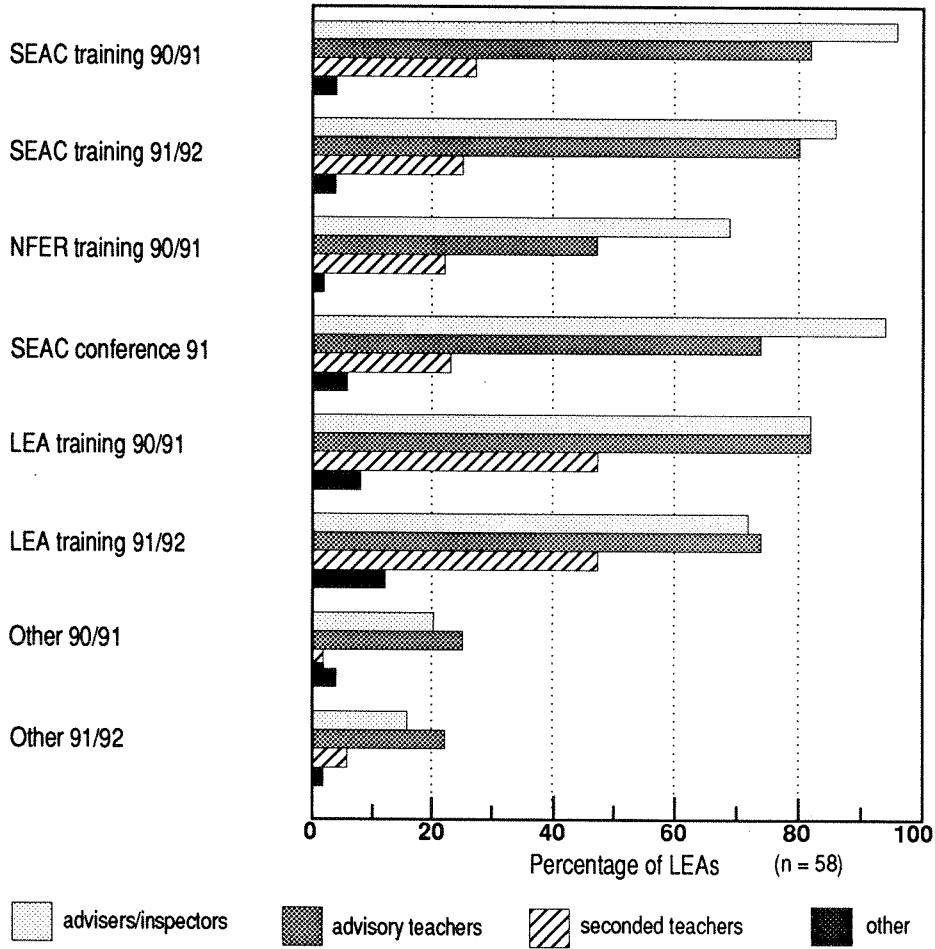
Figure 3.3 Usefulness of SEAC support

Documentation for LEAs

Documentation for schools

Training for LEA staff

Meetings for LEA staff

Percentage of LEAs   (n = 58)

Useful   Quite useful   Not very useful   N/A

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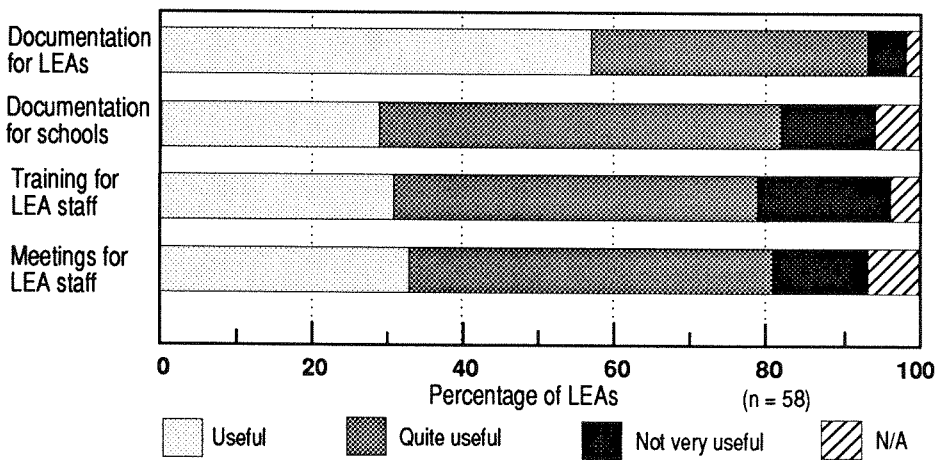
3.4 School staffing for assessment

With the introduction of the NC many schools have set up specific posts which include responsibility for assessment; in many schools, as in LEAs, such posts were given the title of Assessment Coordinator. Respondents to the questionnaire survey were asked to provide information on which teachers held such posts, and the responsibilities involved.

3.4.1 The Assessment Coordinator post

A high proportion of secondary schools (83 per cent) indicated that a member of staff had designated responsibility for assessment, whilst in primary and special schools the percentages were a little lower,(64 per cent and 49 per cent respectively).

At secondary level such a post was generally held by a deputy head whereas at primary level a year 2 teacher was almost as likely to hold the post as the head. Table 3.3 below shows the numbers and percentages of schools allocating responsibility to different members of staff.

Table 3.3 Teachers with designated responsibility for assessment

Status of teachers responsible for assessment	Number and Percentage of schools					
	Primary		Secondary		Special	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Head	36	33	1	1	1	3
Deputy (teaching Y2 pupils	7	6	-		-	
Deputy (teaching other pupils)	11	10	53	67	-	
Deputy (special)	-		-		9	31
Head of department (secondary)	-		6	8	-	
AC/subject coordinator (special)	-		-		9	31
Other senior teacher	-		14	18	5	17
Y2 teacher	25	23	-		-	
Other teacher	31	28	5	6	2	17
n =	110		79		29	

At primary level it is interesting to note that 'other teachers' were also involved in taking responsibility for assessment. According to the information provided these were mostly teachers with allocated 'A' (3 people) or 'B' (8 people) allowances or those teaching other year groups.

At secondary level, in the 25 per cent of schools where other senior teachers were involved, they tended to be staff in charge of curriculum/director of studies (5 people) or to have other titles.

Of the schools which indicated that there was someone with explicit responsibility for assessment, 70 per cent of primary schools, 51 per cent of secondary schools and 62 per cent of special schools, indicated that the member of staff was formally designated 'Assessment Coordinator' or similar title.

In the 75 primary schools and 18 special schools where an explicit Assessment Coordinator post existed, about half indicated that the post carried an incentive allowance. Secondary schools were not asked about this on the assumption that the post would be held by a senior member of staff already on a promoted post.

Many of the Assessment Coordinators had been appointed to the post in the early '90s. Peak times for appointment were in September 1990, April 1991 and September 1991. Table 3.4 shows when Assessment Coordinators in each phase were appointed.

Table 3.4   Date of appointment of Assessment Coordinator

	Percentage of Schools		
AC appointment date:	Primary %	Secondary %	Special %
before 1990	11	28	12
Jan 1990 - Dec 1990	36	26	35
Jan 1991 - Dec 1991	43	36	41
Jan 1992 onward	9	-	12
n =	64	39	17

When researchers visited schools it became apparent that the role of the Assessment Coordinator was set up and perceived in a number of different ways. In the nine primary schools visited, there were only two very clear cut, officially designated Assessment Coordinator posts; in the other seven it was either the head who took responsibility or the Y2 teacher(s). In schools where the head was nominally responsible for assessment but there was no other Assessment Coordinator, it was the Y2 teachers who carried out the assessments and took responsibility for related aspects. They were not coordinating others, although they may have had some involvement in the formulation and/or implementation of assessment policies. Their main focus of interest, though, was on KS1, because that was where the immediate need lay.

All the Y2 teachers interviewed had been involved in some training provided by the LEA (see chapter 5), as had heads, so there was always someone in the school who was aware of the most recent position. The impression gained, however, is that when the Y2 teacher was not the Assessment Coordinator, because this role was taken by the head, the former could feel less well-informed than was desirable. Where the Y2 teacher was officially or unofficially the Assessment Coordinator s/he had more chance of being invited to all relevant meetings, both general NCA (eg developing assessment policy/recording and reporting strategies) and sessions aimed specifically at those carrying out KS1 assessments.

Some LEAs recommended that the Assessment Coordinator post should not be held by a Y2 teacher, already under pressure from KS1 assessment; if the Assessment Coordinator was a teacher of another age group, more of a whole school view could be taken. However, as KS2 assessment becomes established, the question of the most appropriate person to take the post may have to be reconsidered.

In some schools, particularly in those where more than one teacher was involved in assessments for Y2 pupils, there was a view that assessment is everybody's responsibility, so there was no need for a specific Assessment Coordinator. In other schools, where the person concerned had been active and supportive to colleagues, the role was seen as useful and positive, and in one school with no designated Assessment Coordinator a teacher who had conducted SATs in 1991 felt that it would be very useful to set up a specific post so that consistency and continuity could be maintained.

In the secondary schools visited the formal responsibility for assessment was held by deputies. In two schools these deputies were designated as Assessment Coordinator, whilst in the other, assessment was seen as one area within the brief of a particular deputy. Two schools were planning to set up, from September 1992, specific Assessment Coordinator posts with associated incentive allowances: in one school a 'D' post and in the other an 'E' post.

In one of the two special schools, a class teacher had been designated as Assessment Coordinator on a rotated post which she hoped to hold for two years. In the other, responsibility was shared between the deputy head and the class teacher who had Y2 children in her class.

3.4.2 Responsibilities of Assessment Coordinators and others in charge of assessment

In the questionnaire, schools were asked to indicate which responsibilities were carried out by the designated Assessment Coordinator and which were carried out by other members of staff. In schools where no one was designated as Assessment

Coordinator, assessment related tasks were naturally carried out by a range of staff, and even in schools where the Assessment Coordinator post did exist some tasks were also shared or carried out by others.

PRIMARY

The responses from primary schools would indicate that although Assessment Coordinators in about a quarter of schools took sole responsibility for tasks such as the administration and conduct of KS1 Standard Assessment Tasks, in around half the schools such tasks were shared. Of course, if the Assessment Coordinator in a primary school was also a Y2 teacher then the likelihood is that s/he did most of this work alone; if not, then the test-related activities were more likely to be carried out by someone else. Figure 3.4 shows how responsibility for assessment was allocated.

Figure 3.4 Responsibility for assessment-related tasks in PRIMARY schools
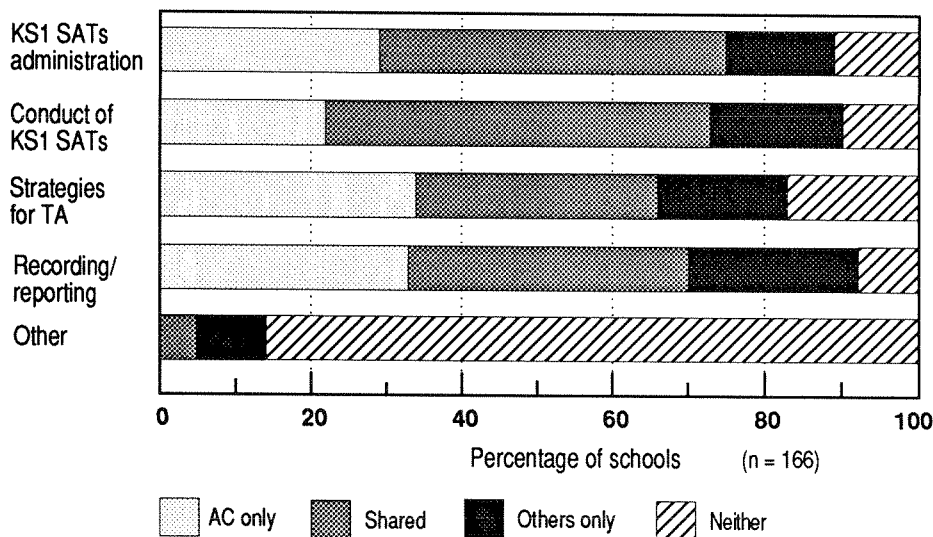
Other staff involved included heads, deputies, staff with various coordinating roles, and working groups. Table A4 in the Appendix shows the full details of the involvement of different categories of staff in the various assessment-related activities.

At primary level, half the heads had some responsibility for the administration of KS1 SATs although less than a third were involved in the other activities shown in Figure 3.4. Y2 staff were, obviously, involved with the administration and conduct of KS1 SATs but less so in the other activities. Nearly half the schools reported that all staff or particular groups of staff had been engaged in developing strategies for TA and systems of recording and reporting.

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The interviews with teachers provided further details with regard to the tasks and responsibilities of the Assessment Coordinator. In the primary schools, year 2 teachers, whether or not they were formally designated as Assessment Coordinators, played a major role in assessment because they had to carry out TA and SATs for their pupils. Assessment Coordinators who were not Y2 teachers were more likely to participate in activities such as the development of whole school assessment policies or recording procedures as they did not have the extra responsibilities associated with the KS1 assessment requirements.

SECONDARY

At secondary level, the Assessment Coordinator had responsibility for developing recording and reporting systems in 45 per cent of schools but involvement with KS3 tests was more commonly shared with or carried out by other staff. Interviews would suggest that the administration and conduct of KS3 tests was carried out by subject heads of department with or without the assistance of others such as the examinations officer. Figure 3.5 shows the allocations of tasks.

Figure 3.5 Responsibility for assessment-related tasks in SECONDARY schools
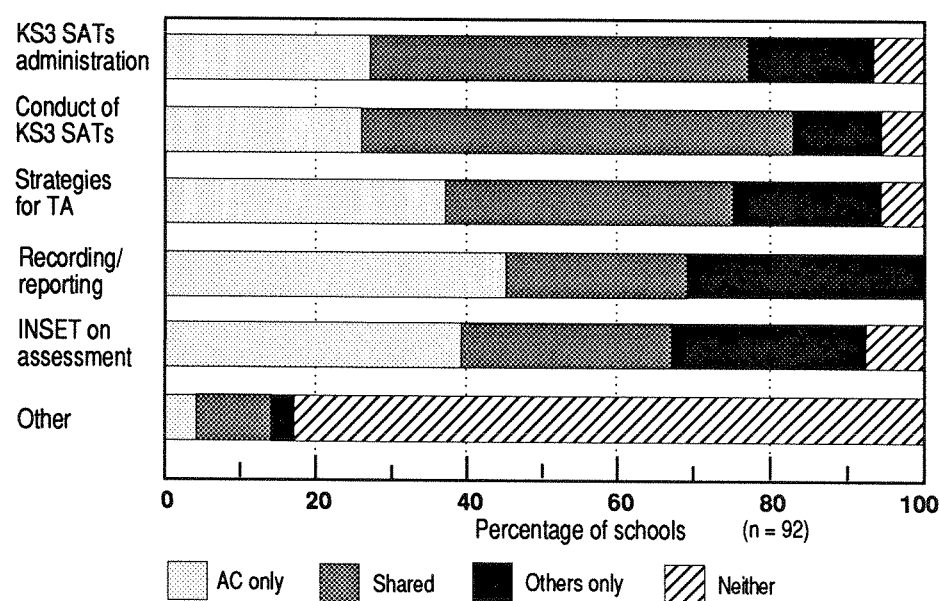
In half the schools heads, deputies and other senior staff were involved in the administration and conduct of KS3 tests, with nearly as many schools reporting such involvement by heads of department. The development of strategies for TA was carried out by heads of department and heads, deputies or other senior staff, indicating that both subject experts and those taking a more general view were involved. Staff with coordinating roles were most likely to have had involvement in the development of recording and reporting systems and INSET activities.

20

In two secondary schools visited, interviews revealed that the designated Assessment Coordinators were responsible for developing assessment policy (in conjunction with colleagues). In both schools the postholders had been very involved with RoA initiatives and this provided the context for their work on developing assessment policy and practices. Both were also responsible for INSET and had set up specific activities on assessment for school-based INSET days.

Staff in all five secondary schools visited felt that most of the work on assessment was done in the departments and that HoDs were responsible for developing policy and practice within their own subject areas, in consultation and working with their subject colleagues. The need for a person with an overview or coordinating role was generally perceived as useful, but some thought it was not necessary.

SPECIAL

As Figure 3.6 indicates, Assessment Coordinators in special schools were less likely to have responsibility for the listed tasks than other staff. In about half the special schools, the administration of tests at KS1 was carried out by senior staff and class teachers, although the SATs (KS1) were more likely to be carried out by teachers other than senior staff. The development of TA strategies and systems of recording and reporting were, in nearly half the schools, carried out by working parties, coordinators or all staff together.

According to staff interviewed in two special schools, different arrangements pertained. In the first school, the senior teacher out of the three adults with each class was responsible for coordinating all assessment and recordkeeping. The Assessment Coordinator had little contact with colleagues on assessment matters except in terms of policy development, though staff approached her if they had problems. She coordinated Standard Assessment Tasks in 1991 and produced modified versions in 1992.

In the second school, it was made clear that all teachers are responsible for assessment as part of an ongoing process. The deputy head in charge of curriculum development had been involved in the county initiatives for developing RoAs and was concerned with the place of assessment within teaching and learning programmes, although she did not appear to have a specific coordination role. The Y2 teacher had worked alone on the Standard Assessment Tasks in 1991 and had not really collaborated with others to discuss the issues arising from the tests. As the school was not participating in the KS1 tests in 1992 and did not intend to in future, the focus of interest in the school was on ongoing teacher assessment. Neither the deputy nor the Y2 teacher thought there was a need for an Assessment Coordinator in their school.

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Fig 3.6   Responsibility for assessment-related tasks in SPECIAL schools

Percentage of schools   (n = 57)

AC only   Shared   Others only   Neither
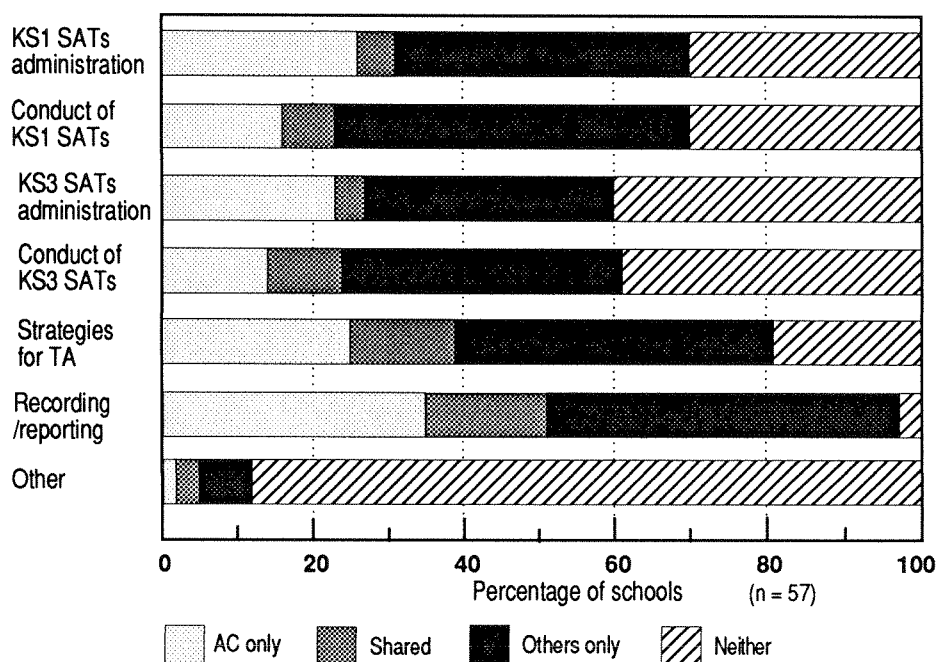
3.4.3 LEA support for the Assessment Coordinator

In the course of the interviews, heads and other staff with assessment responsibilities were asked whether the LEA had provided any guidance on setting up an Assessment Coordinator post and whether any training had been provided specifically for postholders.

At primary level, although support for the year 2 teachers had been supplied in a number of ways, both in school and by LEA activities, little seemed to have been provided for the Assessment Coordinator. In two LEAs, however, examples of support were reported: in one school, the Assessment Coordinator had been provided with a very helpful document on assessment and accompanying video, and had received one day of specially targeted training. In the other school, the Assessment Coordinator had been given a small amount of money to spend on books on assessment.

Other support for the Assessment Coordinator was indirectly provided by the LEAs in the form of incentive allowances, but in the schools visited few had been allocated to the person who was carrying out the relevant tasks. The reasons for not allocating allowances specifically for assessment responsibility included:

♦   under LMS, not sure of budgets for 1992 but one would be available from September (1992)

♦ allowances shared between staff; all staff had several different responsibilities, no special case for NCA

♦ only head, one other teacher, one ancillary in school

♦ Y2 teacher was already deputy, so no allowance given

♦ assessment responsibility shared by head and deputy so no allowance given

♦ head in charge of assessment, so no allowance given

Non-contact time was allocated to Y2 teachers wherever possible to enable them to complete their assessment and record keeping activities. One of the designated Assessment Coordinator interviewed had had some non-contact time for developing the assessment policy and the other had used the little non-contact time he had to work with colleagues.

At secondary level, support by the LEA specifically for the Assessment Coordinator varied: in all five authorities most of the training for KS3 assessment had been subject based, but the two deputies designated as Assessment Coordinator had been involved in meetings targeted at holders of such posts. The others had been involved in assessment-related INSET or meetings, either within their own teaching subject or within their broad range of responsibilities as deputies. According to interviewees, no guidance had been provided by the LEAs on setting up an Assessment Coordinator post but one head thought that the LEA would have done so if asked.

In the two special schools, again circumstances differed: in the first LEA there had been some guidance on setting up the Assessment Coordinator post and some INSET, although it was focused on the needs of mainstream schools, and not really relevant to special schools. In the second school, staff had not been involved in anything specifically targeted at Assessment Coordinators but both the deputy and Y2 teacher had been on courses on KS1 assessment and Standard Assessment Tasks briefings.

3.5 Summary

At LEA level, the following arrangements were in place or were established in the course of 1990-1992:

＊ one of more people had been formally nominated as having overall responsibility for assessment

＊ some of the LEAs designated the person or persons with such responsibility as the Assessment Coordinator or similar title

* half the LEAs had set up a separate unit to coordinate all assessment-related activities

* new staff had been recruited as advisory teachers or moderators, with some temporary appointments and some posts established only on a fixed-term basis

* the majority of respondents found the support provided by SEAC reasonably useful, especially with regard to the documentation aimed at LEA staff.

At school level, arrangements for managing assessment can be summarised as follows:

* in the majority of secondary schools a designated member of staff had explicit responsibility for assessment

* in nearly two-thirds of primaries and half of special schools, a member of staff had explicit responsibility for assessment

* in half or more of the schools the person with responsibility was given the title of Assessment Coordinator or similar

* in secondary schools the Assessment Coordinator post, or equivalent, was most likely to be held by a deputy

* in primary schools the head or Y2 teacher was the most likely postholder

* in special schools, deputies or subject/curriculum coordinators were likely to be involved

* the tasks carried out by Assessment Coordinators and other staff varied, with the Assessment Coordinator taking sole responsibility for some aspects of NCA in a small proportion of schools

* in most schools some of the assessment-related responsibilities were shared between different members of staff according to their appropriateness for the tasks

* guidance on ways of setting up an Assessment Coordinator post and practical support to do so were forthcoming from some LEAs according to teacher interviews.

Attitudes towards the need for an Assessment Coordinator post and the coordinating role were generally positive in the schools visited although some individuals thought that it was unnecessary, as all staff should be involved in discussion of the principles of assessment and active in their implementation. One or two others felt that coordination was superfluous as they and their immediate colleagues already collaborated as much as was needed. On the whole, however, the need for someone to have an overview and to be able to establish effective mechanisms for coordinating the numerous and various activities was seen as important.

PATTERNS OF SUPPORT PROVIDED TO SCHOOLS

Introduction

The responsibilities of the LEAs with regard to implementing arrangements for assessment are laid out in the various SEAC documents (listed under References), and five 'principal functions' are defined. These are summarised below in order to provide a context for the aspects of provision investigated by the project.

LEAs should be providing:

1 Support for schools
- LEA curriculum documentation and structures for quality assurance
- record keeping systems
- links with Records of Achievement
- moderation
- parent matters
- governing bodies
- training and school clusters

2 Training for the professional development of teachers and other staff
- awareness raising of LEA personnel
- training for trainers
- LEA and school-based INSET
- development of professional skills of assessment and recording
- agreement trials
- preparation and conduct of SATs
- partnership with Higher Education

3 Recruitment and employment of staff
- training
- moderation and the role of a moderator

4 Administrative support for schools
- organisation of training and INSET material
- SAT procedures
- maintaining and reporting assessment data
- communications

5 Evaluation

(SEAC, July 1990)

With these responsibilities in mind, the project set out to find out how the LEAs provided support and training and how successful were the approaches they had adopted. The views of both the providers and the recipients were sought by means of the LEA and school questionnaire surveys and the interviews with teachers.

The chapter reports initially on the findings from the LEA survey and then deals with the provision as perceived by the schools. The arrangements for primary, secondary and special schools are examined separately as the support and training needs varied between sectors.

4.1 The LEA picture of provision

LEAs were asked to indicate the ways in which they provided support to schools in 1990/91 and the support provided or planned for 1991/92. Information was requested for both KS1 and KS3 on ten areas in which teachers needed support and the ways in which the support was provided. The areas listed were:
- Planning and teaching the NC
- Classroom management
- Agreeing standards
- Collecting and interpreting evidence
- Carrying out TA
- Conducting SATs
- Resolving SAT and TA results
- Recording and reporting
- Assessing pupils with SEN
- Linking NCA and RoAs

Respondents were asked to indicate, for each of the content areas, whether the support was delivered through one of the following approaches:
- LEA training sessions
- School-based training
- Teacher guidance materials
- Guidance from advisory staff
    - to selected teachers
    - at meetings of   - school staff
                       - cluster schools

The opportunity was also provided for respondents to add to the list of activities or approaches.

The findings from these questions will be reported on separately for KS1 and KS3.

4.1.1 Arrangements at KS1

The responses showed that LEAs offered many forms of support, with the tendency to supply training, guidance and information in each content area by more than one approach.

The most popular approach, especially in the first year of KS1, was to present information in LEA training sessions. In eight of the ten content areas over 80 per cent of the LEAs provided training in this way. The LEA training session, for example, was used universally among respondents in 1990/91 for conveying information about conducting SATs. (Interestingly, one LEA dropped this method for 1991/92). However, guidance and training on SATs, as on every other aspect of the National Curriculum and assessment, was also provided in other ways: in school-based venues, in written materials, by advisory staff to selected teachers or at meetings of school staff or clusters of schools. On all but two of the content areas listed, each one of these approaches was used by about three-quarters of the LEAs.

After LEA training sessions, school-based training and support offered by advisory staff to selected teachers were the most frequently cited as approaches to guiding,

Figure 4.1   Approaches to support in 8/10 content areas - KS1

Percentage of LEAs   (n = 55)

1990/1991   1991/1992

27
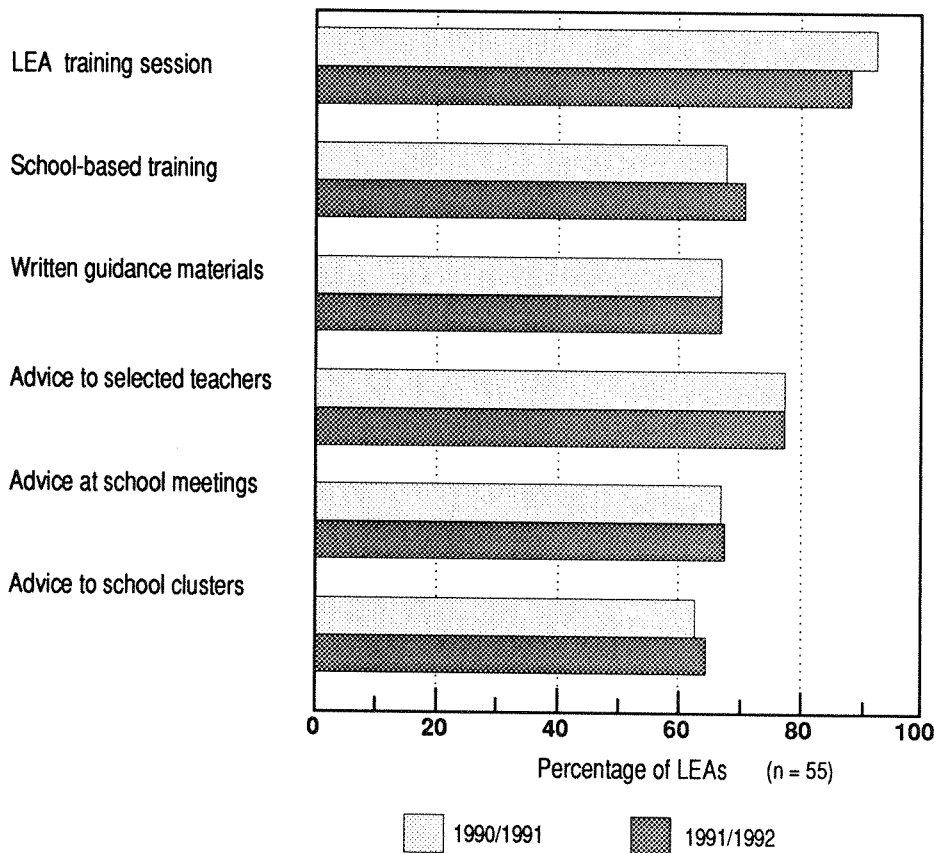
informing and supporting teachers, depending on the topic in question. School-based training was, for example, more frequently reported as being the means for imparting information about planning and teaching the National Curriculum and agreeing standards. On the other hand, guidance on collecting and interpreting evidence and resolving SAT and TA results tended to be provided through less formal contacts.

It appears, therefore, that there was a heavy dependence on LEA sessions to convey information but back-up, advice and additional training was made available by as many other channels as possible. Figure 4.1 shows the extent to which different formats were used by LEAs to provide support in all the areas listed on page 26, except for assessing pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and linking NCA and Records of Achievement. It should be noted that the heading 'advice' used in the figure, as in 'advice to selected teachers', refers to all advisory staff.

The two areas of training that received considerably less LEA attention, most notably in the first year, concerned the assessment of pupils with special educational needs and the linkage of NCA with Records of Achievement. In 1990/91 just half or fewer of the responding LEAs addressed these issues using the approaches illustrated in Figure 4.2, with one exception: over half deployed advisory staff to help certain teachers with SEN and RoAs.

In 1991/92, however, it was in the areas of SEN and RoAs that LEAs sought to expand provision most extensively. It should be noted that 1992 was the first year in which pupils with statements of special needs and those in special schools were required to take part in the SATs, although it was 'open to schools to assess such pupils in conformity with the statutory assessment arrangements in 1991 and they are encouraged to do so' (Circular 9/90, DES). Indeed, responses from the NFER questionnaires to special schools reveal that 26 (79 per cent) did participate in KS1 SATs in 1991.

Comments from LEA and school staff suggest that there was a lack of guidance from SEAC on how NCA should apply to pupils with special needs, and therefore the support provided to teachers was not always adequate or appropriate. In the autumn of 1991, SEAC attempted to rectify this by providing a section on 'Pupils with special educational needs' for the School Assessment Folder, and running a session on this topic at the autumn conferences held for LEA staff with responsibility for assessment.

The extent of the provision made remained relatively stable across the two years although there was a slight shift in emphasis from LEA training sessions to school-based training, accompanied by advisers offering INSET at school meetings and clusters. Trainers were filling in areas which had been less adequately covered in

Figure 4.2 Support for assessing pupils with SEN and linking NCA & RoAs - KS1

LEA training session

School-based training

Written guidance materials

Advice to selected teachers

Advice at school meetings

Advice to school clusters

0   20   40   60   80   100

Percentage of LEAs   (n = 55)

☐ 1990/1991   ▨ 1991/1992
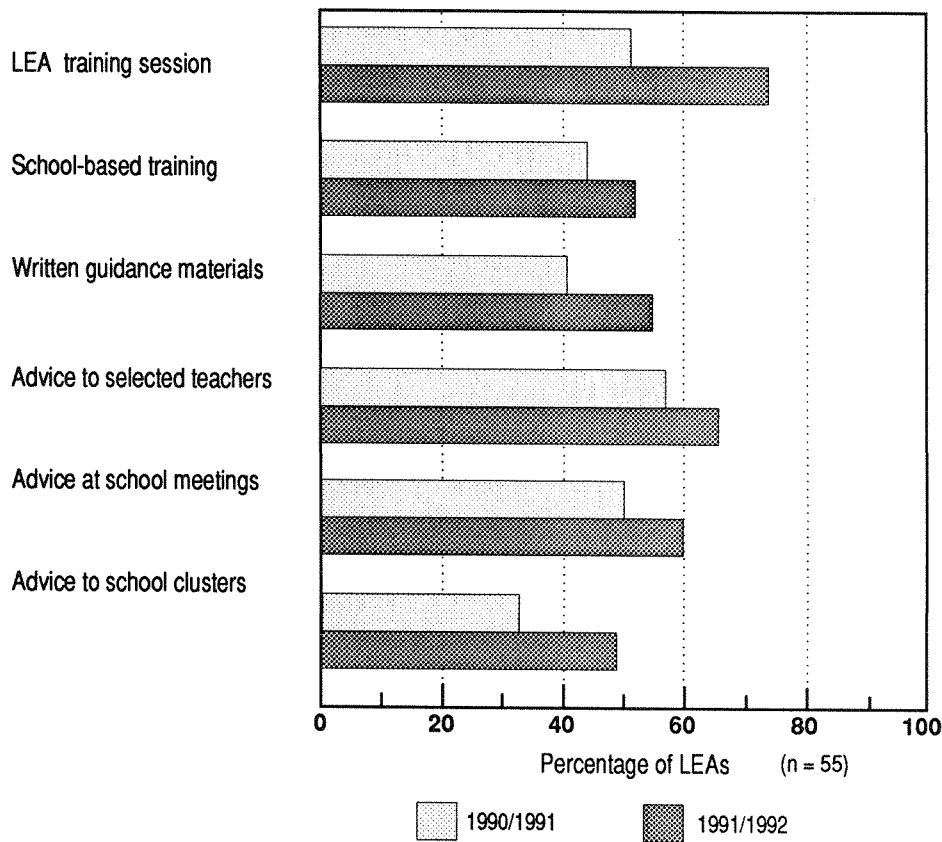
clusters. Trainers were filling in areas which had been less adequately covered in the first year, as noted above, and moving away from the LEA sessions in favour of other forms of support. This shift is likely to have involved smaller audiences, with the training targeted to meet needs more precisely.

In addition, it has become evident from respondents' comments that the range of training provision is wider than the activities specifically asked about in the questionnaire. The additional activities undertaken by LEAs in providing support for schools included:

♦ LEA staff attendance at governors' meetings

♦ conducting sessions for parents on SATs and the National Curriculum

♦ responding to individual schools' requests for INSET in specific areas

♦ initiating projects/research

♦ commissioning outside experts/trainers

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4.1.2 Arrangements at KS3

A consequence of the later introduction of KS3 is that there was a sharp rise in the numbers of LEAs providing support of all kinds on all aspects of the curriculum and assessment in the second of the two years. For example, while just over half the

Figure 4.3 Approaches to support in all content areas - KS3
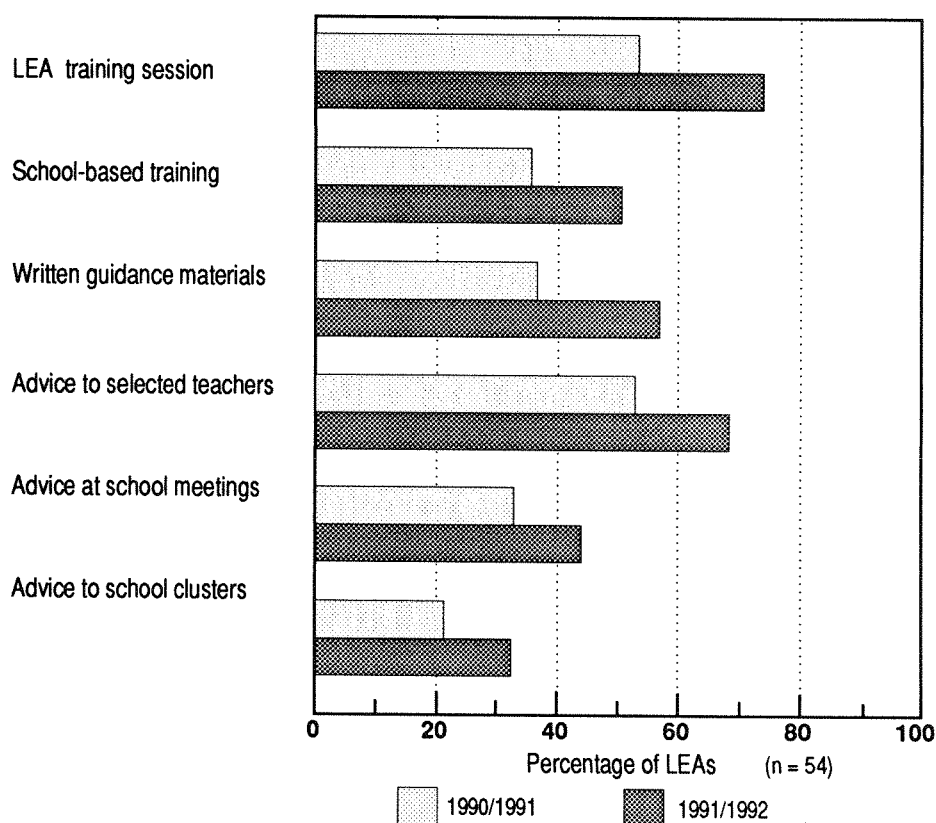
respondents (59 per cent) reported providing LEA training sessions in collecting and interpreting evidence in 1990/91, substantially more of them (91 per cent) did so in the following year; likewise just under half (48 per cent) dealt with agreeing standards at LEA sessions in the first year but nearly all (96 per cent) did so in the next year.

At KS3, as at KS1, the LEA training session was the most frequently reported format for delivering training and information, with advice to selected teachers at a similar level in 1990/91. Figure 4.3 shows the percentage of LEAs using particular approaches to support teachers.

Overall, the responses suggest that LEAs tended to offer a smaller range of support for key stage 3 in comparison to key stage 1, even in the second year when testing in both key stages was in place. This may be attributable to three factors: firstly, the continuing need for training expressed by Y2 teachers, especially those carrying

out end of key stage 1 assessments for the first time; secondly, the LEAs' responsibilities for KS3 assessment were fewer than for KS1 since they were not required to carry out formal quality audit procedures; thirdly, the changes to Attainment Targets in mathematics and science led SEAC to modify assessment arrangements at KS3, so that schools were invited to participate in a 'voluntary pilot' (see section 1.1). LEAs were then left in the position of attempting to provide support to KS3 teachers without necessarily having all the required information from SEAC.

4.1.3 Effectiveness of different approaches

After asking respondents about the extent, format and variety of support made available to teaching staff in their authorities, a logical step was to investigate the success of this support. Information was elicited, therefore, about the perceived effectiveness of the support and guidance provided by LEAs to their teaching staff.

LEA respondents were asked to judge the effectiveness of seven forms of NCA support commonly provided. These were:
- provision of written materials
- training of heads
- release of teachers for training
- release of teachers to work together
- seconding of teachers to produce materials
- seconding of teachers to deliver training
- providing cover for teachers to conduct Standard Assessment Tasks

The results show that all of the approaches that were commonly used were considered as quite or very effective by the majority of respondents. Most frequently cited as being very effective was the release of teachers to work together. The success of this approach was reported by 71 per cent of the respondents. This was closely followed by the release of teachers for training, regarded as very effective by 62 per cent. Interestingly, the provision of written materials and the training of heads generally met with more moderate success.

4.2 The school picture of LEA provision

Schools were asked to indicate the ways in which the LEA had provided support in 1990/91 and 91/92, using a list in the questionnaire. The approaches listed focused on the following topics/activities:
- LEA-organised training sessions
- Discussion to develop whole school assessment policy
- In-class work with teachers
- Advice and support - during conduct of tests
  - for carrying out and recording TA
  - to develop Records of Achievement

31

- on assessing bilingual pupils
- on assessing pupils with SEN
- Written guidelines on teaching and assessing the NC
- Responding to individual school requests for INSET/support

For each of the subject areas in the secondary phase the topics/activities were set in a subject specific context and for the special schools, information was elicited on whether the support provided to them was of general interest or focused on SEN-specific issues. Tables A5 to A7 in the Appendix show the complete distributions of responses for each phase and subject, but some of the broad findings will be reported below.

4.2.1 Support provided at primary level

Training sessions organised by the LEA were the most commonly reported approaches to support and high proportions of schools had also received support during conduct of SATs and for carrying out and recording TA. Other aspects on which about half the schools had received support were: the development of whole school policy, the development of RoA, and LEAs responding to requests for INSET/support. Although support for all the aspects listed in 4.2 above was provided in both years (1990/91 and 1991/92) to at least some schools, in 1991/92 there was a decrease in the proportions of schools having received advice and support for recording TA and an increase in the proportions of schools receiving advice and support on assessing pupils with Special Educational Needs. This reflects the changes described in Section 4.1.1 above whereby LEAs were planning to increase support in this area, if they had not already done so.

Figure 4.4 Advisory support in PRIMARY schools

Percentage of Schools   (n = 172)

☐ 1990/1991   ▨ 1991/1992

32
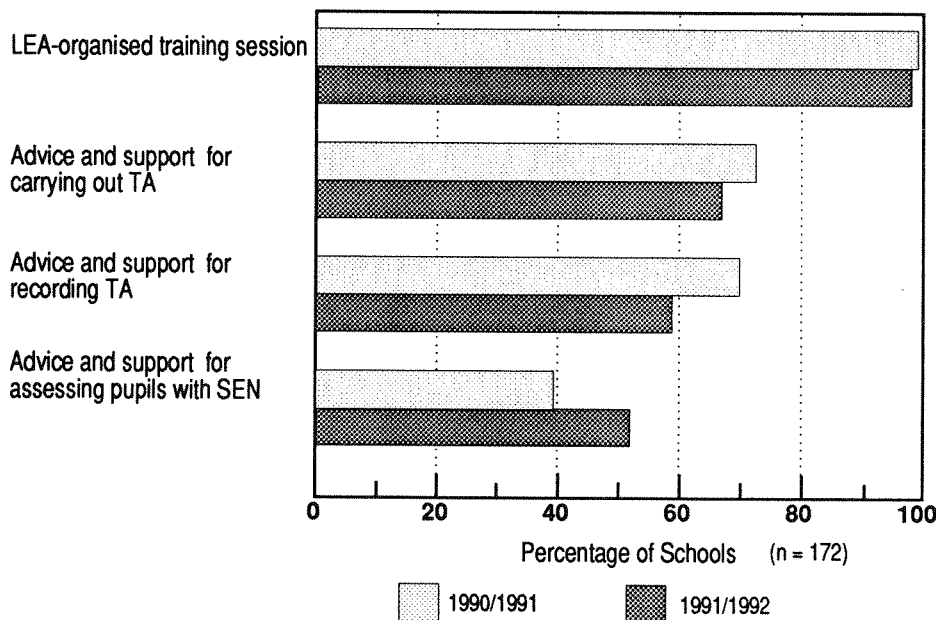
Figure 4.4 below shows some examples of the changes in the percentages of schools receiving support of different kinds from the LEA, in the two years in question.

4.2.2 Usefulness of support provided at primary level

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to indicate how useful they, personally, had found the different kinds of activities undertaken to develop assessment policy and practice. The categories listed covered those reported on above, although under fewer headings, and other activities. Respondents were asked to rate each activity under Not useful/Quite useful/Very useful/Not Applicable.

Very small proportions of schools rated any of the activities as not useful, with most respondents picking the 'Quite useful' or 'Very useful' categories. Areas of support which more than half the respondents thought were 'Quite useful' were:

- INSET sessions provided by the LEA
- specific activities of the moderator
- guidance materials distributed by the LEA.

Under the 'Very useful' heading, an outstanding 80 per cent of respondents placed working in school with colleagues. Other aspects classified in this way were:

- INSET sessions provided by the LEA
- working in school with head
- In-school advice and support by LEA staff.

Figure 4.5 shows details of the response

Figure 4.5 Usefulness of support activities in PRIMARY schools

Percentage of Schools (n = 172)

■ Very useful ▨ Quite useful ▧ Not useful ☐ N/A or missing
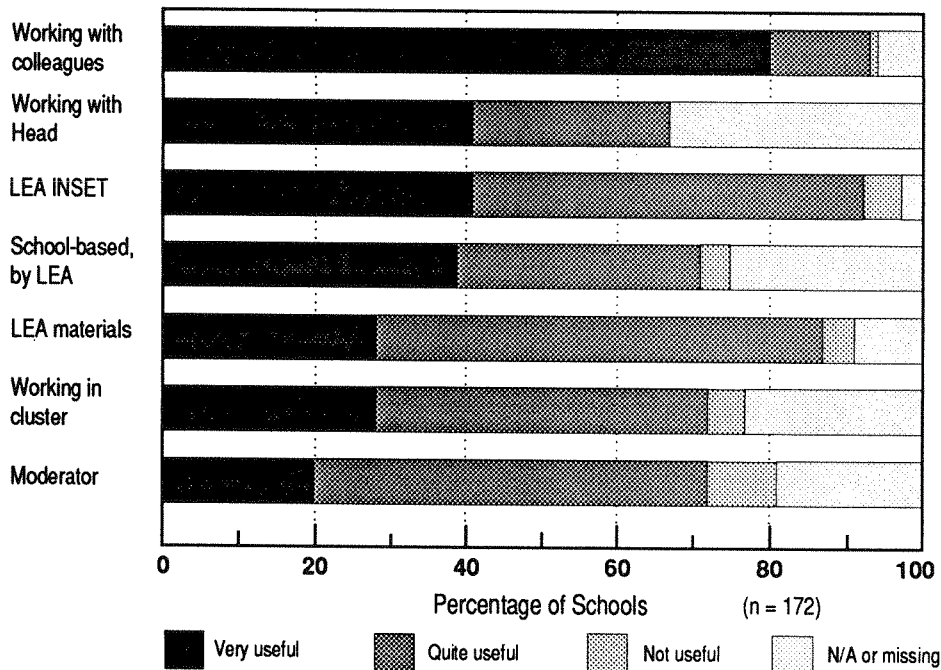
Working in school with colleagues was highly thought of by all respondents whether they were the head or other member of staff, but for other activities, higher proportions of responses from heads fell into the 'Very useful' category than responses from non-heads. The differences of opinion between heads and other respondents were particularly noticeable in two areas of activity: the activities of the moderator and the usefulness of working with colleagues in cluster schools. Both of these were rated more highly by heads than other respondents, as Table 4.1 shows.

Table 4.1   Different perceptions of the usefulness of two approaches

	Percentage of responses		
	Not useful	Quite useful	Very useful
	%	%	%
The activities of the moderator:			
Head	5	66	29
Other respondent	24	61	15
Working with colleagues in cluster schools:			
Head	4	55	41
Other respondent	14	62	24

Interviews with teachers indicated that working with colleagues was perceived as the most useful approach because they have been used to working in this way in the past. Teachers can thrash out problems relating to their own circumstances and implement their decisions directly. Interviewees felt that collaboration between colleagues was the ideal way to clarify thoughts on issues, to share experiences and to disseminate information informally.

Interestingly, in those few schools where such collaboration between colleagues was deemed only quite useful (as opposed to very useful) this relative lack of success was more than once attributed to the size of the school. In very small schools where there was only one teacher of year 2 pupils, such productive co-operation between involved and interested parties could not take place. Some of these teachers may have been able to benefit from working with their heads, but both the statistical data and the interviews revealed that collaboration with a head was not as successful as working with colleagues.

In interviewing year 2 staff it became clear that the benefit to be derived from working with the head depended much on the head's personality and the approach s/he took to NCA. Some heads, apparently, made a lot of effort to become involved and to help with the planning, management and administration of NCA. Others kept their distance, providing little in the way of either practical or moral support. In one instance, a head, who did not have the confidence of the staff, actually caused added stress and worry by insisting on being personally involved.

4.2.3 Support provided at secondary level

Secondary schools were asked to comment on the support provided, using the same headings as primary schools (see Section 4.2). The only difference was that each topic/activity was put into the subject-related context of mathematics, science, English or technology. In 1990/91 the types of support which high proportions of schools reported having received were limited to LEA-organised training sessions and discussion on developing departmental policy on teaching and assessment.

With regard to other types of support, different patterns were discernible for different subjects. For example, in mathematics, only small proportions of schools had received support on carrying out and recording TA (19 per cent and 22 per cent respectively) and similar proportions of schools had received support for those aspects in English. In science, however, much higher proportions of schools had received support, perhaps because of the nature of AT1, and the demands it placed upon teachers. Support in technology tended to be lower than in the other subjects (See Figure 4.6 below) and this may be because National Curriculum technology was only just being introduced.

Figure 4.6 Advisory support in SECONDARY schools - 1990/91

Percentage of Schools

n =   91   87   83   87

maths   science   English   technology

35
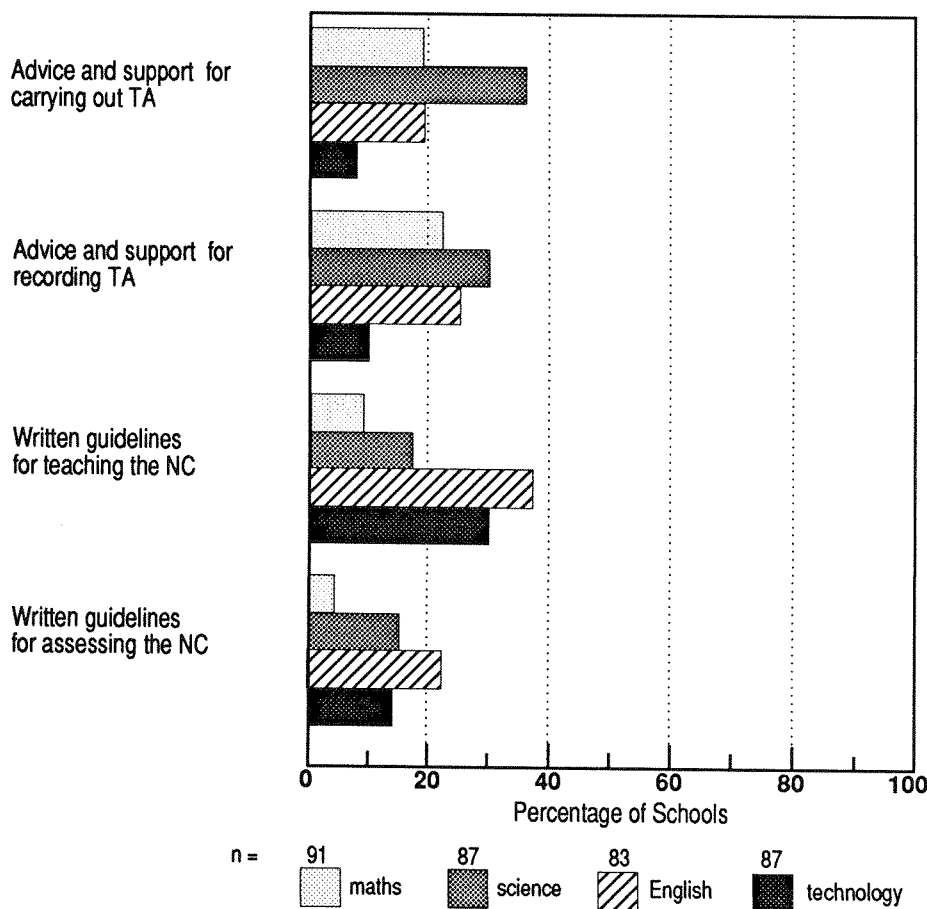
In terms of teaching and assessing the different subjects, as Figure 4.6 shows, higher proportions of schools had received written guidelines for English than for the other subjects, with the lowest proportions receiving such support in mathematics.

In 1990/91 KS3 NC assessment was not yet in place, so the level of support was not as high as in primary schools, and different emphases were given. In 1991/92, however, the proportions of schools reporting support in nearly all the areas listed in section 4.2 had risen, in some cases, substantially. There were still differences between the subjects, but these did not necessarily follow the same pattern as those noted for 1990/91. High proportions of schools claimed to have been involved in LEA-organised sessions, in all four subjects, with advice and support for carrying out TA featuring strongly in mathematics and science, but less so for English and technology. Again, this may be related to the more urgent need for support, given the difficulty of assessing AT1 in mathematics and science. Figure 4.7 shows the proportions of schools receiving support in 1991/92 for the same areas as shown in Figure 4.6 for 1990/91. Full details for each subject are shown in Table A6 in the Appendix.

Figure 4.7 Advisory support in SECONDARY schools - 1991/92

36
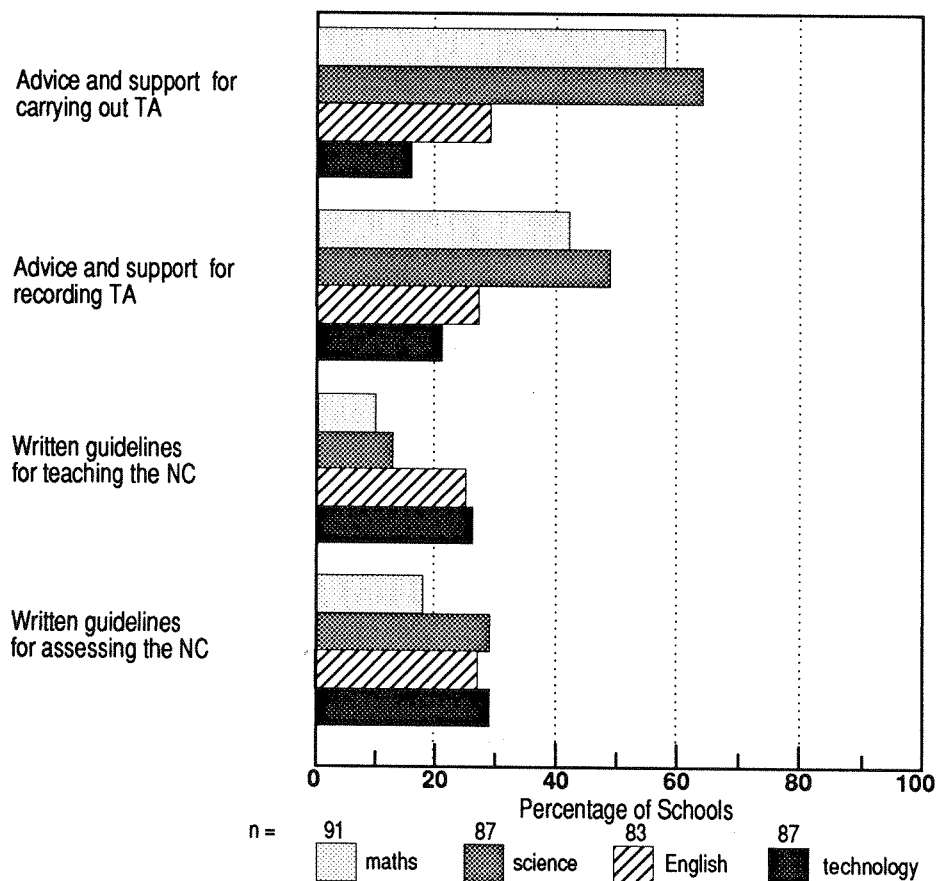
4.2.4 Usefulness of support provided at secondary level

In considering the usefulness of different approaches to developing assessment policy and practice in mathematics, science, English and technology, it is clear that the level of support expressed by respondents was similar in all four subjects.

In over 80 per cent of schools, respondents in each of the four subjects reported that working with colleagues from their own department was 'Very useful'. As in the primary

Figure 4.8 Usefulness of support activities in SECONDARY schools

MATHEMATICS

Percentage of Schools   (n = 91)

SCIENCE

Percentage of Schools   (n = 87)

■ Very useful   ▨ Quite useful   ▦ Not useful   □ N/A or missing
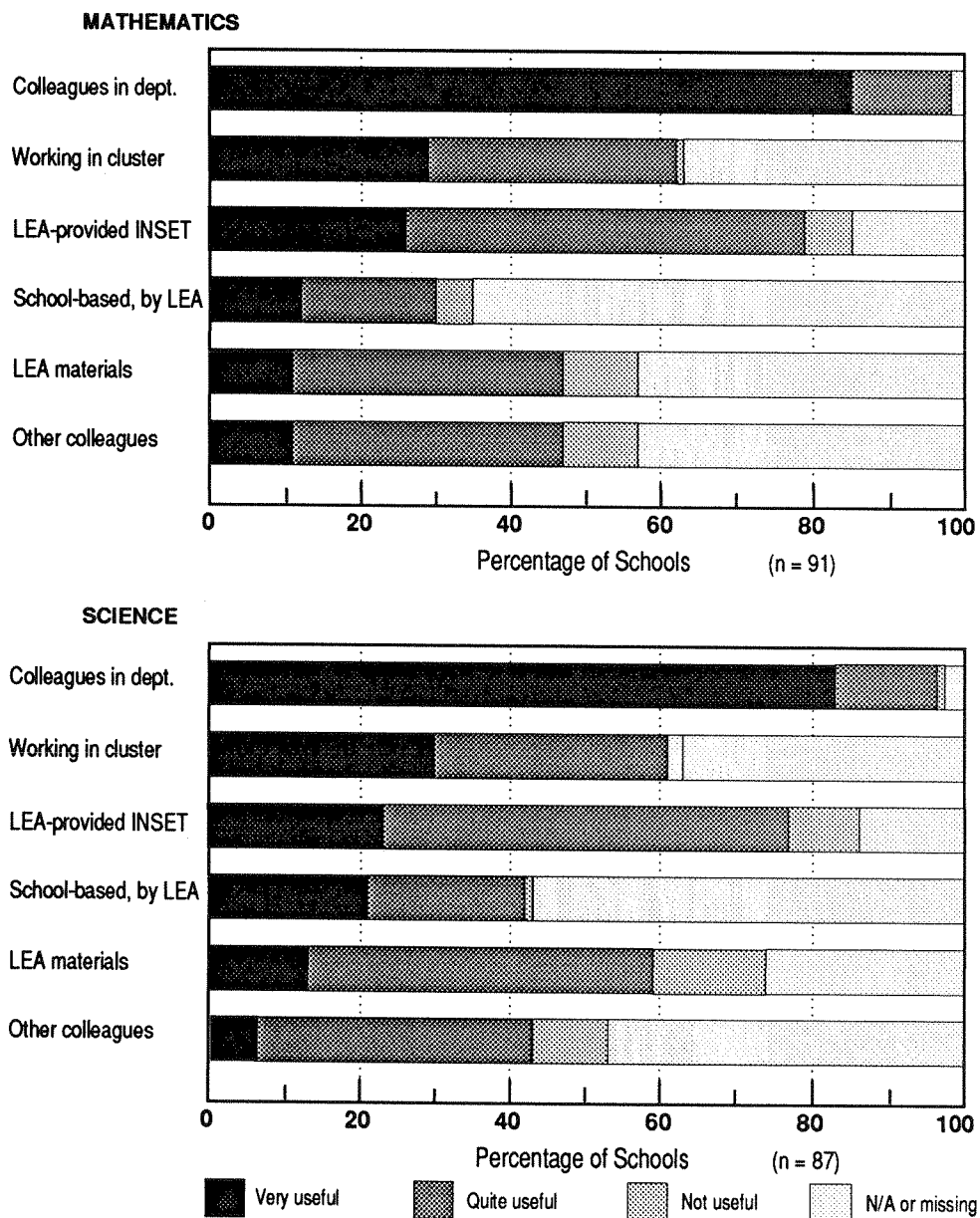
schools, this was clearly seen as the most useful approach to developing assessment policy and practice, but the majority of schools also put INSET sessions provided by the LEA into the 'Quite useful' or 'Very useful' categories. For respondents to the science, English and technology questionnaires, working in school with advisory staff was something that only about half had experienced, with only a third of mathematics respondents able to give a rating. Working in school with colleagues from other departments was also not experienced by around 40 per cent of respondents. Figures 4.8 and 4.9 show the full picture for each of the four subjects.

Figure 4.9 Usefulness of support activities in SECONDARY schools

ENGLISH

Percentage of Schools (n = 83)

TECHNOLOGY

Percentage of Schools (n = 87)

Very useful   Quite useful   Not useful   N/A or missing
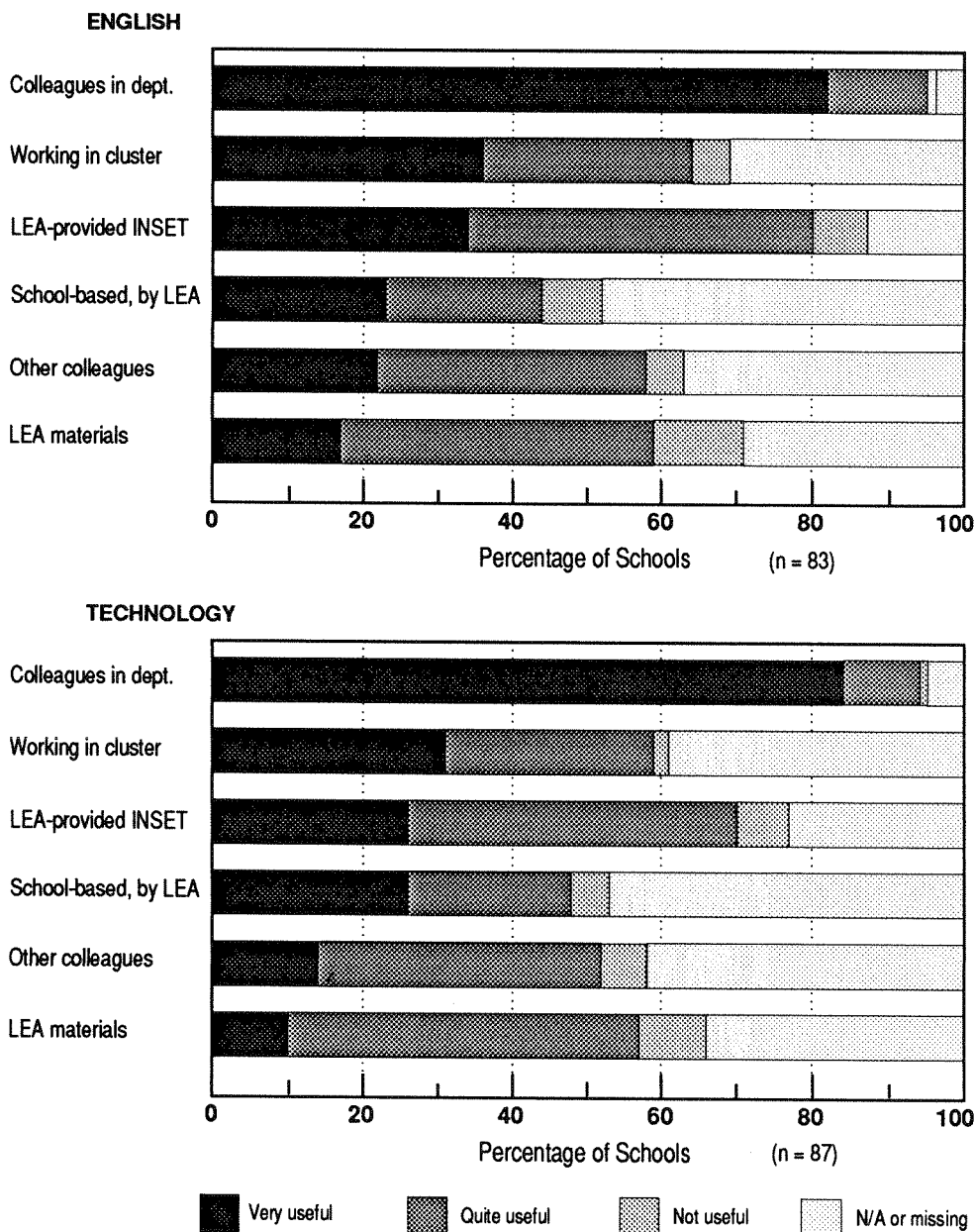
Interviews with teachers in secondary schools confirmed the view that working with colleagues was the most useful approach to making progress; this tended to mean working with others in the same department. They felt that it was more useful to have the opportunity to discuss ideas and pass on information with departmental colleagues than to work with advisory staff.

Although working collaboratively was seen as the most fruitful method it was not always easy to achieve since opportunities for all members of a department to assemble were not frequent in some schools, and even where regular meetings were held there were usually a large number of matters to be discussed. More time was needed for staff to meet so that issues could be thrashed out and consensus reached, rather than decisions being made by only one or two senior members of the department. One head of department explained that a certain amount of information could be disseminated on paper but some issues needed to be discussed and since there were ten people in his department he did not feel that communications were always satisfactory.

Some heads of department felt that there probably would be gains in meeting colleagues from other departments to discuss assessment issues and approaches to recording and reporting, but with the limited time available the priority was to share ideas with colleagues teaching the same subject.

4.2.5 Support provided in special schools

Special schools were asked to indicate whether they had received support of different kinds, using the same headings as for primary and secondary schools but with two variations. Firstly, the sections were divided into questions relating to KS1 and questions relating to KS3, so these may have been filled in by different members of staff in schools which include the whole age range in their intake. In addition, some of the questions were broken down into 'general issues' and 'SEN-specific issues'.

As with primary and secondary, the LEA-organised training session was experienced by a high proportion of schools, although in 1990/91 this applied only to KS1 provision. Much of the advice and support provided had been focused on the needs of all pupils rather than being targeted on special needs-related issues as can be seen from the examples shown in Figures 4.10 and 4.11. (Full details of the support provided by the LEA can be found in the Appendix in Table A5).

In 1991/92 the provision at KS1 remained relatively stable, with the main increases showing in the proportions of schools receiving support on SEN-specific issues, as part of LEA-organised INSET sessions and advice and support for carrying out TA. Far higher proportions of schools also reported that the LEA had responded to requests for support to individual schools, in 1991/92.

Figure 4.10   Advisory support to SPECIAL schools - KS1

ADVICE & SUPPORT

Conduct of tests - general

Conduct of tests - SEN specific

Carrying out TA - general

Carrying out TA - SEN specific

WRITTEN GUIDELINES

Teaching NC - general

Teaching NC - SEN specific

Assessing NC - general

Assessing NC - SEN specific

0   20   40   60   80   100

Percentage of Schools   (n = 38)

1990/1991   1991/1992
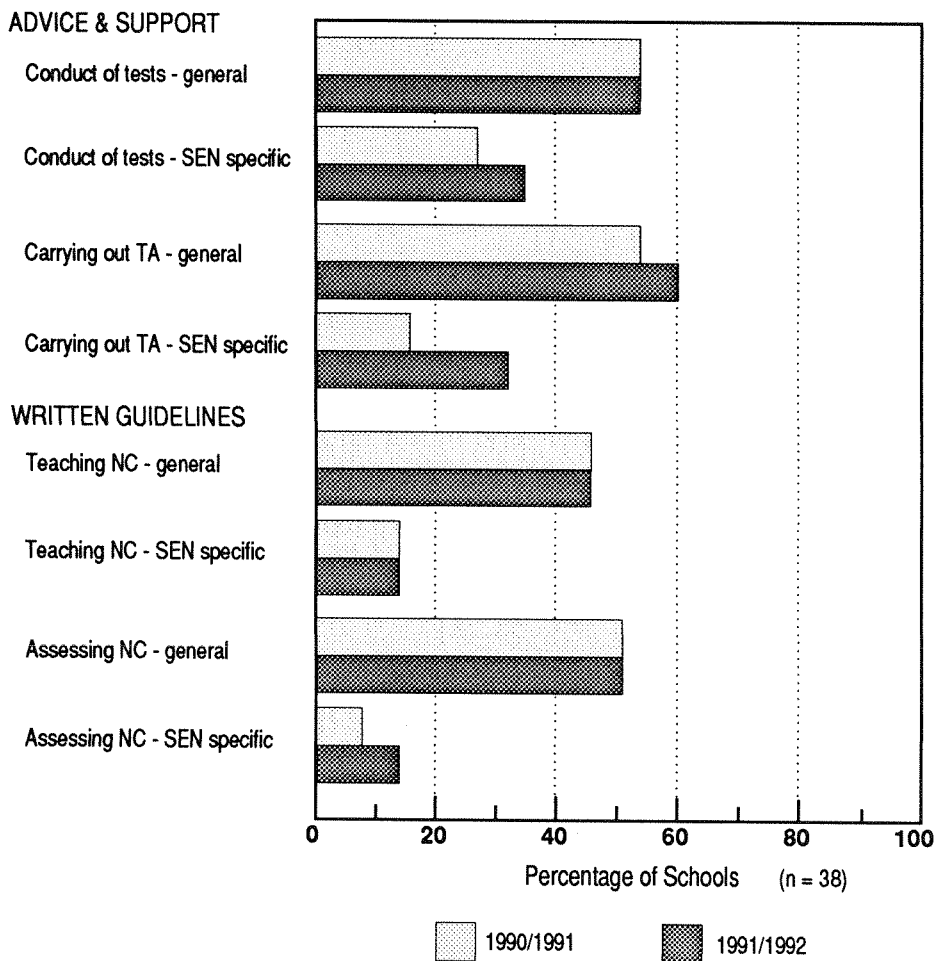
As far as KS3 is concerned, higher proportions of schools had received support during 91/92 for each of the headings listed than in 90/91. The LEA-organised training session was experienced by the highest proportion of schools, 61 per cent, with advice and support to develop Records of Achievement cited by 50 per cent of schools. Figure 4.11 shows some examples of the levels of support provided to special schools at KS3 for the same categories as for KS1.

Levels of support for KS3 were lower than for KS1 in both years, despite an increase in 1991/92 but this can surely be attributed to the fact that participation in KS3 NCA was voluntary in 1992. 1991/92 was also the first year pupils with statements in mainstream schools and those in special schools were obliged to participate in KS1 NCA so LEAs were clearly keen to ensure that sufficient support was available to schools involved.

Figure 4.11   Advisory support to SPECIAL schools - KS3

ADVICE & SUPPORT

Conduct of tests - general

Conduct of tests - SEN specific

Carrying out TA - general

Carrying out TA - SEN specific

WRITTEN GUIDELINES

Teaching NC - general

Teaching NC - SEN specific

Assessing NC - general

Assessing NC - SEN specific

0   20   40   60   80   100

Percentage of Schools   (n = 38)

☐ 1990/1991   ▨ 1991/1992
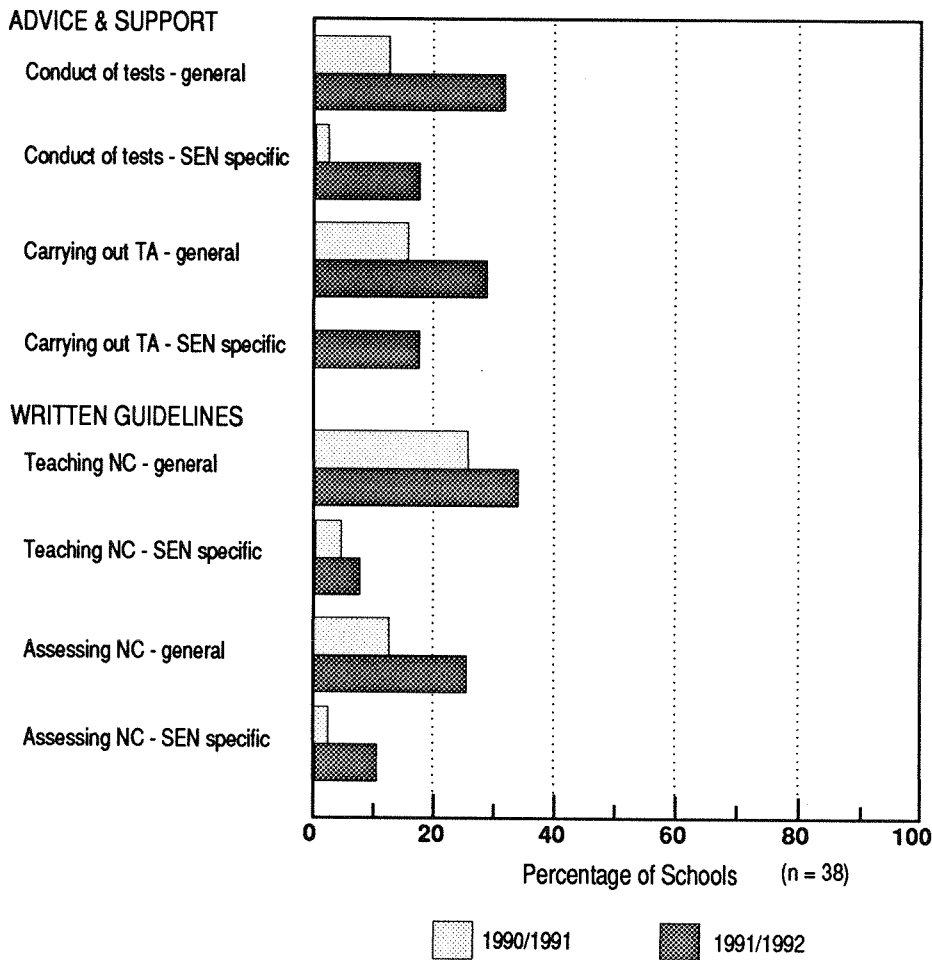
4.2.6 Usefulness of support provided to special schools

Full details of the ways in which special school respondents rated the different approaches are shown in Figure 4.12. As in the other schools, high proportions of respondents from special schools rated working in school with colleagues as 'Very useful', particularly at KS1.

At KS1 the INSET sessions provided by the LEA were also seen as successful: 84 per cent of respondents put this form of support into the 'Quite useful' or 'Very useful' categories. Over 50 per cent of respondents thought that the guidance materials provided by the LEA were 'Quite useful' but 15 per cent indicated that they were 'Not useful'.

Figure 4.12 Usefulness of support activities In SPECIAL schools

KS1

Percentage of Schools   (n = 34)

KS3

Percentage of Schools   (n = 33)

■ Very useful   ▨ Quite useful   ▦ Not useful   ☐ N/A or missing

42
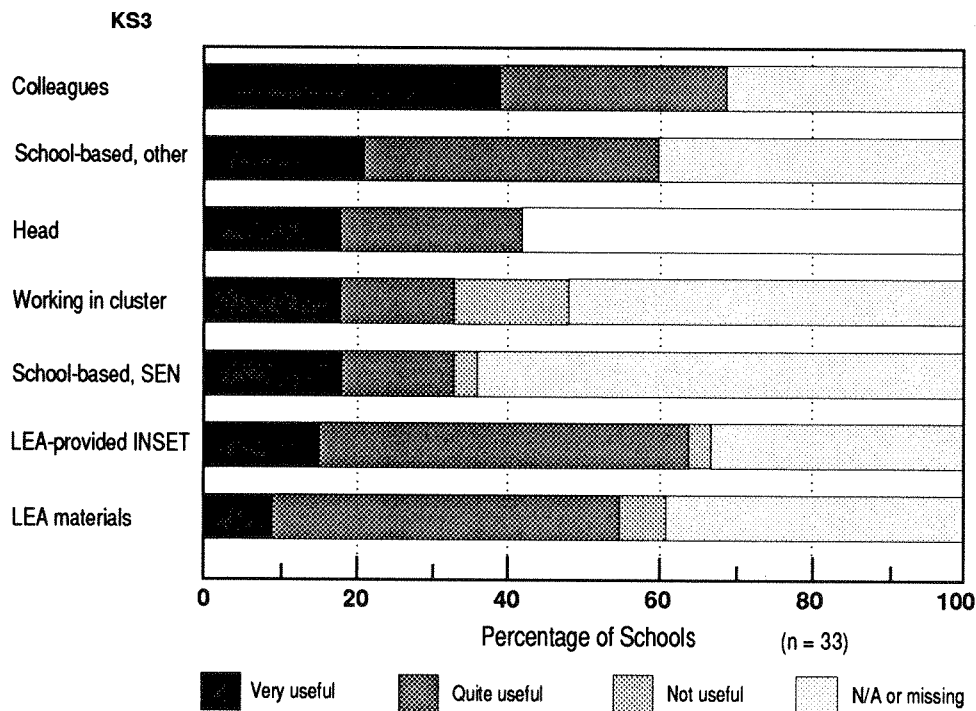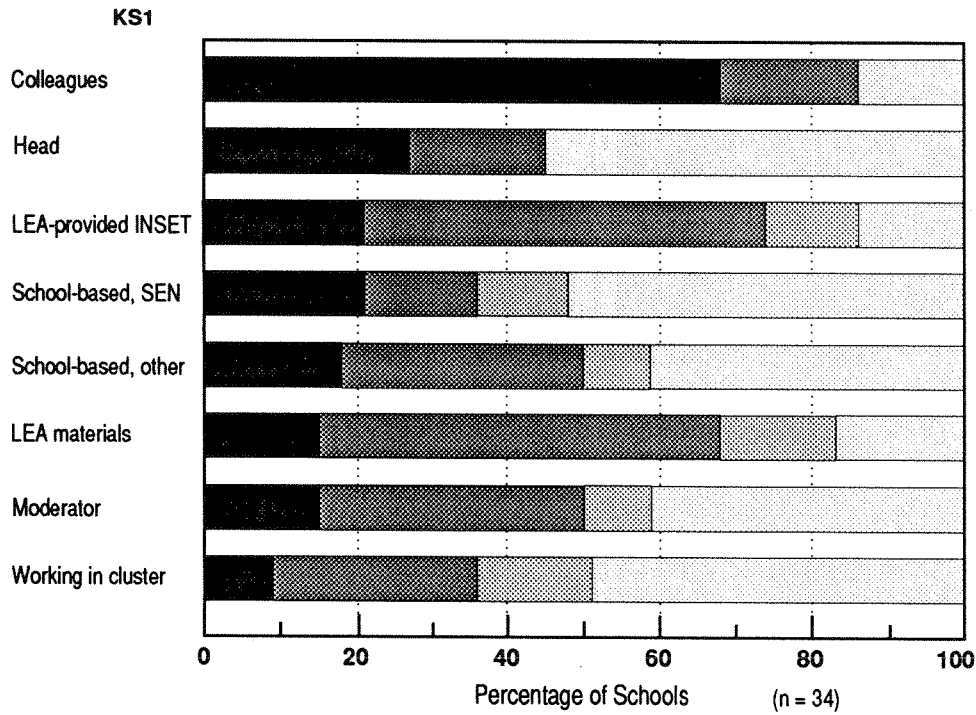
At KS3, the proportions of respondents rating any of the activities as 'Very useful' were smaller than at KS1, but the patterns of appreciation were similar. The only exception to this relates to working with colleagues from the cluster schools: at KS1, 27 per cent of respondents thought this was 'Quite useful' and 9 per cent thought that it was 'Very useful'; at KS3, 15 per cent thought it was 'Quite useful' but 18 per cent thought it was 'Very useful'.

The effectiveness of approaches which involve collaborative working was endorsed by the teachers from special schools who were interviewed. They claimed that this was a normal way of working in special schools and they had not needed to adapt their current practices in order to accommodate to NCA, at least not in this respect.

4.3 Summary

The provision made by LEAs covered a great many topics and approaches, with some differences in the type or level of provision between the two years under consideration and across phases. The main findings from the LEA data are summarised below.

*   LEAs tended to supply training, guidance and information on all revant topics through several different approaches

*   LEA-based training sessions were the most common approach adopted with school-based training and guidance also popular

*   advice and training on approaches to the assessment of pupils with special needs and the linking of the NCA with Records of Achievement was noticeably expanded in 1991/92

*   there was a sharp rise in the numbers of LEAs providing support for all aspects of KS3 NCA in 1991/92

*   LEAs tended to offer a smaller range of support for KS3 in comparison with KS1, even in the second year when testing in both key stages was in place; this may be attributable to LEAs' differing responsibilities towards the key stages and the changes to KS3 assessment arrangements

*   LEAs felt that releasing teachers to work together and to attend training was the most effective of the different approaches adopted

School perspectives on the provision made and its appropriateness do not differ greatly from those expressed by LEA respondents, as the summary of the main findings shows.

* although most **primary schools** reported the availability of LEA-organised training sessions in both years, support in some aspects fluctuated between the two years

* working with colleagues, including the head, and in-school advice and support from LEA staff were, on average, the forms of support rated most highly by primary respondents

* heads tended to be more enthusiastic about approaches than respondents who were not heads

* **at secondary level** differences were noted between the provision made in different subjects; some of these differences may be attributable to the stage at which each subject was introduced and changes to the curriculum

* in 1990/91 LEA-based training sessions and discussion on the development of departmental policy were the main forms of support provided to secondary staff

* in 1991/92 support for all aspects of KS3 assessment increased, with LEA-based training still the most commonly provided approach in all four subjects

* secondary respondents in each of the four subjects rated working with colleagues in their own department as the most useful approach

* working with colleagues from cluster schools was also popular

* many **special school** staff had been involved in LEA-based training but they found that much of the session was focused on general rather than SEN-specific issues

* in 1991/92 there was an increase in the extent to which more specific training and guidance was provided for teachers in special schools

* special school teachers working with KS1 pupils were more likely to have received support than those working with KS3 pupils

* the preferred forms of support for special school teachers were similar to those of the primary teachers: working with colleagues, including the head, followed by in-school advice and support.

Teacher attitudes to the support provided obviously varied greatly, according to their LEA, the type of school, the subject and age range with which they were concerned, and their own needs and the needs of their pupils. It is fair to say, however, that despite individual dissatisfaction, teachers seemed to feel that the LEAs had provided a reasonable level of support, with perceived improvements in 91/92 over 90/92, especially at KS3. To conclude this, is not to deny the criticisms of particular aspects of the provision, described in chapters 5 and 6, but is based on the more general aspects of provision on which views were sought in this chapter.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the arrangements made by LEAs for training; discussion of other forms of support and guidance can be found in chapter 6. LEAs and schools were asked to indicate:

- the categories of staff who had been provided with training

- the amount of training that had been provided for each category of staff

- the different types of approaches used to deliver training

Provision for teachers in primary, secondary and special schools is looked at separately under each of these headings since the arrangements differed between sectors and years.

5.1 The recipients of training

5.1.1 The LEA picture

LEAs were asked to indicate the proportions of different categories of school staff who had been trained in 1990/91 and who had been or would be trained in the course of 1991/92. At primary level, LEAs seem to have offered training on a wider range of issues and provided support in a slightly greater variety of approaches in the second year and there appears to have been a concurrent decline in the proportions of staff trained in the second year. Figure 5.1 illustrates the extent of training provided to primary staff.

As shown above, fewer LEAs were training all or most of their primary heads or year 2 teachers in 1991/92 than in the previous year. In 1990/91, for example, 90 per cent of the LEAs provided training for all or most of their primary heads. By 1991/92 this had fallen to 71 per cent and 14 per cent were not training any at all. In contrast, a slightly greater proportion of Assessment Coordinators was being trained (41 per cent in 1990/91 and 50 per cent in 1991/92), presumably so that they could return to school and 'cascade' the information.

One exception to this downward trend is that teachers other than year 2, who had not been the focus of much training in the previous year, were now more likely to receive some in the second year. In 1990/91 only 24 per cent of LEAs trained all or most of their other primary teachers. This had risen to 45 per cent in 1991/92.

Figure 5.1 Staff receiving training - KS1

Percentage of LEAs training all or most staff

1990/1991   1991/1992
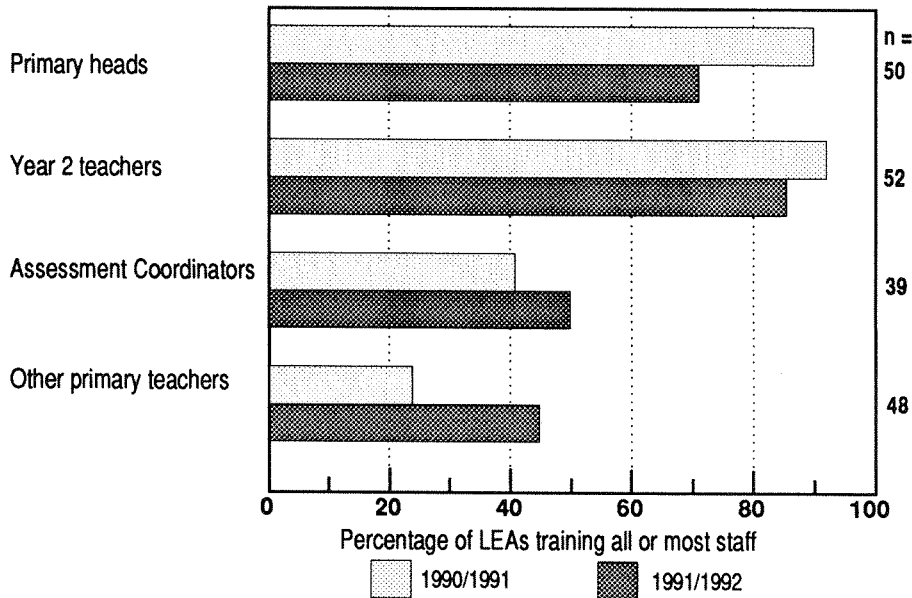
In 1991/92, not surprisingly, increasing numbers of LEAs were training more secondary heads, subject teachers and Assessment Coordinators than in 1990/91, with, for example, the proportion of LEAs providing training for all or most subject teachers doubling from 24 per cent to 48 per cent over the two years.

At both primary and secondary level it would appear that the role of the Assessment Coordinator or equivalent is evolving in the same way as other coordinating posts. LEAs focus on providing training and information to such postholders, who then report back to their colleagues. Figure 5.2 shows the staff who have received or will receive training for KS3 in the course of the year, according to the LEA responses.

Figure 5.2 Staff receiving training - KS3

Percentage of LEAs training all or most staff

1990/1991   1991/1992
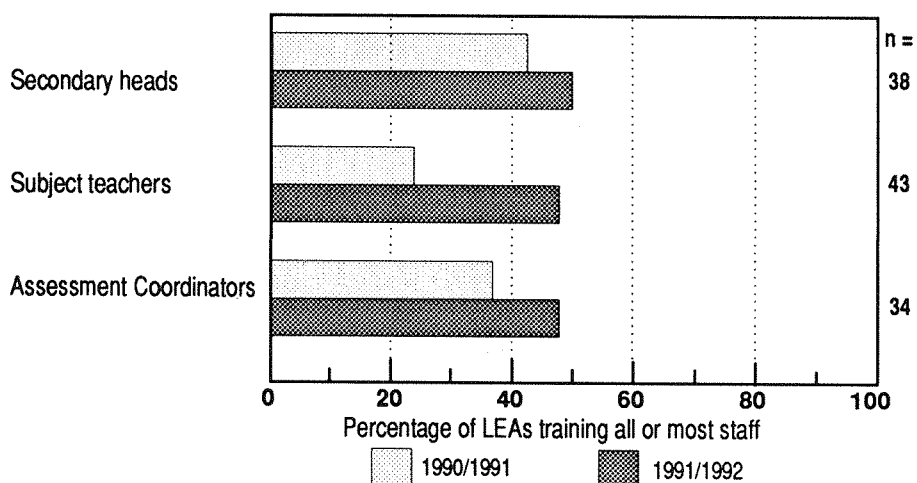
5.1.2 The school perspective

Schools were asked to indicate the members of staff who attended any LEA organised training sessions relevant to NCA. At primary level, virtually all responding schools indicated that their Y2 teacher(s) had attended training, in both years. In 1990/91, a high proportion of schools reported that heads had attended training, and deputies and other teachers had also participated. In 1991/92, however, the proportions of schools indicating that their heads and deputies had attended training had noticeably decreased, though other staff involvement remained relatively constant. This matches the LEA reports and would suggest that heads had less need to be trained in the second year and that resources were being directed towards those who needed them most, such as Y2 teachers. Any new heads would, of course, require appropriate training. Figure 5.3 shows the proportions of schools reporting training for different categories of staff.

Figure 5.3 Staff participating in training in PRIMARY schools

Percentage of Schools   (n = 172)

By post held
* eg SEN, Section 11   □ 1990/1991   ▨ 1991/1992

47
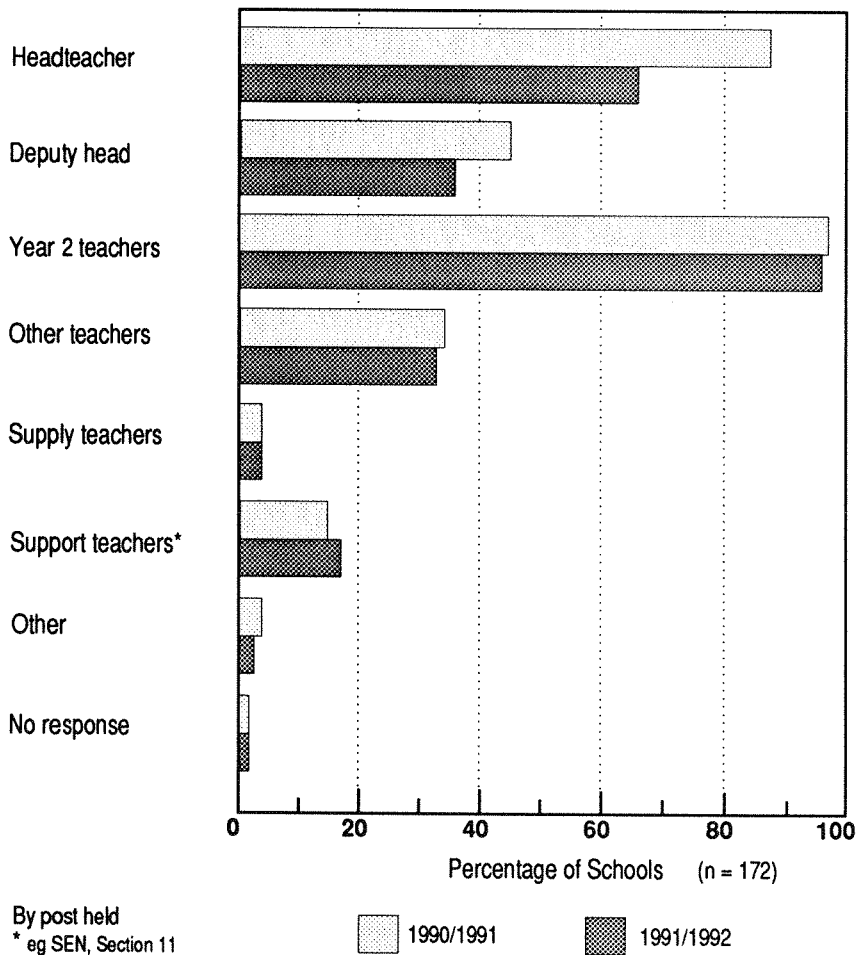
A superficial interpretation of the figures might imply, for example, that almost every year 2 teacher had been on LEA training sessions in both years, as 97 per cent and 96 per cent of school respondents reported that year 2 teachers had attended sessions in the two years respectively. Visits to schools, however, suggested that not all Y2 teachers were able to benefit from LEA sessions and many had to rely on internal dissemination of the information.

At secondary level, the picture is more diffuse because so much of the training was subject-specific. Very few schools indicated that heads and deputies had been involved in subject-specific training, but according to the responses, they had been involved in some aspects of training for NCA. Small proportions of the question-naire respondents had been involved in training on issues such as: the management or administration of assessment; the development of whole school assessment policies; recording and reporting procedures.

Figure 5.4 Staff participating in training in SECONDARY schools

By post held

1990/1991 1991/1992

48
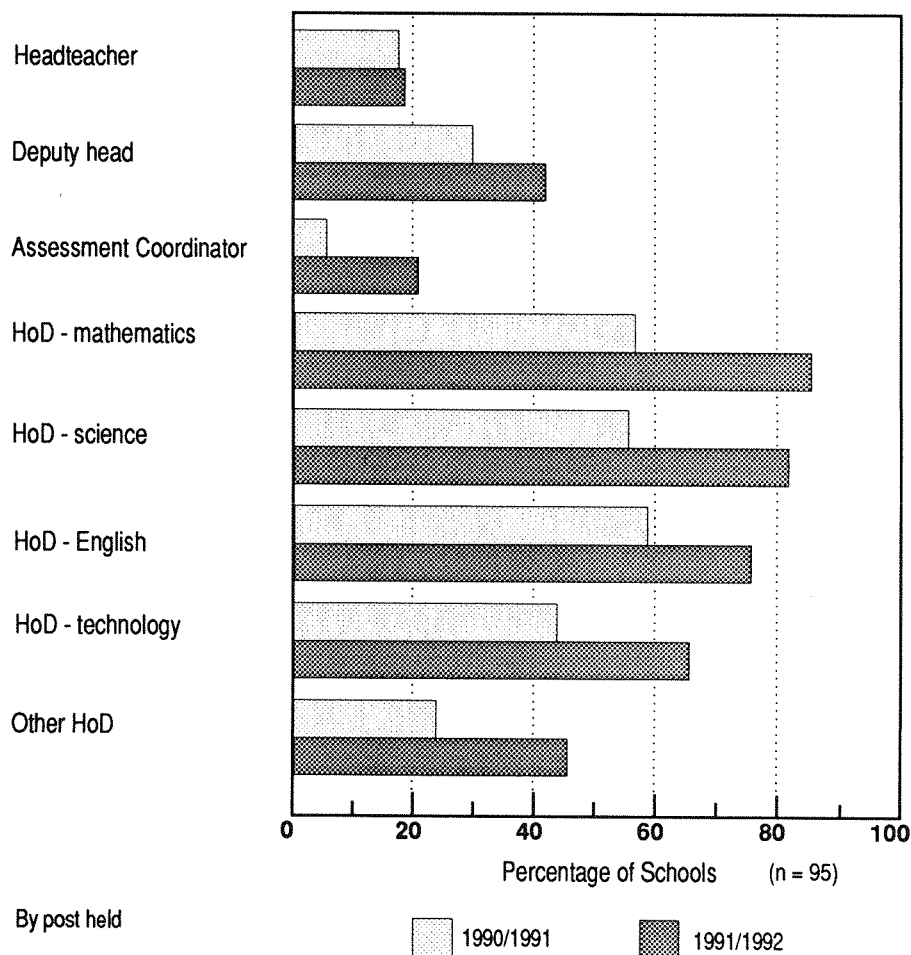
Between 66 and 86 per cent of schools were sending the heads of English, mathematics, science and technology departments on LEA sessions in 1991/92, and between 54 and 70 per cent sent subject teachers. As at primary level, there was an emphasis on the cascade system of training for conveying information to teachers in the classroom.

Figure 5.4 shows the proportions of schools indicating the categories of staff receiving training on some aspect of KS3 NCA. This part of the questionnaire was completed by the main respondent, usually the head, and not by heads of department so the percentages may differ from those reported later.

As the figure indicates, in around half the schools, heads of departments of the core subjects received training in the first year and in 66 to 86 per cent of schools, in the second year. There were fewer schools in which heads of technology received training, presumably because technology was a more recent addition to the NC subjects being introduced.

In around a third of schools, teachers other than HoDs had participated in training for NCA in the four designated subjects in 1990/91 but by 1991/92 these proportions had noticeably increased (see Table A.8 in the appendix).

When the responses from the subject-specific sections of the questionnaire are examined, the pattern is much the same although the detailed figures are slightly different. Table 5.1 shows the proportions of schools reporting participation by staff in subject-specific training.

Table 5.1   Staff attending subject-specific training

Post held	Percentage of schools							
	maths		science		English		technology	
	91 %	92 %	91 %	92 %	91 %	92 %	91 %	92 %
Head	1	1	1	-	-	1	2	-
Deputy	2	8	-	5	1	4	10	6
Head of department	45	85	64	81	71	65	54	59
Subject teacher(s)	33	68	47	71	47	55	37	44
n =	91		87		83		87	

It was also interesting to note that support teachers from a small proportion of schools received some training in 1991/92, especially in mathematics.

In special schools, the respondents to each of the age related sections were asked to indicate which staff had attended any LEA-organised training sessions for NCA.

In 1990/91, at KS1, 73 per cent of schools reported that the Y2 teacher had attended training and in 51 per cent, the head had attended. In 1991/92, however, the proportions of schools where heads had been involved dropped to 27 per cent, although in 70 per cent of schools the Y2 teacher was involved. Figure 5.5 shows proportions of schools reporting training for different categories of staff.

Figure 5.5 Special school staff participating in training - KS1
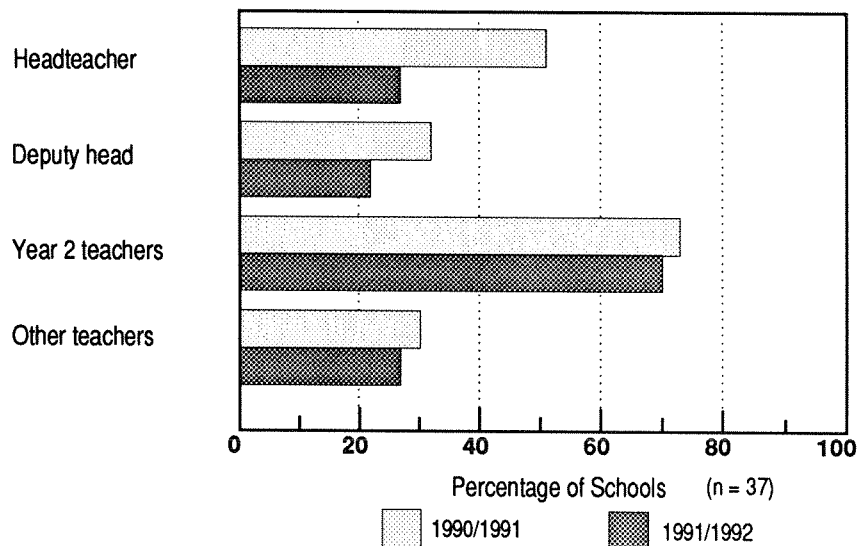
According to respondents, a more varied range of people had been involved in training at KS3. In 1990/91 the proportions of schools reporting participation in training by heads (16 per cent) or deputies (13 per cent) were much lower than those reported at KS1. The mathematics and science coordinators had received training in 29 per cent of schools, which compares favourably with the smaller proportions of schools indicating that English or technology coordinators had received training. In 1991/92, however, as KS3 came on stream, there were noticeable increases in the proportions of schools reporting on training received by all categories of staff. Figure 5.6 gives details of the proportions of schools where different categories of staff participated in training.

As discussed earlier (see section 5.1.2), many teachers felt that it would have been better if all year 2 teachers had attended training so that they did not have to rely on colleagues' skills of disseminating. This dissatisfaction with the cascade approach was expressed by teachers in all phases, as it put pressure on the person who had been trained and left some of the non-participants feeling out of touch with the latest decisions. Teachers seemed to feel that they should **all** receive some direct training and guidance and should not have to rely on second-hand information. LEAs might well have agreed with this, in principle, but were constrained by the limits of the resources available for supply cover (see chapter 7), and therefore obliged to rely on cascade approaches.

Figure 5.6 Special school staff participating in training - KS3

Headteacher

Deputy head

Mathematics coordinator

Science coordinator

English coordinator

Technology coordinator

Other teachers

By post held

Percentage of Schools   (n = 38)

1990/1991   1991/1992
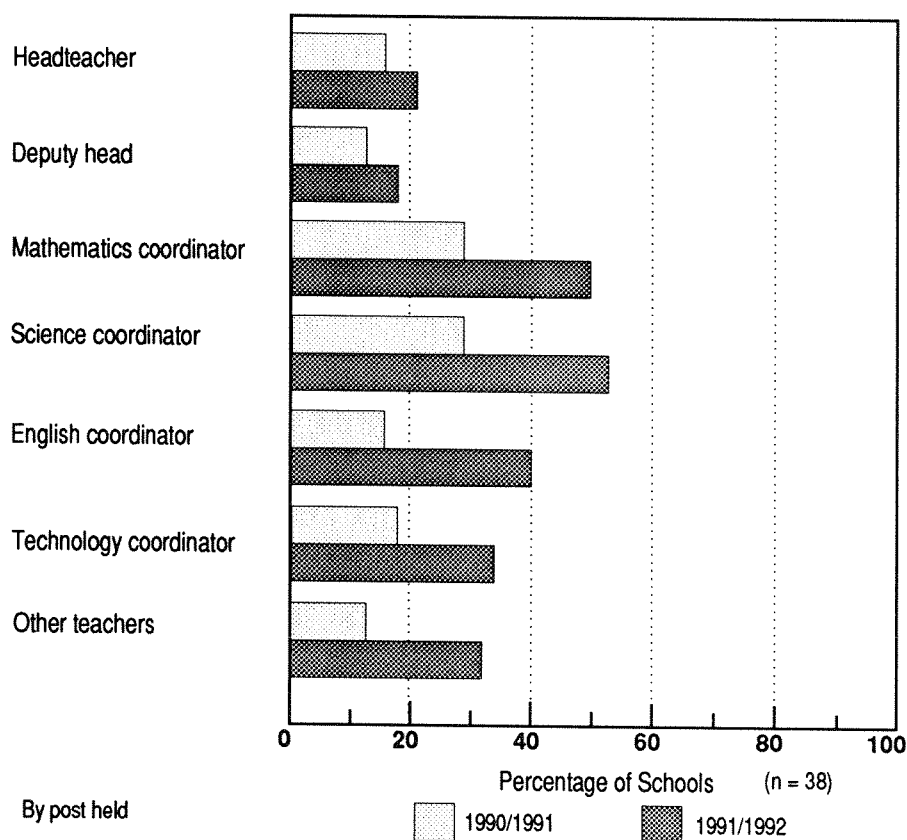
5.2 Amount of training received

5.2.1 The LEA picture

LEA respondents were asked to indicate the approximate number of days' training provided to each category of staff for each year, at each key stage. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 show the average number of days training provided to different categories of staff.

At primary level, the number of days provided to heads, Y2 teachers and assessment coordinators had decreased 1991/92, but other teachers appear to have been provided with slightly more training on average.

Conversely, at secondary level, the mean number of days' training increased in the second year of the investigation, as LEAs were directing help toward staff preparing for KS3 assessment.

Table 5.2   Days of training provided/planned for KS1 teachers

	Mean number of days	
Post held	90/91	91/92
Heads	2.1	1.4
Y2 teachers	3.1	2.4
Assessment Coordinators	1.6	1.4
Other primary teachers	1.2	1.6
Supply teachers	0.8	0.9
no. of LEAs = 52		

Table 5.3   Days of training provided/planned for KS3 teachers

	Mean number of days	
Post held	90/91	91/92
Heads/SMT	0.9	1.1
Subject teachers	1.4	1.8
Assessment Coordinators (if not member of SMT)	1.1	1.4
Supply teachers	0.3	0.3
no. of LEAs = 38		

5.2.2 The school perspective

Schools were asked to indicate in the questionnaire the approximate number of hours' training received by different categories of staff for each of the two years under consideration.

At primary level, teachers of Y2 pupils appeared to be receiving the most training, with an average of 11.6 hours in 1990/91 and 9.6 hours in 1991/92, in other words, two to three days of training (matching LEA reports). In 1991/92 the average number of hours was smaller for all categories of staff except supply teachers, which remained fairly constant. Table 5.4 shows the average number of hours of LEA-organised training received by staff for KS1 NCA training.

At secondary level, the information was provided by the respondents who completed the separate subject-specific sections. Clear differences between the provision for each subject can be perceived, both in terms of the average number of hours' training and the increase or decrease for different categories of staff between the two years.

Table 5.4   Hours' training received by staff for KS1 NCA

Post held	Mean number of hours 90/91	91/92
Head	7.8	5.6
Deputy	9.8	8.2
Teacher(s) of Y2 pupils	11.6	9.6
Other teachers	7.6	6.3
Supply teachers	8.1	8.0
Support teachers	10.0	9.0
n = 172		

Table 5.5 shows the mean number of hours training received by different categories of staff, in each subject, in both years.

Table 5.5   Hours' training received by staff for subject-related NCA at KS3

Post held	Maths 90/91	91/92	Science 90/91	91/92	English 90/91	91/92	Technology 90/91	91/92
Head	3.0	6.0	3.0	–	–	–	4.0	4.0
Deputy	–	6.1	–	5.0	–	5.0	7.7	8.0
HoD	8.0	8.5	10.4	9.8	7.5	7.4	8.6	6.0
Subject teacher	8.3	7.6	8.7	7.3	7.1	6.9	8.7	5.5
Supply teacher	4.8	7.0	7.5	5.7	–	–	–	–
Support teacher	7.5	5.9	3.0	5.2	–	–	–	–
Other	–	5.0	–	14.3	–	7.5	9.0	9.0
n =	91		87		83		87	

It is interesting to note that teachers in all four subjects appear to have received less training in 1991/92 than in 1990/91, on average. Heads of science and technology also received fewer hours although maths HoDs had slightly longer, on average, in the second year, and the allocation for heads of English remained reasonably stable. This decrease, which may appear surprising, could be accounted for by the increase in 1991/92 of other forms of support, such as in-school advice and guidance.

The main comments made by teachers on the amount of time they had spent on training related to the difficulties of participating during school time because of the lack of cover. This issue is discussed in detail in chapter 7.

5.3 Format of training

5.3.1 The LEA picture

Another question on which respondents were asked to give information concerned the emphasis placed on different approaches to deliveringinformation and guidance during training sessions. They were asked how much emphasis was placed on presentation of information, plenary discussions, small group discussions, and workshops. Again, information about both 1990/91 and 1991/92 was requested.

The most popular of all approaches was the workshop, especially for SAT and Teacher Assessment practice. In the first year, 60 per cent of the respondents said that this approach had received much emphasis in their LEAs. In the following year this increased to almost 70 per cent. Workshops for developing materials, however, were less frequently used. Another favoured approach was the small group discussion with half of the respondents revealing that much emphasis had been given to this and the remainder saying that it received some emphasis.

The format receiving least emphasis was the plenary discussion, with only 12 and 14 per cent of the LEAs giving it much emphasis and almost one quarter placing little emphasis on it in the two years under discussion. It is likely that organisers considered that discussions would be much more effective if conducted in small groups.

Unlike other aspects of provision investigated in this study, the data on the emphasis given to various approaches reveal little change between the two years. The only facet of training which differed in the importance it was given was the presentation of information. In the first year, this was clearly a high priority for LEA trainers with 52 per cent giving it much emphasis. It was second only to workshops for SAT and TA practice. In the second year, however, it was considered less important with the proportion of LEAs giving it much emphasis dropping to 35 per cent - lower in priority than SAT and TA practice and small group discussion. Possibly, after the previous year's experience of NCA, there was less information to be conveyed.

5.3.2 The school perspective

Interviews with primary teachers provided many explanations of why training sessions were deemed useful or not. In fact, it should be noted that aspects considered useful by some teachers, were described as totally unhelpful by others. For example informal discussions, which often form part of the LEA training session format, were condemned by some as a waste of time but regarded by others as invaluable. Some considered it unsatisfactory because they did not know the other teachers well enough for fruitful conversation and they felt that it was impossible to engage in informality with colleagues from local 'rival' schools.

Others felt that it was precisely through informal discussion that they could learn about methods that worked well in other schools, lend mutual support and gain reassurance that teachers everywhere were 'in the same boat', that is, anxious about the new initiatives and keen to ensure that they did the best for their pupils.

Despite the fact that the effectiveness of training sessions, or lack of it, was explained in many different ways, some features were mentioned repeatedly in schools from all the areas visited. Teachers tended to be most satisfied with sessions in which they had received practical advice from knowledgeable trainers. These were often sessions in which they had been introduced to the NCA materials and given the opportunity to try them out on colleagues; advice on matters of classroom management and organisation had also been provided.

KS3 staff made similar comments to KS1 staff about the factors that constituted effective training; but in addition to receiving expert advice or hands-on experience, they were eager to receive up-to-date information on NCA and to discuss the implications for their own schools. The opportunity to share ideas with staff from other schools in the sessions, was also perceived as most valuable.

At both KS1 and KS3, teachers found fault mainly with those events from which they had learnt little that was new. Criticisms along the lines of, 'instead of learning, we were the main contributors,' were heard repeatedly from secondary staff, as many felt that their own departments had already worked their way through many of the issues raised at the LEA sessions and that their thinking was far ahead of the content of the presentations. Sessions were also criticised for containing the same information from one year to the next and presenters for lacking in expertise: 'the blind leading the blind' became a familiar refrain during interviews, as it was felt that trainers sometimes had no more information or ideas about how to proceed than the recipients. LEAs were, at times, in the unenviable position of wishing to provide support and guidance but unable to do so effectively because of the numerous changes by SEAC to the curriculum and the arrangements for assessment.

Interestingly, KS3 interviewees offered more reasons for dissatisfaction, than did KS1 or special school teachers. A brief, but varied selection of comments is listed below:

- *too big to be useful*

- *didn't stop us from going down blind alleys*

- *MI5 atmosphere when people go to meetings and come back with rumours so that we never know what the reality is*

- *courses are put on, but not followed up*

- *(LEA concentrated on) the easy work, e.g. how to fill boxes, and did not do the difficult INSET, e.g. classroom management*

5.4 Summary

The LEAs provided training for a wide range of staff with the emphasis changing between 1990/91 and 1991/92. The main findings relating to the training arrangements are summarised below.

* **at KS1** in the first year, the majority of LEAs provided training for primary heads and year 2 teachers, with some other staff involved

* in the second year the majority of LEAs were still training Y2 teachers but heads were less likely to be trained and other primary teachers were more likely to be trained

* although over 90 per cent of schools reported that year 2 teachers had received training, many schools were not able to send more than one person, who had subsequently to disseminate to colleagues

* year 2 teachers received the most training (two to three days a year), followed by heads (one to two days)

* in 1991/92 there was a drop in the number of days provided for heads and Y2 teachers but a rise in the amount provided for other teachers, according to LEAs; school responses, however, reported a decrease in the amount of time allocated to other staff

* **at KS3** there was a noticeable increase in the provision of training for all categories of staff in 1991/92

* at secondary level, training seemed to have been directed predominantly at heads of department of maths, science, English and technology

* heads of departments of technology seemed less likely to have received training than heads of department of the other three subjects

* there was a noticeable increase in the schools reporting training for maths and science teachers between 1990/91 and 1991/92 with a smaller increase for English and technology

* all categories of staff tended to be provided with more training in the second year, according to LEAs

* the number of hours' training provided for subject teachers appeared to decline in 1991/92, according to the respondents for maths, science, English and technology

*   **in special schools** with KS1 pupils, year 2 teachers were most likely to have received training, in both years

*   heads in half the special schools with KS1 pupils received training in 1990/91 but this dropped to around a quarter in the second year

*   in special schools with KS3 pupils the maths and science coordinators were the most likely recipients of training in both years, with English and technology coordinators becoming more involved in 1991/92

*   LEAs tended to arrange training sessions to run as workshops or small group discussions rather than plenary discussions, especially when considering practice for SATs and TA

*   LEAs gave a greater emphasis to the presentation of information in the first year than in the second

*   informal discussion sessions were regarded by some teachers as invaluable but by others as unhelpful

*   teachers tended to be most satisfied with sessions in which they had received practical advice from knowledgeable trainers

*   KS3 staff were also eager to receive up-to-date information on NCA

*   criticisms focused on: a lack of relevant information being available at the right time, inadequate trainers, or participants being asked to supply all the ideas and information rather than this being supplied by the trainers

The cascade approach to training was perceived as unsatisfactory by many teachers but is likely to remain in use, given limited resources. Views from the LEAs and schools on the question of which staff should be targeted to receive training, if priorities have to be established, were, however, roughly comparable.

It is clear that, despite a few individual disagreements, the preferred approach to training was for small groups of teachers to work together on practical matters, supported by an able and credible trainer/facilitator. Teachers giving up their teaching time or their personal time to attend training appear to want support which is sharply focused on their practical needs rather than on a general discussion of principles.

CHAPTER 6
ADVISORY GUIDANCE, MODERATION AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT

Introduction

Staff appointed by the LEA to provide support and guidance carried out a wide range of activities, apart from LEA-based training sessions. This chapter reports on the ways in which different categories of LEA staff were deployed and the activities they carried out. Comments from the schools on the effectiveness of the support are discussed as well as LEA views on the additional support they would have liked to provide.

Information is also provided on the role played by the moderator in primary and special schools, the arrangements for clusters of schools to work together, the provision of written guidance materials and other approaches. The effectiveness of each of these forms of support and the future support needed are discussed with reference to the comments of teachers.

6.1 Support activities carried out by LEA staff

6.1.1 The deployment of LEA staff

At key stage 1, planning, training, advice and school visits, and monitoring and evaluation were largely in the hands of the advisers and inspectors. In most LEAs advisory teachers, too, had significant involvement in these activities, and in the preparation of guidance materials and advice, and school visits. About half the LEAs involved seconded teachers in planning activities in 1990/91, but they were less likely to be involved in the full range of activities carried out by advisory staff. In about half the LEAs, advisers and inspectors were involved in moderation activities, whereas in three-quarters of LEAs advisory teachers participated. Moderation was the one activity in which more LEAs appeared to use seconded teachers, especially in 1991/92. Details of the deployment of LEA staff on support activities are provided in Table A9 in the Appendix.

At key stage 3 smaller proportions of LEAs provided support for all types of activities in 1990/91, than in 1991/92. This is not surprising, since the LEA

assessment implementation plan required the emphasis for 1990/91 to be on provision for KS1 teachers, and teacher assessment and testing at the end of key stage 3 were not due to take place until 1991/92.

In 1991/92 the involvement of advisers/inspectors and advisory teachers tended to be similar although the former were more likely to be involved in areas such as planning and monitoring and evaluation. In very few LEAs were seconded teachers involved in KS3 activities, except for planning in 1990/91.

Comments from LEA respondents on the support they had provided indicate that they were not always able to achieve everything they wanted. Their concerns were focused on the following issues:

i   Planning difficulties

Eleven LEAs (a third of those who made additional observations) made one or more comments which referred to the planning difficulties caused by a lack of information from SEAC and NCC, at times when it was needed. Both LEAs and schools were affected, as LEAs found it difficult to make their own plans when the information was not provided early enough, and this prevented them from informing schools in time for schools to make appropriate preparations. Changes to the arrangements for KS3 assessment, in particular, caused problems. The timing of the arrival of information and support from SEAC was also felt to be inappropriate, in some cases.

ii   Lack of resources

Many of the implications of insufficient resources will be discussed in chapter 7 but ten LEAs commented on the lack of resources to train or support teachers and LEA staff. Views were expressed that more funding was needed to provide increased numbers of advisory staff and moderators to support the schools. Funding to support more training was also seen as desirable; one LEA, for example, had devoted all available resources to training year 2 teachers and had therefore been unable to train for KS2 or KS3.

iii   Areas still requiring support

The need for advice, monitoring and support on particular aspects of NCA was also expressed, by nine LEAs. They felt that teachers required more guidance on a number of points, including: interpretation of the N-1 rule; moderation (KS1); teacher assessment; formative assessment; classroom management and organisation during assessment periods; record keeping systems. Three LEAs identified the particular need for more guidance to be given on how pupils with special needs, or bilingual children, should be supported, and how any disapplication procedures should be implemented.

iv LEA staffing difficulties

Twenty-seven per cent of the responding LEAs pointed out some of the difficulties they were encountering in ensuring that the staff they employed as moderators or advisory teachers were retained in post, so as to ensure continuity from year to year. The role of such staff, especially that of the moderator was also changing from one where providing support to the teachers was the priority to one where dealing with assessments made by the teachers was the focus. From the point of view of schools, the unpredictable nature of work for teacher moderators was leading to problems of arranging cover. From the LEA point of view, the turnover in year 2 teachers made it difficult to make sure that training was targeted at the right people.

6.1.2 Activities carried out by advisory staff

In addition to information about the training sessions and moderation requirements, information was sought about the other activities of the LEA advisory staff. Four main areas were suggested:

- support for developing School Development Plans
- in-class work with teachers
- advice and support during SATs
- advice and support for TA

Information was elicited on both key stages and both years.

In the case of KS1, there was virtually no change over the two years, with almost all (95 per cent) LEAs engaging their advisory staff in advising and supporting teachers in SATs and TA during this period. In-class work with teachers was also a high priority activity with around 90 per cent of LEAs reporting that this fell within the responsibility of their advisory staff in both years. Slightly less popular, but still frequent, was discussion with advisory staff to develop school development plans.

At KS3, not unexpectedly, advisory staff had a more active role in most activities in the second year. For example, advisory staff were reported to be involved in in-class work in 57 per cent of the LEAs during the first year and in 76 per cent the following year. Some differences between KS1 and KS3 support can be seen, even in 1991/92, but are likely to be due to the different responsibilities held by LEAs: at KS3, the quality auditing function was carried out not by the LEA, but by the GCSE examining boards, on behalf of SEAC; at KS1, however, the moderating and agreeing of standards was under the control of the LEA. Figure 6.1 illustrates the activities carried out by advisory staff.

Figure 6.1 Roles of advisory staff in key stages 1 and 3 - 1991/92
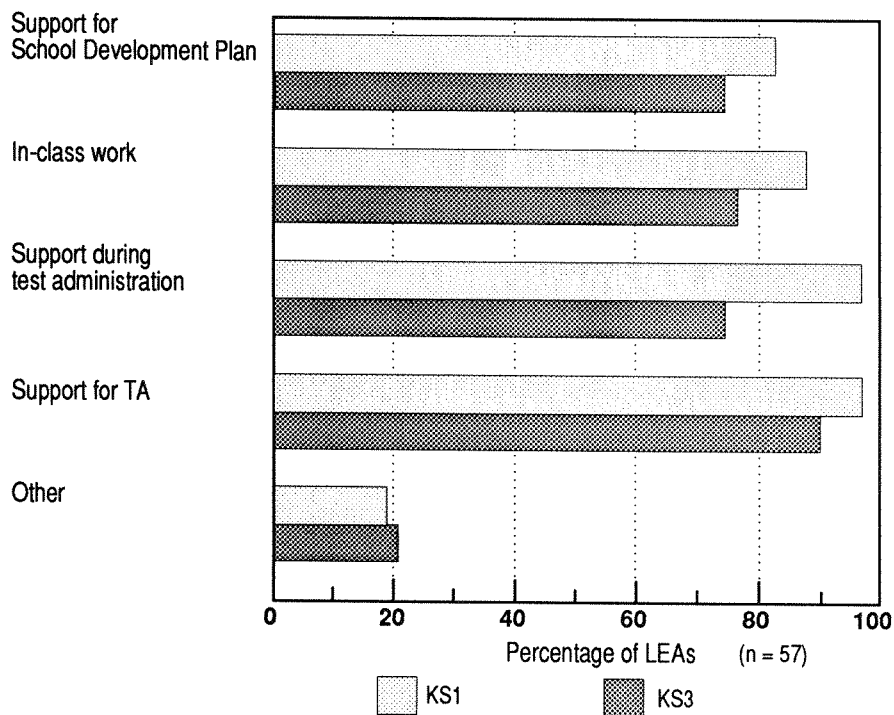
Other roles played by advisers at both key stages involved providing more moderation/standardisation or agreement trialling and assisting staff with profiling and reporting. The latter ranged from helping to devise a whole school policy on reporting, to making presentations at parents' meetings.

6.2 The school picture of advisory support activities

In chapter 4 it was noted that although teachers found working with colleagues the most effective form of support, many also appreciated the activities of the advisory staff and moderators who provided training or in-school support. In primary and special schools, the moderator could be seen as a key person not only for the specific moderating role but for more general forms of support too. However, this did not always seem to be the case, as the interviews with teachers showed.

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6.2.1 The moderator

Primary and special schools were asked in the questionnaire to provide several items of information on the moderator: the post(s) normally held, the approximate number of visits to the school made by the moderator, and whether any colleagues within the school had acted as moderators themselves.

PRIMARY

In 1990/91 in nearly half the primary schools (47 per cent) the moderation was carried out by a person who was normally an advisory teacher, with others coming from the advisory/inspection service or from schools. Six retired heads were also involved.

In 1991/92 the proportions of schools receiving advisory staff as moderators had dropped slightly with a concurrent increase in the proportions of schools receiving heads, deputies and Y2 teachers as their moderator. Table 6.1 shows the proportions of schools receiving moderators from different backgrounds.

Table 6.1 Posts usually held by moderators at KS1

	Percentage of schools	
	90/91	91/92
Post	%	%
Advisory teacher	47	43
Head	16	23
Year 2 teacher	13	17
Adviser/inspector	11	8
Deputy	7	12
Other primary teacher	8	9
Other	5	2
	n = 172	

NB. Percentages sum to more than 100 as people may hold more than one post.

In most areas, schools received several visits from their moderator, although a small percentage of schools claimed to have received none at all. Changes in the pattern between 1990/91 and 1991/92 are shown in Figure 6.2 below.

Figure 6.2 Visits by moderator to PRIMARY schools
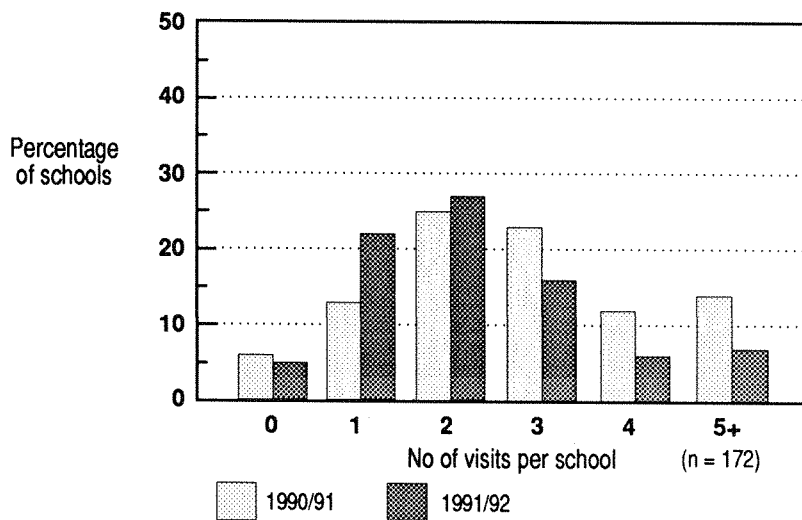
SPECIAL

In 1990/91 about half of the special schools did not provide information on the moderator's usual post, in some cases because they had not taken part in KS1 tests therefore had not received a visit from a moderator. However, 22 per cent had received moderators who were advisory teachers, with even small proportions of schools receiving moderators who fulfilled other roles. In 1991/92, nearly 80 per cent of schools supplied information, and it appears that as before, higher proportions of schools were getting advisory teachers than other types of staff. Table 6.2 shows the proportions of schools receiving moderators of different types.

Table 6.2 Posts usually held by KS1 moderators in special schools

Post	Percentage of schools 90/91 %	91/92 %
Advisory teacher	22	35
Head	11	11
Year 2 Teacher	5	14
Deputy	8	5
Adviser/inspector	5	8
Other primary teacher	-	5
Other	-	5
No response	51	22
n = 37		

NB. Percentages may sum to more than 100 as people may hold more than one post.

The proportions of schools reporting visits by moderators increased in 1991/92 although the number of visits per school remained fairly constant. Changes in the pattern between 1990/91 and 1991/92 are shown in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 Visits by moderator to SPECIAL schools
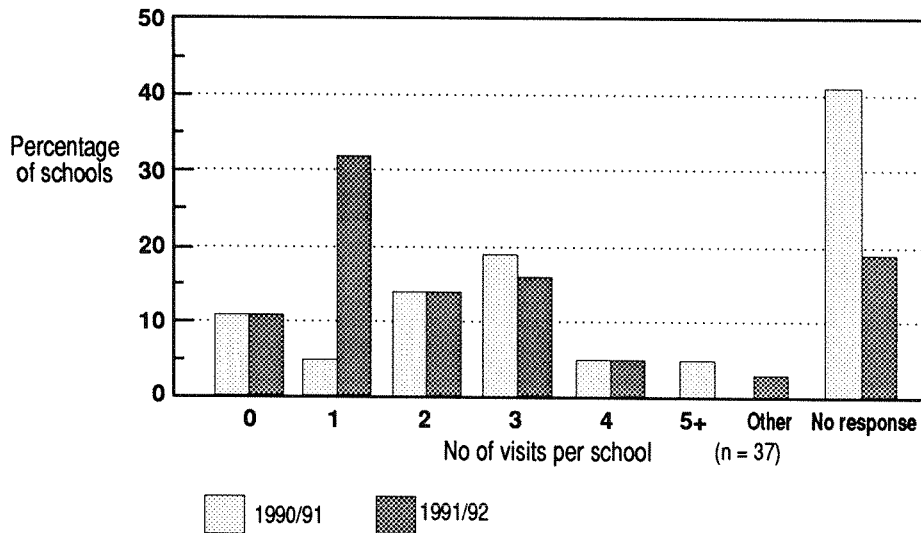
In the two special schools visited staff were asked to comment on the effectiveness of the moderator. In one school they were very positive about their moderator, commenting that, 'He's committed, supportive, helpful and has taken the trouble to get to know the school.' In the other school, no moderator had been available for 1990/91 but one of their staff was fulfilling that role for the LEA in 1991/92. This teacher hoped that she had provided relevant information and support to colleagues in other special schools and wished that someone had been available to help her in the previous year.

6.2.2 Views on the effectiveness of advisory staff

As the discussion in chapter 4 showed, the activities of LEA staff, particularly those which took place in school, were reasonably well thought of. The interviews with teachers provided some additional insights into the qualities which make for effective advisers and moderators. The secondary sector relied heavily on inspectors and advisers for individual subject support but both advisers and moderators were involved in KS1 support, with the latter tending to have a higher profile.

The impression gained from interviews with staff was that the perceived usefulness of the LEA advisory staff varied not only according to LEA, but also according to each school, respondent and subject area. Again, this variability in response is partly due to personal preferences in what makes for good support. Some teachers were grateful for the type of adviser who observed their practices and reassured

them that they were going along the right lines, others preferred a more interventionist or prescriptive approach. Personality plays a greater part in the success of the support offered by advisory teams than in any other form of support. In the course of visits to primary schools, for example, the personality of the moderator was frequently commented upon as being a factor in the quality of support offered:

- *had a bad experience last year with the moderator's attitude generally*

- *co-operative and supportive*

- *last year's had no empathy with the staff ... it's a matter of personalities*

- *very approachable and reassuring*

It became clear in the course of school visits that advisory groups for the four core subjects were active to varying degrees. In some LEAs the maths and science teams were frequently cited as putting on INSET, distributing useful written advice and responding to the requests of individual schools. This may be partly attributable to the availability of twenty-day specially-designated courses in mathematics and science for primary teachers, which were supported by DES funding (LEATGS in 1990/91 and GEST in 1991/92) during the two years in question. In other LEAs, the technology or English teams had a higher profile.

Another factor affecting the level of support may have been the extent to which the LEA had been able to appoint all the necessary staff to the teams in time. In more than one LEA, interviewers were told that certain subject inspectors, advisers and even KS1 moderators had not been appointed or had left their posts, leaving a vacuum in the support available. In one primary school, it was found particularly unhelpful that the moderator had been changed: '.... unfortunate experience with moderators ... This year we've had three, with sometimes no moderator at all.' Rightly, the staff in this school felt rather sceptical about 'moderation', given the turnover in moderators assigned to their school. However, even in those schools where they had had only one moderator teachers expressed concern about the effectiveness of moderation and the lack of standardisation in the way tasks were being administered and levels allocated.

Interviews revealed that, in general, advisory staff were regarded as most successful if they were active, frequently in school, prolific with practical ideas and suggestions, worked in the classroom with teachers, and contributed to the development of policies and practices. Criticisms were directed at advisers and moderators who were seen as passive or purely observant or who gave no input or feedback. Some were deemed to be taking ideas from the school, rather than offering suggestions to the staff, lacking in knowledge and unable to answer questions.

Evidently, many of the advisers and moderators who were regarded as successful were in schools for much of their time, giving them high profiles in the institutions they visited. The degree to which KS1 school staff were satisfied by the assistance

they received from the moderator also seemed to be related to how they interpreted the moderator's role. Those who regarded the moderator's job as one of establishing equivalence in practice across several schools clearly expected their moderators to be constantly out and about in schools, contributing substantially to the work in progress. As many moderators were released for only a limited number of days to moderate, clearly, they could not meet these expectations. Some teachers, however, regarded the moderator as a trouble-shooter, who could help answer questions and solve problems, if and when they occurred. Predictably, it was easier for moderators to satisfy these demands.

6.2.3 School cluster arrangements

The previous sections have discussed the activities and effectiveness of the moderator and LEA advisory staff and aspects of the training received by teachers. Other forms of support provided by the LEA include the establishment of 'clusters' of schools for a number of different purposes, and the use of written guidance materials. Some information on both these aspects was collected and is reported in the following sections.

PRIMARY

The majority of primary schools formed part of some kind of cluster of schools, with three quarters indicating that they were in an LEA-organised cluster and nearly half linked informally with nearby schools. The numbers of schools involved in a cluster varied between three and 50, with a mean of 9 schools.

From earlier discussions with teachers it had become apparent that clusters were used for a wide range of activities, so an attempt was made to group them in the questionnaire so that some comparisons could be made. Table A10 in the Appendix shows the proportions of schools using the cluster for different activities.

A high proportion of the schools involved in clusters reported that clusters were used for LEA-organised sessions (85 per cent), with informal meetings also commonly held (70 per cent). When respondents were asked to indicate how useful they personally found the cluster arrangement, 57 per cent found it useful and 36 per cent felt that it was very useful, with only 8 per cent indicating it was not useful. When these responses were broken down according to the status of the respondent, it was found that higher proportions of heads than other staff had positive attitudes towards the usefulness of the cluster arrangement. Table A11 in the Appendix shows the proportions of respondents giving each point on the scale.

Respondents who had experienced both formal and informal types of cluster activities were more likely to find the cluster arrangements useful than those who had experienced only informal contacts.

SECONDARY

At secondary level, 40 per cent of respondents claimed that they had no cluster arrangements in place, neither formal nor informal; 40 per cent were involved in LEA-organised clusters and 28 per cent had informal links with other schools. As with primary schools the number of schools in a cluster varied, from three to 20, with a mean of 8 schools.

The cluster arrangement was used for a wide range of activities at secondary level too, with a higher proportion than at primary level reporting INSET organised by staff from the schools, and inter-school classroom visits. Table A12 in the Appendix shows the proportions of schools using the cluster for different activities.

As with respondents from primary schools, the great majority of secondary respondents thought that cluster arrangements were 'useful' (52 per cent) or 'very useful' (42 per cent). When this was examined in terms of the status of the respondent, here too the proportions of heads with very positive attitudes were higher than the proportions of other types of teachers, as Table A13 in the Appendix shows.

As at primary level, those who had experience of both formal and informal types of cluster activities tended to be the most positive, although informal-only contacts were more popular than formal-only contacts.

SPECIAL

A high proportion of special schools were involved in LEA-organised clusters (47 per cent) and/or had informal links (33 per cent) with other schools. Of the 44 respondents who supplied information, 14 per cent were in clusters consisting exclusively of special schools. The number of schools in a cluster ranged from three to 40 with a mean of 10.

As with the mainstream schools, a high proportion of special schools used the cluster for LEA-organised training, with about half the schools using it for staff-run INSET and informal meetings and discussions. Table A14 in the Appendix shows the proportions of schools using the cluster for different activities.

The majority of respondents found the cluster arrangement 'useful' (59 per cent) or 'very useful' (23 per cent) with 13 per cent indicating 'not useful' and a further 5 per cent uncertain whether it was useful or not. Unlike in the other sectors, a higher proportion of non-heads than heads thought the cluster was 'very useful.' The differences of opinion between respondents who were heads and others are shown in Table A15 in the Appendix.

As with primary and secondary schools, respondents who had been involved in both formal and informal cluster activities tended to be more enthusiastic than those who had experienced only formal or informal activities.

Interviews with teachers in all types of schools in the 6 selected LEAs provided further insights into the cluster arrangements, and it became clear that the term 'cluster' can signify different things to different people. For some, it is simply the group of schools with whom they attended INSET and LEA-organised training sessions; for others it resembled more closely a mutual support group of members with similar interests and concerns.

The composition of clusters varied greatly. In some areas it was the LEA that established the membership of clusters, in others clusters were less formal. In many cases, clusters had existed prior to the NCA, established for other purposes, such as TVEI, Suffolk Science or other local initiatives, and schools continued to use these links, finding them more fruitful than newly forged networks. In some areas, cluster membership was organised in 'pyramids' so that they contained schools from both the primary and secondary sector and sometimes included special schools, as well. Other clusters were composed of schools from only one sector and for primary and secondary schools this was perhaps relatively unproblematic to organise. Special school-only clusters were only possible in authorities which had more than one special school and, according to the questionnaire returns, only 14 per cent were involved in exclusive special school groups. In some cases the membership of a cluster had evolved since it was originally established.

Teachers in one of the two special schools visited explained that the mixed mainstream/special school cluster arrangement was not especially useful to them because, 'there's such a big difference in the needs of other schools and ours.'

This seems an understandable explanation coming from a special school teacher but, interestingly, it also typifies comments made by primary school teachers interviewed. While the statistical data supplied by the questionnaires indicated that primary staff found clusters useful, conversations with teachers in schools showed that many had reservations. The following comments, attributing the unproductive nature of clusters to the radically different circumstances of the member schools, were made by primary school staff in interviews:

- *its usefulness is doubtful as the management of each school differs*

- *waste of time - too many people wanting to discuss things specific to their schools - not beneficial to all*

- *we're all at different stages*

- *due to LMS we are all competing with other schools; this doesn't lead to co-operation*

Secondary staff appeared more enthusiastic, both in their questionnaire returns and in the face-to-face conversations with interviewers. The following comments are selected from those made by secondary school teachers on this topic:

- *best to compare notes with schools using similar schemes, can save you from going down blind alleys*

- *always worthwhile talking to other people in the same field*

- *very useful platform for exchange of ideas and reassurance*

It would seem that the cluster, in its function as a mutual support group, is more valuable in the first one or two years of NCA at any particular key stage, as the new practices and procedures are being established. At this stage, opportunities to exchange ideas on the best methods to employ, to share common experiences, to take advantage of others' experiences and to commiserate were much valued. After that, teachers no longer seemed to have so much need of the solidarity and the comfort afforded by the cluster arrangement. This is illustrated by a comment from a year 2 teacher:

We probably don't make as much use of it as we could (this year)... last year I felt really miserable and isolated and on my own so it was helpful to get together with other people.

6.2.4 Written guidance

At KS1 67 per cent of LEAs indicated that they had provided written guidance materials in both years. At KS3, however, there was an increase in the LEAs providing such support, from 37 per cent to 57 per cent of LEAs (see Figure 4.3). One of the difficulties which confronted LEAs was the delay they experienced in receiving up-to-date information themselves, because of the changes to the KS3 arrangements (see Section 6.1). This limited the types of information that they could circulate to schools and significantly influenced the timing of such dissemination activities.

At primary level about a quarter of schools reported that the LEA had provided written guidelines on teaching the NC and just over a third indicated the provision of written guidelines for assessing the NC with little change between the two years (see Table A5 in the Appendix). When considering how useful such guidance materials were, 59 per cent of respondents classified them as 'Quite useful' and 27 per cent as 'Very useful'.

At secondary level, the proportions of schools reporting on the provision of written guidance for teaching and assessing the four subjects were relatively low, with some increase in the second year for the assessment guidelines. About half of the science and technology respondents placed guidance materials in the 'Quite useful' category, with slightly lower proportions of mathematics and English respondents giving that rating.

In special schools, about half the KS1 respondents reported that written guidelines on teaching and assessing the NC had been provided in both years, but very few had been provided with anything specific to SEN issues. The proportions of respondents at KS3 provided with written guidelines were much lower than KS1 respondents, although a slight increase was noted for 1991/92. Around half the respondents from special schools rated the guidance materials as 'Quite useful'.

Opinions expressed by teachers during interviews about LEA written guidance were generally lukewarm. There were few very strong views, either in praise or critical of written materials. Some found them useful because they could be used as a reference, or as reinforcement for their own ideas and practices. Others found them unhelpful because they added to the already large quantity of materials to be read or were rather dull and easily forgotten. Some of the more interesting comments about written materials heard in the course of conversations with teachers are listed here:

- *very useful - often discussed in INSET workshops in school*

- *the LEA resisted the temptation to over-interpret and thereby didn't add to the confusion*

- *good - helped crystallise our own thoughts*

Many compared them to the documentation received from SEAC: either favourably, that is, 'much better than that provided by central government,' or unfavourably, that is, 'SAT packs were more use.' It became clear that SEAC documentation elicited more extreme reactions, as many teachers volunteered opinions about the literature sent out by the Department of Education and Science (as it was then known) or SEAC without being explicitly asked.

6.2.5 Other support

It was clear from interview data that, despite criticisms and suggestions for improvement on particular aspects, school staff valued the support provided and hoped for its continuation and extension. Respondents were satisfied to varying degrees by the part played by their LEAs, but total condemnation was not heard, even in those LEAs which were seen as providing a poor service.

In general, respondents seemed to be happiest with their LEAs if they felt that they could rely on them for accurate information, not just at formal training sessions or in-school visits, but at all times. KS1 staff greatly valued the reassurance of having access to an LEA helpline or 'SATs clinics' or 'surgeries', even if they had never had to use them. KS3 teachers spoke of the value of having members of the subject advisory teams always available at the other end of the telephone line to give information. However, it was not sufficient just to provide the personnel to play these roles: teachers were truly satisfied only if they were filled by people who had

expertise, knowledge and experience. Comments about the lack of credibility of advisory staff with dated classroom experience or so-called experts, who were not practitioners, were frequently heard.

The questionnaires to LEAs and schools provided the opportunity for respondents to make general comments about LEA support for schools.

The LEA comments indicated that they had had insufficient resources with which to carry out all the activities they saw as desirable. They specified ways in which support would have been increased if more resources had been available. These included:

♦   more training for teachers

♦   more training for staff not immediately involved with NCA

♦   more supply cover

♦   more advisory support

♦   more support for technology KS1 and KS3

♦   more extended classroom/school based support

♦   more events for supply teachers

♦   more release time for teachers to assess and reflect on pupils' achievements

♦   opportunities for teacher release to allow teachers to carry out standardisation at KS1, 2 and 3 within and between schools

In several instances, the interviewees were so appreciative of their LEAs that they were not able to suggest any ways in which they might improve the support provided.

Comments arising from the school questionnaire suggest that secondary respondents were the most positive about the support provided with slightly more primary respondents positive than negative. Not surprisingly, special schools were the least satisfied with LEA support making frequent references to the lack of guidance for their pupils. Respondents from all types of schools called for more guidance and support in areas such as:

♦   classroom practice

♦   recording and reporting

♦   written guidelines

♦   developing whole school policies

♦   disapplication (special schools)

During the interviews, too, teachers discussed the need for continuing support and guidance on the aspects listed above and those specific to their individual situation. Many teachers demonstrated understanding of, and even sympathy for, the LEA's position, making comments such as: 'at first we had a lot of questions they couldn't answer, but I blame the DES, not the LEA' or 'the LEA did its best, given the late arrival of information from SEAC'. Many of the teachers responding to the questionnaire and those interviewed called for more coherence across the LEA and nationally.

6.3 Summary

The LEAs allocated staff to different support activities across the two key stages and the two years. The main approaches adopted are summarised below.

* advisers/inspectors were most likely to be involved with planning, training, advice and school visits, and monitoring and evaluation, especially at KS1

* advisory teachers were also involved in these activities as well as the preparation of guidance materials

* for moderation activities at KS1, seconded teachers were also likely to be involved

* advisory staff were active in primary schools over the two years but at KS3 there was an increase in school-based support in 1991/92

* the level of support provided in 1991/92 appeared to be greater for KS1 than KS3, probably due to the difference in statutory LEA responsibilities towards each sector

* LEAs would have liked to achieve more but were hampered by planning difficulties, a lack of resources and staffing difficulties

Respondents from schools provided information and comments on the support provided as the summary points below show.

* moderators in **primary schools** were most likely to be advisory teachers, although heads were also active in this capacity

* there was a tendency for the number of moderator visits to primary schools to be smaller in the second year

* moderators in **special** schools were also most likely to be advisory teachers, although an increase in year 2 teachers in 1991/92 was noted

* the personality of the moderator was highly influential in determining teachers' views of the quality of support provided

* it was easier for moderators to satisfy teachers' expectations if their role was seen as a trouble-shooter rather than an all-round provider of support

* at **secondary level**, there was great variation in the amount and type of support provided for the four main subjects, with mathematics and science teachers tending to be better served, possibly due to the extra GEST funding available for these subjects, than teachers of English and technology.

* there was concern about the lack of advisory staff in particular subject areas or a high turnover of personnel, especially in relation to moderators

* different views abounded on what makes a good adviser, with some teachers welcoming an interventionist or prescriptive approach and others preferring encouragement and reassurance for what they were already doing

* advisory staff were generally regarded as successful if they were:
  - active
  - frequently in school
  - offered practical ideas and suggestions
  - worked in class with teachers
  - contributed to the development of policies and practices

* **clusters** were used by the majority of primary schools for formal training sessions organised by the LEA or moderator and for informal discussions

* at secondary level, 40 per cent of schools claimed not to be in a cluster

* the majority of respondents found the cluster useful or very useful, with heads having more positive attitudes than other staff

* most special schools were linked to clusters although only 14 per cent were in clusters of special schools only

* around 80 per cent of special school respondents thought clusters were useful although 5 per cent were uncertain

* clusters based on already established links tended to be viewed more positively than newer groupings

* some teachers felt that cluster meetings were unhelpful as everyone was concerned with their own needs and circumstances

* secondary staff seemed more enthusiastic than other teachers, finding it useful to exchange ideas and experience with others

* clusters appear to be more useful in the early years of NCA programmes than later on

* written guidance was used by most LEAs but tended to be seen as less useful than other support activities

* teachers felt reassured when they had personal or telephone access to advisory staff

* both LEAs and schools identified areas in which more support should be provided; most of these had significant implications for resourcing

* teachers, on the whole, felt that the LEA had done its best to provide support in spite of the difficulties caused by a lack of information from the centre.

CHAPTER 7
RESOURCES

Introduction

The successful implementation of the National Curriculum and its assessment requires additional resources to ensure that teachers and other staff are trained, that appropriate materials and equipment are available, and that effective recording and reporting systems are established.

LEAs have access to funds through GEST (formerly LEATGS and ESG) and other budgets, and much of this funding has been delegated to schools. This chapter examines the funds available to LEAs and the extent to which they were delegated to schools. It also reports on teachers' perceptions of the availability and deployment of funding and their comments on the most appropriate allocations of funding.

7.1 Funding available

In order to get some idea of how much funding was available for NCA, respondents in the LEA survey were asked to provide information on the funding they had from GEST and other sources. It is clear from the GEST information circulars that the amounts available for NCA increased between the two years relevant to this project: from £19.5 million in 1990/91 to £35 million in 1991/92. The figures provided by the LEAs for the NFER survey also showed an increase in the amounts available.

Respondents were asked to indicate the funding available in their LEA to support assessment, giving separate figures for GEST and other sources of funding for two financial years: 1990/91 and 1991/92. The total amounts available, according to respondents, ranged from £20,000 to £574,375 in 1990/91; in 1991/92 the total amounts available had increased to a range from £34,698 to £900,000. The median amount in the first of these periods was £109,150, whilst for the second period it was £221,300. No direct comparisons can be made of these figures as the 57 respondents who gave information for one financial year may not have given it for the other. In 29 cases, however, the respondent had provided information for both years, and again, the medians show a definite increase in funding available, from £110,000 in 1990/91 to £260,000 in 1991/92.

Surprisingly, there did not seem to be a very clear relationship between the size of the LEA and the total amounts of funding available. When the LEAs were grouped into four categories, according to the number of schools they contained, the smallest LEAs did not always have the smallest amount of funding. Table 7.1 below shows the total funding available to different sized LEAs in the two financial years under discussion.

Table 7.1 Total funding available according to size of LEA

LEA size	No. of LEAs		Total funding available	
	90/91	**91/92**	**90/91**	**91/92**
Up to 95 schools	4	9	£92K	134K
96-140 schools	6	9	£80K	164K
141-340 schools	10	13	£159K	294K
Over 340 schools	10	13	£348K	500K

Given the different sizes of the LEAs and the different amounts of funding available, it is interesting to calculate the amounts of funding which might be available per school. For the 30 LEAs on which information was available for 90/91, the median amount per school would be £669; for the 44 LEAs which supplied information for 91/92, the median amount per school would be £1,347. That is not to say that this is the amount actually received by a school, but it is an indication of the increase in funding available.

It was also noticeable from the responses that the amount of money delegated from LEAs to schools for NCA and related activities increased over the two years. Figure 7.1 shows the changes.

Whether funding was retained by LEAs or delegated to schools did not appear to be related to the size of the LEA or to the metropolitan/non-metropolitan characteristics of the LEA.

Figure 7.1 Delegation of funding to schools

Training of teachers
1990/91
1991/92

Supply cover
1990/91
1991/92

Training of
ancillary staff
1990/91
1991/92

Training of teachers
1990/91
1991/92

Percentage of LEAs   (n = 58)

■ All retained by LEA   Some retained/   All delegated   No response
                          Some delegated   to schools
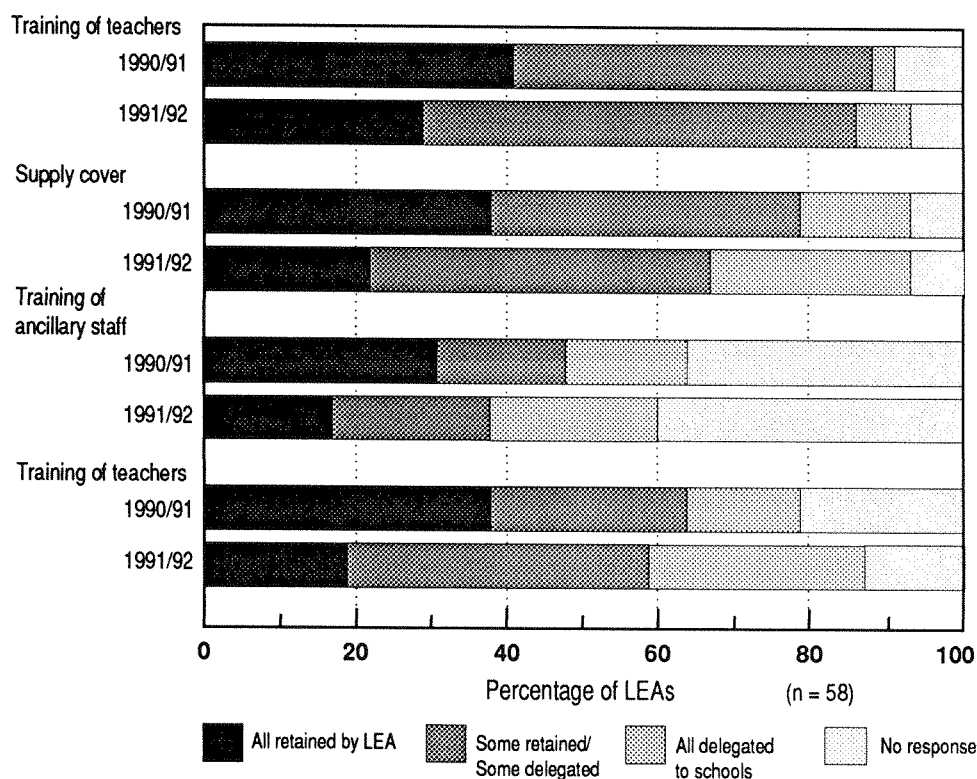
7.2 Uses for funding

Teachers were asked in both the questionnaires and the interviews whether their participation in NCA activities had funding implications and if so, what they were. Apart from the provision of appropriate materials and equipment the main need for funding was for supply cover, to be provided when teachers needed to be released from their classes. According to teacher interviews, cover was seen as desirable or essential for all of the following activities related to NCA:

- *to enable teachers to participate in INSET*

- *to cover classes or groups of pupils while KS1 SATs were being administered*

- *to allow staff (more) non-contact time for preparation, test marking and record keeping (KS1 and KS3)*

- *to allow staff to spend time with colleagues to pass on information and share ideas.*

According to the responses to the school questionnaire, it would appear that if staff participated in training during school time, supply cover was provided in the majority of primary and secondary schools and in about 70 per cent of special schools (see Table 7.3 below).

Table 7.2   Cover provided for teachers participating in training

	Percentage of schools		
	Primary %	Secondary %	Special %
Cover provided	85	78	68
Cover not provided	8	10	29
Cover sometimes provided	7	12	3
n =	170	91	59

According to the questionnaire returns, where funding was provided for cover when teachers participated in training, it came from a variety of sources, with about 75 per cent of primary schools receiving funding from central LEA funds, and about 60 per cent using funds in school budgets. At secondary level, nearly 80 per cent of schools were using school budgets and 61 per cent using LEA funds. In special schools, a higher proportion were using central LEA funds than school based budgets.

Table 7.3   Sources of funding for supply cover

	Percentage of schools		
	Primary %	Secondary %	Special %
Earmarked category in delegated budget	13	17	10
School INSET budget	50	62	45
Central LEA funds	75	61	69
Other	6	5	7
n =	157	82	42

N.B.   Schools giving sources include those who only sometimes had cover.
Percentages may sum to more than 100 as more than one source of funding could be indicated.

The figures on the availability of resources to provide cover imply that the position was satisfactory but the school interviews showed that there were other factors to be considered. In some schools it appeared that there was not enough funding to ensure that **all** those who felt they should be involved in training were able to participate on every occasion (see chapter 5).

A small number of schools indicated in the questionnaires that no cover was provided when they participated in training and the reasons given are shown in table 7.4 below.

Table 7.4   Reasons for no provision of cover

| | Percentage of schools | | |
| | Primary | Secondary | Special |
	%	%	%
No cover provided because:			
Training on INSET days	36	35	16
No funds in school budget	32	20	21
No LEA funds	44	40	37
Funds available but no supply staff	8	15	21
Funds available but not appropriate to bring in supply staff	4	10	-
Other reasons	12	-	-
n =	25	20	19

N.B.   Schools giving sources include those who only sometimes had cover.
Percentages may sum to more than 100 as more than one source of funding could be indicated.

A third of respondents in the primary and secondary questionnaires explained that no cover was required since the training took place on school INSET days when pupils are not in school. Other reasons given indicated a lack of funds available, and in special schools, a lack of suitable supply teachers.

These differences in the sources of funding for training and cover can largely be attributed to the extent to which budgets have been delegated to schools in the primary and secondary sectors. In the schools visited, half of the primaries had some funding for NCA devolved to them in 1991/2 whereas all of the secondary schools visited managed their own budgets.

Interestingly, the change to more control over budgets by the schools, seems to have given teachers the impression that there is less money available. In the interviews, some teachers claimed that it had been more difficult for them to get released this year than last and that fewer people had been involved in training overall, since the budget had been controlled by the school. As a Head of Science in a secondary school commented,

For the LEA INSET we send a representative from the Department of Science and so we have to provide cover from the devolved school budget.

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*This is tight enough at the moment but it will cause more problems as more
subjects come on line. The LEA say that all funding is delegated to schools,
but at least with central funding, if the need arose the staff went and there was
no problem, this year ... it is impossible to fit all the needs into the amount
of money [available].*

There also seemed to be a perception amongst many of the secondary teachers,
shared by some of the primary teachers, that having to use money from the 'school
INSET' budget was somehow unfair, and that cover for obligatory courses should
come from the LEA. It was as if the school INSET budget should be for them to
do with as they wished, and if the LEA wanted them to attend courses on NCA, then
it should fund the teachers to attend. Some teachers, of course, realised that the
delegated budget was intended to cover all aspects of providing training for staff and
were aware of the amounts earmarked for NCA. They still felt, however, that the
amounts allocated were lamentably low considering the numbers of staff wanting
training and the numbers of subject areas already on stream.

7.3 Effects of cover not being provided

In the schools visited to interview staff the effects of cover not being provided were
discussed. In primary schools colleagues had to cover for teachers released for
training. If the head was involved in covering or teaching part of the class (during
SATs, for example) this would cause the least disruption to the school, as heads tend
to have fewer teaching commitments than other staff, except in very small schools.
However, when other colleagues were involved, this often meant them losing their
(already minuscule) non-contact time, or shuffling classes around. In at least four
of the schools visited provision for ancillary/support teachers/nursery nurse was
reallocated to give greater support to the Y2 teacher(s).

Responses to the questionnaire survey also show that in three quarters of primary
schools support was provided either by redeploying existing staff or by help from
parents, during the time that SATs were being administered.

Schools drew attention to the fact that reorganising staff internally to cover for
teachers is not cost-free. Apart from colleagues losing non-contact time and
personal and professional relationships becoming strained, there is the effect on the
pupils. For example, if a learning support teacher is diverted from her normal
classes to provide support in the Y2 class(es) then the pupils she usually supports
may suffer. If other teachers temporarily lose their ancillary support the amount of
individual attention received by pupils in those classes is bound to be reduced. If
average sized classes are joined together to free one teacher, the pupils in such a
large group may not receive the attention and teaching they require.

In some schools, in order to reduce the burden on colleagues having to cover extra
classes, they explained that only one teacher had attended training. In small schools

this meant that only the Y2 teacher had been funded and in larger schools it meant that only one Y2 teacher of several could attend training. The effect of this in a small school is that the Y2 teacher can feel isolated, unable to discuss the details and problems of the KS1 testing and assessment with colleagues. It also means that if that teacher is ill or leaves, there is no one else available who has been trained. In addition, the teacher who has attended training has to try and inform her Y2 colleagues of the information gained and the issues discussed. Those who do not participate have to rely on their colleague's attentiveness and ability to feedback effectively. In one school, where two teachers had attended training together, they explained how useful it had been, as it enabled them to discuss the issues that concerned them, in the course of the training day, and to decide together on how to act upon the information and ideas acquired on the course.

In secondary schools, one of the main effects of the lack of funding for supply cover was that teachers either did not participate in any training or had to attend sessions outside school hours. This was not popular with the majority of interviewees who felt that if the training was necessary then it should be done in school time. Additionally, teachers were too tired to make good use of evening sessions, and felt that they needed to be fresh and receptive for training.

Nevertheless, although staff felt that training should be provided during school time, with supply cover fully funded, there were some anxieties about how this affected their pupils. All the teachers were reluctant to leave their classes, but some felt this was the right approach. Others preferred to attend evening sessions as they did not want to leave their classes even if supply cover was provided. For example, those teaching practical subjects such as technology felt that there were particular difficulties in leaving their classes, especially on a regular basis, as their pupils were often engaged in long term projects or assignments.

Teachers in some schools felt that they had no choice but to attend evening sessions as there was no possibility of supply cover being funded, and although a few found this acceptable, most were unhappy but acquiescent about the situation. A few interviewees felt that there should be a balance between training inside and outside school hours, given the advantages and disadvantages of both. One had thought that, 'it would be simpler if they paid overtime to go in the evenings and at weekends', and a deputy thought that 'Saturdays are ideal but people object to giving up their weekends'.

In each of the secondary schools visited, some cover for staff out on training was provided by colleagues, but it was generally acknowledged that this caused extra pressure for all concerned. In a school where funding was seen as adequate for the needs of staff, the Assessment Coordinator explained that they had the advantage of having a sixth form, which meant that such classes could be left, without cover having to be provided. The INSET/cover money that was available could then be reallocated to cover other classes on other occasions. She felt that this gave them

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more flexibility than would be possible in a primary school or a secondary without a sixth form.

In both special schools visited the need for supply cover was not seen as so pressing since there were always ancillary staff present in class. It appeared to be easier for existing staff to cover than in mainstream schools. Nevertheless, the effect of class teachers not being present can have an effect on the work patterns of colleagues (teaching and welfare) and pupils. In one school they explained that if there were too many staff absences on a day when a teacher was supposed to be out on training, then the teacher had to stay in school and forgo the course.

If staff do not attend courses due to lack of cover for their classes, there is a knock-on effect on the LEA, who will have to reduce the training provided, or run sessions with uneconomic numbers.

7.4 The way forward

All the teachers interviewed felt that current resources were inadequate as they did not allow all staff to get the training and support they needed. At primary level, some teachers felt that the only solution to the problem of covering classes was to hold training sessions in the evening but others were opposed to this on principle or felt that teachers were too tired and overworked already to participate in extra evening activities.

An additional problem identified in schools with limited funds was the difficulty of finding ways of enabling Y2 teachers (and others) to have non-contact time for preparation and record-keeping. Schools also felt that more funds should be available to provide cover as support to Y2 teachers (and others in the future) while they are assessing individual and groups of pupils.

More support from ancillary staff, particularly during the summer term, while KS1 testing was taking place, was seen as desirable. Y2 teachers would benefit most from this, but others would make good use of such support too, especially now that pupils have to be regularly assessed and tested and detailed records of achievements have to be kept.

At secondary level, funding to allow for more non-contact time for staff was identified as a need in three of the schools visited. Staff needed increased release from classes during the test period itself, so that they could carry out the large amounts of marking required; enhanced staffing or more supply cover would facilitate this. There was also the feeling that staff needed more time to get together with subject colleagues to develop schemes of work, assessment schemes, and systems for recording and reporting. In addition, it was felt that time needed to be allocated more formally, for heads of department who had been involved in training to disseminate to colleagues the ideas and information they had acquired. Cascade

approaches have some obvious drawbacks and heads of department were finding it increasingly difficult to find opportunities to disseminate effectively. As one pointed out, there is only so much that can be circulated in writing; a lot of what is happening needs to be discussed and agreement reached on the next step.

7.5 Summary

Responses to the questionnaire surveys and teacher interviews on the availability and use of resources can be summarised as follows:

* funding available through GEST was increased in 1991/92 but the demands on expenditure also increased as KS3 testing was introduced

* the proportion of funds delegated to schools also increased in 1991/92, as LEAs complied with regulations

* at school level, the availability of funding for cover was widespread, enabling teachers to attend training during school time

* in a small number of schools cover was not always provided, either because training took place on INSET days or because of a lack of funds

* teachers seemed to feel that it was more difficult in 1992 for schools to release for training all those teachers who wanted it than in previous years; some attributed this to the changes brought about by LMS

* in situations where cover is not provided, colleagues have to take over classes and pupils may receive less support

* if only one representative of a year group or department can attend training s/he has to cascade to colleagues, which was not perceived as satisfactory by many of the teachers interviewed

* teachers who could not or preferred not to participate in day-time training were obliged to attend evening sessions, but many were unhappy with this situation

* teachers felt the need for (increased) non-contact time to enable them to carry out the preparation, assessment and recording and reporting procedures required

The general perception of funding seemed to be that a good start had been made and a minimal level of desirable support provided. However, the increasing demands on teachers indicated the need for more training and more non-contact time, needs which can only be satisfied by higher staffing levels and/or increased funding for supply cover.

CHAPTER 8
EMERGING MESSAGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE SUPPORT

8.1 Emerging messages

Each of the chapters of the report looks at an aspect of the support provided by LEAs to schools, drawing on data collected through LEA questionnaires, school questionnaires and teacher interviews. Provision in each phase and in two academic years was reported and some comparisons were made, where these seemed relevant. Much information has been presented in the previous chapters, and this final chapter attempts to draw out some of the messages emerging from the findings. Comments are made for each of the main strands of the investigation.

8.1.1 Policy

Three quarters of the LEAs made their policy statements on assessment available to their schools and the vast majority of schools either have or are developing policy statements of their own. The LEA documentation clearly served as a useful starting point for some schools to develop their own policy and many schools set up working groups or elicited the views of all their staff in order to develop the policies.

Superficially, this seems a satisfactory arrangement, but interviews with teachers suggest that apart from those who have some management responsibility for assessment, many are either unaware or uninterested in any aspects of policy except for the practicalities of recording and reporting procedures. Some teachers explained that the pressure to sort out their immediate needs was so great that they could not afford to spend time to reflect on underlying principles.

However, once they have become more familiar with the procedures needed to carry out and record NC assessments, and when computerised methods of keeping records are well established, teachers may wish to review some of the broader issues associated with assessment and they will look to the LEA for relevant ideas and guidance. Much of this has already been provided by LEAs, as this enquiry showed, but ideas and materials, particularly for TA, may need reintroducing and renewing in the light of subsequent experience. This work could perhaps be carried out in the context of the preparation of Curriculum Development Plans or School Development Plans, for which GEST funding is available in 1993/94.

8.1.2 Staffing

The LEAs recruited and redeployed staff in order to cover responsibility for the multifarious assessment-related activities that the LEA is required to carry out. A quarter of these posts were fixed-term, which caused some concern to LEAs in terms of continuity, an important factor where training is concerned: if the personnel involved in carrying out advisory or moderation activities change every year the training and support they themselves require has to be repeated; from the school point of view it is important that teachers know whom to contact so that they can develop good working relationships; a constant change of LEA staff creates an obstacle to this process. At secondary level, some teachers indicated that no advisory person had been in post for their subject over extended periods of time. The implications of the current Education Bill for changes in LEA structures are such that even fewer advisory staff may be available in the future to provide the support needed.

LEAs still have numerous responsibilities associated with the implementation of the National Curriculum and need staff to undertake the training and other professional support required by teachers. The need for further training in 1992/93 will increase, as foundation subjects are introduced into the curriculum and assessment at the end of KS2 comes on stream. The new quality audit procedures to be carried out by LEAs will also place futher demands on staff. The need for appropriate staff to carry out the training, support and monitoring and evaluation procedures is increasing rather than decreasing.

At school level too, many posts with specific responsibility for assessment were set up. In primary schools, the person actually holding the post was most likely to be a head or year 2 teacher but the evidence suggests that neither of them is the best person to take the overall responsibility for coordination of assessment policy and practice. Year 2 teachers are already heavily committed to the end of KS1 assessment arrangements and heads already have a wide range of responsibilities.

It might be better for the assessment coordinator role to be carried out by deputies or teachers of year groups other than Y2 so that a whole school view can be taken of what is being achieved and what scope there might be for improvement. Of course, as KS2 assessment is introduced, the demands on teachers of Y6 pupils will also increase, reducing the pool of teachers to take on the whole school responsibility.

At secondary level, responsibility for assessment was usually included in the brief of a deputy or other senior teacher and this seemed to function effectively, as responsibility for INSET and/or the development of recording and reporting procedures was often carried by the same person. In secondary schools, most of the

detailed work on assessment policy and procedures was carried out by heads of subjects and colleagues in their departments, but the lack of agreement on the development and application of school-level policies and procedures was a noticeable shortcoming in some schools.

Teachers complained that they were having to develop their own systems for their own subject and wished that the LEA had provided more guidance or acceptable models that could be adapted for their own use. But the question arises as to whether teachers would use such materials since many did not even favour working with colleagues from other departments within their own school, even though such cross-departmental working might have been fruitful in the development of efficient systems for recording and reporting.

As more subjects come on stream the need for common systems of assessing, recording and reporting will increase. The establishment of Optical Mark Readers and other computerised approaches should facilitate this but teachers will still need guidance and support on the particular implications for their own subject. Heads of department and Assessment Coordinators will continue to require inputs from the LEA in order to work effectively with their own departments.

In the special schools, responsibility for assessment was more widely shared between staff members, reflecting the close integration of curriculum and assessment in special schools and the well-established practice of collaborative working. However, this survey showed that many SEN teachers were not satisfied with the support received from either the LEA or SEAC. This situation should improve at LEA level, as more teachers in special schools gain the experience of NCA which will enable them to provide support to colleagues in other schools.

8.1.3 Support and training

LEA training sessions were the most common form of support provided, not surprisingly, as this is an effective way of training large numbers of people. Such sessions tended to be run as workshops and group discussions. Since other findings suggest that teachers are most satisfied with training which is practical and related to their needs, with opportunities for sharing ideas and concerns, this is clearly an appropriate way to provide training.

In-school training and advice was also widely provided and was considered by some teachers to be more useful than training sessions, but account has to be taken of the fact that in-school activities are likely to be complementary to the training already provided externally, and it would be very difficult for LEAs to provide that level of training to each school separately.

The approach perceived as most effective by both LEAs and schools was the release of teachers to work together; releasing teachers to attend training was also seen as an effective approach by LEAs. Many teachers, however, claimed that they needed more non-teaching time to spend on planning, preparing and discussing work with their colleagues, as well as being released to attend training sessions. At the time of the surveys, primary teachers, in particular, were finding this difficult to arrange and finance.

Training in 1990/91 tended to be focused on KS1 and targeted primary heads and year 2 teachers whereas in 1991/92 a wider range of primary staff (and fewer heads) had access to training, and there was a noticeable increase in all aspects of training for KS3, especially in the core subjects. Teachers of mathematics and science were particularly well provided for with the designated training courses and will continue to be so for at least two more years (see GEST funding arrangements for 1993/94). In 1992/93 the priorities suggested by the Department for Education (DFE) are the continuation of support in mathematics, science and technology with the additions of history and geography at key stages 1-3.

Despite these apparent increases, there was considerable concern expressed by teachers in primary and secondary schools about the 'cascade' method of training being adopted. Although schools were nearly always represented at training sessions, the full complement of relevant staff rarely had the opportunity to attend. The result of this is pressure on the attendee to provide effective dissemination on the issues and activities covered at the training sessions and fear on the part of the non-attendees that they have not got a complete grasp of the issues and information.

Although teachers prefer first-hand training to dependence on 'cascade' approaches, how can this be achieved without increased funds to enable teachers to be released from classes, or sessions being held outside school time? Neither of these seems a likely option as the comments below on resources explain. Given that GEST funding is targeted at subject coordinators, especially at primary level, cascading seems to be the only feasible way forward. This highlights the need for trainers to ensure that the role of attendees as disseminators is clearly established and that sessions and documentation are organised on this basis.

Support activities other than LEA training sessions were provided by LEA staff, with advisory teachers particularly involved in school visits and moderation. Perceptions of what makes a good adviser/advisory teacher or moderator varied according to individual preferences, but there was a general consensus that the most effective support was provided by people who were frequently in school, who could offer ideas and practical suggestions, and who contributed to discussion of issues. Moderators in some areas were able to provide this kind of support to the teachers

they visited in addition to their formal moderating duties, but in other areas their allocation of time was so limited that a deeper involvement was not possible. Teachers' views on the effectiveness of their moderator were obviously coloured by their expectations of the role to be played by the moderator, and where the teachers' expectations were fulfilled they seemed pleased with the support provided.

In the future, as 'audit-moderators' take over from moderators, a more systematic approach to consistency of standards may be expected and teachers should have a clearer understanding of what the responsibilities of such a role entail (see School Assessment Folder, 1993).

8.1.4 Funding

The funding available to LEAs was greater in 1991/92 than in 1990/91 but the demands on the funding were also greater, as support for KS3 needed to be increased. Teachers appeared to feel that less funding was available to them in the second of these years than in the first, but it is difficult to judge if this was actually the case because of increased delegation of funds to schools, and different ways of allocating funds within schools.

The main uses of funding were to provide cover for teachers to be released for training, and, in some cases, other activities such as planning, preparing, recording and reporting. As the demands on teachers increase yearly, so the need for support and training increases, but teachers are reluctant to leave their classes too often and many cannot or will not participate in training outside school time. So how can the support be provided? A great deal of support is already provided by advisory staff working with teachers in school time, but the only long term answer to giving teachers more time for professional development is to enhance overall staffing levels so that more non-contact time can be allocated.

LEAs are increasingly required to devolve large proportions of funding to schools, so that 'schools should be free themselves to determine the balance of expenditure' between different categories of GEST funding allocations (DFE, Circular 10/92), but it will be difficult for schools to establish priorities between the competing demands. LEAs may face difficulties if the schools choose to spend funds outside the LEA support on offer, leading to a situation whereby LEAs can no longer retain sufficient staff to provide support across all the areas covered in the implementation of the NC.

8.2 Implications for future support

The suggestions below are based on the evidence collected for this enquiry and the current and prospective situation relating to assessment and the support that LEAs might provide. Much of what is put forward will be familiar to LEAs, given their own local experience, but this report has the advantage of drawing on information obtained from a wide range of sources and it is hoped that it will be of some benefit when planning takes place. Some implications for future support are as follows:

*   teachers need to get more involved in discussion of the broad aims of assessment so that they can develop their practice based on a deeper understanding of the issues.

*   LEAs need to renew their efforts to help teachers develop appropriate policies for assessment and thereby facilitate discussion of the issues

*   appropriate LEA staff must be retained to carry out their responsibilities for: auditing assessment standards and remedying any inconsistencies in standards; ensuring that schools have made 'adequate arrangements for the professional development of staff' and facilitating such arrangements; providing modest administrative back-up (Circular 12/92, DFE)

*   schools need to clarify who is the best person to take on the role of Assessment Coordinator. Perhaps at primary level the post should be filled by staff on a rotating basis, according to commitments in a particular year

*   schools need to establish common systems for record keeping, particularly at secondary level, where departments may currently function semi-autonomously. LEA guidance and concrete examples for schools to use or adapt would be appreciated

*   teachers need more time together, with and without advisory support, to plan, prepare, and produce schemes of work and approaches to assessment

*   LEAs need to structure INSET so that participants can cascade to colleagues as efficiently as possible

*   teachers participating in INSET need to work out effective strategies for disseminating to their colleagues in school

*   training needs to be organised so that those with previous experience of assessment of a particular subject at a key stage get updating and those without such experience receive training in the full range of skills, as well as information on the current assessment arrangements

*   the DFE and SEAC are responding to the stated needs of teachers for more support on agreeing standards but this survey indicates that teachers also require support in:
    -     record keeping procedures
    -     carrying out teacher assessment on a continuous basis

*   funding needs to be allocated in ways that allow teachers to work collaboratively; enhanced staffing levels would facilitate this

*   given the keenness teachers show for working with colleagues to develop ideas, perhaps it would be useful for LEAs to provide materials and training modules for teachers to work through themselves, with advice and guidance provided by the adviser when requested. Teachers are under too much pressure to devise everything themselves but like to use materials flexibly.

*   in addition to written support materials LEAs will need to specify on their programme of courses exactly what will be covered and who should attend, to ensure that take-up is good and participants satisfied. SEAC indicates that 'the principal role of the LEA is to act as auditor of assessment standards' (SEAC, 1993) but many teachers are keen that the role of LEAs as providers of professional support and guidance should continue.

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APPENDIX

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TABLE A1 SEAC Timetable

TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTING CORE SUBJECTS AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY 1989/90 - 1994/95

Pupil year at school	Pupil age	Key stage	School year 1989/90	School year 1990/91	School year 1991/92	School year 1992/93	School year 1993/94	School year 1994/95
1	5/6	1	MSE	MSET	MSET	MSET	MSET	MSET
2	6/7	SAT		M¹S¹E¹	$M^2S^2E^2T^1$	$MSET^2$	MSET	MSET
3	7/8			MSET	MSET	MSET	MSET	MSET
4	8/9	2			MSET	MSET	MSET	MSET
5	9/10					MSET	MSET	MSET
6	10/11	SAT					$M^1S^1E^1T^1$	$M^2S^2E^2T^2$
7	11/12	3		MSET	MSET	MSET	MSET	MSET
8	12/13		MS	MS	MSET	MSET	MSET	MSET
9	13/14	SAT			M^1S^1	$M^3S^2E^2T^1$	MSE^2T^2	MSET
10	14/15	4				MSE	MSET	MSET
11	15/16	GCSE/SAT					MSE	MSET

M = Mathematics attainment targets and programmes of study in place
S = Science attainment targets and programmes of study in place
E = English attainment targets and programmes of study in place
¹ = Unreported assessment
² = First reported assessment

DES (1989) *From Policy to Practice*. London: DES

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TABLE A2   Administration and response rate for questionnaire surveys

(i)   The LEA questionnaire survey

Questionnaires were sent to all 116 LEAs. The questionnaire was designed to cover both KS1 and KS3 but in about a quarter of LEAs, where responsibility for KS1 and KS3 assessment was held by different postholders, two questionnaires were sent.

Responses were received from 50 per cent of LEAs, though in a few cases the information related to only one key stage.

(ii) The school questionnaire surveys

Questionnaires were sent to a selection of schools in 20 of the LEAs which had returned the LEA questionnaire.   A letter and relevant versions of the questionnaires were sent to heads with a request that it be completed by the head or appropriate colleagues.   In fact, the majority of respondents from primary and special schools were heads (63 per cent of each) whereas deputies were more commonly the respondents from secondary schools (40 per cent deputies, 21 per cent heads).

The numbers and percentages of schools responding to the questionnaire surveys are shown below.

	Primary		Secondary		Special		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
No. of questionnaires sent	239		146		102		487	
No. of schools returning at least one questionniare	175	73	99	68	58	57	332	68

TABLE A3 Assessment unit titles

Assessment Unit, County Curriculum Centre

Assessment of Achievement Unit (name of LEA)

Assessment Office

County Assessment Support Team

County Assessment Team

Assessment and Support Services

Learning and Assessment

Assessment Unit

Assessment Team

Assessment and Support Unit

(Name of LEA) Assessment Unit

National Curriculum Assessment Unit

(Name of LEA) Assessment and Recording of Achievement

Assessment Development Unit

Quality Assurance Division

(Name of LEA) Curriculum and Assessment Team

Records of Achievement

(Name of LEA) Assessment Team

Assessment and Recording Achievement Unit

TABLE A4   Staff involved in assessment-related activities

PRIMARY

	Percentage of schools			
	KS1 Admin %	SATs Conduct %	TA Strategies %	Recording & reporting %
Head/deputies	50	30	26	28
Y2 staff	39	52	8	4
Other individual teachers	6	5	2	4
Whole staff/group of teachers	4	10	46	49
Teachers with coordinating responsibilities	6	8	6	9

SECONDARY

	KS3 TASKS Admin	Conduct	TA Strategies	Recording & reporting	INSET
Head/deputy/other senior staff	52	52	31	26	35
Head of Dept.	38	45	52	29	16
Coordinating role	7	5	8	26	31
Working groups/combinations	3	2	14	16	8
Pastoral/SDO/PT				2	12

SPECIAL

	KS3 TASKS Admin	Conduct	KS1 SATs Admin	Conduct	TA Strategies	Recording & reporting
Head/deputy/SMT	48	29	38	22	44	34
Other teachers	48	58	29	41	16	14
Working party/ coordinators/ all staff	20	16	38	30	47	51

TABLE A5 Advisory support for assessment in PRIMARY schools

LEA support activities:	Percentage of schools	
	90/91 %	91/92 %
LEA-organised training sessions	99	98
Discussion to develop whole school assessment policy	53	49
In-class work with teachers	39	36
Advice and support during conduct of SATs	88	88
Advice and support for carrying out TA	73	67
Advice and support for recording TA	70	59
Advice and support to develop Records of Achievement	51	47
Written guidelines on teaching the NC	27	24
Written guidelines on assessing the NC	37	35
Advice and support on assessing bilingual pupils	18	21
Advice and support on assessing pupils with Special Educational Needs	39	52
Responding to individual school requests for INSET/support	56	58
Other	2	1
No response	1	1

n = 172

TABLE A6 Advisory support for assessment - mathematics, science, English, technology

	mathematics		science		English		technology	
	90/91 %	91/92 %	90/91 %	91/92 %	90/91 %	91/92 %	90/91 %	91/92 %
LEA support activities:								
LEA-organised training sessions	54	92	58	79	70	78	52	63
Discussion to develop a departmental policy	34	40	32	46	37	45	32	37
In-class work with teachers	9	4	6	9	11	15	10	8
Advice and support during conduct of tests	-	17	2	7	1	1	1	1
Advice and support for carrying out TA	19	58	36	64	19	29	8	16
Advice and support for recording TA	22	42	30	49	25	27	10	21
Advice and support to develop Records of Achievement	17	14	24	23	34	28	18	14
Written guidelines on teaching the NC	9	10	17	13	37	25	30	26
Written guidelines on assessing the NC	4	18	15	29	22	27	14	29
Advice and support on assessing bilingual pupils	1	2	-	-	5	5	-	-
Advice and support on assessing pupils with Special Educational Needs	6	13	5	13	12	10	1	6
Responding to individual school requests for INSET/support	15	30	22	29	33	42	26	38
Other	2	3	5	5	4	2	5	6
No response	25	1	25	7	7	12	24	13
	n = 91		n = 87		n = 83		n = 87	

Percentage of schools

99

TABLE A7 Advisory support for assessment in SPECIAL schools

	Percentage of schools			
	KS1		KS3	
	90/91	91/92	90/91	91/92
LEA support activities:	%	%	%	%
LEA-organised training sessions				
- general issues	84	76	32	61
- SEN-specific issues	24	54	5	24
Discussion to develop whole school assessment policy	24	14	8	16
In-class work with teachers	22	16	5	8
Advice and support during conduct of SATs				
- general issues	54	54	13	32
- SEN-specific issues	27	35	3	18
Advice and support for carrying out TA				
- general issues	54	60	16	29
- SEN-specific issues	16	32	-	18
Advice and support for recording TA	49	46	11	24
Advice and support to develop Records of Achievement	38	35	45	50
Written guidelines on teaching the NC				
- general issues	46	46	26	34
- SEN-specific issues	14	14	5	8
Written guidelines on assessing the NC				
- general issues	51	51	13	26
- SEN-specific issues	8	14	3	11
Advice and support on assessing bilingual pupils				
- general issues	11	14	3	8
- SEN-specific	3	11	-	3
Responding to individual school requests for INSET/support	24	43	21	37
Other	3	3	-	-
No response	8	8	37	21
	n = 37		n = 38	

TABLE A8 Staff participating in KS3 training

	Percentage of schools	
	1990/91 %	1991/92 %
Head	18	19
Deputy	30	42
Head of department - mathematics	57	86
Head of department - science	56	82
Head of department - English	59	76
Head of department - technology	44	66
Other head of department	24	46
Assessment Coordinator, if not one of the above	6	21
Subject teacher(s) - mathematics	31	68
- science	34	70
- English	34	57
- technology	31	54
- other	15	34
Supply teacher(s)	2	3
Support Teacher(s) (eg SEN, Section 11)	4	19
Other	1	3
No response	20	4
		n = 95

TABLE A9   Involvement of LEA staff

KS1	Advisers/ Inspectors		Advisory teachers		Seconded teachers		Other	
	90/91 %	91/92 %	90/91 %	91/92 %	90/91 %	91/92 %	90/91 %	91/92 %
Planning	96	94	87	85	53	24	5	9
Training	93	85	91	89	29	31	9	14
Moderation	56	51	76	78	38	40	9	14
Preparation of guidance materials	82	78	91	89	22	24	9	18
Advice/school visits	98	94	91	91	33	31	11	16
Monitoring and evaluation	98	94	74	73	22	22	9	13

KS3	Advisers/ Inspectors		Advisory teachers		Seconded teachers		Other	
	90/91 %	91/92 %	90/91 %	91/92 %	90/91 %	91/92 %	90/91 %	91/92 %
Planning	84	93	67	76	31	9	2	2
Training	76	85	69	82	9	5	7	4
Moderation	25	42	24	42	4	4	-	-
Preparation of guidance materials	69	87	71	80	7	7	2	-
Advice/school visits	80	91	67	80	5	5	-	-
Monitoring and evaluation	67	94	34	53	5	5	-	2

TABLE A10 Activities of cluster/linked schools (primary)

Activities	Percentage of schools %
Formal presentations and training sessions organised by LEA and/or the moderator	85
INSET organised by the staff of one or more of the cluster/group of schools	48
Informal meetings/discussions between staff of cluster/group of schools	70
Classroom visits between cluster/group of schools	22
Other	12

n = 153

N.B. Numbers based on schools involved in clusters

TABLE A11 Usefulness of cluster arrangements at primary level

Post held	n	Percentage of respondents		
		Not useful %	Useful %	Very useful %
Head	104	4	54	42
Other	42	17	64	19

n = 146

TABLE A12 Activities of cluster/linked schools (secondary)

Activities	Percentage of schools %
Formal presentations and training sessions organised by LEA	53
INSET organised by the staff of one or more of the cluster/group of schools	63
Informal meetings/discussions between staff of cluster/group of schools	73
Classroom visits between cluster/group of schools	41
Other	10
No response	8
	n = 51

N.B. Numbers based on schools involved in clusters

TABLE A13 Usefulness of cluster arrangements at secondary level

Post held	n	Percentage of respondents		
		Not useful %	Useful %	Very useful %
Head	12	8	25	67
Deputy	28	-	57	43
Assessment coordinator	7	14	71	14
Other	3	33	67	-
			n = 50	

TABLE A14 Activities of cluster/linked schools (special)

Activities	Percentage of schools %
Formal presentations and training sessions organised by LEA and/or the moderator	75
INSET organised by the staff of one or more of the cluster/group of schools	50
Informal meetings/discussions between staff of cluster/group of schools	59
Classroom visits between cluster/group of schools	14
Other	16
No response	2

n =   44

N.B. Numbers based on schools involved in clusters

TABLE A15 Usefulness of cluster arrangements for special schools

Post held	n	Percentage of respondents			
		Not sure %	Not useful %	Useful %	Very useful %
Head	25	8	8	64	20
Other	14		21	50	29

n = 39

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SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOL:
The Role of the LEAs

Since the introduction and implementation of the National Curriculum schools have been responsible for devising policies and procedures to underpin the assessment of pupils who have been following National Curriculum programmes of study. The LEAs have had a crucial role to play in supporting schools and teachers through the provision of INSET sessions, written guidance materials, personal advice and help on practical issues, and ideas for record keeping and reporting.

The NFER project investigated the various arrangements made for supporting teachers of pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 3 and the effectiveness of this support, by eliciting the views of both LEA staff and teachers. The main questions covered were:

- do schools and LEAs have policies on assessment and what do such policies cover?

- which staff have responsibility for assessment at school and in LEAs and what tasks do they carry out?

- what training and other types of support are provided by LEAs to teachers and how effective are they?

- what resources are available to support teachers and how is funding deployed?

The report provides a wealth of detail on these issues and considers the implications of the findings for the support that teachers will require in the future, in the light of the demands of the National Curriculum.