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Better education and care

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2005/06

Better education and care through effective inspection and regulation

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The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2005/06

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Inspectors make judgements about pupils'/students' achievements and the quality of educational provision using a four-point scale:

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Joint area reviews

Ofsted undertakes joint area reviews in partnership with the following inspectorates:

- the Adult Learning Inspectorate
- the Audit Commission
- the Commission for Social Care Inspection
- the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection, known as the Healthcare Commission
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
- HM Inspectorate of Probation
- HM Inspectorate of Prisons
- HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
- HM Inspectorate of Court Administration.

Inspectors carrying out joint area reviews make judgements on the basis of a common grading scale, set out below:

Grade	Descriptor
Grade 4: A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users.	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for children and young people, is innovative and cost-effective and fully contributes to raising expectations and the achievement of wider outcomes for the community.
Grade 3: A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users.	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for children and young people, has some innovative practice, and is increasingly cost-effective while making contributions to wider outcomes for the community.
Grade 2: A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users.	A service that delivers minimum requirements for children and young people, but is not demonstrably cost-effective nor contributes significantly to wider outcomes.
Grade 1: A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users.	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for children and young people, is not cost-effective and makes little or no contribution to wider outcomes for the community.

Use of proportions in this report

In this report, proportions are described in different ways. If sample sizes are small – generally fewer than 100 – scale is expressed using actual numbers of institutions to which particular judgements apply.

Proportions, which are used when sample sizes are large, are expressed in a number of ways: percentages, common fractions and general descriptions such as 'majority', 'minority' or 'most'. Where general descriptions are used, they relate broadly to percentages as shown in the following table.

Expressions of proportions in words

Proportion	Description
99+-100%	Vast, overwhelming majority or almost all
90-98%	Very large majority, most
65-79%	Large majority
51-64%	Majority
35-49%	Minority
20-34%	Small minority
3-19%	Very small minority, few
0-3%	Almost, no, very few

Table 3. Inspection evidence: number of inspections.

Childcare and nursery education

Day care	11,388
Childminders	25,187
Total	36,575

Maintained schools and pupil referral units

Nursery schools	133
Primary schools	4,968
Secondary schools without sixth forms	483
Secondary schools with sixth forms	561
Academies	9
Special schools	322
Pupil referral units	785
Total	6,729

Colleges of further education

General further education, tertiary and specialist colleges	58
Sixth form colleges	21
Independent specialist colleges	22

Other inspections

Joint area reviews of children's services in local authorities	56
Non-association independent schools	108
Secure settings for young people including secure children's homes, young offender institutions and secure training centres	13
Initial teacher training	111

Table 4. Numbers and proportions of schools in different categories of concern

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Table 5. Numbers of schools placed in and removed from each of the categories of concern in inspections in 2005/06 and those that closed while in these categories

[Table content illegible]

November 2006

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

Christine Gilbert
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

Dear Secretary of State

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 2005/06

I have pleasure in submitting my Annual Report as required by the Education Act 2005.

The report begins, as usual, with my commentary on education and childcare in England. The commentary includes some reflections on the significant changes that have been made this year to the inspection arrangements for schools and childcare, with their new focus on the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people.

The first section of the report presents evidence from inspections in 2005/06 of childcare and early education settings, schools, colleges, initial teacher training providers and other institutions which it falls within Ofsted's remit to inspect. In short, it presents the national picture based on the evidence of about 40,000 inspection visits. For the first time, inspection evidence is also presented from the joint area reviews of the children's services provided in local authority areas.

The second section of the report draws together the findings of the joint area reviews and surveys carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and childcare inspectors to provide evidence about the progress and achievements of children and young people in relation to the Every Child Matters outcomes. This also draws on the evidence for 45 specialist reports published this year.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Gilbert

Preface Christine Gilbert, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

This report describes the findings from the full range of Ofsted's remit. It brings together evidence from our regular inspections of different types of settings and our detailed surveys of specific issues and themes. There have been many changes during the year including the introduction of shorter, more focused and short-notice inspections of maintained schools and the new arrangements for inspection of children's services within local authorities.

The first section of the report provides an overview of outcomes across our remit. The second section uses the structure of the Every Child Matters five outcomes for children and young people to describe in detail how young children, pupils in schools and older students are faring in the areas of health, safety, enjoyment, achievement, participation and economic well-being. The evidence for this section is drawn largely from focused, subject-specific and thematic inspection activity, in which more intensive reviewing of particular areas is possible than during the institutional inspections. The findings from the new joint area reviews of children's services in local authority areas have also been used as evidence for this part of the report.

The report is available in printed form and via our website, which provides access to the different parts of the report.

My report makes some reference to test and examination results for 2005, but not extensively, because the data available at the time of writing are both provisional and limited in quantity.

I believe we should recognise and celebrate the achievement of those providers who offer our children and young people the very best. I look forward to meeting many of the leaders of those settings over the coming months. My list for 2005/06 of outstanding providers, childminders, nurseries, schools and colleges is published at the same time as this report.

Table 2: Inspection frameworks

Type of provision	Framework	Effective since	Legislation
Maintained schools	Every Child Matters framework for inspection of schools in England from September 2005	September 2005	Section 5 of the Education Act 2005
Independent schools	Inspecting independent schools	September 2003	Section 162(a) of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005)
Post-16 education and training	Common inspection framework	September 2005	Sections 60–64 and 69–71 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000
Local authority children's services	Every Child Matters framework for the inspection of children's services	September 2005	Section 20–24 of the Children Act 2004
Initial teacher training	Framework for the inspection of initial training for the award of qualified teacher status 2005–11	September 2005	Section 18B of the Education Act 1994 as inserted by the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998
Settings providing childcare and nursery education in registered childcare provision	Inspecting outcomes: inspections of childcare and, where applicable, funded nursery education in registered provision	April 2005	Section 79 of the Children Act 1989 as inserted by the Care Standards Act 2000 and as further amended by the Children Act 2004 and the Education Act 2002 and section 122 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by the Education Act 2005

Ofsted registers the following types of childcare

- **Childminding** is provision that takes place on domestic premises for a total period or periods of more than two hours a day, excluding the hours of 18.00 to 22.00.
- **Full day care** includes nurseries and children's centres which operate for a continuous period of four hours or more.
- **Out of school care** can provide for children aged five and over and operates before or after school or during the school holidays.
- **Sessional care** is for children attending part time for no more than five sessions a week, each session being less than a continuous period of four hours in any day.
- **Multiple care** provides more than one type of day care on the premises.
- **Crèches** provide occasional care on particular premises for more than two hours a day on more than five days a year, for example when parents are shopping or attending a conference.

Explanation of National Qualification levels

- **Level 1** includes qualifications at level 1 and level D (entry level), such as NVQ, foundation GNVQs and other foundation or pre-foundation qualifications.
- **Level 2** includes level 2 NVQs, intermediate GNVQs and precursors (BTEC first certificate or first diploma, City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education at intermediate level), GCSEs and other recognised intermediate level qualifications.
- **Level 3** includes level 3 NVQs, advanced GNVQs and precursors (BTEC national certificate or national diploma, City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education at national level), advanced VCEs, GCE A, A2 and AS levels and other advanced level qualifications.

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Table 1. Changes to inspection arrangements for 2005/06.

Type of inspection	New arrangements effective from	Summary of the key changes
Childcare and early learning	April 2005	A new inspection framework within which: ■ each year's provision is assessed in relation to the Every Child Matters outcomes for children ■ the four-point grading scale, common across Ofsted's work, is used.
Maintained schools and pupil referral units	September 2005	A new inspection framework within which: ■ inspections are carried out by HMI and Additional Inspectors (AI) drawn from Ofsted's inspection partners, the Regional Inspection Service Providers (RISP) ■ schools are normally inspected every three years ■ schools are inspected at very short notice of two to three days ■ inspectors are in school for no more than two days ■ there is a focus on the school's self-evaluation as the basis of the inspection ■ inspection reports are short and accessible to a wide readership.
Independent schools not affiliated to the Independent Schools Council	September 2005	The academic year 2005/06 has seen a significant change in the arrangements for the inspection of non-association independent schools: ■ the organisation of inspections is now undertaken by a National Inspection Service Provider (NISP) ■ half of inspections are led by HMI and half by AI.
Colleges	October 2005	A new cycle of college inspections is underway within which: ■ inspections are carried out by HMI and AI drawn from the NISP ■ colleges will normally be inspected at least once every four years ■ there is a proportionate approach to inspection: colleges which performed well at their last inspection will receive lighter touch inspections ■ colleges judged inadequate or unsatisfactory at their last inspection will be inspected with a higher level of monitoring.
Teacher training and development	September 2005	A revised inspection framework within which there is: ■ a differentiated inspection programme to reduce the burden of inspection ■ a strong focus on using providers' self-evaluation to inform the inspection process.
Children's services in local authority areas	September 2005	In the past, HMI inspected the educational provision in each local authority. Ofsted is working in partnership with other inspectorates to provide joint area reviews. Joint area reviews involve an integrated approach to the range of children's services provided by local authority areas. All local authority areas will be subject to a joint area review between September 2005 and December 2008. Among the evidence drawn upon in joint area reviews is that of the annual performance assessment (APA), carried out for the first time in 2005. APAs draw upon information already available to the local authority.

This Annual Report covers a year in which Ofsted was led by two chief inspectors. I am pleased to offer my thanks to David Bell and Maurice Smith for demonstrating so clearly and publicly the key role that a modern inspectorate can play in improving public services.

One of my first tasks as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector has been to read and provide a commentary for the Annual Report. The evidence base from which the report is compiled is impressive and includes 32,300 childcare and early learning settings; 6,300 maintained schools; 58 colleges of further education, 21 sixth form colleges and 21 independent specialist colleges; and 36 joint area reviews of children's services in local authorities.

This commentary gives me an opportunity to draw on the evidence, to reflect on the overall effectiveness of education and childcare in England, and on some of the underlying strengths and weaknesses. The overall picture is positive. The key messages are encouraging and speak for themselves.

■ The overwhelming majority of childcare and nursery education settings inspected are at least satisfactory and over half are good or outstanding.

■ More than nine in 10 maintained schools inspected this year are at least satisfactory in their overall effectiveness, while almost six in 10 are good or outstanding.

The trend of improvement is an important theme in the report

■ A very large majority of childcare and nursery settings judged inadequate at their previous inspection have made significant improvement and were judged at least satisfactory when re-inspected.

■ Similarly, almost all further education colleges once judged inadequate are now at least satisfactory overall.

However, the challenge of dealing with some persistent weaknesses remains. Too many schools are inadequate: about one in 12 of maintained schools inspected, and a higher proportion of secondary schools than primary schools. There remains a small but significant proportion of colleges in which standards are declining; and some satisfactory colleges are showing no signs of improving further.

Every child matters

Every child matters: this phrase is central to Ofsted's mission. It provides the framework for this Annual Report, which draws on evidence from institutional inspections, our survey programme and our reviews of children's services in local authorities. The fact that 10 inspectorates or commissions have worked together so readily on these reviews demonstrates at both a policy and a personal level our determination to make things better for all children and young people, but above all to protect and seek the very best for the most vulnerable.

I am encouraged by the early findings of our joint area reviews of children's services, in terms of their overall effectiveness; the services for children and young people were good in just over half of the 36 local areas reviewed. Services for children and young people are seen as a high priority in all of the areas inspected and, encouragingly, virtually all have the capacity to improve.

Provision for early years education and childcare continues to grow. Ofsted inspected over 32,000 settings during the year and found that over half provided good or outstanding quality of care and education for children. The best are impressive: the children's interest and imagination are captured from the moment they arrive, their skills develop well and they are comfortable and happy, with positive relationships between adults and children.

Better education and care make a difference to the life chances of children and young people. I have seen strong local intervention and support, often working with national strategies, making a real

difference, and making it quickly. It is a cliché to say that children only have one chance at school, but the cliché is right. I have witnessed the liberation and empowerment realised by young people who achieved success in literacy and numeracy and found that doors, previously locked, were now opening to them. Competence in literacy and numeracy continues to be fundamental to all new learning.

The story is not always positive, however. That is why I am so concerned at the gap between the best provision and that which makes an inadequate contribution to improving the life chances of children and young people. To take perhaps the starkest example, the poor levels of attainment and attendance of many looked-after children are simply unacceptable. It is salutary to report that these children are inadequately supported in almost half of local authorities. One in eight looked-after children was absent from school for at least 25 days during the year. It is hardly surprising that the attainment of these children is low and that when they leave school they are much less likely than other school-leavers to remain in full-time education or get a job.

Empowerment is not just about academic success; it also means having your views listened to, respected and acted upon. It is increasingly the case that young people are being asked for their views; it is right that they are engaged in their own learning and development in this way. Indeed, inspection found that a strength of the work of many local authorities was the large proportion of looked-after children participating in their own case reviews; and the views of pupils and their parents increasingly form part of the consultation and decision-making process in schools. Pupils' satisfaction can be a useful barometer for the overall quality of a school, particularly when views are either very positive or very negative. Given that, we should feel optimistic about a system in which most pupils are very satisfied with their school. An Ofsted report found that pupils are at least satisfied with their school in nine out of 10 primary schools and eight out of 10 secondary schools.

> Better education and care make a difference to the life chances of children and young people. I have seen strong local intervention and support, often working with national strategies, making a real difference, and making it quickly.

Other reports published by Ofsted in 2005/06

2004/05 subject conference reports: business education (HMI 2529); citizenship (HMI 2530); design and technology (HMI 2508); music (HMI 2570); physical education (HMI 2513); RE/RS (HMI 2515); science (HMI 2506); English (HMI 2507); ICT (HMI 2511); modern foreign languages (HMI 2513); religious education (HMI 2514), 2006.

An employment-based route into teaching 2004/05 (HMI 2623), 2006.

Arrangements for the annual performance assessment of children's services 2006 (HMI 2525), 2006.

Annual performance assessment council services: the APA of children's services in 2005 (HMI 2627), 2006.

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2004/05 (ISBN 0 10293 545 9), 2005.

Annual performance assessment (APA): local authority children's services first annual report on activities (HMI 2520), 2006.

Creating opportunity: for young people: the NDS five year scheme for National Voluntary Service Organisations 2002-2006 (HMI 2444), 2005.

English 2000–05: a review of inspection evidence (HMI 2531), 2005.

English as an additional language: an evaluation of pilot training courses (HMI 2600), 2006.

Food technology in secondary schools (HMI 2633), 2006.

Healthy schools, healthy children? The contribution of education to pupils' health and well-being (HMI 2563), 2006.

Improving performance through school self-evaluation and improvement planning (guidance), joint Ofsted/DfES (HMI 2646), 2005.

Learning practice in English: a review of recent research in literacy and the teaching of English (HMI 2565), 2005.

Initial teacher training for teachers of citizenship 2004/05 (HMI 2438), 2006.

The initial training of further education teachers: findings from 2004/05 inspections of courses leading to national awarding body certification (HMI 2485), 2006.

Monitoring independent schools Council inspections 2005/06 (HMI 2511), 2006.

Parents' satisfaction with schools (HMI 2634), 2006.

Race equality in further education: a report by HMI. Progress and good practice in colleges in the further education sector, in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (HMI 2463), 2005.

Raising achievement of bilingual learners (reference 0013435 4) (HMI 2613), 2005.

Removing barriers: a 'can-do' attitude: a report on developing good practice for children with special needs in early years childcare and education in the private and voluntary sectors (HMI 2449), 2005.

School inspection: an evaluation (HMI 2770), 2006.

SfAN SfLG briefings: see para. xx (HMI 2438), 2001.

Other publications, such as consultation papers and frameworks, are listed on Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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The bibliography includes 35 of publications referred to in this report:

i. *An evaluation of the post-Citizenship pilot 2004/05: a report from Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate* (HMI 2440), 2006.

ii. *[...] in schools: a survey of [...], colleges and local authorities* (HMI 2533), 2006.

iii. *Creative Partnerships: initiative and impact* (HMI 2517), 2006.

iv. *Developing a coherent 14–19 phase of education and training* (HMI 2442), 2005.

v. *Developing enterprising young people: features of the successful implementation of enterprise education at Key Stage 4* (HMI 2460), 2005.

vi. *Drug education in schools* (ISBN 0 1350 092 0), 1997.

vii. *Drug education in schools* (HMI 3382), 2005.

viii. *Early years: experiences of children at the very start of the first hour of the day*, 2005.

ix. *Early years: Safe and sound* (HMI 2663), 2006.

x. *E-learning in FE schools – a dual evaluation exercise* (HMI 2391), 2005.

xi. *Evaluating mathematics provision for 14–19 year olds* (HMI 2611), 2006.

xii. *Excellence in Cities: managing associated initiatives to raise standards* (HMI 2595), 2005.

xiii. *Extended services in schools and children's centres* (HMI 2626), 2006.

xiv. *[...] for thought: a survey of healthy eating in registered childcare* (HMI 2548), 2006.

xv. *Further education matters: the first few years of Ofsted/ALI college inspections* (HMI 2553), 2005.

xvi. *Good school libraries: making a difference to learning* (HMI 2624), 2006.

xvii. *Healthy eating in schools* (HMI 2625), 2006.

xviii. *[...] does it matter? How pupils are [...]? Provision and outcomes in different settings for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities* (HMI 2553), 2006.

xix. *Primary National Strategy: an evaluation of its impact in primary schools 2004/05* (HMI 2396), 2005.

xx. *Race equality in education: good practice in schools and local education authorities* (HMI 589), 2005.

xxi. *Remodelling the school workforce: a report from Ofsted* (HMI 2596), 2005.

xxii. *Safeguarding children: an evaluation of procedures for checking staff appointed by schools* (HMI 2647), 2006.

xxiii. *The Key Stage 3 evaluation: learning and flexibility, work related learning and much Remodelling in Programmes* (HMI 2478), 2006.

xxiv. *The logistics of continuing professional development in effective schools* (HMI 2661), 2006.

xxv. *The Secondary National Strategy: an evaluation of the fifth year* (HMI 2612), 2006.

xxvi. *Towards consensus? Citizenship in secondary schools* (HMI 2666), 2006.

Seeking the views of parents and engaging them in their children's learning and development is also something I welcome. As with their children, a very large proportion of parents is satisfied with the school that their children attend, and improvement in the quality of the links with parents is something that Ofsted has reported over recent years. Schools' self-evaluation increasingly takes account of children's views and those of parents; one of the challenges for schools remains that of taking soundings from those pupils and parents who do not come forward with views, respond to questionnaires or attend open meetings.

Parents are quick to appreciate improvement. At its most extreme, we find that with schools placed in special measures, parents' satisfaction increases markedly as the school responds and improves. I am convinced that the greater involvement of parents in their children's education is an important component in the recovery of weak schools, and a strong influence on general levels of satisfaction and ultimately on performance.

Standards and quality in schools

The year saw the overhaul of the approach Ofsted takes to a major part of its core business, the inspection of schools. Inspection is now shorter, sharper, more frequent and places greater emphasis on the school's evaluation of its own performance. I welcome the new approach, and I know parents do. The increased frequency of inspection enables parents to have more up-to-date inspection reports, and schools to receive, more frequently, a rigorous external appraisal of their performance. Most schools tell us that they welcome the new approach, but the new inspections are no less robust, and when hard messages have to be given, inspectors give them. Neither David Bell nor Maurice Smith minced their words: the new inspection arrangements have raised the bar, but without putting it out of reach. The performance of schools, and the public's expectations of them, have both risen, and it is right that inspection should reflect that. The rigour of the new grade descriptors, and the data now available, mean that there is an ever more acute appraisal of pupils' progress and a school's performance.

> I have witnessed the liberation and empowerment realised by young people who achieved success in literacy and numeracy and found that doors, previously locked, were now opening to them. Competence in literacy and numeracy continues to be fundamental to all new learning.

Commentary continued

The increased frequency of inspection enables parents to have more up-to-date inspection reports, and schools to receive, more frequently, a rigorous external appraisal of their performance.

The new inspection framework focuses on a school's effectiveness. It combines self-evaluation with scrutiny from outside. In essence, two questions are now asked by both schools themselves and inspectors: how good are the outcomes for pupils and how effective is the school in promoting them? The number of schools Ofsted inspects is large – around 6,000 this academic year. This means that Ofsted has quickly built up a picture of the overall effectiveness of schools, using the new framework for inspection, and has found that around 11% of schools are outstanding; 48% are good; 34% are satisfactory; and 8% are inadequate.

As I have indicated, the proportion of schools in which provision is inadequate is too high: about one in 12 of those inspected, and in secondary schools this proportion rises to just over one in eight. As a former secondary school headteacher I can understand this difference; secondary schools are generally large, complex organisations and the range of issues they face can be substantial. However, more needs to be done, and swiftly, to reduce the number of secondary schools found to be inadequate. The big question is how all secondary schools can maintain the relentless focus on each individual's progress that is characteristic of the best schools. They need to establish the systems and processes that maximise each pupil's capacity to learn, achieve and participate. Each pupil is entitled to a secondary school experience which supports and challenges them to achieve at least national standards and to gain the skills they need to thrive and succeed throughout their lives. Providing this for those pupils who arrive at secondary schools without adequate skills in literacy and numeracy is a particular challenge. Good leadership and management are also crucial. Inspectors often report on a lack of shared understanding among senior staff about what needs to improve, and a reluctance or inability to address concerns with the necessary sense of urgency.

Although a smaller proportion of primary schools is inadequate, it remains vital that they improve as quickly as possible. In these schools, inspectors frequently report that pupils who are not making sufficient progress are not identified and supported quickly enough.
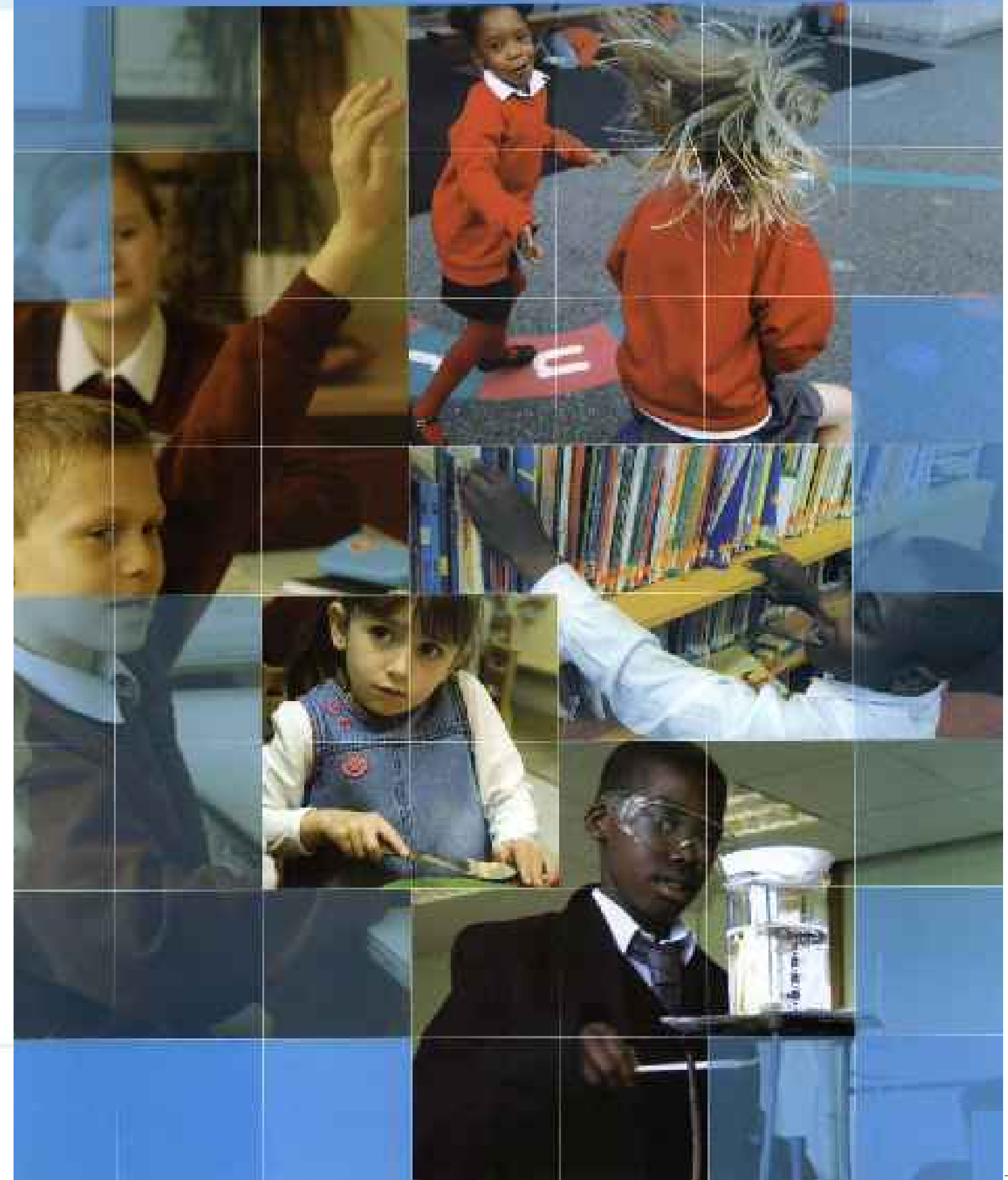
The Young Apprenticeship Programme

The Young Apprenticeship Programme, part of the 14–19 Vocational Strategy, has made a generally successful start. The majority of students enjoyed their study, were making progress and had a clear idea of their future career pathways. They were well informed about assessment requirements, the quality of their work and how to improve it.

They were developing good practical skills, including ICT skills, and good knowledge and understanding of skills required in the vocational sector. However, there was not enough consistency in the degree to which they were developing active learning skills, for example asking relevant questions, and to which they were able to work well, independently and with their peers.

Teaching in the Young Apprenticeship partnerships was often good and the partnerships were well managed. However, links between the Young Apprenticeship Programme and students' vocational courses were underdeveloped. Partnerships had improved the selection of and guidance for students; however, the details of students' attainment were not used consistently to match work to their abilities or to set targets.

A minority of Young Apprenticeship Programmes had fallen short in important respects: the integral role of the 50 days' work experience was often ignored; parents were not always fully informed of the nature of the course and its status; and students were not always interviewed by partner employers. Moreover, gender stereotyping was not consistently challenged and strategies for encouraging pupils from minority ethnic groups to join the Young Apprenticeship Programme varied in their effectiveness.

Education for sustainable development

There is increasing public interest in education for sustainable development and it is included within programmes of study for some National Curriculum subjects. However, it frequently goes unrecognised or is underdeveloped, even in those subject areas such as geography, science, personal, social and health education, and citizenship, where there are specific requirements and opportunities.

Where practice was good:

- there was a whole-school commitment led by senior management to integrate education for sustainable development into the work of the school

- pupils and their families were encouraged to play a part in their local community, developing citizenship through action

- pupils were given both individual and collective responsibility for looking after and improving their learning environment

- there was an emphasis on inclusion in promoting positive attitudes and values.

In most schools, pupils only touched on education for sustainable development issues. The coverage of the issues tended to be implicit, piecemeal, uncoordinated and lacking in vision. For example, many schools had recycling schemes but these often had a low profile and usually involved a few dedicated individuals rather than the whole school.

The impact of inspection

Last year's Annual Report included a section on 'the impact of inspection'. This year's report does not, but the link between improvement and inspection permeates the document. My own experience at local level has shown me how inspection can lead and shape change. I am encouraged to read references to the impact Ofsted is making and to positive feedback from those we inspect. For example, in the provision of childcare and early learning, the vast majority of providers are highly satisfied with their inspections, including the no notice arrangements. Where inspectors report that standards are not met, the great majority respond well to criticism and put things right. Schools, too, report that they will use the recommendations in their inspection reports to move forward; and parents welcome the fact that we see schools as they really are.

Nearly all colleges found to be inadequate at their last inspection have improved, and some – four out of the 15 that were judged to be inadequate – have made considerable improvement in a short period of time and are now good in terms of their overall effectiveness.

Ofsted has been very effective in identifying those institutions which are failing to give their pupils or students an acceptable standard of education. Ofsted should now be asking questions of those schools or colleges where performance is not good enough and where there are few signs of improvement. 'Satisfactory' can never be good enough.

Published alongside this report is a list of outstanding providers of childcare, schools and colleges. We should celebrate the achievements of all of these. Forty-one of the schools in that list were once identified by Ofsted as schools causing concern. These schools have undergone nothing short of a transformation and I pay tribute to the headteachers, teachers, governors and others who have brought about the remarkable changes. It is no less impressive how many schools that were once failing their pupils are now being judged as good by inspectors. Reading through some of the reports on these schools I saw that similar themes were emerging: 'a relentless focus on raising standards and

> Published alongside this report is a list of outstanding providers of childcare, schools and colleges. We should celebrate the achievements of all of these.

What of the future?

Achieving economic well-being continued

A report on enterprise education, which is a component in the 14–19 National Strategy, addressed the problems of definition and thus the lack of clarity in many schools about what enterprise education means (see v, p.82). Where the objectives of enterprise education had not been fully understood, schools focused on much that was peripheral. In the schools in which staff were clear about the objectives, there was an awareness of the knowledge, skills and attributes they wanted students to develop by the end of Key Stage 4. For example pupils demonstrated the ability to:

- present ideas for solving a problem to an unfamiliar audience
- write a business plan as part of a team
- construct and present a convincing argument based on evidence.

Schools with successful programmes had the purposeful leadership necessary to create a tangible core of enterprise learning. These programmes included a combination of suspended timetable days, cross-curricular approaches and dedicated time, for example in personal, social and health education or citizenship.

In good lessons students took responsibility and calculated risks, made decisions, had opportunities to be innovative and creative in their thinking, worked in teams and engaged in discussion and debate. It requires both continuing professional development and experience for all staff to develop these skills. Many schools could also draw upon teachers with recent business experience and experts from outside the school. Generally, such resources remained underexploited.

A survey of schools that work with creative practitioners as part of the Creative Partnerships initiative found that the aspirations of pupils are significantly increased and informed by sustained work with professionals from the creative and cultural sector (see iii, p.82). Pupils developed an understanding about the importance of collaboration, initiative, improvisation and problem-solving by seeing how practitioners worked in the creative industries or more commonly, how they applied their skills when working in schools. However, the creativity of teachers was more evident than that of pupils.

In primary and secondary schools, pupils often developed a unique working relationship with a creative practitioner. This was usually dependent upon a clear understanding about the different roles of teacher, support staff and creative practitioner built over time. However, awareness in school of the creative practitioner's working life outside was patchy. This was a missed opportunity for schools to understand the opportunities and challenges of working in non-educational settings. The economic factors involved in working as an individual, contributing to or building a business in the creative sector, were rarely explored.

Work-related learning

From autumn 2004 secondary schools were offered greater flexibility in the curriculum they could offer to 14–16-year-olds. This initiative was consolidated in the 14–19 National Strategy. The compulsory core curriculum was reduced when design and technology and modern foreign languages became optional subjects, but work-related learning, including enterprise education, became a requirement for all students. Additionally, collaboration between schools and colleges was encouraged to widen the range of options open to students at the age of 14 to include vocational courses.

Ofsted inspects a range of educational institutions and childcare providers, including childminders and early education settings, maintained schools, some independent schools, further education colleges for post-16 students and teacher training providers. In addition, Ofsted works in partnership with other inspectorates to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the children's services provided by local authorities.

This section of the report summarises the key findings from across the range of Ofsted's statutory inspections during the academic year 2005/06. During 2005, significant changes were made to Ofsted's inspection arrangements. Details of these changes and of the frameworks under which the different types of inspection were carried out are contained in the Annex to this report (pages 84–5). The number of inspections undertaken in each sector is also shown in the Annex.

The evidence is drawn from analysis of inspection data together with sampling of reports from the inspections of:

- childcare and early education settings

- maintained schools and pupil referral units

- independent schools which are not members of the Independent Schools Council (non-association independent schools)

- further education colleges, sixth form colleges and independent specialist colleges

- secure settings for young people, including secure children's homes, young offender institutions and secure training centres

- providers of initial teacher training

- children's services provided by local authorities.

Financial capability and enterprise

In a small minority of primary schools, outstanding provision developed pupils' understanding of finance and enterprise. Sometimes this involved direct and active links with businesses, for example working alongside professionals in local industry or replanting an orchard under the supervision of the National Trust. In some of these schools, pupils were involved in making and marketing products for school fairs and other occasions, or for charities. In one school pupils ran a business selling healthy food. A few schools had 'enterprise weeks' in which pupils developed teamwork skills and entrepreneurship. In one case, pupils carried out surveys, bid for funding and marketed their product, helped by contact with local business. Such activity also fostered problem-solving skills and developed teamwork and self-confidence.

Most schools will say, quite rightly, that their main contribution to economic well-being is in the development of basic skills, but these enterprising schools show what can be done with greater ambition.

Evidence from the pilot survey inspections carried out in secondary schools suggested that relatively little attention was being given to financial capability and that expertise in teaching in this area was limited. Consequently Ofsted will conduct a fuller survey of financial capability from the autumn of 2006.

Case study 15: Enterprise in Year 6 mathematics

Year 6 pupils have developed a greater sense of economic awareness by participating in a business and enterprise project. The project has also provided numerous opportunities for using and applying mathematics. At the beginning of the school year, pupils in Year 6 were loaned £50 by the school and given the task of making as much money as possible from this. Year 6 pupils formed a company. They elected a chairperson, vice chairperson, finance committee, two secretaries and an advertising secretary. Other pupils within Year 6 have roles such as 'ideas people'. The company has opened a building society account and invested in various events to make money. For example, the company purchased some 'gunge' and then charged pupils to throw this at members of Year 6. This required complex calculations involving the capacity of the tubs of 'gunge' purchased, what capacity of 'gunge' to give to each customer and the price that should be charged to make the activity affordable and attractive to customers, while creating a healthy profit margin. The profit was banked. This project has also given pupils an opportunity to contribute to the wider community. The pupils talked knowledgeably and with enthusiasm about the project, discussing the problems they had encountered and the mathematics they had used. The project is making a profit, pupils have paid back their start-up loan and have a balance of over £500 at the building society.

The lack of opportunity for structured conversation can have a serious and negative impact on achievement. In mathematics in secondary schools, for example, pupils' weak understanding and powers of reasoning could be linked to the limited opportunities they had to discuss their learning. They spent a great deal of time practising techniques demonstrated by the teacher, but the skills they accumulated lacked coherence and were not rooted in understanding. As a consequence they did not make important conceptual connections and struggled to apply their mathematical knowledge in new or unusual contexts.

A survey of library provision in primary and secondary schools also showed that pupils' skills in the retrieval and use of information were often unsatisfactory (see vol, p.82). Many pupils struggled to locate and make good use of information. The most effective schools promoted reading and library use well. However, lessons in library skills were often unsatisfactory, with too few opportunities for pupils to carry out research or work independently to prepare them for further education or the workplace. Schools also acknowledged they were not successful enough in involving subjects across the curriculum in work to improve pupils' competence in retrieving and using information. Application of number was insufficiently practised across the curriculum in most schools. Pupils were aware that basic mathematics skills are important for future employment but, when asked, they could not develop this idea much further or offer examples of the use of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum.

As reported in Embedding ICT in schools, Ofsted found that most schools in the survey made at least satisfactory curricular provision for ICT, including some balance between teaching ICT capability and its application across subjects (see x, p.82). However, none of the schools surveyed embedded ICT to the extent that it was an everyday aspect of pupils' learning. Typically, pupils' use of ICT varied from subject to subject or from year to year.

The best provision offered a good balance between discrete ICT and its use within other subjects. In primary schools, ICT was used mainly to support English and mathematics; there was some use of ICT in other subjects, but application across the curriculum was still largely undeveloped. In secondary schools there were examples of good application of ICT across a few subjects, typically in design and technology, modern foreign languages, and art and design.

The main uses for ICT across the curriculum were word-processing, internet access and presentations. These were often effective, although when activities were not well planned they could be time-wasting and unproductive. In art, some courses had widened to embrace new technologies, with the result that more and different groups of pupils gained confidence in their ability to succeed. In geography, there was good use of new technology in only a minority of schools, especially those linked to geographic information systems. However, in many schools, teachers were still unaware of the web-based support materials now available. Similarly, in modern foreign languages, ICT was used by pupils to enhance their language-learning in only a minority of schools. Commonly, as with mathematics, this was because opportunities were identified in a scheme of work but their adoption was left up to individual teachers' preferences.

- The overwhelming majority of childcare and nursery education settings inspected are at least satisfactory and over half are good or outstanding.

- A very large majority of childcare and nursery education settings judged inadequate at their previous inspections have made significant improvement and were judged at least satisfactory when re-inspected.

- More than nine in 10 maintained schools inspected this year are at least satisfactory in their overall effectiveness, while almost six in 10 are good or outstanding.

- Too many schools are inadequate, about one in 12 of the maintained schools inspected. The proportion of inadequate secondary schools is almost twice that of primary schools.

- A high proportion of non-association independent schools inspected meets the majority of statutory requirements, maintaining the improving trend noted last year. Over half of the independent special schools inspected are providing a good or outstanding quality of education.

- The trend of improvement over the first cycle of inspections of further education and sixth form colleges continued this year. Almost all those judged inadequate at their previous inspections are now at least satisfactory overall. In a small proportion of further education colleges inspected, standards have declined, and too many colleges are no better than satisfactory.

- In secure and custodial settings inspected, standards are variable and the curriculum is often too narrow to provide a sound basis for the next stages of education or for the working world. However, management of the young people's behaviour has improved and is satisfactory overall.

- The quality of training has improved among the school-based providers of initial teacher training and is generally good. The management and quality assurance of training are better in the primary than in the secondary phase. The quality of initial teacher training for those wishing to teach in further education is too inconsistent.

- Annual performance assessments of local authorities judged that children's services in three quarters of authorities are good or very good and almost all are at least satisfactory. Educational provision by local authorities is generally good. Provision by local authority children's services for the most vulnerable young people is often only satisfactory and in some cases inadequate.

- Most local areas have a clear strategy for provision for learners in the 14–19 age range.

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Childcare and early learning
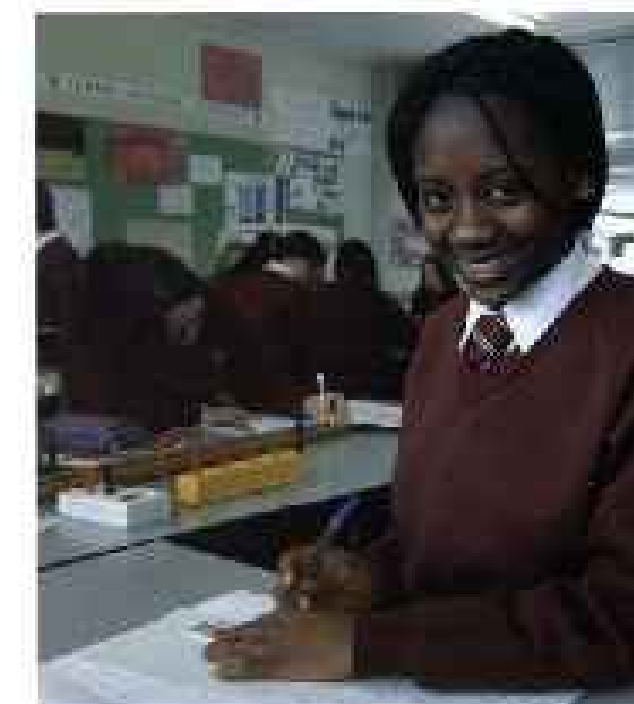
The quantity of childcare and early education

The childcare and early education sector continues to grow. At the end of June 2006 there were nearly 106,000 registered providers, compared with 106,000 in June 2005. The number of childcare places has increased by almost 2% (see Figure 1).

Early education in the private, voluntary and independent sector also continues to grow. The number of early years settings offering early education rose by over 1,800 from April 2005 to more than 20,400 in June 2006.

Much of the growth has occurred in full day care. Some sessional day-care settings have changed to full day care, influenced in part by the funding support for childcare places which has encouraged some parents to return to work or to access training (see Figure 2).

The quality of childcare and early education

In April 2005 Ofsted introduced a new early years inspection framework to assess provision against the Every Child Matters outcomes for children. No notice of inspection is given to providers of group day care such as nurseries, but childminders and providers of short term crèches or holiday play schemes are telephoned a few days in advance to check when they are operating.

Of over 32,000 settings inspected during the year, over half provide a good or outstanding quality of care and education for children. They help children particularly well to enjoy what they do and to make good progress in their learning and development (see Figure 3).

Figure 1. Number of childcare places: June 2006 (Total 1,545,100)

Figure 2. Trends in childminding and day care places (thousands)

Figure 3. Effectiveness of provision for children April 2005–June 2006
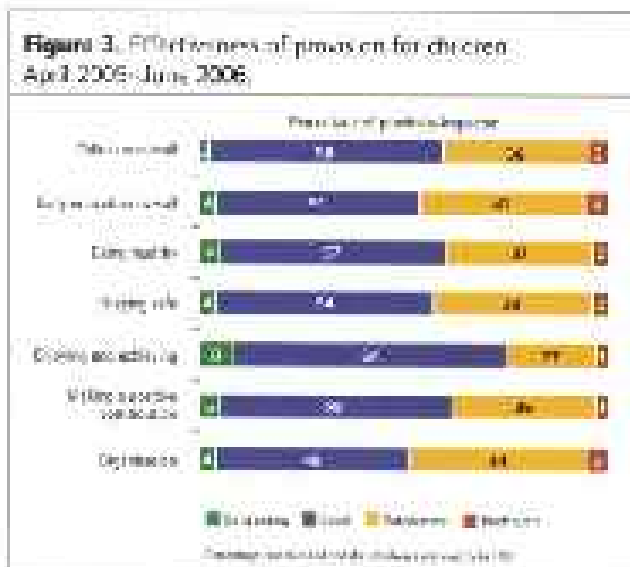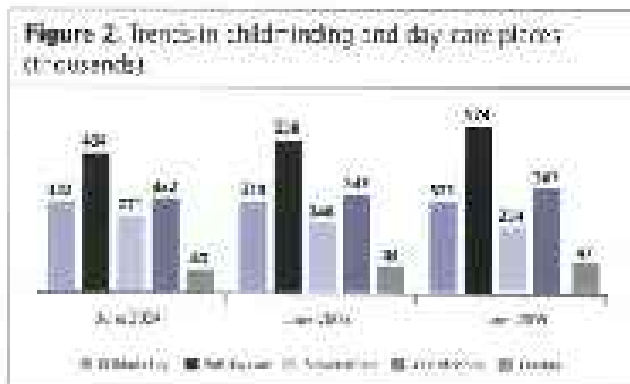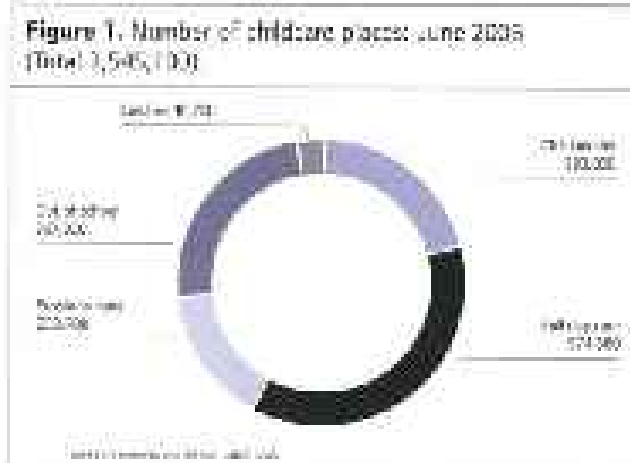
Looked-after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were usually well supported in selecting the most appropriate courses, although the range of courses available was sometimes limited. Some areas did not have a clear strategy for post-16 education for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities nor did they have sufficient provision for these young people to follow apprenticeships. Although direct payment to families and carers of the young people had increased, the rate of implementing payment was sometimes slow.

Regeneration programmes were increasingly benefiting children and young people in some of the most disadvantaged areas. An integral part of these programmes was often an increase in the range of types of childcare available, with significant increases in the number of full-day places available. However, in some areas insufficient childcare facilities for over-lives were available to help parents to take full advantage of employment opportunities, and some parents or carers were hampered by a lack of clear information on the provision available. Links between Sure Start and JobCentre Plus were beginning to offer effective support to vulnerable families in providing opportunities to gain employment.

Many local areas had been successful in providing sufficient supported accommodation for young parents and care leavers, and only used bed and breakfast accommodation for their young people as a last resort. The average length of stay for families with children in bed and breakfast accommodation was usually much less than the government target of six weeks. There remains, however, a shortage of affordable rental accommodation for young people generally. Most areas were developing detailed plans to improve the availability of decent housing, but occasionally the collation and monitoring of housing data were insufficient to plan for decent housing for all young people.

Key skills of communication, application of number, and information and communication technology

The National Curriculum sets out the key skills which pupils and young people should develop in groups of subjects across the curriculum and which are central to their development as learners.

Two thirds of primary schools make a good or outstanding contribution to pupils' economic well-being. The foundation of this lies in the emphasis they give to competence in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Evidence from the inspection of the secondary National Strategy suggests that there has been little progress in the development of literacy across the secondary curriculum as a contribution to communication skills. There were exceptions, such as in history in some schools, where teachers were increasingly aware of the importance of literacy for learning. More generally, literacy targets set for English were not reinforced in other curriculum areas, particularly in teachers' marking.

In the minority of schools where there was a consistent approach to the teaching of literacy, this was often associated with a whole-school coordinator with the time and status to work with teachers and outside experts to keep it high on the training agenda. More often, such leadership was lacking and schools did not monitor standards of literacy across the curriculum.

Speaking and listening, the weakest aspects of English, were generally not well developed across the curriculum. Pupils' experience of speaking and listening was often narrow; few English departments planned explicitly for teaching these skills, arguing that 'talk happens naturally in lessons anyway'. As a result, some elements of the National Curriculum, most notably the use of standard English and other dialects, were insufficiently taught.

Ofsted evaluates the degree to which early years settings, schools, colleges and children's services are effective in enabling children and young people to achieve economic well-being so that they take part in further education, employment or training on leaving school; are ready for employment; live in decent homes and sustainable communities; have access to transport and material goods; and live in households free from low income.

Overview

- Youth services and Connexions, often working in partnership, were helping young people to move into work, training or learning.

- Links between Sure Start and JobCentre Plus services were starting to provide good support for vulnerable families in seeking employment.

- Many local authorities had been successful in providing accommodation for young parents and care leavers.

- In most schools, insufficient sustained effort was given to improving communication skills or the application of number across the curriculum. Most schools made satisfactory provision for ICT, but too few made it an everyday aspect of pupils' learning.

- Overall in colleges, achievement in key skills, including the integration of literacy and numeracy into work-based learning, was inadequate.

- Enterprise education remained on the margins of the curriculum, with a lack of clarity about what it involved.

- The quality of work-related learning had improved, but it remained inadequate in one quarter of schools. Young Apprenticeship Programmes had made a broadly successful start.

Local children's services

- There was increased collaboration between local agencies to provide young people with education, training and support. In some areas there were increased vocational opportunities, particularly where a local skills shortage had been identified. But access to vocational and work-based learning opportunities was still not wide enough. Local partnerships in some areas identified gaps in the range of courses available. However, it was difficult to involve schools that had traditionally worked independently of the local authority; this was restricting the range of courses available. Young people involved in work-based learning too often made limited progress. The often restricted range of courses available and the poor quality of teaching may have led some to fail to complete their courses.

- Youth services, often when working in partnership with Connexions, were successful in developing preparation for working life programmes in which young people were encouraged to develop the skills and confidence to move into work, training or learning. Planning took account of local strategies to develop 14–19 provision generally. Youth services provided individual young people with support in tackling issues such as housing, finance and parental relationships and responsibilities. In this way, young people were often better placed to consider their longer-term options. Links between Connexions services and schools were good, although there were occasions when insufficient transfer of information about young people's learning needs between schools and post-16 learning providers adversely affected the suitability of the courses offered.

- In early education, partnership with parents is particularly strong. Many settings work closely with parents and carers to ensure continuity in children's learning. Parents are involved in planning and discuss their children's progress regularly with key practitioners. Children are given time to think and reflect on their ideas. Adults are aware of children's interests and use questions and suggestions effectively to extend their thinking and learning. Successful providers evaluate and know their services well; they act on their weaknesses and build on their strengths to improve further.

- In good-quality settings children's interest and imaginations are captured from the moment they arrive; children thrive in warm relationships and respond well to one another and those around them, developing their skills well as they explore and play. Children enjoy good opportunities for physical exercise, and they develop a good understanding of healthy eating. They learn to keep themselves safe, and their concerns are taken seriously. They are looked after by suitable and well-qualified adults who assess and manage risks effectively and are committed to continual improvement.

- Good-quality childcare is seen most often in childminding and least often in out-of-school provision (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Overall quality of childcare by type of provider April 2005–June 2006.

Scope for improvement identified during inspection

- Where Ofsted finds that National Standards are not met, it requires providers to take specific action promptly to meet them. In the inspection programme for 2003–05, Ofsted required actions to be taken by about a fifth of providers; the large majority of providers completed them successfully and met the standards. The proportion required to take actions fell to just 3.5% this year. The 4,200 actions required of providers during the year aim to ensure that:

- child protection concerns are identified and reported
- children are welcomed and their views are heard
- children's behaviour is handled appropriately
- children have regular opportunities to enjoy physical exercise
- the necessary records are kept to support children's safety and well-being.

- Inspectors also made 80,400 recommendations for providers to enhance the outcomes for children. These included asking providers to improve their approach to risk assessment or record keeping, to ensure that children are safe and healthy. More detail is available in Ofsted's report Early years: Safe and sound (see ix, p.62).

- Most providers operating large numbers of settings use the inspection findings from one setting to improve practice in all the others. Examples include improvements to staff induction, staff training and development, child protection procedures, risk assessments, the design and use of children's space, and the provision of information to parents.

- Where inspectors observed weaknesses in early education, these included failure to make use of assessments of individual children's progress, insufficient challenge to extend the older or more able children, and insufficient balance in the use of activities to promote children's development in the areas of learning. In each case Ofsted required the provider to take specific action to improve.

Childcare and early learning continued

Making a positive contribution continued

The impact of inspection

The very large majority of the settings judged inadequate at their previous inspections are improving. Where settings are judged inadequate, Ofsted requires the provider to take specified actions and re-inspects soon afterwards.

Results from re-inspection of some 400 settings judged to be providing inadequate childcare in the current cycle of inspections show that the very large majority (87%) have improved. The services they provide for children are now at least satisfactory and 18% of settings now provide good-quality childcare. Aspects which have improved include the security and supervision of exits and entrances, vetting of staff for suitability, adults' first-aid qualifications, and recording of medication and accidents. Sixty-one settings remain inadequate. Ofsted is continuing to monitor these closely, taking enforcement action where necessary to ensure that children are not left in an unsafe environment.

The very large majority of settings providing inadequate early education have also improved following inspection. Of 117 settings judged inadequate and re-inspected, 80% are now at least satisfactory, and 50% provide good-quality early education. Improvements include the use of children's assessments to plan activities for their next steps in learning. Just 23 settings are still judged to be providing inadequate education and Ofsted is monitoring their progress.

However, a few settings are performing less well now than at their previous inspections. Reduction in quality is sometimes linked to a change in management. In every case in which provision is inadequate, Ofsted takes further steps to ensure standards are met or to cancel registration.

Compliance with the National Standards

Ofsted has received fewer complaints about childcare this year; there were approximately 7,300 compared with some 7,800 in the previous year. The main areas of concern included allegations that individuals were not suitable to have unsupervised access to children, the number of adults present was insufficient to ensure children's safety, or the provider was not assessing and minimising risks to children.

Ofsted received more complaints about group day care settings (about 4,500) than about childminding (about 2,800). However, childminding settings have fewer children, and there were over twice as many complaints per 1,000 childcare places in childminding (8.8) as in day care (3.7).

Ofsted uses the information from each complaint to see whether the provider is continuing to meet the National Standards. In the majority (63%) of cases, Ofsted took no further action after checking, because there was no evidence to support the complaint, the concern had been resolved or the registered person had already taken remedial action. In a minority (29%) of cases, Ofsted required the registered person to complete an action to meet the National Standards within a set timescale. A very few cases (2%) resulted in Ofsted's issuing a formal warning, indicating that a further offence was likely to result in prosecution. In 6% of cases, Ofsted took enforcement action, including issuing a compliance notice which requires providers to comply with the National Standards (300 cases); suspending registration pending further investigation (130 cases); cancelling a registration (16 cases); imposing, changing, or removing a condition of registration (12 cases); seeking an emergency court order on a condition of registration (five cases); and bringing a prosecution (one case). Ofsted also served 90 enforcement notices to unregistered childminders who were operating illegally.

Pupils' voices

The majority of schools had school councils, and some of these had already established good track records and gained the full confidence of the pupils they represented. There is a strong link between good citizenship education and good school councils. School councils demonstrate democracy in action, with councillors representing their constituents on issues of concern to them and being held to account for what they do.

Most importantly, good school councils enable children's and young people's opinions to be heard. Whole-school inspections now include a discussion with members of the school council. In these discussions, pupils tell inspectors about the range of their involvement and the degree to which they believe they are listened to.

Often the school council agenda was exciting, with new ideas for school improvement or involvement in actions and activities beyond the school gates. The views of the school council were asked for and acted upon in many aspects of school life including, for example, staff recruitment and governors' meetings.

However, the continuing appearance on some school council agendas of topics such as toilets and school lunches suggested ineffectiveness on the part of both the school council and the school management. School councils thus were not run democratically and had a very restricted remit, were not regarded highly by other pupils. In some primary schools there was no school council or it had become ineffective. In some schools, too, pupils expressed the view that school councils were for the more able and articulate pupils only. Rarely was it ensured that pupils across the full range of abilities were represented.

Ofsted's report on inclusion suggests that the most effective schools ensured that the views of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, were additionally sought through questionnaires and interviews. These schools then used this information to help improve provision (see xviii, p.82).

One of the objectives of the post-16 citizenship pilot project was to improve the skills of young people in representation (see i, p.82). In particular, it strove to increase representation of the students in the college concerned and to encourage them to articulate their views to those in authority, partners and outside agencies with whom they discuss, negotiate and plan.

Making a positive contribution continued

Maintained schools

The main benefits of the extended services were found in increased confidence and self-esteem on the part of the young people, children and adults. Attitudes to learning and relationships were improved and participants' expectations of what they could achieve were raised. Study support sessions provided pupils with the opportunity to work in a calm and secure environment, in which they could receive one-to-one help from teachers. In some settings there was evidence that pupils' standards were improving, especially in English and mathematics, but the impact of services on achievement was rarely monitored.

Leaders and managers with a strong commitment to the work were crucial to success. The most effective providers had taken time to ascertain the requirements of local communities before setting up services, consulting regularly with local people and collaborating with other agencies in the gradual development of their services. These successful settings met the needs of their communities and engaged and maintained the interest of participants in the range of provision on offer.

The services had a beneficial effect on the Every Child Matters outcomes for children, raising their awareness of the importance of healthy eating and exercise, as well as providing opportunities for enjoyment of a range of activities. Those who used the services felt that their opinions were listened to and that they were able to influence the development of the services.

The role of local authorities was important in formulating well coordinated plans, in ensuring that good practice was disseminated and in establishing effective mechanisms for supporting extended service provision.

Participation and responsible action

Towards consensus? Citizenship in secondary schools reflects on the progress schools have made in establishing programmes of citizenship to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum (see xxxi, p.82).

The report focused on the distinctive features of participation in citizenship, in contrast to contribution in a broader sense. For example, all schools encouraged pupils to join in, to make contributions to charities and to support younger pupils in the school. Work in citizenship increased the impact of this; for example, with regard to charities, pupils were expected to research, decide, campaign and reflect. In some schools this was well done, but in others the 'political' dimension of participation and responsible action was limited, with relatively few pupils involved.

There were also successful citizenship projects involving young people in a range of post-16 settings (see i, p.82). While many schools, colleges, youth services and training providers had traditions of volunteering for work in the school, college or community, opportunities were often provided as extra-curricular activities and taken up by only a proportion of the students. The post-16 citizenship pilot programme sought to promote community action on a wider scale by including all of the students in specific programmes.

Introduction and overview

A new inspection framework was introduced in September 2005. Under the new arrangements schools are given only a few days' notice of their inspections. The school's self-evaluation is taken as the starting point for the work of the inspectors, who are in school for no more than two days and interact closely with the school's senior leaders.[9] Since September 2005, 4,468 primary, 1,014 secondary and 322 special schools have been inspected under the new framework, much larger numbers than in previous years.

Overall effectiveness

Of the 6,129 maintained schools inspected in 2005/06, the great majority, over nine in 10, are providing a quality of education which is at least satisfactory overall, while in about six in 10 it is good or outstanding. However, there are variations in performance among different types of school. In just over one in 10 schools, the standard of education is outstanding. The proportion of schools in which provision is inadequate, however, remains too high at about one in 13 of those inspected. In secondary schools this proportion increases to almost one in eight. Pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory in a large majority of schools inspected, although inadequate in 7%.

Most of the nursery schools inspected are good or outstanding. The proportion of special schools judged good or better overall is also very high. Almost six in 10 primary schools are good or outstanding.

In effective secondary schools with sixth form provision, there is a good take-up of post-16 courses. In many schools, larger numbers of pupils are encouraged to continue their education in the sixth form because of the wide range of appropriate courses available, some of which are offered in partnership with neighbouring post-16 institutions. Generally, provision in sixth forms is judged by inspectors to be better than in the main part of the school. Even in schools judged inadequate, sixth forms are frequently at least satisfactory.

Of the 163 pupil referral units (PRUs) inspected in 2005/06, over half are good or outstanding, a third are satisfactory but over one in eight is inadequate. Outstanding PRUs have a clear vision for their work, matched by excellent provision and productive partnerships with local schools and support services. PRUs judged to be inadequate fail to monitor and assess their pupils' progress effectively in key areas of their personal development.

Most schools have taken effective steps to bring about improvements since their previous inspections and are able to demonstrate the capacity to make further improvements.

Figure 5. The overall effectiveness of schools inspected since September 2005.

9 Further information about the new inspection arrangements can be found in the 2006b (xxii).

Maintained schools continued

Making a positive contribution continued
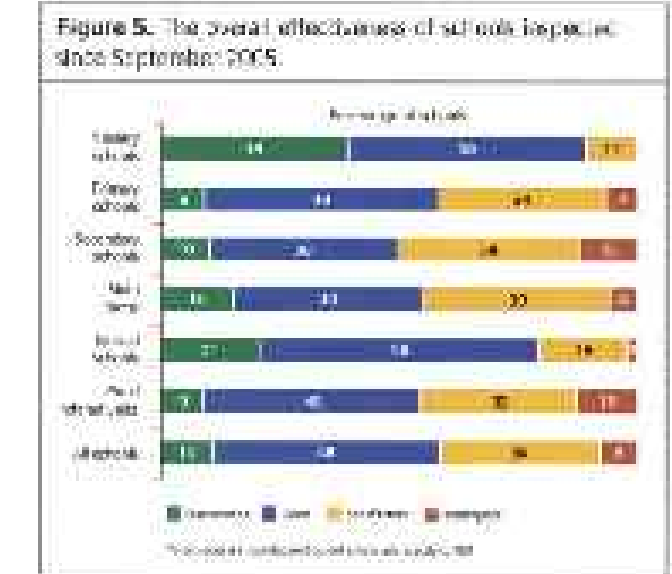
Since September 2005, inspectors have made judgements about how well schools are doing in relation to the five Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people. On the whole there has been a strong correlation between the judgements made about these outcomes and those made about pupils' achievement. Where judgements differ, however, in the main those on the Every Child Matters outcomes are higher than those for the pupils' achievement. Most pupils enjoy school. Predictably, their enjoyment of education is most marked in schools in which their achievement is good or outstanding; in these schools pupils are generally keen to learn and show initiative as they respond to appropriate challenge. However, in schools in which achievement is satisfactory or inadequate, while most pupils show at least satisfactory levels of enjoyment they are rarely excited about their learning.

Successful schools invest considerable time and effort in developing initiatives which are effective in improving teaching and learning. These may include the provision of a very effective literacy programme or a strong focus on raising the achievement of particular groups of pupils. In some schools, however, senior managers are struggling to support large numbers of new and inexperienced teachers. Problems with the recruitment and retention of teaching staff often have an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and progress in those schools. In secondary schools generally, there is a smaller proportion of good or outstanding teaching than in other types of schools.

Of the 322 special schools inspected, just under eight in 10 are judged to be good or better. In these successful schools, pupils become confident and achieve well in response to their teachers' high expectations. There is a well balanced range of activities, supporting pupils' academic, personal and medical needs. Teachers and health professionals work in effective partnership to support pupils in preparing for the next stages in life. In special schools in which provision is inadequate, the

curriculum is often poorly organised, there is insufficient teaching time available and pupils make inadequate progress in their academic and personal development.

Academies provide one possible response to the challenge of raising and sustaining standards of education in some of the country's most challenging areas. Nine of the new academies have been inspected under the new arrangements and the progress they are making, while uneven, is broadly positive. Overall effectiveness is good in three, satisfactory in five and inadequate in one. Given the histories of most of their predecessor schools and their legacy of low achievement, considerable progress has been made in improving morale, pupils' behaviour and the learning ethos. The quality of leadership is a strength in most academies, but the impact of management on the quality of the teaching has been more limited. There remain difficulties with staff recruitment and, in some academies, retention. The most common issue is the inexperience of many staff.

Fresh Start is another, and longer established, programme aimed at tackling intractable problems in schools causing concern. It involves the closure of an existing school and the opening of a new one on the same site. In 2005/06, the programme was modified to include a Collaborative Restart strategy for secondary schools working in partnership with successful schools in their areas. By January 2006, 44 Fresh Start and five Collaborative Restart schools had been opened. Just over nine in 10 of the schools opened between September 1998 and August 2003 and subsequently inspected have become providers of an acceptable standard of education for their pupils, in contrast to the schools which they replaced. Half are providing a good standard of education. Of the schools opened since August 2003 which have been monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), a very large majority are making at least satisfactory progress towards providing an acceptable standard of education, and nearly half of these schools are making good progress.

Children's efforts were rewarded with praise, enhancing their confidence, and their behaviour was generally very good.

Pupils in over four fifths of primary schools and three quarters of secondary schools made a good or outstanding contribution to the community. In very few schools was this inadequate. Commonly, pupils were involved in fundraising, sometimes for causes with which they identified and for which they campaigned. They were ready to hold positions of responsibility, volunteering and taking on leadership roles. Many schools were benefiting from successful peer mentoring, mediation and anti-bullying schemes in which pupils provided advice, counselling, tuition or support for their peers or younger pupils.

An established network of high-profile peer supporters works diligently to promote safety and resolve conflict. Peer supporters have provided training to other schools, and pupils have commented through questionnaires that they feel supported and safe. Two Year 6 pupils received the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Award for Young People for their contribution to the school community through their work as peer supporters.

Pupils thrive because all individuals feel valued by their classmates and teachers as soon as they enter the school. Large numbers of older pupils have excellent opportunities to contribute through the peer support, peer reading and prefect systems. Some 40 Year 10 pupils take part in peer mentoring, for which they receive formal training. This is an area in which the school has achieved national recognition, but more importantly it helps children to settle into school and maintains support when it is most needed, whether in paired reading or in one case, one peer carer for vulnerable children.

Some schools had particular links with schools and charities in the developing world, and these connections had two-way benefits as pupils learned to appreciate and respect people living under very different circumstances. They also learned about fundamental principles, such as the rights of the child. Pupils in many schools also contributed to their local community through specific projects, such as environmental improvement, and through engagement with particular groups, such as the elderly, faith groups and other schools. Such links played an important part in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Extended services

Extended services provided in schools and children's centres for pupils and families include crèche and day care facilities, breakfast and after-school clubs, sports clubs, provision for particular groups of pupils, and a very wide range of courses, activities and access to services, advice and guidance, including services for families. These take place outside the school day, on Saturdays and during school holidays.

Ofsted has carried out an evaluation of extended services in 13 schools and seven children's centres. The findings of this evaluation were published in July 2006 (see xiii, p.82). Almost all the provision inspected was effective in meeting the needs of the children, young people and adults who participated. In half the settings, the impact of the services on most outcomes for the users was good or better. Leadership and management were also at least good in over half the settings, all of which were strongly committed to services which were inclusive in providing for a broad range of participants' needs and abilities. However, there was a lack of continuity in services when children moved from children's centres on to school (see xiii, p.82).

Making a positive contribution continued

Maintained schools continued

Transitional arrangements between schools, and between schools and local colleges, were generally effective, although not all young people had sufficient and timely careers guidance. The development of multi-agency projects, such as Sure Start and those run by voluntary agencies, provides greater opportunities for local staff to support parents and carers in improving relationships with children and young people and in helping them to manage challenging situations. These services were appreciated by children and young people. However, insufficient attention was given to evaluating their success and this impeded the sharing of good practice.

Collaboration between partners in local areas was beginning to have a positive impact in reducing anti-social behaviour. Provision by the Youth Offending Service had generally been successful in reducing the numbers of first-time offenders in the youth justice system. However, levels of re-offending were too high in some areas.

Making a positive contribution: what young people think – findings from the 'Tellus' surveys of approximately 19,000 young people

Of the children and young people who completed the survey, 70% said they very often, or quite often, became involved in activities at school or in their local community. The range of opportunities at school was a telling reason why children and young people got involved or did not. A larger percentage of girls (34%) than boys (27%) thought that they did not get involved.

Survey results and other evidence gathered during joint area reviews revealed that many children and young people were disappointed that, although their views were sought by schools and some local groups, these did not influence decision-making significantly. Some local areas did not always inform children and young people of the results of any consultation and how it had influenced decision-making.

Case study 12. Learning responsible behaviour – an example from a pre-school setting for 24 children.

Daily small- and large-group activities teach children to play cooperatively, take turns and share. Politeness and good manners are highly regarded. Children say please and thank you and learn not to interrupt. They create their own individual workspace and know not to intrude on others unless invited. They make their needs known in an assertive but non-aggressive way. One little girl said to a boy who wanted her materials, 'No, this is my work and I haven't finished yet.' Staff are on hand to support and nurture those children who lack the maturity for this level of behaviour. Children quickly learn to appreciate and respect the needs of others and confidently speak up for themselves. Consequently, relationships are excellent at all levels.

Children learn to act positively and take responsibility for their actions because they have developed their own 'golden rules' for behaviour, such as 'treat others as you like to be treated', 'No pushing or shouting' and 'Respect each other and staff'. These are displayed around the room as a constant reminder and to show children that their views are valued.

Learning responsibility

The majority of early years settings inspected were good or outstanding in helping children to make a positive contribution. In these settings, children learned from an early age to form positive relationships and to respect one another and those around them.

Childminders and staff in day care settings helped children to support each other and to respect one another and the things around them. With support, minor disputes were resolved and children were able to share and take turns. Through a wide range of activities, children developed an awareness of their local community, the country and the wider world.

Achievement and standards

Figure 6. Pupils' achievement in schools inspected since September 2005.
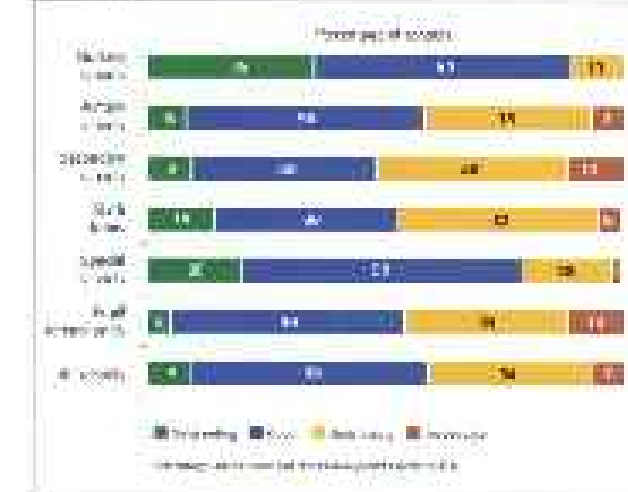
In 2005, National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show one percentage point fall in each subject in the proportion of pupils who achieved Level 2 or above. In reading, the proportion achieving Level 2 or above was 84%, in writing it was 81%, in mathematics 90% and in science 89%.[14] Girls outperformed boys in all subjects and particularly in reading and writing.

In the 2006 Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above did not change in English (79%). There was a decrease of one percentage point in reading (83%) but increases of four percentage points in writing (67%), and of one percentage point both in mathematics (76%) and in science (87%).[15] Apart from mathematics, girls outperformed boys in all subjects, with the widest gap in writing at 16 percentage points.

The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in the 2006 Key Stage 3 tests fell two percentage points in English to 72%, increased by three percentage points in mathematics to 77%, and rose by two percentage points in science to 72%. Girls outperformed boys; the difference was greatest in English, at 15 percentage points; in mathematics it was only one percentage point.[?]

The proportion of pupils in maintained schools achieving five or more A*–C grades at GCSE, or equivalent, has increased by two percentage points to 58.7%.

In most schools inspected, pupils make progress which is at least satisfactory. In about six in 10 schools, progress is good or outstanding, although it is inadequate in 7% of schools. In about two-thirds of schools the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good or outstanding, and it is inadequate in only 3%.

Children generally make a good start in the Foundation Stage, which is often a strength in primary schools. Pupils' achievement is better overall in the primary schools than in the secondary schools inspected; in primary schools, it is good or outstanding in nearly six in 10. Achievement is generally better in secondary schools with sixth forms than in those catering for the 11–16 age range. In schools with sixth forms, pupils' achievement is outstanding in over one in 10 of those inspected, but it is outstanding in only one in 20 schools for pupils aged 11–16 years.

Pupils' progress across Key Stage 3 is often slower than at Key Stage 4, sometimes reflecting the greater use of non-specialist teachers in Years 7 to 9 and a higher priority given to pupils taking public examinations. Variations in progress made by different groups of pupils are examined in further detail in the second section of this report.

[13] DfES provisional first release (SFR 12/2006/DfES), August 2006.

[14] DfES provisional first release (SFR 30/2006), August 2006.

[?] DfES provisional first release (SFR 35/2006), September 2006.

Pupils' achievement is good in almost six in 10 of the relatively small number of special schools inspected and outstanding in a further fifth. These are larger proportions than in primary or secondary schools. In effective special schools, targets are used well to challenge pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding in a variety of situations, enabling them to improve their confidence, communication skills and independence. Pupils' achievement is good or outstanding in over half of the pupil referral unit (PRUs) inspected. In the most successful units, there is equal emphasis on academic and personal skills, ensuring excellent progress in both. In special schools and also in PRUs, older pupils' progress is closely linked to the range of subjects and examinations available, as well as the degree of attention paid to basic skills and how well these are integrated in the teaching of other subjects.

Pupils' personal development and well-being

Figure 7: Pupils' personal development and well-being in schools inspected since September 2005.
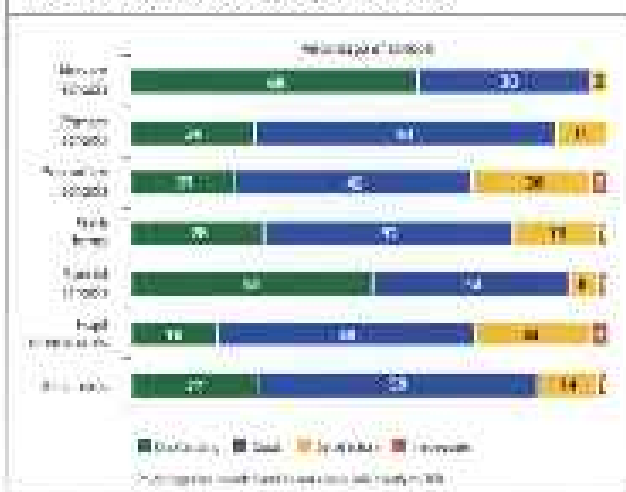
The overwhelming majority of schools ensure that pupils' personal development and well-being are at least satisfactory, and in most cases they are good or outstanding. Schools generally welcome the focus on the whole child represented by the Every Child Matters agenda. Overall, the care, guidance and support provided for pupils are stronger than other aspects of provision, including teaching and learning.

Whilst pupils' attendance is good or better in about half of the schools inspected this year, it is inadequate in about one in 10, a smaller proportion than that reported from inspections in 2004/05. The largest proportions of schools in which attendance is inadequate are in London and the north of England. Attendance is generally worse in secondary than in primary schools among the schools inspected in 2005/06; this is particularly so across the north of England, where about a fifth of secondary schools have inadequate attendance. However, attendance is also inadequate in almost one in five London primary schools inspected this year. Pupils' attendance nationally tends to be lower in schools with high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Many PRUs are successful at improving their pupils' attendance but in a quarter of the units inspected, attendance overall is nevertheless inadequate.

In good secondary schools, in which boys and girls of all abilities do well, several approaches contribute towards successful outcomes: effective pastoral care, with robust monitoring of pupils' attitudes and encouragement for them to try hard; a sharp focus on examination preparation and coursework completion; a well-conceived curriculum; and generally good teaching.

Ofsted evaluates the degree to which early years settings, schools, colleges and children's services are effective in enabling children and young people to make a positive contribution by: taking part in decision-making and supporting the community and the environment; behaving positively and with respect for the law, in and out of school; developing positive relationships; choosing not to bully and discriminate; developing self-confidence and dealing successfully with significant changes and challenges in life; and developing enterprising behaviour.

Overview

- Joint area reviews revealed that most local services worked well to provide encouragement for young people to make a positive contribution.

- Many schools had systems of peer mentoring which gave pupils responsibility and provided a service for their peers.

- Pupils were motivated by the extra opportunities offered to them in extended schools.

- All the schools surveyed encouraged pupils to contribute to charities and to support younger pupils but in some schools the 'participation and responsible action' strand of citizenship was underdeveloped.

- Most schools and colleges had student councils and these were often effective. However, some were seen by pupils as representative of only the more able and articulate.

Local children's services

Joint area reviews judged that in 26 of the 35 local areas inspected, the effectiveness of local services in working together to help young people make a positive contribution was good or better. Many councils had encouraged greater involvement by young people in their committee work and several had implemented surveys of young people's views to help guide their thinking and to ensure that the council's work met the current needs of young people.

However, only a few areas systematically gathered the views of looked after children to help inform future commissioning of services and to determine how effective the service was. Occasionally, looked-after children did not know how to complain about the service they received.

Most children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were encouraged to be involved in reviews of their learning programmes but some services did not ensure that children's views of their progress and any planned changes were sufficiently explained. This is a particular problem when young people transfer from children's to adult services.

Personal and social development activities provided by the authorities' youth services and the voluntary and private sector generally offered a satisfactory variety of opportunities for young people to participate, build up a wide range of skills and make new friends. However, liaison with potential partners in local communities to extend the range of educational, recreational and leisure activities was underdeveloped.

In general, success rates for learners who needed and received learning support were at least as good as the success rates for students who did not need support. In most cases this was due to better than average retention rates, but in a number of colleges achievement rates were also better.

The most effective support was made relevant to young people's vocational courses. This was achieved either through close liaison between the support tutor and vocational teacher or support in lessons where staff had both vocational and Skills for Life qualifications. The use of ICT was becoming much more widespread in learning support and was increasingly effective. Initial assessment of literacy and numeracy was routine for all full-time and almost all substantive part-time students.

Each college used a range of methods of learning support to suit the needs of the students, including teaching on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. Not all colleges were collecting and analysing learning support data but some were becoming very sophisticated, for example in measuring the effectiveness of learning support for different groups of learners. In colleges with the best learning support provision, there was very active support from senior managers.

The overall quality of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses had improved. Learners generally made good gains in personal skills and demonstrated proficient speaking and communication skills. Progression between different levels of programmes was also good, and rates of retention on courses leading to Skills for Life qualifications were increasing.

However, a small number of ESOL courses were unsatisfactory and there remained areas of weakness in most colleges. Teaching and learning targets did not always take sufficient account of the learners' differing language needs and educational backgrounds, especially at entry level. Progression to vocational and other courses was hindered in many cases because ESOL learners were not receiving adequate monitoring of their progress, and

there was insufficient language support for learners on vocational courses. There was some unsatisfactory management of the Skills for Life ESOL Strategy.

Provision for students with difficulties and/or disabilities was inspected in a range of colleges, including some that were found to be inadequate in their previous inspection.

- Success rates were improving, with better achievement among learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a significant increase in the number of learners entered for external accreditation. However, there were too few opportunities for learners to gain vocational qualifications.

- Learners were not always entered for the appropriate programme. There were few courses offered at Levels 1 and 2, so learning needs were not being met, with students placed on available, but inappropriate, accredited courses (see p.85).

- Learners made very good progress in developing their personal and social skills, often as a direct result of the very good support and guidance they received.

- Colleges continued to provide an extensive range of programmes; they responded well to local needs and emphasised external links and community partnerships. However, much otherwise satisfactory provision placed insufficient emphasis on work experience programmes and the development of work-related skills.

- Progression from pre-entry level to entry level programmes continued to improve but progression to employment and vocational programmes required further development.

- Assessment remained an area of weakness. Initial diagnosis of learners' needs was inadequate, leading to learning plans with targets which were neither appropriate nor challenging and against which learners' progress could not be effectively monitored.

- Access to ICT to support learning was not always sufficient.

Overall, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory or better in almost all schools inspected and outstanding in over a quarter. In primary and special schools it is rarely inadequate. In secondary schools the picture is less positive. Behaviour is good or better in seven in 10 of the schools inspected this year and inadequate in 8%, a lower proportion than in the past. In secondary schools in which behaviour is inadequate, many pupils settle quickly and work steadily but too many lessons are disrupted by the poor attitudes of a minority. In schools judged inadequate overall, the poor behaviour of a significant number of pupils often hinders or prevents the progress of those who wish to learn. In almost a third of secondary schools, behaviour is no better than satisfactory overall, and in these schools there are also instances of disruptive or distracting behaviour from some pupils. In the PRUs inspected, pupils' behaviour is good or outstanding in just under three quarters of cases, and in the overwhelming majority it is satisfactory or better.

Most pupils feel safe in school but bullying remains a concern. Schools have established strategies to combat intimidation, but some parents still tell inspectors that they lack confidence that all incidents will be dealt with effectively. In successful schools, where there is a positive ethos and pupils respect and care for each other and their surroundings, incidents of bullying or racial harassment are relatively rare and are dealt with well. The issue of bullying is examined in further detail in the second section of this report (pp.43 and 45–7).

The care, guidance and support provided to pupils are particularly strong in special schools and are mirrored by the high quality of the pupils' personal development, which is outstanding in over half of the special schools inspected. An overwhelming majority of pupils in special schools enjoy their education.

Quality of education

Figure 8. The effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools inspected since September 2005.

Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in the very large majority of the schools inspected and in six in 10 they are good or outstanding. Where teaching and learning are most effective, teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and have the confidence to stand back and encourage pupils to become independent learners. Successful teachers raise pupils' aspirations, give them the confidence to succeed and enable them to make rapid progress through challenging activities. In less effective lessons, teachers dominate and provide too few opportunities for pupils to take an active role in thinking things out for themselves. In this environment, more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and frequently underachieve.

Weaknesses in teachers' use of assessment information often hinder pupils' learning. Teaching is likely to be good only when teachers know what their pupils understand and then plan activities to meet their differing needs. In the very best lessons, teachers plan for personalised learning to meet individual needs. In their discussions with inspectors, pupils often revealed that they found their work too easy or were bored by having to listen passively to teachers for long periods.

Maintained schools continued

In successful schools, assessment information is used increasingly well to set targets, track pupils' progress, focus support and enhance achievement. The pupils in these schools know their targets, how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. There remains, however, considerable inconsistency in the degree to which schools make effective use of assessment information. In December 2005, for example, Ofsted reported that in a survey of 160 secondary schools, the transfer of assessment data from the primary to the secondary phase was unsatisfactory in about a quarter of cases (see xxv, p.82).

The largest proportions of good and outstanding teaching and learning are found in nursery schools and special schools.

The quality of teaching is better overall in the Foundation Stage than in the other key stages in primary schools. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the only year group for which the strength of teaching rivals that seen in the Foundation Stage is Year 6. The weakest teaching continues to be in Years 1, 3 and 4. Inadequate teaching in the primary phase is often characterised by planning which is not adapted to the specific needs of the pupils in the class.

Teaching and learning are good or better in just over half of the secondary schools inspected and generally improve as the pupils progress through the school, with best practice usually found in sixth forms. However, teaching and learning are inadequate in 6% of the secondary schools inspected. In some subjects in secondary schools, the quality of provision is affected by high levels of staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified staff; this is particularly the case in science, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology, including food technology.

Overall, in schools inspected this year, there have been improvements in the quality of curriculum planning. Sampling of inspection reports suggests that

there has been an increase in the range of vocational courses being offered to pupils aged 14–19 years but that in many schools vocational courses are not yet valued as highly as academic courses, and especially so in high-performing schools.

In a minority of secondary schools statutory requirements are not being met, usually in religious education and citizenship, but also sometimes in other subjects. Curricular provision for ICT also remains a concern in Key Stage 4, particularly for pupils who do not study for a national qualification in the subject. Some of these pupils do not have sufficient access to ICT to ensure that they receive their full entitlement within the National Curriculum.

In four out of five special schools, the quality of teaching and learning is good or better. In these effective schools, teachers make appropriate use of assessment to monitor the progress of individual pupils and as the basis of their planning. Schools for pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties are less successful than other special schools in matching the curriculum to individual needs, although the provision in most is at least satisfactory overall. In some special schools, the lack of specialist teachers has an adverse effect on the quality and breadth of the curriculum.

This is also a problem for some PRUs. In these units, a curriculum which meets the pupils' needs and aspirations is the key to ensuring that they make good progress. However, in one in 10 PRUs the curriculum is inadequate, often because it is too narrow and insufficiently focused on preparing pupils for their lives once they have left the unit. Outstanding educational provision in PRUs is characterised by high levels of consistency in the teachers' use of daily assessments, so that each pupil's progress is kept under constant review and is linked to clear long-term goals. In these successful settings, there is a particular emphasis on the development of skills to ensure pupils' future economic well being.

Enjoying and achieving continued

In schools with good provision:

- EAL specialists had a central and integrated role in developing whole-school literacy and in establishing common approaches to teaching and learning

- EAL specialists planned and taught alongside subject teachers and ensured that Secondary National Strategy approaches to teaching and learning provided pupils who have EAL with the best opportunities to develop subject knowledge and language skills

- EAL pupils particularly benefited from the use of specific learning objectives linked to short-term tasks with precise purposes

- EAL pupils also responded to well-planned lessons in which demonstration, careful structuring of activities and opportunities for shared learning enabled them to participate fully

- careful grouping of pupils in mainstream settings enabled EAL pupils to participate in speaking and listening activities with confident speakers

- pupils were placed in classes according to their abilities rather than on the basis of their competence in English, and were provided with effective support whatever their stage of language acquisition.

In schools with weaker provision, information about pupils was often patchy so that teachers found it hard to plan appropriately for individuals or groups. Too often, undue emphasis was placed on practising existing language skills. Practices varied between, and sometimes within, schools depending on resources and demands. There were times when the focus was almost exclusively on new arrivals; pupils were withdrawn for intensive language lessons before they were placed in mainstream classes where they received little further help or support. Where EAL pupils were taught separately from others, they had few opportunities to acquire or practise English in relevant and recognisable contexts.

Excellence in Cities

A report which reviewed the progress of Excellence in Cities and the Leadership Incentive Grant concluded that Excellence in Cities, together with associated programmes, had contributed significantly to raising standards and improving social inclusion (see xii, p.82). There had been a steady improvement in GCSE results, narrowing the gap with other schools.

Effective leadership and management were seen as crucial to the success of these schools, both in generating a momentum for improvement and sustaining it over time. In particular, the Leadership Incentive Grant had a major impact, enabling schools to implement initiatives more rapidly than would have been the case otherwise. The Behaviour Improvement Programme also had a generally good impact in schools. The more dynamic headteachers used additional funding to help carry out their vision for wider school improvement.

However, in a small minority of schools, leadership and management were not as good, leading to a piecemeal approach to improvement. In a few of these schools, despite funding over several years, no noticeable improvement in pupils' attainment or progress resulted.

Inclusion in post-16 settings

In literacy and numeracy, pass rates in specialised Ofsted tests used as part of the Skills for Life Strategy were generally high. Learners' achievement was better where skills for learning were well developed. Care, guidance and support were important factors in determining learners' success and most benefited from effective strategies for widening participation and building good community links.

Direct learning support in courses was usually effective. In 2005/06, inspectors visited a range of colleges to survey the impact of literacy, numeracy and language support delivered in class and through sessions with small groups or individual learners.

Enjoying and achieving continued

Maintained schools continued

Case study 11. Effective use of the Intensifying Support Programme in a primary school.

Before the programme began, there was considerable dissatisfaction among staff, a large proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and a history of low standards. Coordinators did not take enough responsibility for the leadership of their subjects and the strategic development of the school lacked coherence. In a little over two terms, these issues have been tackled and good progress has been made on a number of fronts. There is now a strong sense of teamwork, with staff working together very well to create an effective climate for learning. There is greater consistency in the culture and climate for learning in classes. Teachers and expectations are common and all staff have a greater understanding of how learning develops. Staff share a common purpose and are eager to reflect on their practice and learn from each other. This has led to improved consistency in lesson-planning and has raised the importance of assessment in the planning process.

All classes now have curricular targets clearly on display and staff are more aware of the impact of their teaching on the achievement of pupils. Assessments are accurate and teachers share concerns and seek help if an individual or group of pupils does not make the expected progress. The programme consultant has helped staff understand the importance of assessment for learning and given advice on day-to-day assessment strategies. This has been particularly beneficial to the teachers who had previously taught unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers are now more confident in adapting their planning and responding creatively to questions and requests for clarification in lessons. There is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching in the school.

The Secondary National Strategy and inclusion

At secondary level there was considerable improvement in teachers' awareness of inclusion, but continuing difficulty in putting policy into practice to raise pupils' achievement (see xxx, p.621). In particular the Secondary National Strategy offers limited support to help teachers meet the needs of pupils who use English as an additional language (EAL) and those of pupils who start their secondary education with standards well below those expected for their age group. However, there was some evidence that lower-achieving boys and bilingual learners were doing better as a result of the more carefully structured teaching associated with the strategy and staff training.

There were both strengths and weaknesses in the intervention programmes provided for pupils working well below Level 3 at the age of 11. On the one hand, there was an improvement in pupils' motivation because of the special help provided. On the other hand, pupils who were withdrawn for literacy intervention programmes sometimes found it hard to understand what they were taught and struggled to apply what they had covered when they returned to ordinary lessons.

In subjects other than English, there were few examples of effective intervention for lower-attaining pupils and schools usually claimed that setting arrangements were sufficient to cater for pupils in these subjects. Yet in the main, when pupils were taught in ability sets, there was little further attempt to meet the individual needs of those sets catering for lower-attaining pupils. Furthermore, schools were unable to show the effectiveness of intervention programmes or other strategies because there was insufficient evaluation of outcomes.

The Secondary National Strategy report also looked at provision in a small sample of schools for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Of this small sample, some staff had received good training and support from their local authorities but in others this was inadequate; generally training was not provided for all staff.

Leadership and management

Figure 9. The effectiveness of leadership and management in schools inspected since September 2005.
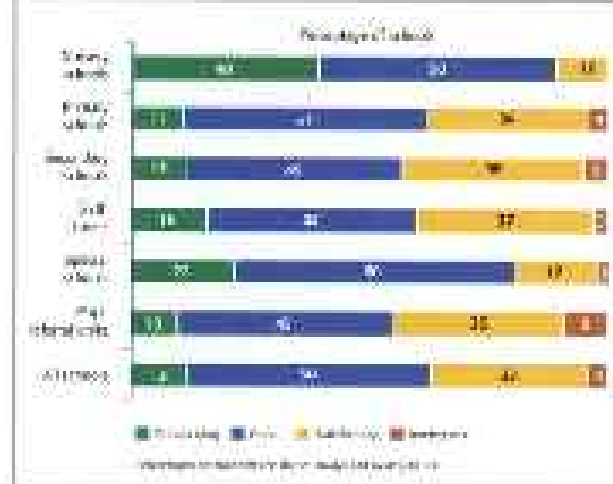
Leadership and management are at least satisfactory in most schools and good or outstanding in over six in 10. There is a close link between the overall effectiveness of schools of all types and the quality of their leadership and management. Outstanding leaders analyse the quality and consistency of teaching across the full range of provision in order to ensure that the professional development provided for staff brings about improvement. There are, however, some variations between aspects of leadership and management in different types of schools.

The very large majority of primary schools inspected are led and managed at least satisfactorily. The role of the headteacher is crucial in establishing and maintaining high-quality leadership and management. However, in the one in 10 primary schools in which they are outstanding, the management team as a whole, including subject leaders, is highly effective. Monitoring and evaluation, including the work undertaken by subject leaders, remain the weakest elements of leadership and management.

This is particularly evident in the primary schools in which leadership and management are only satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation are good or better in just under six in 10 of the schools inspected.

In about six out of 10 primary and secondary schools leadership and management are good or outstanding. In effective schools, staff at all levels are given responsibility for making decisions and pioneering new ideas. Some less successful schools have too many systems and procedures, the impact of which is proportional and rarely sustained. In such schools, important initiatives such as the National Secondary Strategy are not coordinated and managed effectively.

In a very large proportion of special schools inspected, leadership and management are good or outstanding. In these schools, self-evaluation is invariably a strength: it is rigorous, accurate and comprehensive and it provides a firm foundation for improvement.

In almost one in 10 of PRUs inspected, leadership and management are inadequate, and in a similar proportion self-evaluation is inadequate; systems and procedures in these units are usually insufficiently embedded.

Governors discharge their duties well in most schools. The most effective governing bodies use their own professional skills and expertise to provide good support and effective challenge to the headteacher. Many have been instrumental in ensuring effective reforms of staffing structures to enable schools to meet current challenges. In schools which are inadequate, governors are often insufficiently rigorous in their monitoring and in the degree to which they hold the leadership team to account for the progress of the school.

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The impact of the new inspection arrangements

The evidence suggests that inspectors are making a difference. Overall, the new inspection system is running smoothly and has resulted in financial savings, both for schools and for Ofsted. Most headteachers who responded to Ofsted surveys are positive about the new inspection arrangements and consider that the benefits of their inspections outweigh any negative aspects. The great majority of the respondents believe that the right issues for action were identified by inspection and they intend to use them to take their schools forward. Local authorities also report that inspections identify issues that form a sound basis for improvement.

An independent survey, carried out in 2006 by the National Foundation for Educational Research, found that most schools believe that the outcomes of inspection provide a helpful agenda for further improvement. Of 134 schools responding to the survey, almost all were in agreement with inspectors' recommendations for improvement. Eight out of 10 respondents reported that inspection had already contributed to improvements in their schools, while 95% believed that it was likely to do so in the future.

In 2005/06, approximately nine in 10 of the schools inspected have made effective progress since their last inspection, a similar proportion to that for 2004/05. The new inspection arrangements have emphasised the importance of ensuring that school self-evaluation is rooted in measuring the impact of the school's work on the quality of provision and the pupils' achievement. Local authorities have welcomed the new focus on school self-evaluation. They generally report that it has had a significant and positive impact on the way in which schools causing concern gather and analyse information to make accurate judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of their work.

Schools causing concern

With the introduction in September 2005 of the new inspection arrangements, the categories used to identify schools causing concern changed. Schools causing the greatest concern, because they are failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, are still made subject to special measures. However, schools that are inadequate but which are demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements are not made subject to special measures but are given a notice to improve.

These changes need to be borne in mind when the numbers and proportions of schools in categories of concern are considered. The number of schools subject to special measures at the end of the school year 2005/06 was lower than at the end of the previous year. Although the number of schools placed in the category in 2005/06 was higher than in 2004/05, the number removed from it was higher still. That 184 schools were made subject to special measures in 2005/06 does not mean that schools generally are getting worse. More than twice as many inspections took place during the year than in 2004/05. Of schools inspected in 2005/06, 2.7% were made subject to special measures, the same proportion as in 2004/05 and smaller than the 3.7% in 2003/04. Although the changed definition means that some schools that might formerly have been made subject to special measures received notices to improve instead, Ofsted has made no secret of the fact that the new inspection framework has 'raised the bar' and reflects higher expectations of schools' performance.

The Primary National Strategy and inclusion

The evaluation of the Primary National Strategy found that schools which adopted a creative and motivating approach to learning were more likely than others to be inclusive in their practice (see six, p.82). Examples included talking to partners, collaborative group work, ICT and educational visits to stimulate first-hand learning experiences. Other characteristics included:

- good data analysis
- well targeted support
- well managed teaching assistants, learning mentors and bilingual support workers
- increased involvement of parents through a broad range of school activities
- family learning programmes.

Inclusion depends on the capacity of teachers to plan for the range of pupils in their classes and to make good use of the assistance available to them. However, the quality of support was reduced when:

- pupils were provided with tasks that were too difficult to complete independently, or where adults guided pupils to the answers in order to maintain the pace of the session but at the expense of securing learning
- there was insufficient identification of and provision for pupils who had significant gaps in learning and who required more focused intervention
- insufficient challenge was provided for more able pupils.

Although data are now available from most local authorities, many schools are unsure how to access the needs of pupils who are identified as underachieving or to ensure that the gains they make are sustained in the longer term. The greatest impact of the Primary National Strategy has been through specific programmes, such as the Intensifying Support Programme, in which support materials are used with greater consistency and all staff are involved.

The Intensifying Support Programme is targeted at schools with Key Stage 2 results that are consistently below national levels. Involvement has led to improvements in leadership and management at all levels, especially among subject leaders in English and mathematics, and in teaching and learning, with a clearer focus on teaching objectives, learning outcomes, and good-quality assessment.

Most primary schools were aware of the Primary National Strategy's literacy programmes. However, schools generally knew too little about how to manage the intervention programmes successfully.

An issue for many schools is the impact on individual pupils of withdrawal from classes. This occurs when pupils are taken from class to a designated area in school for learning support. Such arrangements worked well where provision was well matched to the assessment of individual needs. However, there was often an emphasis on consolidation at the expense of new learning. Furthermore, even though support teachers often had considerable responsibility, systematic monitoring of their work was rare, as was feedback to inform improvement.

High quality, specialist teachers and a commitment by leaders to creating opportunities to include all pupils were the key to success. In good lessons, teachers had well-established subject knowledge and were skilled in identifying and explaining exactly what the pupils needed to do next to make good progress. These teachers demonstrated care and concern for individual pupils and wanted them to gain maximum benefit from each lesson. The best teachers had the confidence and motivation to take risks in making the lessons innovative and exciting for the pupils.

Where support from teaching assistants was good, they had often received high-quality training and had relevant qualifications. Training was disseminated effectively to all staff to ensure that the school capitalised on professional development and promoted consistent practice. However, this occurred in too few schools.

The survey also found that the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice has some serious weaknesses in operation.* First, the provision of additional resources to pupils – such as teaching assistant support – does not ensure good-quality intervention or adequate pupil progress. Pupils in mainstream schools, where support from teaching assistants was the main type of provision, were less likely to make good academic progress than those who had access to specialist teaching.

The lengthy process of obtaining a statement of SEN disadvantaged pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. This is the group least likely to receive effective support and most likely to receive their support too late.

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour were less likely than others to be placed in mainstream schools, even when specialist facilities were available. Those included in mainstream provision, when they had access to teaching from experienced and qualified specialists, were as likely to do well as those taught in special schools.

Local authorities have not yet analysed the effectiveness of different types of provision or determined which provision has provided the best outcomes for pupils with different types of need.

Pupil referral units (PRUs) in the survey were the least successful of all in ensuring the good progress of the pupils who attended. Their strengths lay in their good attention to the personal and social needs of the pupils. Increasingly, they were improving provision by developing greater flexibilities in the curriculum through the use of partnerships, for example with colleges and youth offending teams. In many PRUs, the curriculum has been personalised to take account of individual strengths and needs. However, there was a continuing weakness in the use of assessment to underpin progress and to monitor how well pupils were achieving in academic and vocational courses. Lack of information from previous schools made it difficult to maintain continuity of learning.

Increasingly, PRUs are receiving pupils with statements of special educational need, who in the past might have been placed in schools for pupils with educational and behavioural difficulties. PRUs are often ill-equipped to cope with these pupils who have complex behaviour difficulties as well as a statement of SEN. Indeed, they were not designed to enrol such pupils; and so during 2006/07 Ofsted will carry out a survey to find the reasons for this trend.

Ofsted's decision to re-inspect in 2005/06 all schools that had been subject to special measures for over two years may have contributed to the slightly increased number of schools removed from the category. A few of these schools had been in special measures for considerably longer, and the great majority were removed from it when re-inspected, although half of the 44 schools re-inspected were given a notice to improve. The removal of such schools from special measures may have contributed to the higher overall average recovery time for schools taken out of the category in 2005/06, compared with the equivalent figure for 2004/05. As in 2004/05, the average recovery time for primary schools is shorter than that for secondary schools.

During 2005/06, 317 schools, 5.1% of those inspected, have been given notices to improve; as a result the total number of schools in categories of concern was higher at the end of the year than at the beginning. Nevertheless, the proportion of inspections that resulted in schools becoming subject to special measures or notices to improve (7.8%) was broadly in line with the proportions of schools placed in categories of concern over the preceding three years.

Inspectors monitoring schools causing concern have noted an increasing willingness by local authorities to act swiftly to remove barriers to improvement. This has been a significant and beneficial development. Local authorities are more likely than in the past to set an ambitious timescale for a school's recovery. Ofsted has continued to hold regular school improvement seminars for key personnel from schools in categories of concern. Participants frequently comment on the helpfulness of these seminars in clarifying priorities for action.

Introduction

About half of independent schools are inspected by the Independent Schools Council and the rest, referred to as non-association schools, are inspected by Ofsted. The non-association schools include a wide range: independent special schools, often catering for pupils with complex learning difficulties and disabilities; children's homes applying to provide education for the children in their care; and a variety of faith schools. The period 2005 to 2006 has seen an enormous increase in the number of children's homes seeking registration for education.

The majority of schools inspected by Ofsted during the period are small: most have fewer than 50 pupils and many are special schools, catering for pupils with a wide range of learning and behavioural difficulties. Many of the places for pupils who attend these special schools are funded by local authorities in which there is no suitable provision to meet the specific needs of the young people concerned.

Non-association independent schools

By September 2005, schools in the transitional phase had to demonstrate that they met new statutory regulations; 27 out of the 180 had not improved sufficiently to meet requirements.*

The large proportion of schools inspected which meet most or all of the statutory regulations indicates that the positive developments noted in last year's report have been broadly sustained. This year there was a small rise in the number of schools showing the highest levels of compliance with the regulations, building on the substantial rise seen since 2004. However, about one in seven of the schools inspected this year meets less than 80% of the regulations, a similar proportion to last year. These schools frequently have inadequate educational provision, including weaknesses in the quality of teaching, assessment and curriculum planning, and do not have effective policies to safeguard aspects of pupils' welfare.

Independent schools continued

Enjoying and achieving continued

In a large majority of the schools inspected there is good attention to pupils' welfare, health and safety. However, there are important areas of weakness in this aspect of the work of a small minority of schools. Over a quarter of schools inspected this year have not prepared and implemented adequate policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at school. In a similar proportion of schools, attendance or admissions registers are not maintained correctly. One in five of the schools inspected provides inadequate facilities for pupils who are taken ill at school.

Non-association independent special schools

Over the past five years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities being educated in independent schools. The increase in the number of care homes applying to provide education for the children in their care is a welcome development in the provision of stability and continuity for vulnerable groups of children.

Approximately two thirds of those inspected met requirements and were recommended for registration, but one in five required substantial improvements. Of the independent special schools which received a full inspection in the same period, over half are providing a good, and in some cases outstanding, quality of education and care. In a very small number, provision is unacceptably poor. Re-inspection showed that the schools concerned are making some improvements but still have considerable work to do to comply with regulations.

Other inspections of non-association schools

In addition to the above inspections, Ofsted undertook other regulatory inspections of schools, including 148 registration visits to prospective new schools. Two thirds of those inspected were recommended for registration by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) after the first short inspection. Nevertheless, some proprietors did not fully understand the requirements. The gaps in understanding frequently related to meeting regulatory obligations for the development of policies and strategies, mainly with regard to setting out the nature and content of the curriculum to meet the needs of all the pupils.

In the report Race equality in education: good practice in schools and local education authorities, Ofsted evaluated the work of schools in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in closing gaps in attainment between groups of pupils (see xx, p.82).

All schools visited in this survey of good practice had either devised race equality policies or were revising existing policies to take better account of the Act and their local circumstances. For some schools with pupils drawn from predominantly white backgrounds, race relations provided were an innovation. At best, policy formulation drew both on local authority advice and the views of stakeholders, including parents/carers and community groups.

A starting point for primary schools was to identify and close gaps in attainment between groups of pupils. This involved collection of data on individual rates of progress in core subjects and qualitative evidence, such as absence due to extended holidays abroad during the school term or involvement in playground incidents. This evidence informed judgements on allocation of pupils to appropriate teaching groups and on the deployment of additional resources for support. As a consequence, most schools could be confident that pupils from minority ethnic groups were achieving well.

Similarly, at secondary level, local authorities' good data analysis supported schools effectively, enabling them to engage in fine analysis of the attainment of minority ethnic pupils to ensure that support was put in place to meet realistic but challenging targets. Good practice was also found in the development of school-home links, and these were effective, for example in improving the attainment and engagement of Gypsy and Traveller pupils.

Some good practice was found in the use of race equality materials in the curriculum, predominantly in arts and humanities subjects, which made good use of local resources that contributed to harmonious relationships between groups of pupils. Pupils commented that they enjoyed subjects which incorporated race equality issues and that the 'black dimension' within a number of curriculum areas widened their perspectives on race and discriminatory practices in school and beyond.

Inclusion and different settings

An Ofsted survey, Inclusion: does it matter where pupils are taught?, sought to identify whether pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made better progress in their academic and vocational learning, personal development and social development in mainstream or special schools (see xxiii, p.82).

The report found that pupils with even the most severe and complex needs were able to make outstanding progress in all types of settings. Effective provision was distributed equally in mainstream and special schools visited, but there was more good and outstanding provision in mainstream schools with additional resourced units than elsewhere.

The best teaching was most often provided by specialist teachers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These teachers had higher expectations for pupils over the longer term and applied their knowledge of the pupils' difficulties well in ensuring that the impact of these was reduced. They were more confident in managing the various support strategies, such as in-class support, and adapted curricula to meet the pupils' changing needs. They actively encouraged pupils' independence.

Most of the improvements in courses were associated with better leadership and management. In engineering and history, for example, better management was a key factor in the wider involvement of staff in self-assessment so that they gained a realistic view of their strengths and a systematic approach to tackling weaknesses. Striking features of the most effective college departments included effective communication; good teamwork; careful attention to improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in relation to the use of ILT; and a productive collaboration with employers.

Many courses were enriched by community partnerships. Where the process of establishing links has been slow, for example in some business courses, opportunities for enriching learners' experiences were lost. Other areas requiring attention in some colleges included curriculum action planning which failed to tackle identified areas of weakness adequately. Poor management of new programmes of work or initiatives, such as the new Skills for Life ESOL qualification, was also an area for improvement.

Some courses, such as construction, generally benefited from good accommodation. However, accommodation was inadequate in some performing arts courses, particularly in the many music rooms which have poor soundproofing. On music technology courses there were examples of too few specialist resources for the number of learners.

The inclusion of different groups of children and young people

Analysis of achievement by gender, ethnicity and socio-economic indicators in a survey of schools showed that, despite some considerable improvements overall, discrepancies remained; boys, pupils from some minority ethnic groups and those entitled to free school meals often achieved less well than their peers.

Ofsted surveys and whole-school inspections have identified good practice in raising the achievement of different groups of pupils. This was often found in schools and colleges which acted to make the idea of personalised learning a reality and so were able to raise achievement.

Such schools and colleges are exciting places where learners enjoy the activities, attend regularly and engage themselves actively in their school or college. Inclusion is at the forefront of planning for improvement. Leaders and managers are creative. They evaluate rigorously whether the strategies they have put in place have actually improved achievement for all groups of learners. Assessment data are used very well to identify patterns of achievement and inform planning. Partnerships within the school and college community, in the local area and beyond, are strong and effective.

Case study 10. Inclusion of bilingual learners in an inner-city primary school.

Learners used their home language with confidence and bilingual staff moved seamlessly between English and the home language when teaching. In a Year 6 target group, learners were engaged in paired talk about the properties of quadrilaterals. The teacher gave out cards on to which she had stuck different four-sided shapes. Pupils had to describe the shape using vocabulary such as irregular, parallel, adjacent and right angle, whilst a partner drew the shape on a whiteboard. All learners in this mathematics target group made good progress as a result of the focused mathematical language support. They used their home language to clarify and expand their talk about the properties of the hidden shape. A bilingual teaching assistant was deployed very effectively to support the learners through questioning and reinforcement using their home language.

Introduction: a new programme of college inspections

Ofsted began a new cycle of inspections of further education (FE), sixth form and independent specialist colleges in September 2005, working jointly with the Adult Learning Inspectorate. This section draws on the findings from inspections within this new programme. Between September 2005 and June 2006, inspections were carried out in 59 general FE or tertiary colleges, 20 sixth form colleges, 21 independent specialist colleges and four other specialist colleges.

Within the new cycle, colleges will normally be inspected at least once every four years. However, there is a proportionate approach to inspection in the programme. Colleges which were performing well when last inspected will receive lighter-touch inspections, providing that their high levels of performance are maintained. Conversely, higher levels of resources will be allocated to the inspection of colleges judged satisfactory or inadequate at their previous inspections.

Overall effectiveness

Overall, inspections in 2005/06 demonstrate the continued trend of improvement found since the first cycle of inspections and identified in the Ofsted report Further education matters (see x, p.82).

Nearly all colleges found to be inadequate at their last inspections have improved. Of the colleges inspected in 2005/06, 15 were judged inadequate at their previous inspections. Of these, 14 are now satisfactory or better. Some have made considerable improvement. For example, four of the 15 colleges are now good in terms of their overall effectiveness.

Overall of the colleges inspected demonstrate good or better overall effectiveness, and more than one in 10 is outstanding (see Figure 10). Four in 10 of the colleges inspected are now more effective than they were and about one fifth are less effective than they were.

Figure 10. Overview of colleges inspected since September 2005.
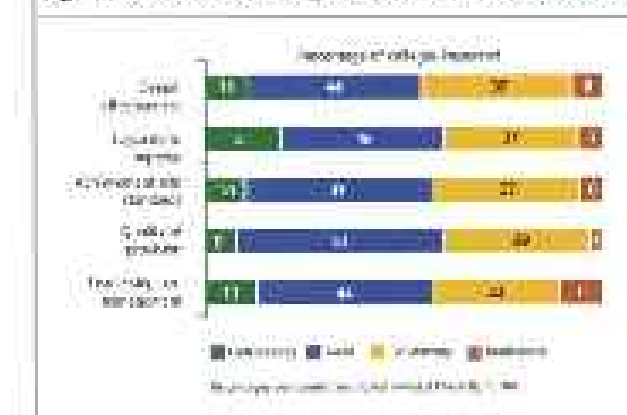
There remains a small but significant proportion of colleges in which standards are declining.

- Of the 100 colleges inspected during 2005/06, eight are inadequate. In the earlier 2001–06 inspection cycle, one in 10 colleges inspected was judged to be inadequate.

- Seven of the eight colleges found to be inadequate in 2005/06 had declined, having been at least satisfactory overall at their previous inspections.

- Seventeen colleges which were found to be satisfactory overall were still found to have some aspect of their provision which was inadequate.

- Of the 44 colleges which were re-inspected in the same period because one or more aspect of their provision was inadequate, nine have some aspect of their provision which remains inadequate.

The proportion of colleges which are no better than satisfactory is still too high; some satisfactory colleges are showing no signs of improving. Just over a third of colleges inspected in 2005/06 are satisfactory in their overall effectiveness. Over half of these were satisfactory overall at the previous inspections.

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Further education colleges continued

Leadership and management

Generally, the leadership and management of colleges are improving; they are good or better in about six in 10 of those inspected.

There is a close link between the quality of leadership and management and the overall effectiveness of colleges. In all but two colleges inspected in which overall effectiveness is good or better, leadership and management are also good or better. In all but one of the colleges judged inadequate overall, leadership and management are also inadequate.

Leadership and management are inadequate in 11% of colleges inspected in 2005/06. This relatively high figure includes a significant proportion of independent specialist colleges. For general further education colleges only, the figure is 9%.

In the colleges inspected in 2005/06, about nine in 10 were judged to have a capacity to improve which is at least satisfactory. This judgement, introduced in the new cycle of inspections, involves assessment by inspectors of a college's potential to progress to a more successful position, or to maintain very high standards. In reaching this judgement, inspectors review both the college's track record in tackling its weaknesses and its current improvement strategy.

Achievement and standards are good or better in almost six in 10 of the colleges inspected, and satisfactory in over a third, with the remainder inadequate.

The quality of provision, including teaching and learning, is good or better in six out of 10 colleges inspected. This is similar to the findings of college inspections between 2001 and 2005. Provision is inadequate in only one college.

Annual assessment visit outcomes

In addition to a full inspection, all colleges are subject to an annual assessment visit. This is normally a one-day visit to carry out a 'health check'. It allows Ofsted to assess whether a college continues to maintain the standards achieved at the last inspection or whether there has been any improvement or decline. This provides additional information for Ofsted in deciding whether:

- the next inspection should take place at the time originally programmed, be brought forward or, in cases in which there is sufficient evidence of improvement, deferred

- a reduced or increased level of inspection is required.

Annual assessment visits were carried out in all eligible general further education, sixth form and independent specialist colleges between September 2005 and July 2006. The outcomes of these visits mirror the overall pattern of improvement in colleges, which is apparent in full college inspections.

In most cases, the annual assessment visit resulted in a recommendation that the next inspection should take place at the time originally planned and with the same level of resources. For a very small minority of colleges (13), concerns arose which led to a recommendation that the next inspection should be brought forward or should be carried out with additional resources. In almost one in 10 visits, the outcomes of assessment visits were so positive that inspectors recommended that the next inspection should be postponed or carried out with a lighter touch.

Success rates for business, administration and law courses have improved, so that learners' achievements were at least satisfactory, with good practical business skills demonstrated on vocational courses. However, on advanced level courses, learners did not have sufficient opportunities to develop the higher-level skills of research, analysis and evaluation. The inspection of history, theology and philosophy included a sample of higher-performing colleges; here the achievement was outstanding and higher-level skills were well developed through, for example, the study of history.

The inspection of health and social care also included higher-performing colleges. Most courses seen had improved this year. The main reasons for this change were the significant improvement in leadership and management and the careful attention paid to improving the quality of teaching and learning. This was particularly evident in relation to the use of information and learning technology (ILT), collaboration with employers and better links between theory and practice.

In ICT, achievement was generally good and success and retention rates were high, particularly on Level 3 courses. However, not all colleges improved their overall provision and this was largely due to weaknesses in achievement on foundation and intermediate level courses and the underdeveloped use of assessment to support learning.

The quality of teaching in colleges was generally good. Where it was good or better, teachers demonstrated a high standard of subject expertise and learners were engaged. More imaginative teaching, capturing the learners' interest, was seen than in the previous year. In history, for example, a rich variety of resources was used to promote dynamic teaching and learning and there were numerous outstanding examples of the use of ILT.

However, in some areas, including engineering, too much of the teaching of theory lacked sufficient variety and failed to interest learners. The teaching was best where theory was related to practice, when the quality and pace of learning were monitored frequently and when learning was enlivened by practical activity.

There has been some good progress in most colleges in the use of ILT. For example, better use was being made of internet or whiteboards, PowerPoint and college intranet systems in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). More generally, however, ILT remained an area for development. In engineering, ILT was not used enough, and in science and mathematics PowerPoint presentations were relatively common but interactive ILT use was rarely interesting or imaginative.

Overall, more attention was being paid to personalised learning but marked variations in practice remained, and this was an area of weakness in some colleges. In particular, not enough attention was paid to individuals' needs at the planning stage. The more able learners were not always challenged to learn more quickly and in several areas the least able learners received insufficient support. A weakness in some lessons was in the checking of students' understanding and an assumption too readily made that they had successfully grasped the lesson content.

Assessment was often a weaker aspect of teaching. In construction, for example, insufficient work-based assessment was identified as an area for improvement on some inspections. However, there were some areas of relative strength. In health and social care, for example, the good quality of assessment and the support given to learners identified in past reports were maintained. In many colleges, target-setting for learners was inconsistent; targets were not specific or challenging enough and did not clearly identify the required improvements.

Progression routes were well established in some courses. For example, in arts and media, the provision in many colleges allowed good progression for learners through each level to higher education and widened opportunities for learners from disadvantaged areas. In business, opportunities in most colleges were good and the proportion of learners moving to higher-level courses had increased.

Enjoyment and achievement, the quality of teaching and the appropriateness of the curriculum all depend largely on the effectiveness of school leadership at senior and middle management levels. Successful school self-evaluation was closely linked to the level of priority it was given by senior managers and to the full involvement of all the staff. Where it worked well, self-evaluation was integral to the work of the school and was enhanced by increasingly sophisticated use of a widening range of evidence, including the views of pupils and students. There was a clear understanding of the school's strengths, as well as of the weaknesses, and how to tackle them.

Subject departments were increasingly involved in self-evaluation, using the full range of data to make secure judgements on their strengths and weaknesses. In some cases, however, departmental self-evaluation was not rigorous enough, nor sufficiently sharply focused on standards and the quality of teaching. In these instances, departments judged their performance to be good when the evidence, including data on pupils' progress, made it clear that this was not the case.

In the most effective schools, a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) was planned to meet the school's and individual teachers' needs; the programme was monitored and its impact evaluated (see xxx, p.82). More generally, planning was often poor in identifying individual needs and expected outcomes and, as a consequence, it was difficult to evaluate the effect of CPD on teaching and learning.

Ofsted has continued with its survey of workforce reform to establish how far this initiative has resulted in reduction of teachers' workload and improvement in standards (see xxi, p.82). The positive trends reported in 2004/05 have become more firmly established. Most schools in the sample inspected made at least satisfactory progress in restructuring their workforce and nearly all schools met the requirements for introducing new limits on cover for absent teachers.

Post-16 settings

Learners were generally satisfied with their college courses and with college provision. They achieved well overall in a wide range of contexts. Broadly, they enjoyed lessons, and the progression by full-time learners to higher-level courses, further training or employment was good. Attendance and punctuality were good and usually closely monitored.

Inspectors noted improvements in learners' achievement in language and literature and in mathematics and science. However, some weaknesses remained, including a lack of higher grade passes in GCSE English and poor retention on advanced supplementary (AS) and some modern foreign language courses. Some students began GCSE and AS mathematics and science courses that they found too difficult and in which their chances of success were low.

Success rates have been improving in agriculture, horticulture and animal care, in arts, media and publishing, and in ICT. In these areas, learners' enjoyment and success were enhanced through the use of practical approaches to learning and teachers' vocational expertise. In arts, media and publishing, standards were high. The quality of courses in construction was satisfactory overall. However, in improving colleges, the practical work in this area was of a very high standard.

Practical work was the strongest aspect of some other areas, including engineering and manufacturing, and leisure, travel and tourism. In the latter area, many learners achieved additional qualifications relevant to the industry and benefited from a range of curriculum-related enrichment activities. However, low retention and poor attendance and punctuality persisted in a significant number of these courses. This was also a problem in a minority of hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. Although most learners developed good practical skills, they did not always make productive use of their time in practical lessons. Generally poor rates were high particularly in beauty therapy.

Sixth form colleges

Most sixth form colleges continue to be effective institutions. Seven out of 10 are good or better in terms of overall effectiveness and all but one of those inspected are at least satisfactory overall.

Independent specialist colleges

Inspections in 2005/06 show less encouraging outcomes for independent specialist colleges. Of the 21 colleges inspected, five are good and one is outstanding in terms of their overall effectiveness. However, two are inadequate and 13 out of 21 are satisfactory. Two of the colleges which are satisfactory overall demonstrate inadequate capacity to improve. The proportion of independent specialist colleges showing good or better capacity to improve is less than four in 10. Whilst the quality of provision is good or better in about half of the colleges inspected, leadership and management are inadequate in five and only satisfactory in 11.

The impact of college inspections

Ofsted invites colleges to complete a questionnaire in the period following their inspections. In autumn 2005 and spring 2006, the response rate was high, with eight in 10 colleges providing returns. Of the 53 colleges which responded to the relevant question, 45 considered that the advantages of inspection greatly outweigh any disadvantages in terms of helping the college to improve. Six of these 53 colleges considered that the negative effects of inspection outweigh the gains. Of 39 colleges responding to a question about the value of the issues raised by inspection, 34 believed that they provide a sound agenda for improvement.

Provision for children and young people in secure settings

Overall, standards across the range of secure settings remain too variable and the curriculum offered is often too narrow to meet the needs of the young people. Of 13 institutions inspected, two secure children's homes and one young offender institution are inadequate. Only one establishment, a secure training centre, is very good and two secure children's homes and one young offender institution are good. There has been an improvement, however, in the management of the young people's behaviour and it is satisfactory overall in the settings inspected.

The more effective institutions are successful in meeting the needs of a wide range of young people, many of whom have had little or no experience of educational success. A minority of settings have developed an appropriate range of vocational and academic courses. In these institutions, young people enjoy their education and often make good progress; many experience success for the first time in their lives. However, levels of accreditation remain low in too many institutions and opportunities for progression to more advanced courses are limited. This is particularly pertinent for young people aged 16 and over in young offender institutions. More able young people are often working below their capabilities and few gain GCSE qualifications.

The range of vocational courses is narrow in too many institutions, restricting opportunities for young people to access the skills that will help them to gain employment or access to further training on their release from custody. Teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is often poor. Lessons fail to motivate or engage young people. In the more effective institutions, literacy and numeracy are linked successfully to vocational work and their life experiences. The needs of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not always met appropriately.

In the better settings, teaching is lively and engaging. Young people are given interesting and challenging tasks that they enjoy. They respond well to good teaching, make sound progress and are justifiably proud of their achievements. The collection of information about the young people's achievements, progress and attendance is improving and is now available to support teaching staff more effectively. However, this information is used effectively in only a small number of institutions. Young people's individual learning plans are not used successfully to plan their work or to monitor their progress.

The more successful settings draw on a variety of resources and external partners to develop creative and interesting educational experiences for young people. External agencies are often effective in raising the young people's aspirations. Most institutions are successful in making the environment as attractive as possible, often in very difficult circumstances. Rewards and incentives are used effectively to motivate young people, but only in a minority of institutions.

In the settings inspected, the management of poor and inappropriate behaviour has improved in recent years and is satisfactory overall. It is good in institutions where the behaviour policy is clearly understood and consistently applied. Relationships between prison and education staff in young offender institutions are generally good. Some aspects of prison life, however, continue to have a negative effect on teaching and learning. For example, movement from residential to education units is often delayed, adversely affecting both punctuality and young people's learning. There are too few opportunities for young people to share their opinions about the education and training they receive.

Arrangements for the care and progress of young people about to leave custody are not good enough. Insufficient attention is paid to preparing them for their return to the community. Careers education and guidance are often poor. The lack of appropriate education and training for these young people once they are released is a real concern.

In most of the settings inspected there has been steady improvement in leadership and management. Senior managers are now more focused on improving the quality of provision. Self-assessment and the report of lesson observations have improved.

Although planning for the transfer from primary to secondary education had improved and was satisfactory in a large majority of schools, the transfer of assessment and other data was still unsatisfactory in nearly a quarter of secondary schools. In particular, secondary teachers in ICT and other foundation subjects found it difficult to build on pupils' attainment in primary school because they did not have assessment information about those subjects. In a few subjects, the quality of teaching was affected by high staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified staff. This was particularly the case in mathematics, science, ICT and D&T.

In some schools, too much time in food technology lessons is devoted to low-level investigations and written work; too little time is spent learning to cook nutritious meals.

In the most effective schools the curriculum was flexible enough to meet the needs of individual pupils. For instance, in the English curriculum, some schools used early examination entry as a way of challenging and motivating underachieving pupils, so that they could then take a further GCSE such as English literature, media studies or drama. Similarly in PE, some schools had been successful in meeting the needs of specific groups of pupils such as disaffected boys, girls of Asian heritage and talented performers by offering appropriate options. For example, one school provided masterclasses in basketball for pupils in Key Stage 3 who had been identified as talented. Another school introduced a new optional fitness programme for girls of Asian heritage and improved the attendance and participation of disaffected boys by enabling them to take part in sports which were new to them. The effect of a more flexible curriculum in relation to work-related learning is discussed on page 78.

Enjoying and achieving continued

Initial teacher training

The importance of good teaching: mathematics for 14–19-year-olds

This small-scale survey explored the very close link between the quality of teaching and students' achievement. The majority of the teaching observed adequately prepared students for examinations. However, in around half of the lessons observed the teaching insufficiently promoted the secure understanding of mathematical ideas; students were not stimulated to think for themselves and to apply their knowledge and skills in unfamiliar situations.

The best teaching gave a strong sense of the coherence of mathematical ideas; it focused on understanding mathematical concepts and developed critical thinking and reasoning. Careful questioning identified misconceptions and helped to resolve them, and positive use was made of incorrect answers to develop understanding and to encourage students to contribute. Students were challenged to think for themselves, encouraged to discuss problems and required to work collaboratively. Effective use was made of ICT. In contrast, teaching which presented mathematics as a collection of arbitrary rules and provided a narrow range of learning activities did not motivate students and limited their achievement. For example, students could answer examination questions but could not apply their knowledge independently in different contexts (see x, p.82).

Assessment and provision for personalised learning to meet individual pupil needs remained the weakest aspect of teaching. Inspection of the Secondary National Strategy has shown that assessment for learning is good or better in only a minority of schools and is unsatisfactory in a quarter. Relevant training and development are at an early stage and as yet there has been little impact on teaching, learning or achievement.

Assessment was generally better developed in core than foundation subjects but there were weaknesses in assessment in subjects across the curriculum. The most effective English departments had clear and systematic approaches, integrated within particular units of work. This enabled teachers to moderate judgements and track progress. In these schools, pupils were taught to review their own work and develop a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses.

In mathematics, pupils were more aware of their targets and what particular grades or levels mean. The best marking addressed misconceptions and pointed the way forward but too often marking took the form of ticks and crosses so that pupils did not know what they needed to do to improve. In science, where in the past assessment has been confined to end-of-unit tests, pupils were involved in the evaluation of their own work through devices such as a logbook which set out the assessment criteria and was used by teachers to assess and record pupils' work.

Case study 9. Good use of assessment in design and technology.

In one school, the design and technology (D&T) department introduced a test to assess pupils' capability, skills and knowledge at the beginning of Year 7. The assessment information was used by teachers when planning lessons and to set pupils' targets for the year. In lessons, teachers identified when pupils were encountering problems and adjusted their teaching accordingly. Project-specific assessment sheets were used with pupils to help them identify what they needed to do to achieve the next level. Pupils assessed their own work during the project, sometimes revising work several times to achieve higher levels. The assessments were moderated across the department and used to refine further the teaching programmes.

Introduction and overview

September 2005 marked the start of a new cycle of inspection of initial teacher training (ITT) provision and the introduction of a revised framework for the inspection of primary and secondary ITT. The principal changes were a differentiated inspection programme to reduce the burden of inspection for good and outstanding providers, and a strong focus on using the providers' self-evaluation to inform the inspection process.

In 2005/06, there were 27 inspections of primary provision and 29 inspections of secondary provision. The inspection of designated recommending bodies (DRBs), which manage training through the Graduate Teacher Programme, was in the final year of its cycle: 17 DRBs were inspected, three of which were re-inspections. The inspection of further education (FE) teacher training was in the second year of a four-year cycle. Twelve partnerships led by higher education institutions and national awarding bodies and 28 of their partner FE colleges were inspected.

Overall effectiveness and improvement

The quality of ITT in school-based providers has improved: among the sample inspected in 2005/06, it is generally of similar good quality to that found in partnerships led by higher education institutions (HEIs). However, some provision of primary ITT are not ensuring that trainees have practical experience of work with the full age range of pupils they wish to teach. The quality of training for those wishing to teach in FE is too inconsistent among the sample of providers inspected, especially with respect to specialised support for workplace training. Employment-based ITT programmes are also uneven in their overall effectiveness.

There are strong links between the effectiveness of providers' management and quality assurance, the quality of training and the standards achieved by trainees. Providers build on the outcomes of their previous inspections to maintain and improve their training. They acknowledge, through their self-evaluations, that they make systematic improvements as a result of inspection.

Between 2002 and 2005, partnerships led by HEIs were consistently judged to offer good or better training to those wishing to teach in primary schools. However, there was more variability in the training by school-centred providers. The first year of the new cycle suggests that the quality of training offered by both groups of providers is now of similar good quality. School-centred providers have responded promptly to previous inspection findings and have strengthened their assessment and quality assurance procedures considerably. Six providers in which the management and quality assurance were good during the last inspection cycle are now outstanding. Three providers in which these were satisfactory during the last inspection cycle are now good.

The management and quality assurance of training in the primary phase are better than in the secondary phase. In contrast to primary training, in which managers are appointed to oversee the whole training programme, secondary phase training tends to be managed through individual subject routes and its overall quality is therefore more variable.

There is less evidence of improvement in provision in the secondary than in the primary phase and the management and quality assurance grades of several secondary providers are lower than those awarded during the last inspection cycle.

The coherence of links between partnership schools and providers has an important influence on the quality of ITT and is an area in which previous inspection evidence has highlighted weaknesses. Primary providers, and particularly HEI-led partnerships, have acted decisively to improve the degree of coherence and it is now a key strength of the provision. School practitioners are contributing more to the development and delivery of centre-based training and subject leaders are playing a more active role in supporting primary trainees on school experience. However, there is much more inconsistency in the quality of school-based training on secondary courses. Similarly, weaker grades awarded on FE teacher training inspections often result from over-reliance on voluntary systems of support for trainees, provided by mentors in the colleges.

Providers ensure that trainees are kept abreast of current curriculum development and government initiatives. The Every Child Matters agenda is featuring more prominently in primary training and the Primary and Secondary National Strategies are embedded firmly in course programmes.[30]

Recruitment of suitable trainees is generally buoyant and retention is mainly good. Providers make increasingly successful efforts to recruit from minority ethnic and under-represented groups. As a consequence of shortcomings identified during previous inspections, checking with the Criminal Records Bureau is being implemented more rigorously.

Training to teach in two key stages was identified as a problem in the previous inspection cycle and continues to present a challenge for some primary providers. Difficulties in finding sufficient Key Stage 1 school placements have generally been overcome but some trainees in primary phase have limited opportunities to teach at the upper end of Key Stage 2. The issue of training to teach across the whole age range in secondary schools has largely been resolved.

Most providers have well established management systems but their quality assurance procedures are not always so well developed. Providers are good at responding to the outcomes of inspection but less effective at identifying their own strengths and weaknesses through rigorous self-evaluation. Where weaknesses in subject training have been identified, subject tutors are not always involved in identifying shortcomings and action planning. Across all sectors, there is too much variability in providers' expectations of external examiners and in the quality of their reports.

This contrasted sharply with the low achievement in schools where pupils went through the motions of practical work as instructed, rather than engaging in genuine scientific investigation.

Pupils enjoy and achieve when they can see the relevance of what they are learning to their own lives, and it is in these circumstances that subjects such as citizenship, geography, religious education, and personal, social and health education are at their most compelling. Pupils' attitudes to the study of citizenship were often good, especially in the discussion of topical issues that affect them. However, pupils underachieved in many schools because the curriculum was limited and incoherent. In history, most pupils achieved well in exercising the skills of historians while developing their knowledge base. However, it is a reflection of the curriculum that this knowledge tended to be fragmented, with a concentration on particular topics. As a consequence, some pupils' chronological understanding was often weak, as was their understanding of the connections between topics studied and contemporary issues.

Many pupils did not see the relevance of modern foreign languages, and so did not choose to continue with the subject to examination level. Those who did, however, responded well to good teaching and displayed positive attitudes. Speaking was less well developed than listening, reading and writing at both key stages.

In the creative areas of art, music and PE there were many instances of very high achievement but, overall, the progress that pupils made was too erratic because teachers paid insufficient attention to systematic development of pupils' knowledge and skills.

Pupils enjoyed the practical nature of subjects such as design and technology (D&T), ICT and business studies. In D&T, pupils were motivated by opportunities to create functioning products, and those taking GCSE and General Certificate of Education (GCE) courses also enjoyed the challenge of working on projects which had an adult, sometimes industrial, nature.

In ICT, pupils' engagement in lessons was overwhelmingly good. Where pupils achieved well, they were very confident users of ICT and were given good opportunities to use it creatively and extend their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. However, there was still much variation in pupils' ICT experience and too many underachieved, often because they were not challenged sufficiently. Curricular provision for ICT remains a concern in Key Stage 4, particularly for pupils who do not study for a qualification in the subject.

Business education was taught well, using ICT to engage pupils with practical business issues. However, although most pupils and students taking examination courses in economics and business achieved well, they often expressed disappointment that courses were insufficiently practical and that there were too few opportunities to engage directly with employers.

Across the range of subject inspections, teaching was good in around two thirds of the lessons. There were indications of further improvement in the quality of teaching and learning as teachers continued to apply Secondary National Strategy techniques. These included a wider range of teaching strategies and a greater emphasis on pupils thinking for themselves.

Inspection of the Secondary National Strategy showed how pupils responded well to the variety and the brisk pace of effective lessons, but mechanistic use of the recommended structures and approaches failed to meet the needs of individual pupils. For example, weaker teaching of business studies was unimaginative, with teachers spending too much time talking, over-using worksheets and setting tasks that were not sufficiently engaging and interesting.

Teachers' subject knowledge is a key factor in enabling pupils to achieve high standards. In subjects such as geography and religious education, in which there tend to be more lessons taught by non-specialist teachers, the focus was often on coverage of the programmes of study, with an over-reliance on textbooks and a limited range of resources.

Enjoying and achieving continued

Services for children and young people

Ofsted's evaluation of the fifth year of the Secondary National Strategy

The main findings include the following:

- In English, mathematics and science, results had risen steadily since the introduction of the Secondary National Strategy.

- Leadership of the Secondary National Strategy was at least good in two thirds of the schools. In a small minority of the schools where the impact of the Secondary National Strategy was unsatisfactory, there had been weaknesses in leadership, the allocation of resources was inadequate, subject leaders were uncertain about the Secondary National Strategy and they were not held to account sufficiently for raising standards.

- As a result of the Secondary National Strategy guidance, departmental schemes of work were better structured and more comprehensive, although it was still unusual for them to provide guidance on teaching pupils of different abilities.

- The quality of teaching and learning continued to improve as teachers applied Secondary National Strategy techniques. In less effective lessons, teachers often used recommended structures and approaches too mechanically, with too much emphasis on content rather than the development of conceptual understanding.

- The use of assessment for learning was good in only a few of the schools and unsatisfactory in a quarter, but Secondary National Strategy support for this was still at an early stage.

- The impact of strategy consultants was at least satisfactory in nearly all schools. Consultant support was generally more effective than external training courses because it was more carefully targeted to meet schools' needs.

- Staff training had heightened the awareness of inclusion in a very large majority of schools but teachers often found it difficult to put policy into practice to meet individual pupils' needs. Schools were not doing enough to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils who started Year 7 with attainment in English and mathematics which was below average.

- Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language varied too much.

- Since the Secondary National Strategy started, planning for the move from primary to secondary education had improved and was satisfactory in a large majority of schools. However, the transfer of data was still unsatisfactory in nearly a quarter of secondary schools.

There was a similar tension in mathematics. At its best, pupils' learning in mathematics was vibrant and laid foundations for their future progression; pupils were confident and achieved highly whatever their starting points. However, sometimes, even within the same school, other pupils fared less well. Much weaker teaching was too narrowly focused on proficiency in examination technique at the expense of building understanding of concepts and their interrelationships; a traditional style of exposition followed by practice was still favoured by many teachers. In these circumstances pupils were passive, and often bored, recipients. This led in turn to an emerging dependence on booster or revision classes.

Many schools have given consideration to pupils' preferred learning styles, and across a range of subjects it is evident that higher achievement is associated with active forms of learning. For example, where science was well taught, not only were basic concepts effectively addressed, lessons were also stimulating and enjoyable. In thinking about how science works, pupils researched and exchanged information, often making effective use of ICT, debating ideas and displaying knowledge and understanding of issues very relevant to their own and others' lives.

Background

Between September 2005 and the end of 2008 children's services in all local authority areas will be inspected under the provisions of the Children Act 2004. Inspections of these services are known as joint area reviews (JARs), 36 of which were carried out in 2005/06. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools is responsible for leading and coordinating the work of 10 inspectorates and commissions in conducting JARs.

The JARs draw on annual performance assessments (APAs) of local authority children's services. In the summer of 2005, 150 APAs were conducted by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and Ofsted. Drawing on evidence which is already in the public domain, APAs include judgements about:

- the children's services in each local authority and their contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people

- the local authority's capacity to improve these services further.

Annual performance assessments

In APAs carried out in 2005, 110 of the 150 local authorities were found to provide good or better services for children and young people, 38 were adequate and two were inadequate.

The strengths in local authority services which emerged most often were:

- the improving quality of services for children in the social care system; in 94 local authorities, these services are good

- the large proportion of looked-after children participating in reviews of their care and education

- the reduction in the number of children remaining on the child protection register for extended periods

- the provision of health assessments for looked-after children

- the reduction in offending rates of children and young people

- the focus by schools on promoting healthy lifestyles

- the provision for early years education and care

- the developing consultation with children and young people and their growing engagement in making decisions which affect them.

The areas most frequently in need of improvement were:

- support for children and young people who offend and action to prevent re-offending

- the attainment and attendance at school of looked-after children, for whom educational outcomes still lag behind those of other pupils

- access to good mental health provision, which is not always rapid enough

- the timeliness and quality of social care assessments

- high rates of teenage pregnancies in some areas

- declining access to preventative services for children and families.

Services for children and young people continued

Enjoying and achieving continued

Education services are good or better in about three quarters of local authorities but only adequate in about a quarter. In two local authorities, they are inadequate.

There are important weaknesses as well as strengths in these education services. Standards at Key Stage 4 are improving nationally and this is reflected in over four in 10 local authorities. However, further improvement is needed in almost the same proportion of authorities. School attendance rates are high or improving in some four in 10 authorities but require substantial improvement in about three in 10. As in previous years, the attendance of looked-after children is a cause for concern. While they are well supported in about half of local authorities, in the other half they are not.

Joint area reviews

In terms of their overall effectiveness, just over half of the 36 local areas in which JARs took place are good, two are inadequate and the remainder are adequate. Leadership by senior officers is effective in many local authorities. Services for children and young people are a priority in all the areas inspected; most have either established, or were in the process of establishing at the time of inspection, integrated children's services, incorporating former departments of education and social services for children and families. Many local authorities find difficulty in recruiting and retaining social care staff. All but one of the local authority areas had the capacity to improve and in over half the capacity was good.

While the outcomes of the work of children's services are good for most children and young people, those for vulnerable groups are often only adequate and occasionally inadequate. The majority of local authorities have too many looked-after children or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in placements outside their areas. This removes the children concerned from the network of local support services and militates against inclusion and reintegration.

The overall effectiveness of education services in 26 of the 36 local areas is good or better. Two are inadequate. Eight of the local authorities inspected do not have a sufficiently clear strategy for provision for students aged between 14 and 19.

Health services in 23 areas inspected are good with all others adequate. The social care services for children are adequate in half of local authorities and good in a further third. In six they are inadequate. Six of the 29 youth services inspected are inadequate, 10 are adequate and 13 are good. One is outstanding.

Assessment remained the weakest area of teaching, although there were signs of improvement in English and mathematics, often associated with support from the Primary National Strategy on assessment for learning. Record keeping and the use of this information were also improving. Common weaknesses included the assessment of speaking and listening in English, and superficial marking in mathematics, so that pupils did not have a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. At school level, the causes of underachievement were often not identified early enough, and this led eventually to an over-emphasis on booster classes in Years 5 and 6.

Outside the core subjects, assessment procedures were very limited, and this had an adverse effect on pupils' achievement. In the foundation subjects, few teachers were secure in assessing pupils' performance against national benchmarks.

The leaders of most primary schools were taking steps to raise pupils' achievement. Effective school leaders used performance data from core subjects, data on groups and individual pupils, target setting and monitoring to track pupils' progress. Headteachers and senior managers were very closely involved in setting targets (see p. 82). Self-evaluation was largely accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development and was aided by the close teamwork of staff. However, the lack of detailed information on pupils' progress in the foundation subjects detracted from the rigour and quality of school self-evaluation.

The leadership programmes promoted through the Primary National Strategy had successfully engaged schools and local authorities in working more closely together to develop the capacity of leadership and management to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. More needs to be done to tackle long-standing weaknesses in leadership and management in those few schools where underachievement goes unchecked.

The role of subject leaders is crucial to raising achievement. Core subject leaders often had a prominent role, and full involvement in monitoring and evaluating performance across the school, but the extent to which this role was discharged effectively remained variable.

Secondary schools

The Secondary National Strategy was recently reviewed again by Ofsted (see xxv, p 82).

In schools in which pupils achieved well across the range of subjects of the secondary curriculum, teachers made use of varied approaches to learning, which included active pupil involvement, relevance, practicality and creativity.

The best teachers found ways to teach that were imaginative and enjoyable for pupils and raised standards. In English, for example, this was achieved through a range of teaching styles, with opportunities for pupils to work individually and in groups to use and consolidate what they had learnt. For some pupils, however, the experience of English had become narrower in certain years as teachers focused on tests and examinations; this affected pupils' achievement in speaking and listening in particular. In the better lessons, teachers made use of questioning, which encouraged pupils to explain and to justify their opinions. However, even where teaching was effective, the management of plenary discussions at the ends of lessons was often a weakness.

Enjoying and achieving continued

Over one in 13 schools provided a curriculum that was outstanding in meeting pupils' needs and the work of the majority of schools was at least good in this respect. The pressure on the curriculum affected different subjects in different ways. In art and design there were strengths in the making of images and artefacts; sketchbooks both supported and demonstrated the progress that pupils had made in recording ideas and observations, and in expressing their imagination. But knowledge and understanding of art were the weakest aspects of achievement, and in Years 5 and 6 pupils tended to make insufficient progress.

Design and technology frequently suffered from confusion with art and design, not only because of pressure of time but also because of weakness in teachers' subject knowledge. Where it was well taught, pupils thought innovatively and became confident in making and testing their products. Too often, however, pupils' limited technological knowledge held back their design work and weak practical skills prevented their making what they had designed.

History and, more so, geography continued to be marginalised, both in what was covered and the time available for teaching those subjects. In schools where the subjects were flourishing, the youngest pupils researched, made judgements and then wrote, drew and talked about the historical and geographical topics they had studied. In these schools, Key Stage 2 pupils often demonstrated considerable knowledge and insight. However, achievement in history and geography was often constrained because they were taught using disjointed activities which failed to provide pupils with opportunities to build up their subject knowledge, skills and understanding progressively.

PE went against the trend shown by most other foundation subjects in that schools were beginning to give more time and resources to it. Most pupils showed high levels of enthusiasm for PE and achieved satisfactory standards; achievement was better in games than in swimming and gymnastics.

Another positive curricular development was found in those schools preparing for the Key Stage 2 modern foreign language entitlement, which will begin by 2010.[1] Pupils were enjoying their lessons and responding well to the challenges of learning a new language, making good progress in developing their listening and speaking skills.

The relative strength of pupils' achievement in mathematics was the product of primary teachers who had benefited from training in core subjects. However, there were weaknesses in science and some foundation subjects, arising from lack of initial and in-service training or subject development in schools. This resulted in unsatisfactory teaching, often undetected by school managers who lacked the subject expertise to deal with it. In schools in which this was the case there were weaknesses in subject knowledge across the range of foundation subjects and religious education. Leadership and management were failing to identify training requirements in strategic and coherent ways and to allocate funds for continuing professional development on a systematic basis.

In ICT, the widespread adoption of the national scheme of work led to pupils presenting their work using a wide range of ICT applications, including multimedia presentations. ICT was also frequently used to enhance the curriculum in imaginative and creative ways that would be impossible without the technology. There were, however, wide variations in the quality of pupils' ICT experience. Despite pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and levels of engagement in ICT lessons, high achievement was found only in a minority of schools and higher-attaining pupils in particular were underachieving.

ICT is an area which has benefited from significant investment in resources, staff training and support for the subject coordinator. There has been a general improvement in teachers' use and teaching of ICT. The quality of planning has improved. Many teachers were adept in their use of interactive whiteboards.
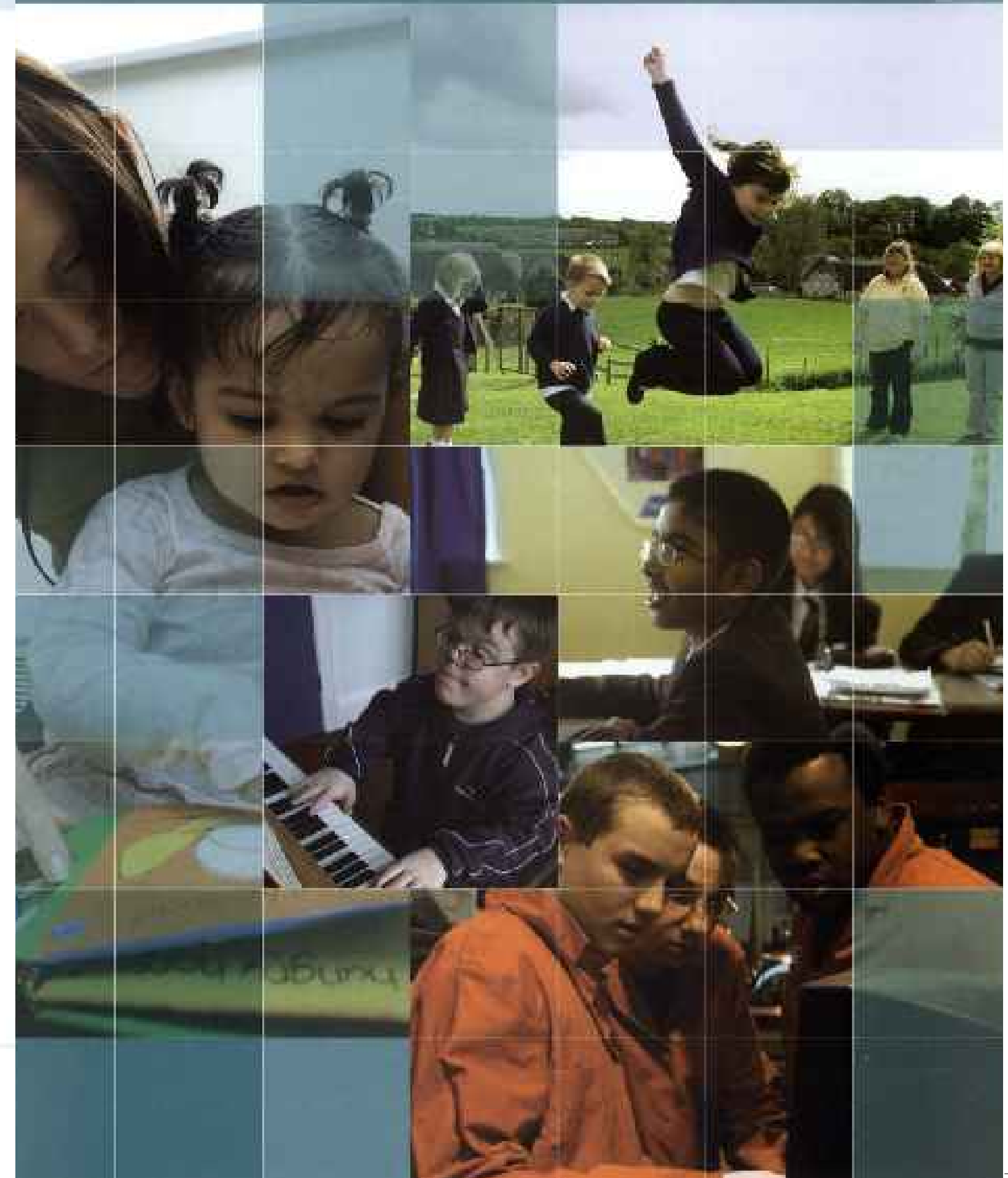
This section of the report provides an overview of the surveys and children's services reviews undertaken by Ofsted in the academic year 2005/06. Surveys sample a small number of providers for an in-depth analysis of specific issues in education and care. The inspection of local authority children's services is described briefly in the first section of the report but more details of the findings in relation to the outcomes for children are reported here.

Specific survey reports which have been published in 2005/06 are listed in the Bibliography on pages 82–3.

This section is structured around the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters national agenda. The five outcomes are central to the way in which institutions and services judge their effectiveness, and they form a key dimension of Ofsted's inspection process.

Although there have been improvements in English teaching, more needs to be done to promote consistently good practice and to address specific weaknesses. In the schools where pupils' speaking and listening skills had improved, good use was made of additional guidance from the Primary National Strategy and from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. However, the evidence from a number of inspections carried out this year indicates that many schools are finding difficulty in raising standards in writing.

Most pupils showed positive attitudes to learning in mathematics. Their ability to solve problems in real-life contexts and to explain their methods has improved quite markedly. However, the development of investigative approaches that characterise using and applying mathematics remains weaker than other aspects of the mathematics curriculum. There has been some improvement in mathematics teaching but, as in English, some teaching focused narrowly on preparation for tests. The most skilful mathematics teachers capitalised on pupils' answers, right or wrong, to make or reinforce teaching points. They also tackled pupils' misconceptions effectively and helped them develop secure understanding of key concepts.

At the heart of good achievement in science was active engagement of pupils in scientific enquiry. Some of the best achievement was found where pupils were taught well and were given opportunities to research topics, came up with their own ideas, exchange views, plan and carry out investigations and evaluate their work and that of others.

However, there was evidence to suggest that overall achievement in science was falling, with pupils lacking the knowledge and skills necessary to undertake investigations and make links between different areas of science.

Ofsted's evaluation of the fifth year of the Primary National Strategy

The main findings include the following:

- The impact of the Primary National Strategy on teaching and learning was at least satisfactory in most schools; however, many schools had not made effective use of strategy teaching and learning materials to evaluate their practice.

- There has been limited improvement in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in recent years. In some cases, schools gave too great an emphasis to supporting teachers and pupils in Years 5 and 6 in improving outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2, to the detriment of earlier support.

- The use of assessment was improving but it was still the least successful element of teaching.

- Many schools had used strategy training materials for developing speaking, listening and learning, but few had taken steps to incorporate the effective development of speaking and listening as part of a whole-school approach.

- The Primary National Strategy had raised the profile of ICT as an integral tool in supporting effective teaching and learning. Teachers were beginning to link the teaching of literacy with other subjects but very few were successfully planning for the development of mathematics across the curriculum.

- Although school leaders had generally welcomed the emphasis in the Primary National Strategy on greater flexibility and freedom in the curriculum, the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson remained in nearly all schools. Some schools had begun to consider greater flexibility in the organisation and teaching of National Curriculum foundation subjects.

- Inclusion of all pupils was a key priority for most local authorities but, despite the focus given to it, the management of inclusion varied significantly across schools (see xix, p.82).

Enjoying and achieving continued

Being healthy

Most childminders and staff in outstanding day-care settings had an excellent understanding of child development. They worked closely with parents to meet children's individual needs, providing consistent routines and care. Children benefited from their relationships with adults who knew what they were interested in and built on those interests to promote achievement. Childminders and staff organised an enticing environment and activities. There was easy access to resources and children played within simple guidelines. They learned to share and negotiate and understand the difference between right and wrong, with sensitive support from caring adults.

In settings offering outstanding early education, practitioners had an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage. High-quality teaching ensured children's enjoyment and achievement. Planning covered all areas of learning and showed how children would make progress towards the early learning goals. There was an excellent balance of adult-led and child-led activities, allowing children to contribute actively to their learning and to pursue interests at their own pace. Staff were exceptionally skilled in making judgements about when to intervene and when to allow children time to develop their ideas and determine their own learning. Assessment was continual and the information gained was used very effectively to plan children's next steps to support them in reaching new goals and to set new challenges.

In outstanding out of school care, children enjoyed well-supported activities which were planned with children's interests in mind. The environment was extremely well organised, with quiet areas where they could complete homework, and space for lively activity, enabling them to enjoy creative and imaginative play. Children had excellent opportunities to voice their opinions and make decisions through open relationships with staff and through 'children's councils'.

In the very small minority of inadequate settings, children did not have appropriate support from adults. Practitioners' lack of understanding of how children develop hindered the youngest children's ability to learn, for example, adults did not pitch their language at the right level or interact effectively with the children to make them think, learn new skills or contribute their ideas. There was insufficient planning to provide a stimulating environment with exciting activities that captured children's interests. There were often few resources, limiting children's ability to enjoy and achieve.

In day-care settings where teaching was inadequate, staff lacked sufficient knowledge of the Foundation Stage and of the progress that children should make. Planning was weak and lacked a balance across all aspects of the curriculum. Staff observed and recorded children's progress but did not use their observations to plan children's next steps, to extend their learning experiences or to help them enhance their achievements.

Primary schools

It is to the credit of nearly one third of schools that they were graded outstanding in the degree to which pupils enjoy their education. This, in part, reflects the way in which some schools have responded to the Primary National Strategy, *Excellence and enjoyment*.

In many schools the focus of the teaching of English is on those parts of the curriculum on which there are likely to be questions in national tests. This year, however, in some schools there was evidence of a broader approach to the teaching. This breadth was evident where teachers used drama, visual stimuli and practical experiences to motivate pupils; in extended reading and writing, often linked to work in other areas of the curriculum; in discussion and writing stimulation by good-quality children's literature; and in reading for pleasure. Although there were signs of improvement, too often speaking and listening remained under-represented in the English curriculum.

Ofsted evaluates the degree to which the support provided by early education, schools, colleges and children's services is effective in enabling children and young people to develop healthy lifestyles, so that they are physically, mentally and sexually healthy and choose not to take illegal drugs.

Overview

- Local services were effective in working together to promote the health of children and young people. No local area inspected was judged to provide an inadequate contribution to healthy outcomes.

- The majority of early years settings made a good contribution to the health and well-being of children by emphasising the importance of healthy eating.

- Schools and colleges have been successful in encouraging children and young people to take part in healthy living programmes. More children and young people were developing their understanding of the key factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

- The quality of drug education was improving in the schools surveyed. Pupils' understanding of sex and relationships education was satisfactory or better in most schools. Where it was less secure there were generally weaknesses in the teaching of the subject.

- In some schools surveyed, there was insufficient emphasis on the moral implications of behaviour, specifically of taking drugs, and parents did not do all that they could to attend meetings and work in partnership with schools.

- The contribution of youth services was good, with a few examples of outstanding practice. Noteworthy areas included support for health promotion and for young people to reduce their involvement in drug misuse.

Local children's services

Overall, local children's services were effective in working together to promote the health of children and young people. Two thirds of local authorities made good or better contributions. In this area no local area inspected was judged to provide a contribution to healthy outcomes that was below minimum requirements. Local partnerships between services were beginning to play an important role in ensuring that the needs of looked-after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were taken into account more frequently. Such partnerships also had a positive effect on the information, advice and support offered to parents and carers in many local areas. The contribution of health visitors and the support offered to families, children and young people by those in non-health contexts, such as Sure Start and children's centres, was generally good.

Schools and colleges have been particularly good in encouraging more children and young people to participate in healthy living programmes, and many have embraced the quality standards within the National Healthy Schools programme. However, success in reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy has been more variable, despite the effort and commitment of many local agencies.

The contribution of youth services to healthy living programmes was good, with a few examples of outstanding practice. In such cases, youth workers directly challenged individual young people's risky behaviour in areas such as drug misuse or sexual health. In many local authorities the youth work curriculum increasingly took account of health promotion, using sport, performing arts and outdoor activities.

The availability of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is frequently inadequate. Children and young people experienced long waiting times to access services. The range of provision available was often insufficient to meet the needs of certain users, especially those in transition from children's to adult services and those with substance misuse problems.

In some areas, looked-after children in short-term placements experienced difficulty in accessing CAMHS therapeutic services. In other areas, the CAMHS had insufficient beds and services to cope with demand. This resulted in some children and young people with acute mental health problems being cared for in paediatric wards in local hospitals.

Shortages of National Health Service dentists were causing delays in routine dental health checks, and the dental health of children and young people was deteriorating in a number of local areas. The quality of care for children and young people in hospitals was usually good, but some had no or too few nursing staff who were specially trained to treat them.

Being healthy: what children and young people think – Findings of the 'Tellus' surveys of approximately 19,000 young people

Of the children and young people who completed the survey, 94% saw themselves as healthy or very healthy; 5% of boys and 7% of girls felt they were unhealthy. Of those children and young people who felt they were very healthy, 85% believed that playing sport or taking exercise was important whereas only 52% felt that not smoking was important. Of those who felt they were not very healthy, the availability of healthier food, more sport or exercise at school and being happier and having less stress in their lives were their priorities for improving their health.

There was inconsistency in the quality of provision to meet the health needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In some areas there was careful planning to enable them to progress from children's to adult health services. In other areas, the transition was either given insufficient attention or adult services could not meet the specific needs identified. A further problem was the fragmented delivery of services because providers were not communicating effectively across agency boundaries.

Healthy eating

Ofsted conducted surveys in early years settings and in schools to establish whether children receive good-quality meals and whether they learn from an early age the benefits of a healthy diet.

The Ofsted report Food for thought, a survey of healthy eating in registered childcare was based on a short survey carried out at 110 settings across England. The survey found that the majority of childcare providers were at least satisfactory in providing a healthy and balanced diet for children (see xiv, p.82). Most placed an emphasis on nutritious food, using fresh ingredients cooked on the premises. All of the providers collected information about children's dietary needs, including details of allergies.

A small-scale survey, Healthy eating in schools, found that in a minority of schools there was slow improvement in the standard of meals provided. In the schools visited improvement was more rapid in primary than in secondary schools (see xvi, p.82). Where meals were good, they were fresh, well planned and imaginative. There were choices of fruit and vegetables, and limits on fatty foods such as chips.

A minority of schools still offered unhealthy or unappetising food, especially where it was prepared off site. Most schools recognised that healthier meals were only a first step. In the primary schools, pupils were developing and using the necessary skills to make informed choices about healthier meals. By contrast, secondary school students did not always apply their knowledge when making meal selections.

In early education for children aged three to five, children's achievements were highest when their interest and imagination were captured from the time they arrived.

- In their personal, social and emotional development, children demonstrated high levels of independence in their personal care and self-help skills. They were confident enough to seek help when necessary.

- In communication, language and literacy, children readily chose to look at books independently and listened with concentration to stories in small and larger groups. Children spoke confidently and language development was supported with the introduction of new words.

- In mathematics and problem-solving, children made simple calculations confidently. They recognised and compared shapes, sorted by colour and size, and described position and quantity.

- In developing their knowledge and understanding of the world, children enjoyed designing, building and constructing with a wide variety of resources. They began to understand how everyday technology works and how to use it. They discovered and identified features in their environment and began to learn about their own and others' cultures and beliefs.

- Children made good progress in physical development through activities such as completing obstacle courses or moving around ball pools.

- In creative development, children expressed themselves enthusiastically in cooking, music and movement, imaginative play and art, including clay modelling and jelly play.

Case study 7. Good progress in an early years setting run by a registered childminder for a small number of children.

Young children make extremely good progress because their senses are stimulated through, for example, different tactile experiences with paints and soft modelling material. They discover how to make things happen, such as how to create sounds, and their curiosity is stimulated by having access to a large box of toys which are made from different natural materials.

Case study 8. High achievement in mathematics in a pre-school group offering sessional day care for three- and four-year-old children.

Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play and respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. When looking at the number 10, staff use an alarm clock to illustrate to children the concept of time, counting 10 seconds in time with the clock. After experiencing what 10 seconds feels like, children are asked to predict how long they think it will take a balloon to float up to the ceiling and count how long it takes to roll a tin across the floor. Children are involved in developing their understanding of mathematical concepts such as symmetry, sequencing and pattern-making, and consider questions through a variety of planned activities.

The educational achievement of most children up to the age of 16 was at least adequate but it is a matter of concern that a small proportion of secondary school pupils still leave with no formal qualifications. There were, however, often significant differences in the achievement of different groups of children and young people within a local area.

Educational outcomes for looked-after children were improving, but slowly. They still lagged far behind other groups. Many children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieved adequately but the monitoring of their progress was underdeveloped in a number of local areas. This was also the case for the sometimes large numbers of looked-after children who were placed by their own local authority in a different local authority area.

In some areas, looked-after children over the age of 16 achieved no formal qualification after leaving school. Despite considerable commitment to support these children and young people, frequent changes in placements and assigned social workers led to too much instability and uncertainty for them.

Recreational and voluntary learning opportunities based in schools were generally good but provision outside school was more limited. Provision for sport was usually much better than for other kinds of activity. Transport difficulties formed a barrier to participation for many, especially in rural areas. Some young people in more deprived areas reported difficulty in accessing recreation and leisure facilities because of high travel costs and concerns about walking the streets alone.

Youth workers continue to provide alternative educational programmes for young people who may otherwise be disengaged from school or college. Improved practice in accreditation has further sharpened the quality of this work. In the best work seen, young people socialised and enjoyed themselves. Youth services continued to work well with partner organisations and the better local authorities understood well the complementary role which youth work and Connexions can provide.

Enjoying and achieving: what young people think – findings from the 'Tellus' surveys of approximately 19,000 young people

Of the children and young people who completed the surveys, 83% said that they thought they were doing well or very well at school; the remainder, equally boys and girls, said that they did not think they were doing well. The key factors for those who were positive included help from teachers; help from family and friends, for example with homework; and interesting and fun lessons. Those not doing well wanted more help from teachers and more interesting lessons.

Early years settings

Almost three quarters of early years settings were judged good or outstanding in helping children to enjoy and achieve. Babies and toddlers enjoyed themselves and developed well when the people who cared for them offered reassurance and continuity with the care provided at home. They responded enthusiastically when they had access to an exciting range of resources. They developed their senses, and their curiosity was stimulated when they were given the opportunity to explore materials and objects. Through imaginative play, they demonstrated understanding of everyday activities and sustained their concentration levels. The youngest children developed communication skills as they participated in conversations and joined in songs and rhymes.

Case study 1. Promoting healthy eating in a primary school: a headteacher's account

Following a full consultation with parents, we decided to make radical changes to what children could eat and drink at playtimes. Previously, they could bring in more or less what they wanted, with crisps, sweets and chocolate bars being very common. With fruit being provided for the younger pupils, we decided to extend this to Key Stage 2 as well and said that the children could eat only fruit at playtimes. At the same time, we agreed that only water or milk would be available at playtimes and that pupils would have access to water throughout the day. Although there was some resistance from a minority of parents, the changes have been implemented successfully and pupils are enjoying a wider range of fruit and vegetables at all mealtimes.

Some schools did their utmost to prepare pupils for learning by providing them with a healthy breakfast. However, schools can only do so much. Children have most of their meals at home and parents determine the content of packed lunches. A few schools have given advice to parents to help them to provide a healthier packed lunch for their children and have seen improvement as a consequence.

Physical health

The Ofsted report *Early years: Safe and sound*, based on the inspection of 25,000 early years settings, identified the features of outstanding and inadequate practice in promoting physical health as well as safety (see ix, p.82). The report showed that the overwhelming majority of children are kept safe while in childcare settings. Where provision was outstanding, children thoroughly enjoyed a wide range of activities which promoted their physical development in an environment where risk was managed effectively. They took part in regular exercise and learned how this affected their bodies, for example, they could discuss how the heart rate increases after jumping on the trampoline.

They also had a very secure understanding of the reasons for practising good hygiene.

In outstanding settings:

- carers planned for children to engage in daily physical exercise
- children used a good range of indoor and outdoor play equipment, which provided them with physical challenges
- children were encouraged to respond to music and movement activities
- adults helped children make effective use of equipment, such as ropes, climbing frames, slices and pedal cycles
- adults knew the children very well and in most were quick to spot any chances and potential health risks; adults attended training on health matters, for example in meningitis awareness.

In the weaker settings:

- there were few opportunities for children to be active and they had little experience of playing with equipment outdoors
- children were not encouraged to take part in energetic play but spent long periods of time in passive activities such as watching television
- adults were reluctant to take children outside to play in cold or wet weather
- there was insufficient space in which children could move freely indoors
- adults missed opportunities to draw children's attention to the importance of exercise.

Being healthy continued

Enjoying and achieving

The majority of primary schools were promoting healthy lifestyles and raising awareness of the benefits of health and exercise with pupils. For many primary schools, the 'wake up and shake up' programme, involving whole classes, and often the whole school, in 10 minutes of daily exercise to music, was a regular and popular feature of the school day. The programme was helping pupils to develop positive attitudes towards regular exercise and improve their coordination and stamina. In some instances, Year 5 and 6 pupils were composing their own routines and leading sessions, offering good opportunities for them to develop their leadership and communication skills. Other initiatives, such as 'walk to school' weeks and integrated topics on healthy living, were raising the profile of healthy lifestyles and fitness among pupils.

Nevertheless, in primary schools, and more so in secondary schools, levels of pupils' fitness continue to be a concern. Data from the Department of Health show increasing obesity levels among young people, and teachers and others voice their concerns about pupils' fitness levels. Although schools were developing strategies to improve the standards of health and fitness achieved by different groups of pupils, for example girls or minority ethnic groups, few targeted those who were overweight and leading sedentary lifestyles.

Participation in physical education (PE) and attendance at extra-curricular activities were generally good. Teachers were paying more attention to physical health, with better use of warm-up activities that raised and sustained pupils' heart rates for longer periods of time, for example 10 or 15 minutes. These more rigorous beginnings to lessons were helping to raise the pace of learning and put more of the 'physical' back into PE. Many schools had a small but significant minority of pupils who were disaffected towards PE, especially in Key Stage 4.

Some schools had identified such disaffected pupils and were adjusting the curriculum and being more flexible to meet their needs more closely. For example, parental notes had been abandoned. Everyone changed into kit and those suffering from an injury or feeling unwell participated at different levels which involved a little physical exercise, or they took on the role of coach or umpire.

Colleges generally promoted sport and other forms of physical exercise and often had very good facilities, but in some there were insufficient opportunities for learners to participate in sports.

Drug education in schools

A survey based on 60 schools and a review of section 5 inspection reports found that the quality of provision for drug education in schools was improving (see vi, p.82). Since the last Ofsted drug education report in 1997, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with drugs and their skills in the application of their knowledge were higher at all key stages (see vi, p.82). Most schools had effective policies and curriculum plans for drug education, but some primary schools in particular needed to update their policies in line with recent guidance. Nearly all secondary schools and a majority of primary schools had a policy for dealing with drug related incidents. Many of the policies were based on detailed frameworks that had been produced by national or local bodies.

The quality of teaching had improved at all key stages, in particular the report acknowledged the good quality of teaching about drugs in primary schools. Some secondary schools made very effective use of peer education, which at best involved trained pupils, supported by a teacher, in leading groups in well informed discussion of the issues.

Ofsted evaluates the degree to which early years settings, schools, colleges and children's services are effective in enabling children and young people to be ready for school; attend well and enjoy their learning; progress well and achieve challenging educational standards; achieve well in personal and social development; and enjoy recreation.

Overview

- Joint area reviews revealed that local children's services were usually effective in helping children and young people to enjoy and achieve.

- In most early years settings, babies, toddlers and young children enjoyed what they did and made good progress in developing their self-confidence and skills; they were stimulated by attractive environments and interesting activities. In the minority of weaker settings, staff had insufficient knowledge of child development and the Foundation Stage of learning, and this reduced their ability to support children's progress adequately.

- In primary schools, there were continuing improvements in achievement that reflected better teaching of English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT). Many schools had improved their PE provision. However, science and foundation subjects generally showed little sign of improvement, and teachers' weak subject knowledge and the lack of professional development in these areas were key factors where provision was inadequate.

- Secondary schools made better use of self-evaluation than previously to identify strengths and weaknesses. Barriers to continued improvement included weaknesses in assessment and in meeting the needs of individual pupils. There remained other important issues for schools to tackle, including the slow development of citizenship courses; the decline in numbers of pupils taking modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4; and provision in ICT for pupils not taking examination courses.

- Most college courses have improved, with greater attention to the needs of individual learners and strengths in the development of learning in practical areas.

- Youth services continued to work well with partner organisations and the better local authorities understood well the complementary mix which youth work and the Connexions careers service can provide.

- Across early years settings, schools and colleges there were still significant differences in achievement among different groups of pupils, including boys and girls, and pupils from minority ethnic groups. National Strategy materials and training have not yet had a significant impact outside the core subjects, although particular initiatives such as the intensifying Support Programme and Excellence in Cities have been beneficial. High-quality specialist teaching was the key factor in raising the achievement of pupils with English as an additional language. This was also the case for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Local children's services

Joint area reviews reported that local services, including early years settings, schools and colleges, were usually effective in helping children and young people to enjoy and achieve. In most areas the quality of educational provision was good. Local authorities generally worked effectively with partners to offer a wide range of opportunities for education and enjoyment.

Parents and carers often received good support, particularly when their children were due to start school. Some local areas had provided effective, targeted support for parents and carers of very young children in the most disadvantaged areas. There were generally sufficient numbers of early education and childcare places to meet the needs of children and parents. In areas with the highest levels of social deprivation, the establishment of neighbourhood nurseries and children's centres which cater for all children under five was being given priority.

Staying safe continued

Procedures for checking staff appointed by schools

A small-scale survey in schools and local authorities evaluated procedures for criminal records checks, identity checks and checks of the information maintained by the DfES (see xxii, p.62).

The survey found that all parties sought to safeguard and protect children and most made thorough checks during employment procedures. However, with regard to the serving staff as a whole, very few schools took the simplest of measures in terms of record keeping, including the names of all staff members: whether they are who they say they are; whether they have the qualifications that they say they have; whether they have a criminal record; and when these facts were last checked and by whom. Commonly, this was regarded as someone else's responsibility. As a consequence of this lack of rigour, there was little evidence to show that the tasks had been completed; records were not robust; and thus the safeguarding of children remained insecure.

When employing supply teachers or teachers from abroad, schools generally had no idea whether these staff had been checked or not. Schools were not sure whom to check, nor were they sure what to do when checks were 'pending'. Half of the schools in the survey were not aware of the good range of available advice or of DfES and local authority guidance. The employment practices of teacher supply agencies were not always secure: two of the six interviewed in the course of the survey allowed supply staff to go into schools before their checks were returned from the Criminal Records Bureau.

In the small number of schools where practice was good, all List 99 and Criminal Records Bureau information was held in one file, which was set up for that purpose.[27] These schools had a clear overview of staffing as well as the nature and date of the checks that had been made. More importantly, headteachers could see at a glance if and when further checks were needed.

Being healthy continued

The key objective was to develop strategies to cope with peer-group pressure. Pupils could already identify common drugs and their effects, and their attitudes towards drugs were negative. Role play was used in which pupils were asked to consider what avoidance strategies they could employ if offered drugs by their friends. Each group developed and gave a presentation, which was evaluated by the whole class to discuss the effectiveness of avoidance strategies and any alternatives. Individual pupils decided which might best help them resist peer pressure. Throughout the lesson, pupils had the time to develop their ideas and to listen to those of others.

However, schools and teachers face great difficulties in the area of drug education. Despite the good attempts being made by over half the schools to engage the pupils in a dialogue about drugs, the lack of understanding of pupils' needs by teachers remained a problem. At worst, some teachers were asked to teach drug education when they lacked the necessary subject knowledge.

In the majority of schools, pupils were taught the skills and understanding to make healthy choices, but in a significant minority of schools there was too little focus on the moral implications of taking drugs. Pupils were not made sufficiently aware of the impact that drugs, smoking and alcohol could have on their lives.

Most schools had done all they could to involve parents in educating their children about drugs, but it cannot be taken for granted that parents always have the information and skills necessary to carry out this role successfully or, in some cases, the will to carry it out. Information and advice evenings provided by schools had generally attracted little support from parents.

Drug education programmes were effective in so far as pupils identified alcohol and tobacco, particularly the former, as the greatest threat to them in terms of the personal risks they might face. Nevertheless, the survey found that a significant number of young people regularly placed themselves at risk by drinking to excess and engaging in sexual activity, the latter often influenced by the former. The risk might be reduced if the link between drug education and sex and relationships education (SRE) was more explicit.

Sexual health

Inspections of children's services commented on the variable degrees of success of services in reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy. In areas where the rate has been above the national average, some significant successes have been achieved. Elsewhere, despite apparent effort and commitment from many local agencies, success in reducing the rate has stalled. This problem has been identified in recent research that highlights pupils' lack of knowledge about sexually transmitted infections and suggests that parents are playing a decreasing role in their children's SRE; this increases the pressure on schools to provide effective SRE for their pupils.

When SRE in schools was sufficiently comprehensive and effective, it highlighted the issues of emotional development and self-esteem. It also enabled young people to gain the knowledge and skills to make informed, healthy choices about relationships and equipped them to resist pressure to have sex. In SRE, pupils' knowledge and understanding were satisfactory or better in a majority of schools. However, in those secondary schools where pupils' learning was less secure, this was usually associated with weaknesses in teachers' knowledge of how to teach the subject effectively. In such cases, the teaching failed to explore what pupils thought and did not challenge existing attitudes and behaviour.

Ofsted evaluates the degree to which the support provided by early education and childcare, schools, colleges and children's services is effective in enabling children and young people to have security, stability and care, and to stay safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation, accidental injury and death, bullying and discrimination and crime and anti-social behaviour, in and out of school.

Overview

- Most local services made effective arrangements to help children and young people to stay safe. In a small number, provision was inadequate.

- In the vast majority of early years settings, children were kept safe and were well cared for. In a small number of weaker settings appropriate safety procedures were not in place.

- Most schools and colleges provided well for the safety of children and young people. Pupils felt safe in schools, although they often felt less safe in streets and recreation areas outside the school premises.

- Schools were making use of National Strategy training in behaviour management.[76] In most of those visited, the main problems consisted of low-level misconduct and inattention in lessons. In many schools there were fewer permanent exclusions of pupils. However, there was an increase in the number of pupils removed from classrooms to other accommodation within schools because of their misbehaviour.

- Provision for pupils who were excluded or placed in temporary, specialised provision within school was very variable in quality.

- Racist incidents were generally well handled where there was good guidance from local authorities and strong leadership from headteachers.

- Schools and local authorities were highly motivated in making thorough checks on staff they recruited. However, once staff were in place, few schools and local authorities kept a secure, reliable and accessible record of checks.

Local children's services

The work of local services in identifying the risks to safety, supporting preventative approaches and helping to keep children safe was generally adequate, with strong partnerships to ensure that children and young people were cared for properly. However, of the 36 local authorities which had joint area reviews, six were judged to be inadequate in their contribution to the overall outcomes achieved by children and young people in relation to staying safe.

Where there was concern about the safety of the most vulnerable children and young people, the main causes of concern included significant shortages of specialist social workers, high staff turnover, weak management and fluctuating thresholds for intervention. These problems sometimes resulted in poor assessment of need and evaluation of the risk of harm in individual cases. There was also uncertainty amongst other local partners about the level of need, including risk of harm, that should trigger direct intervention.

Area Child Protection Committees were mostly effective, although there were some weaknesses in their monitoring and scrutiny work. The outcomes of serious case reviews were usually translated into practice through training and good management. Nearly all areas have implemented the recommendations following the Victoria Climbié Inquiry and progress towards the introduction of local safeguarding children boards was developing well.

Children looked after by the local authority and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were generally kept safe, but there were issues about placement choice and stability of placements in a third of the 36 local authority areas. This is a cause for serious concern because children need stable attachments to achieve positive outcomes.

Local authorities provided good training to stop bullying by pupils, but the training was not compulsory and some schools chose not to participate. Local authorities found that some of the schools with the largest number of complaints from parents about failure to tackle bullying were also those schools that did not take up places on their courses on how to tackle bullying.

Tackling race-related incidents

One section of a review of race relations in schools was concerned with tackling race-related incidents (see xx, 3.92). The report outlined the legislation and guidance that followed from the Macpherson inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, and the implications for schools and inspections. The nature of incidents handled and reported in schools in the 12 local authorities visited included verbal abuse by pupils, which accounted for the largest proportion of incidents; name-calling in infant schools; verbal abuse of pupils by adults; and assaults.

Authoritative, well researched and supportive local authority guidance helped schools tackle race-related incidents effectively, and schools felt confident about the backing that they had from local authorities. In addition, a strong stance from headteachers on the unacceptability of racism provided staff with the confidence to manage incidents well.

In one local authority, the racist incident procedures were developed with the local racial incident action group. The material refers to the relevant recommendations in the Macpherson report and Ofsted guidance. The local authority uses the Macpherson definition of an incident and states clearly early on in the guidance that all incidents must be recorded. The guidance is put into practice by, for example, each school having a nominated monitoring officer whose responsibilities include overseeing the handling of all incidents and, importantly, identifying particular trends. The officer's role extends beyond mere processing and tracking and covers work on developing the curriculum to reflect diversity and measures to combat racism, as well as staff training and the analysis that the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires.

76. [reference text illegible]

The Primary National Strategy initiative on social and emotional aspects of learning has enhanced the methods used by schools to improve pupils' behaviour. Schools have used the material available through the strategy to broaden and deepen their approaches, building on work that already existed in primary schools. A pilot project in secondary schools which focused on pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills was deepening teachers' understanding of how best to organise learning opportunities. Class teachers became more confident in applying techniques developed through in-service training. Support provided by learning mentors and teaching assistants was directly related to heightened awareness of the most effective strategies. This support was effective in reducing fixed-term exclusions for individual pupils.

In the pilot schools which were working with local authority behaviour and attendance consultants, teachers' confidence and skills in helping pupils manage their emotions and behaviour more successfully were improving. After three terms, target groups of pupils were beginning to work more effectively with each other, recognising how to respond appropriately to others and their peers and understanding how to manage behaviour.

While many schools were making less use of permanent exclusion, there was an increase in the removal of pupils from mainstream classes to other accommodation within the school premises. The quality of provision for those pupils was extremely variable and the monitoring and evaluation of internal exclusion were weak.

A few schools used unofficial exclusion, asking parents to take their child out of school rather than face formal exclusion. This practice is illegal and local authorities take firm action when it is found. Most local authorities have developed guidance on exclusions for schools, often based on Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance. Most authorities had mechanisms to detect unofficial exclusion; often they were reported to the local authority by parents, carers or service providers. Most local authorities challenged schools about their practice over unofficial exclusions, and some had used formal procedures to direct schools to reinstate unofficially excluded pupils.

Where pupils were permanently excluded they were usually placed in a pupil referral unit (PRU). More often than in the past, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who behaved badly but did not have statements of special educational need were excluded and placed in PRUs. A common weakness in the placement process was that PRU staff did not receive information about the pupils' attainment before entry and this could have an adverse effect on pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Pupils, parents and teachers are often concerned about bullying. There is a perception that bullying is commonplace and many pupils fear being bullied. Using the guidance offered by the DfES on bullying, including racial bullying, many schools were reviewing and improving their procedures to tackle it. Some schools continued to deny that bullying existed or treated it as a part of 'growing up' and something that pupils should get used to.

Case study 3: A children's service in the north of England which shifted its focus towards outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people

The Director of Children's Services holds a regular meeting of key managers at which the quality of provision offered to some of the most vulnerable children and young people is analysed on a case by case basis. These meetings consider the effectiveness of the joint services being offered, identify specific outcomes for improvement and establish challenging improvement targets for each child. Follow-up meetings consider how much progress each child has made, and opportunities are regularly taken to meet with the child (where appropriate) to discuss the quality of services offered. This approach ensures that any slippage between high level intention and the delivery of front-line services can be quickly identified and, where necessary, remedial action taken.

The work of schools, colleges and health professionals in supporting preventative approaches and keeping children safe was generally good. Admissions to hospital due to injury have fallen and serious road accidents involving young people have declined in recent years in most areas.

Staying safe: what children and young people think – findings from the 'Tellus' surveys of approximately 19,000 young people

Of the children and young people who completed the survey, 93% said that they felt very or quite safe and happy. Having helpful friends or classmates was the strongest reason given for this. However, 7% thought they were not very safe and happy. Many children and young people who felt safe and free from bullying while in school felt less secure when walking on the streets and playing in local parks and recreation areas. Those who did not feel very safe and happy wanted schools to be stricter with bullies.

Early years settings

A report based on the inspection of 25,000 early years settings recorded that in the vast majority of cases children with registered childcare providers were kept safe and were cared for well (see ix, p.82).

In outstanding settings children were kept physically safe because adults were meticulous about security, safety and accident prevention. Risk assessments were effective; children were supervised by well qualified and informed adults, so they remained safe. In these circumstances the children understood how to keep themselves safe.

Case study 4: A play scheme for a small number of children with disabilities

Risk assessments are made of all areas within the setting and reviewed by a member of staff who has training and expertise in this area. All staff are made aware of possible risks and informed of the positive action they must take to prevent accidents. All outings are well planned, staff make visits without children to the venues and liaise with the owners to make a full risk assessment before taking the children. Children are informed in advance of outings. This gives them an understanding of how they must behave to stay safe, for example holding hands when walking along the road.

In safeguarding children from harm, outstanding settings ensured that all adults were properly vetted and had a thorough understanding of their role in protecting children. Settings had clear procedures which were discussed with parents; staff listened to children and responded appropriately when there was a concern.

In the very small minority of settings in which care was inadequate, Ofsted required actions to be taken to ensure that National Standards were met to keep children safe. Examples of inadequate provision included: insufficiently qualified or experienced adults; too few adults for the number of children; failure on the

part of adults to identify hazards, minimise risks to keep [...] satisfactory records, inadequate emergency evacuation arrangements; and failure by adults to help children to learn how to keep themselves safe. In a small number of weaker settings, adults who were not properly vetted were present. Adults' understanding of how to safeguard children was inadequate. Records and reporting of child protection concerns were inadequate and adults were unclear about how to respond to allegations.

A small-scale survey of 45 nurseries by childcare inspectors focused on the arrangements made for children on arrival at nurseries (see viii, p.62). Good nurseries made plans to have sufficient staff at the start of the day to cope with partings from parents. All of the nurseries in this sample had risk assessments in place, but in the best, staff assessed potential hazards at the start of every day using a checklist.

Case study 5: Access to a nursery

A new biometric system on entrances and exits ensures that only parents and staff whose fingerprints are registered on the system can gain access to the nursery. Registered parents can enter and leave, while staff can continue to concentrate on caring for the children.

Thirteen of the nurseries had weaknesses in the way they organised childcare to meet the needs of the children attending during the first hour of the day. In some cases staff did not spend enough time helping children to feel settled or reassuring parents.

Other weaknesses related to staff deployment and their ineffective grouping of children. They ranged from inadequate ratios of staff to children, or no manager or deputy present, to children being left for too long without adult attention while staff prepared breakfast or attended to other children's needs. A small number of nurseries had insufficient staff to help minimise risks. In one case, staff who had not been vetted took children to the toilet.

Security systems were not always in place. In the best nurseries, the manager or another free staff member monitored the entrance area at busy periods. However, several 'overrode' their security systems in busy periods during the first hour. Unacceptably, in three cases inspectors were allowed into the nursery without challenge.

Schools and colleges

Just over eight in 10 primary schools and nearly three quarters of secondary schools were judged to have pupils who were good at adopting safe practices; the remainder were mostly satisfactory.

Most schools met safety requirements. Where these were met, a designated senior member of the management team was responsible for child protection, the school policy was known to all staff and it was published in the school prospectus. There were set procedures for handling cases of suspected abuse. Pupils were given the information and skills they needed to stay safe, were protected from bullying and anti-social behaviour, and knew whom to approach in confidence if the need arose.

Although generally safe, a very small minority of primary schools failed to meet the requirements in one or more respects. Typically:

- there were staffing issues, including the lack of a designated child protection officer, a lack of induction and training of staff, or inadequate criminal record checks

- child protection policies were not in place, for example on the safe restraint of children

- records on child protection were inadequate

- risk assessments were inadequate, for example of buildings, practical lessons or out-of-school visits.

In a very few schools inspectors identified risks to safety, including, for instance, the lack of a secure outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage, or inadequate procedures to ensure that younger children were collected by their parents or carers at the end of the day. Very rarely, pupils felt intimidated by the bad behaviour of some of their peers; this was linked to inadequate training of staff and inconsistent application of policies.

In secondary schools, policies and procedures were almost always in place, although in a few cases the monitoring of these was insufficiently rigorous. Issues of safety identified by inspectors were often associated with poor behaviour.

The majority of schools had policies to ensure the safety of staff and pupils while using the internet and email. These were often displayed in the school's information and communication technology (ICT) suite. In some schools, pupils were not allowed to use the internet unless an adult was present. In others, the school undertook a risk assessment and required parents and/or pupils to sign an 'acceptable use' agreement. Some schools ensured that pupils were made aware of health and safety aspects of using ICT, including the amount of time they spent in front of a computer screen.

Most colleges inspected had good policies and procedures to safeguard their learners, including, for example, the provision of identity cards to enhance security. Students generally felt the college was a safe environment where respect for themselves, others and the community was promoted.

In a small minority of colleges health and safety practices in some curriculum areas, such as hairdressing, were not satisfactory and there were few identity checks for learners entering those colleges.

Behaviour and anti-bullying strategies

The main behavioural problems identified by inspectors in 44 of 46 schools surveyed were low-level misconduct and inattention in lessons, which, during the course of the school day, wore down the patience of teachers and peers so that learning was regularly interrupted.

Increasingly, schools were using a range of non-teaching support personnel to help pupils improve their behaviour. In the Excellence in Cities programmes, learning mentors were particularly successful in offering advice and guidance to pupils and in working with parents. At the same time, early identification of 'pupils at risk' and the use of learning support units linked with learning mentor support led to a reduction in permanent and fixed-term exclusions. The success of the learning mentor and learning support units initiatives has been recognised by schools outside the Excellence in Cities programmes and these schools are developing similar provision from within their existing funding.

In schools where behaviour policies were not planned, managed or organised well, their impact was minimal and levels of exclusion remained high. The key to successful provision was support from senior managers in seeing it as a part of school improvement, together with the sharing of relevant information with teachers, middle managers and senior staff. Behaviour improved when schools focused on resolving the underlying causes of poor behaviour in the first place, for example poor literacy and underdeveloped social and emotional skills.

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