

## 4 REVIEW OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT AND EVALUATION OF EDP1

This section of the EDP comprises:

- ◆ an update of the context of the Devon LEA and Devon schools (Section 4.1);
- ◆ an evaluation of the effectiveness of aspects of EDP1 (Section 4.2 - 4.8);

### 4.1 The Context of the LEA and the LEA Audit: update since EDP1

4.1.1 EDP1 and subsequent EDP Supplements for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 stressed the extent of the difference between the socio-economic make-up of Devon and that of the group of ten LEAs with whose attainment Devon is compared in "PANDA" performance tables. Those differences have grown more marked during the last three years as economic activity and prosperity in East Anglia, East Sussex and Cambridgeshire, in particular, have out-paced development in Devon and Cornwall. In April 1997, average weekly earnings in Devon were 94.7% of the average of the ten "neighbour LEAs", and 84.5% of the level in the highest neighbour LEA, Cambridgeshire. Three years later, in April 2000, average weekly earnings in Devon had fallen to 93.1% of the average of the neighbour LEAs, and to 80.3% of the level in Cambridgeshire.

Although the free school meals measure (used as a measure of relative deprivation in LEA areas in determining groups of neighbour LEAs) does not point to a significant difference between Devon and the LEAs with which Devon's results are compared, the average weekly earnings figures indicate a continued divergence in overall prosperity between Devon and the neighbour LEAs up to April 2000. In particular, rural farming economies such as Devon's have been in crisis for some time before the Foot and Mouth Outbreak. Farm incomes

decreased by 65% in the last three years for a number of reasons, including the impact of BSE, the strong pound and the market power of supermarkets. Since that point, Devon has been among the Counties worst affected by the Foot and Mouth Outbreak: the impact of that has been felt not only in the loss of income and loss of jobs in farming and auxiliary industries and in tourism, but also in the many service activities in Devon which depend upon the holiday trade.

#### **4.1.2 Demographic Characteristics**

There is significant increase in net migration to Devon. The level of migration in the year to mid-1999 (9,000) and the year to mid-2000 (15,300) was significantly above the level earlier in the 1990s (average annual net migration to Devon was 5,300 during the nine years to mid-1998). Only a small proportion of this increase can be attributed to the arrival in Devon of families for whom English is not the first language (the number of pupils receiving support from the EAL Service increased from 126 in 1998 to 266 in July 2001). Anecdotal evidence indicates a growing movement of families from outside Devon to Devon seaside towns, attracted in part by the availability of cheaper housing.

#### **4.1.3 Changes in Council Structures**

There have been significant changes since EDP1. The County Council elections in June 2001 saw the return of an administration finely-balanced among the political parties. Since June 2001 the Council's decision-making body, the Executive Committee, has included two Portfolio Holders for Education services - a Schools' Services Portfolio and a Lifelong Learning Portfolio (which incorporates special education needs, and other services to individual children). Each of these Portfolio Holders is supported by a Policy Group which meets monthly; each Policy Group has a membership of six Councillors. In addition there are three Overview and Scrutiny Committees - one of which, the Community Services Scrutiny Committee - covers Education and Social Services issues.

The result of this will be that County Councillors will be more closely involved in matters bearing upon school improvement and the monitoring and evaluation of attainment data and EDP activities. In particular:

- ◆ in line with the Post-OFSTED Inspection Report, the Schools Services Policy Panel is now receiving a termly report about the progress of schools about which there is concern.
- ◆ the Community Services Scrutiny Committee has instituted a programme of review of attainment data and will also receive regular reports as part of the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of the EDP2 programme (see Annex 4).

#### **4.1.4 The Structure of LEA School Provision**

The LEA has resolved to proceed with the reorganisation of schools in Exeter (which are attended by approximately 14% of Devon pupils) to provide a pattern of primary and secondary schools with transfer at age eleven in place of the current structure of first, middle, combined and high schools, with transfer at ages eight and twelve. However, that will depend on the securing of a PFI project.

At present the attainment of Exeter pupils falls below the overall County figure. An EDP activity (4.1) will address the position in the period until reorganisation is implemented, and will complement activities within the Post-Inspection Action Plan.

### **4.2 Evaluation of EDP1**

- 4.2.1 The targets set early in 1999 which appear in EDP1 constitute an ambitious improvement programme during the three-year life of that EDP. They comprise "mile post" targets for 2000 and 2001, and final targets for 2002. The full analysis of progress towards the EDP targets appears in Section 5. This section provides an overview and evaluation of progress.

#### 4.2.2 Progress towards 2002 pupil performance targets

<b>KS2 English:</b>	<b>Summer 1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Summer 2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Summer 2002</b>
<b>English Tests: % of Y6 Pupils achieving Level 4 or above</b>	66.8%	75.5%	82.0%

Devon primary schools have made good progress in delivering the literacy strategy over the past three years, with an additional 8.7% of Y6 pupils reaching the Level 4 target by 2001 but, as is the case nationally, the 2001 SATs results showed no significant advance over those of the previous year and it appears unlikely at this point that the 2002 target will be met.

<b>KS2 Mathematics:</b>	<b>Summer 1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Summer 2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Summer 2002</b>
<b>Mathematics Tests: % of Y6 Pupils achieving Level 4 or above</b>	60.4%	71.1%	76.0%

The results of Devon primary schools have improved in line with the national average, and an additional 10.7% of Y6 pupils reached the Level 4 target by 2001. However it appears unlikely at this point that the 2002 target will be met.

<b>KS4:</b>	<b>Summer 1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Summer 2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Summer 2002</b>
<b>% of Pupils aged 16 gaining 5 or more Grades A*-C GCSE or equivalent</b>	47.6%	51.3%	52.0%

Secondary schools have made good progress, slightly ahead of the two "mile post" targets, and remain on track to meet the Summer 2002 target.

<b>KS4:</b>	<b>Summer 1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Summer 2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Summer 2002</b>
<b>% of pupils aged 16 gaining 1 or more Grade A*-G GCSE (or equivalent)</b>	96.3%	95.7%	97.5%

In the measure of pupils gaining one or more Grade A\*-G, Devon schools continued to be ahead of the national position during the period 1999-2001, but made no progress in extending examination success to the small residual percentage of the cohort.

<b>KS4:</b>	<b>Summer 1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Summer 2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Summer 2002</b>
<b>Average GCSE (or equivalent) points score per pupil aged 16</b>	38.8	40.0	42.0

The Summer 2001 attainment figure was in line with the EDP "mile post" target, and Devon schools continue to have a good chance of meeting the very challenging EDP target of 42.0 points. It should be noted that only four out of the ten "neighbour LEAs" achieved an APS of 42.0 or higher in 2001.

<b>Exclusions:</b>	<b>Academic Year 1997-1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Academic Year 2000-2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Academic Year 2001-2002</b>
<b>The number of permanent exclusions</b>	118	136	60

The result is disappointing and it is clear that permanent exclusions from Devon schools, although below both the neighbour LEA and national figures, according to the PANDA, are currently on an upward trend. The EDP target will not be met.

**Exclusions:**

Permanent exclusions: three-year average target: EDP Target - <b>80 exclusions per annum</b>
Given actual exclusions of 82 in 1999/2000 and 136 in 2000/2001, for the three-year target to be met would require exclusions in 2001/2002 to be 22 or less.

It is clear that this target will not be met.

<b>Unauthorised Absence:</b>	<b>Academic Year 1997-1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Academic Year 2000-2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Academic Year 2001-2002</b>
<b>Unauthorised absence: % of half-days missed in primary schools</b>	0.28%	0.3%	0.2%

The result is disappointing: unauthorised absence in Devon is reported as being in line with neighbour LEAs and significantly below the national level, but the EDP activity to bring down the 1997/98 rate of unauthorised absence has been unsuccessful.

<b>Unauthorised Absence:</b>	<b>Academic Year 1997-1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Academic Year 2000-2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Academic Year 2001-2002</b>
<b>Unauthorised absence: % of half-days missed in secondary schools</b>	0.77%	1.04%	0.45%

Again, the outcome is disappointing, with unauthorised absence worsening and approaching the national level. The EDP activities aimed at bringing down the rate of unauthorised absence in secondary schools have not been effective.

<b>Total Absence:</b>	<b>Academic Year 1997-1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Academic Year 2000-2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Academic Year 2001-2002</b>
<b>Total absence: % of half-days missed in primary schools</b>	5.77%	5.9%	5.0%

The outcome is disappointing, with total absence in Devon primary schools increasing towards the national level. It seems very unlikely that the EDP target will be met.

<b>Total Absence:</b>	<b>Academic Year 1997-1998 Baseline</b>	<b>Academic Year 2000-2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Academic Year 2001-2002</b>
<b>Total absence: % of half-days missed in secondary schools</b>	8.76%	9.3%	8.0%

The overall absence figures have worsened and appear to be approaching the national level. The outcome is disappointing and it appears very unlikely that the EDP target will be met.

<b>Children in Public Care:</b>	<b>Year to Summer 2001</b>	<b>EDP Target: Year to Summer 2002</b>
<b>% of children aged 16 or above who held a GCSE or GNVQ qualification upon leaving care</b>	35.8%	65%

The outcome is disappointing. There has been a clearer focus upon educational support to looked-after children during the last three years, including the allocation of an Education Welfare Officer post. During 2000/01, preparations were made for the introduction of personal education plans in the Summer term. Training and guidance has been made available to designated teachers in all schools and similar preparation is being undertaken with care managers, foster carers and residential child care staff. The second Quality Protects audit has been completed using electronic transmission of information and there is now a reliable list of young people in public care available to both Education and Social Services for the closer monitoring of these pupils. This area of LEA work has been praised during the recent OFSTED Inspection. These developments are expected to bear quickly upon the attainment of young people in care, but it is uncertain that the 2002 target will be reached.

- 4.2.3 Progress towards these targets will be closely monitored under the arrangements described in Annex 4. Where a shortfall against target is envisaged, action in response forms part of EDP activities for 2002-2003.

#### 4.3 **The effectiveness of LEA Policy to identify and support schools with weaknesses**

- 4.3.1 Through the monitoring cycle activities and other information collated by LEA officers, the County Council has identified a number of schools which were causing concern. Sixty-one schools were so classified in 2000/2001 and have drawn up action plans in partnership with the LEA to remedy the issues which were the basis for concern. Funding has been devolved to the schools in order to support implementation of the action plans.

Approximately 15% of Devon schools have been identified as causing concern - but it remains the case that during 2000/2001 three schools were identified by OFSTED as requiring special measures or having serious weaknesses which had not previously been identified by the LEA as causing concern.

The expectation is that the LEA will refine the information about individual schools which can be gleaned from analysis of data, and that the utility of monitoring visits where these take place can be further developed - but the evaluation of the effectiveness of the LEA in identifying schools with weaknesses must be that there has been only partial success to date.

- 4.3.2 However, the record of supporting schools which have identified weaknesses is a good one:
- ◆ at the start of the EDP1 programme in April 1999 there were eight Devon schools classified as requiring special measures. All eight schools were successfully removed from special measures by October 2000.
  - ◆ no Devon school removed from "special measures" has subsequently been determined by OFSTED to have serious weaknesses, or to require re-admission to the "special measures" category.
  - ◆ at the start of the EDP programme in April 1999 there were twelve Devon schools classified as having serious weakness. Nine of the twelve schools were released from the serious weaknesses category by December 2000; two further schools were released from that category during the Summer term 2001. At the time of writing the twelfth school continues to await re-inspection by OFSTED to determine whether it can be released from the serious weaknesses category.
  - ◆ no Devon school removed from the serious weaknesses category has subsequently been determined by OFSTED to have serious weakness, or to require admission to the "special measures" category.

- ◆ the use of reserve powers by the LEA or Secretary of State has not been necessary.

#### 4.4 **The effectiveness of LEA Policy to support school self-evaluation and review**

The focus of LEA support has been monitoring visits undertaken by LEA Advisers.

The principles and procedures for monitoring visits have been clearly established and shared with schools. Visits in the second (ie. 1999-2000) monitoring round focused on informing school self-evaluation. Visits to primary and special schools concentrated on monitoring processes for self-evaluation and implementation of the National Literacy Strategy or progress on the school's post-OFSTED action plan. In secondary schools and Pupil Referral Units the focus was on the measures which schools are taking to evaluate and improve their own performance and activities. Judgements made against statements of good practice showed that in 237 primary schools monitored on self-evaluation, 81.5% have good or satisfactory strategies in place. (The EDP target is that 100% of schools should have effective strategies in place by 2002). Judgements on implementation of the National Literacy Strategy in 224 primary schools showed that 87.5% of schools monitored had made good or satisfactory progress in implementing the strategy. In both areas of work it is significant that a higher number of small schools (ie schools with less than 100 pupils) had judgements indicating shortcomings or weak practice.

In secondary schools and colleges (for which there is the same EDP target of 100% of schools having effective self-evaluation strategies in place by 2002), 25% had good strategies and 72% satisfactory strategies.

Various activities to evaluate monitoring visits were undertaken. The EDP target is that 90% of headteachers should confirm that monitoring visits had assisted the process of school evaluation. 150 (46%) headteachers responded to the questionnaire on monitoring visits: 83% of secondary headteachers and 88% of primary headteachers agreed that visits had supported school review processes. The third (ie. 2000-2001) round of monitoring visits covered themes such as monitoring of inclusion; the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and progress on the school's post-OFSTED action plan. Visits focused on informing school self-evaluation and enabling schools to set clear priorities for improvement.

#### 4.5 **The effectiveness of LEA Policy to disseminate good practice**

There have been a number of developments and the record is a good one. Good progress has been identified and disseminated through a variety of strategies: Newsletters and publications continue to be used and increasingly schools are visiting the Devon Curriculum Services (DCS) website, which has seen considerable development over the last year. Schools can access sites on all curriculum areas, Literacy, Numeracy and Devon Grid for Learning, and on specific issues: for example, the SEN Code of Practice; Anti-Racism; small schools, and teachers as researchers.

Dissemination is also achieved through involving staff from schools which demonstrate good practice within the County Staff Development Programme; facilitating the use of demonstration classrooms in Literacy and Numeracy; exchanges between schools, and encouraging sharing through collaborative work; eg, between small schools.

Devon Curriculum Services continues to appoint seconded staff from schools to work with the team of advisers: post-16 work has been covered in this way. This is seen as an important contribution to disseminating best practice.

The County Council has continued to work closely with Beacon Schools and this has been enhanced now that there are more schools in this category. Beacon School heads have met with an adviser to look at effective ways of working to support the dissemination of best practice.

There have been significant developments in planning for the extension of the County Council's Advanced Skills Teacher programme with a planned increase from three to twenty-one teachers.

Some work has begun to strengthen the work of Academic Councils. There are examples where they operate well and the County Council now works more closely with Chairs of Academic Councils to build on this good practice in order to strengthen Academic Councils' role in school improvement.

#### 4.6 **The effectiveness of LEA Policy to improve the quality of teaching**

An improvement into the quality of teaching in Devon schools can reasonably be adduced from both improvements in pupils' academic attainment at each Key Stage and OFSTED Inspectors' evaluation of observed teaching, but it is more difficult to say to what extent that improvement can reasonably be attributed to LEA support and - out of that attributed improvement - how much can be attributed to EDP activities and how much to bought-back LEA activities outside the EDP.

With that caveat, however, the evaluation is positive: Inspectors' judgements about **the quality of teaching** in Devon schools are summarised in Section 5.3.4. They show an improvement between the first and second inspection cycles in both primary and secondary schools. In primary schools the extent of improvement broadly matches the national improvement but in secondary schools the extent of improvement in Devon exceeded both the national level and the average of neighbour LEAs.

An induction programme for **newly qualified teachers** was implemented. This provides for determination and allocation of Standards Fund to support induction; maintenance of accurate records of all NQTs in Devon schools; support through visits by advisers to NQTs deemed to be at risk of failing to meet the inclusion standards, and for information and advice to schools with NQTs in the form of a Guidance Pack and through a help-line to three designated advisers. The programme also provides a programme of training for school induction tutors and NQTs.

A number of means are taken to secure the quality of induction arrangements in Devon schools, including evaluating provision as part of monitoring visits made by advisers. The LEA OFSTED inspection found one aspect of the NQT programme unsatisfactory: this related to advisers' monitoring of support for NQTs in their schools and moderation of Headteachers' recommendations about whether NQTs have met the induction standards.

**Headteachers** new to Devon and **acting heads** have been supported by designated LEA officers and advisers following their appointment and encouraged to participate in regional training on issues such as Finance and Personnel: 2 days over 2 years are allocated for this. The County Council undertakes work relating to applications for NPQH - where recruitment is at the regional average and LPSH - where recruitment has been at the maximum. Evaluation has been carried out on the impact of the programme on participants' schools. Provision for the Headlamp Programme for newly appointed Primary Headteachers in their first headship has been successfully implemented.

Extensive consultation on the content of the **staff development programme** takes place with schools including bi-annual meetings with senior staff, a written questionnaire, an analysis of summaries from all schools on how they intend to spend their allocations of Standards Fund grant and meetings of Steering Groups for teaching assistants and School Administration.

A systematic process of evaluation was introduced from April 2000, including a common evaluation form, an analysis of the individual needs of teachers attending courses, an in-depth evaluation of the quality of provision and the impact of selected courses. Individual advisers are provided with data relating to their courses in order that they can improve the quality of what is being offered.

In addition, a range of opportunities are provided to support teachers in acquiring further professional qualifications and school support staff in acquiring initial and further professional qualifications. For teachers, accredited modules are offered in school leadership and management, subject leadership and management and the leadership and management of SEN. The programme has enjoyed high take-up. One of the modules on school leadership was the subject of OFSTED inspection and was very highly rated on its quality of provision, analysis of needs and impact on schools.

Opportunities have been provided for teachers to participate in the Best practice research scholarship scheme and the Teachers International Development programme.

In 2000/2001, 426 courses were offered by the County Council: there were over 6880 participants.

Courses have been fully subscribed for **returners to teaching**, and courses for updating the knowledge of **supply teachers** have been successful. Sixteen teachers have had opportunities to work and learn alongside colleagues. All of these contribute to ensuring the quality of teaching in Devon schools.

Training and support for statutory assessment this year included that in relation to baseline assessment and completion of the statutory audit of Key Stage 1 assessments and other end-of-Key Stage procedures.

#### 4.7 **The effectiveness of the LEA Action Plan**

Following the OFSTED/Audit Commission inspection of the Devon LEA, the LEA Action Plan was cast in July 2001. The majority of the activities which together constitute the Action Plan commenced at the start of the Autumn term 2001: an evaluation of effectiveness of the Action Plan at this point would be premature. A number of the activities in the LEA Action Plan are now subsumed in the EDP activity programme.

The first report on the progress of the Action Plan will be published as an adjunct to the annual LEA Audit and will appear in June 2002.

#### 4.8 **The cost-effectiveness of EDP1**

In broad terms the cost-effectiveness of EDP1 has been reasonable:

- ◆ the cost of EDP activities funded by school improvement funds with-held from delegation to schools was approximately 10% below the national average. In 2001/2002 the expenditure per pupil figure for school improvement was £23 in Devon, compared with £23 for County LEAs and £26 for all English LEAs;
- ◆ the extent of improvement in terms of pupil attainment up to 2001 was broadly in line with the national level;
- ◆ expenditure on the EDP at below the national average level was despite the higher cost of discharging LEA functions in a large rural authority such as Devon - that is, costs incurred both as direct travel costs and as 'down-time' spent by LEA staff in travelling to schools.