

## **Authorities where inspection reports have identified that LEA property services are excellent or good**

### **Excellent property services**

#### **Isle of Wight LEA, Summer 2000**

*Premises repairs and maintenance services are offered under a property indemnity insurance service level agreement in collaboration with the corporate property services team and all schools have bought into this. Links with schools are strong: they receive an annual monitoring visit from their building inspector, who attends a governing body meeting once a year, and many schools visited spoke highly of the knowledge and responsiveness of the LEA managers. Schools had a clear understanding of the service under the SLA and, although work is largely reactive; most schools had seen some benefit from their contribution to the pooled maintenance budget. Emergency support was reported to be excellent.*

### **Good property services**

#### **Blackburn with Darwen LEA, Autumn 2000**

*The Council secures good premises support to schools, through its own staff and the use of private contractors. Sound technical guidance, including health and safety guidance is provided and advice given to schools managing their own contractors and works. All schemes, including complex works with tight timetables, have been efficiently project-managed and all have been completed within budget.*

#### **Cornwall LEA, Spring 2002**

*Property services are good and this aspect was not covered in the previous inspection. Services are comprehensive and well differentiated, although the options in the "Services for Schools" folder lack some clarity. The basic subscription provides good telephone advice on all aspects of governors' delegated maintenance responsibilities. The enhanced service provides access to a qualified surveyor who knows the school and who will undertake site inspections, specify work, place orders and supervise construction.*

*About two-thirds of schools subscribe to the property maintenance partnership which offers an effective insurance scheme for major breakdowns. It is managed by a board with headteacher and governor representation that prioritises structural maintenance and ensures, for example, that schools are redecorated externally on a five-year cycle. Schools report that the maintenance service is prompt and efficient. Effective crisis work ensured a secondary school could re-open quickly after a major fire.*

*The service provides good advice on the use of devolved capital. Surveyors assist governors to develop schemes which optimise the use of grants and effectively link schools' own priorities with the LEA's asset management plan. There is an informative termly newsletter for schools that can be viewed on-line and the web site includes a helpful interactive flow chart to help schools determine the appropriate funding route for different types of buildings-related expenditure. The council's architectural team are winning national recognition for their design work for Cornwall's "Classroom of the Future" project.*

#### **Herefordshire LEA, Autumn 2000**

*The LEA provides a good service for property management. The professional support provided by the Council's property services section is well regarded by schools. There are regular reviews of customer satisfaction and reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the costs of fees and contracts compare satisfactorily with those incurred by other LEAs and the private sector. Client support for cleaning, caretaking and grounds maintenance is provided by the Council's environment directorate and is also well regarded by schools.*

### **Kensington and Chelsea LEA, Spring 2000**

*Schools and their inspection reports were positive about the condition of buildings. Repairs and maintenance were delegated in 1990. There are no in-house contractors but there is 100 per cent buyback from the efficient and expert property advice team. The team convenes termly schoolkeepers' meetings, which schools report to be useful and to epitomise the high regard the LEA has for non-teaching as well as teaching staff.*

### **Knowsley LEA, Spring 1999**

*The section has clear aims linked to supporting school improvement and to the programme of area reviews of school places and to meeting statutory duties including health and safety. The management of property services is a strength of the LEA. Schools rated the service highly and it is effective. Most of the repairs and maintenance budget has been delegated for some years and there is 80 per cent buyback of the surveyors service which monitors and manages contracts. The Maintenance and Buildings Working Party includes headteachers who feed in views from colleagues, monitor and review the SLA for the surveyors and consider criteria and priorities for the service including the development of the Asset Management Plan. This is an example of a good working arrangement with headteachers.*

*Over the past five years there has been significant lead from the LEA in developing risk management strategies to combat the high level of arson (C1.1m claims in 1 990) and security incidents. All schools now have fencing, all buy in to the Knowsley security force night patrols, many have CCTV. Schools visited reported that this strategy is being very effective in reducing the incidences of crime and vandalism directed against the schools.*

### **North Yorkshire LEA, Spring 2000**

*Premises support is good. Active monitoring of the work performance has resulted in contractors being removed from the approved list. This level of scrutiny is recognised by schools as helpful. Building stock in North Yorkshire is in a good state of repair. Most schools visited intend to buy back the comprehensive premises support package offered through the LEA. This level of involvement reflects the reluctance of many schools to assume this budget responsibility alone as well as a high level of trust in the service's reliability.*

### **Solihull LEA, Summer 1999**

*The school survey indicates that schools consider central LEA services to be satisfactory, a response which is better than for the majority of the LEAs surveyed. Schools have benefited from the comparatively high priority given to the maintenance of school buildings. Schools will now have an increasing responsibility for preventive maintenance to their own buildings. The biggest uncertainty is about the extent of work that will be required to address suitability issues in school buildings. Methodology has yet to be finalised to survey schools for suitability, particularly of specialist facilities.*

*The Facilities Management Team have needed to deliver a considerably larger building programme in recent months. The combination of normal capital programmes, New Deal for School resources, implementation of Class Sizes Plan, nursery expansion and primary school reorganisation has at times stretched their resources. Much of the work has needed to be carried out to tight deadlines and has over-stretched local contracting resources. As a result, some building work has been completed too close to the time when the buildings were due to receive children. However, the LEA has acted as speedily as extraneous factors have allowed.*

### **Southampton LEA, Autumn 2000**

*The building repair and maintenance service provided through building design services (BDS) is very good. Emergency repairs are carried out promptly, often on the same day they are reported. Longer term work is managed effectively. The LEA operates a successful scheme for schools to pool delegated revenue funding for repairs and maintenance. This ensures that funds will be available should an emergency occur for any scheme member. The LEA reports back to schools on how this fund is used.*

*The school buildings stock that Southampton took over at LGR in 1997 included some buildings in a very poor state of repair. The LEA has improved the situation and has enhanced spending on school buildings. It has been successful in attracting funds under the New Deal for Schools and has made effective use of them to improve the condition of school buildings.*

### **Southend-on-Sea LEA, Spring 2001**

*An effective property consultancy service is offered to schools by the property services department which includes a helpline, termly visits from a link surveyor, annual electrical and mechanical maintenance and help with feasibility studies. Take-up is increasing and includes about three-quarters of the primary schools and a quarter of the secondary schools. The schools visited were clear about their own responsibilities for repairs and maintenance and were planning effectively to meet these. Those that bought the LEA service rated it highly.*

### **St. Helens LEA, Spring 2001**

*The LEA operates a pooling arrangement for delegated repairs and maintenance; all but one school buy into this arrangement. Technical support is provided by surveyors assigned to the education department. Schools visited during the inspection were positive about the quality of technical support that they received. For major building contracts, the council provides design services, but some schools are concerned about the speed of service that they receive. The council has developed an innovative partnership approach with contractors in order to secure good value for money in the design and construction of new school buildings.*

### **West Sussex LEA, Spring 2001**

*The property maintenance service to schools is generally reliable and effective. It is well managed and responsive to schools. It is valued by schools as the full buy-back offers some insurance against expensive emergencies. Every school is guaranteed that 75 per cent of its buy-in will be spent over the three year period on planned works utilising the condition survey or on reactive maintenance. All schools buy in, 95 per cent to the full level, and receive clear reports of work carried out. Many have tested comparisons and found the service offers good value.*

### **Worcestershire LEA, Autumn 1999**

*The Property Services team in Corporate Services provides the technical property service to schools. The new Planning and Accommodation Unit in Education discharges the client function in relation to the capital programme, and for caretaking, catering, cleaning and grounds maintenance. It liaises closely with property services over preparation of the Asset Management Plan. The role of forecasting pupil numbers has recently been transferred to the unit as part of the asset management planning process. The property service is well regarded by schools and is well organised, planned and prioritised.*