

Provision for particular learning needs

44 All the primary and secondary schools which had general inspections estimated that a significant proportion of their pupils required particular help in order to access the curriculum. In four schools as many as half the pupils were thought to need additional support of some kind. Three schools had a substantial number of developing bilingual learners on roll; in one of these 18 different home languages were represented among the pupils. All three schools were able to use the services of additional teachers under the arrangements of Section 11 of the Local Government Act of 1966, though neither secondary school had more than the equivalent of half a teacher. These teachers usually provided support in English as a Second Language and generally worked in projects managed by LEA services rather than directly by schools. Several other schools had smaller numbers of bilingual pupils whose needs they were required to meet without benefit of additional resources or expertise.

45 A small number of pupils in all the schools had received a statement of special educational need in accordance with LEA procedures under the 1981 Education Act. Pupils with statements made up 5.5% of the roll in one secondary school but in the others they usually represented under 2%. Statements were issued in respect of a variety of behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties or specific disabilities. They usually outlined additional resources that should be available to assist pupils' learning, for example the support of a teacher or of a non-teaching assistant for a specified number of hours in each week. **The quality of provision and the associated resources for pupils with statements was satisfactory and often good; that for the greater number of pupils whose needs were not subject to statements was generally poor in both primary and secondary schools.** Only one secondary school had a clear statement of policy which recognised the continuum and variety of learning need and attempted to co-ordinate the work of subject departments to meet pupils' needs in lessons. Specialist expertise was in short supply in all schools but inappropriate deployment of specialist staff often compounded the difficulty by spreading resources too thinly.

46 **Initial assessment was weak: it failed to identify pupils' specific learning needs with the result that support was not targeted appropriately, nor used efficiently to encourage learning.** Schools used a mixture of methods to support pupils. These included

withdrawal, where pupils attended special support sessions instead of going to lessons with the rest of their class, and in-class support, where learning support teachers worked within lessons to assist particular pupils. **Both withdrawal and in-class support suffered from poor planning, preparation and match to particular need.** A withdrawal group in one school inappropriately mixed children with learning difficulties and bilingual pupils whose learning needs were quite different. Some pupils were continually absent from lessons in some subjects and had little opportunity to catch up with their peers. Resource constraints meant that in-class support, both for bilingual pupils and for pupils with learning difficulties, was provided for only some lessons. Joint planning with subject teachers was rare and the work of the support teacher was consequently limited to helping pupils to understand what was happening and to complete tasks. These teachers were sometimes under-occupied, during long periods of exposition for example, but their presence encouraged pupils' dependence on an intermediary.

47 No secondary school made special arrangements to support higher attaining pupils. Few provided extension sessions or homework supervision for children who might not have adequate facilities for study at home. None made provision for pupils in Key Stage 4 to have access out of school hours to the facilities they needed for GCSE coursework and none made arrangements either to stagger coursework demands across the Key Stage or to review pupils' progress periodically in order to reinforce deadlines.

SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT SERVICES

48 LEAs employed teams of specialist staff such as behaviour support teachers, learning support teachers and educational psychologists. These staff often worked peripatetically to make their expertise available to schools. In several authorities all special needs provision was undergoing review. The scope and extent of some services had been considerably reduced and there was widespread confusion in schools about the role of the support services and about the various kinds and sources of funding for special needs and learning support; allocation of funds was sometimes *ad hoc*.

49 These uncertainties made it **difficult for support services and schools to reach agreement about the nature and level of support to be available, especially for non-statemented pupils.** Despite this, some services were able to ensure that access to their help was as effective as possible by making clear what they could offer and delineating the respective responsibilities of the schools and the support services. Services

for pupils with sensory or physical disabilities found it easiest to establish criteria for intervention and realistic expectations about what could be achieved. In the best cases LEA support services had thorough systems for assessing individual need and a high level of expertise in appropriate teaching and learning strategies. Their methodology provided a good model for the organisation of schools' own provision. Where clear objectives had not been set for the service, their effectiveness was difficult to assess.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND UNITS

50 LEAs maintained a range of special schools and units to which pupils with special educational needs might be referred. A few of the primary and secondary schools in the survey had a special unit attached to them. More often pupils were referred to separate establishments, sometimes at some distance from the estates - though transport was generally made available. No LEA achieved strategic oversight of its range of special schools or co-ordinated schools and units effectively with the support services so as to provide a continuum of provision that might be matched to the varying needs identified. **As a consequence, pupils' referral to special schools and units tended not to be the result of a sequence of planned and positive interventions but rather a reaction to pressures from mainstream and special schools.** Admission criteria in a majority of schools were unclear and frequently the cause of tension between schools; pupils with behavioural difficulties, for example, were admitted to schools for those with moderate learning difficulties. A significant number of pupils had incomplete statements of their needs and most special schools and units received too little information about pupils either via the statements or from the referring school.

51 In general, special schools or units paid some regard to the National Curriculum but none of those visited had an explicit policy for the curriculum entitlement of pupils and only one had achieved both breadth and balance in its provision. Inappropriate accommodation and too narrow a range of subject expertise among teachers restricted pupils' access to several subjects. Curricular planning and organisation were generally poor, time allocation fell considerably short of National Curriculum requirements and monitoring of pupils' experience was inadequate. **Within the constraints imposed by the curriculum offered, pupils in special schools generally made satisfactory progress.** Attendance was usually good and relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff were a strong feature in most schools. Not all schools made adequate use of externally validated programmes to bring rigour to their KS4 work but a few achieved satisfactory results in GCSE examinations.

Provision for school leavers

52 In all the schools the profile of attainment in GCSE examinations at age 16 was low in relation to LEA and national norms (see Figure 4 on page 22). Consequently, **only a small proportion of pupils was qualified for entry to those post-16 programmes of study which make up the bulk of full-time provision for the age group** (usually those leading to GCE A-level examinations or to national vocational qualifications [NVQs] at level 3). Provision for post-16 study is made in one area by tertiary colleges and in the others by a variety of 11-18 schools, sixth-form colleges and colleges of further education. In two cases one of these institutions maintained a major centre on the estates; elsewhere all opportunities for full-time study post-16 were located at some distance. Two of the colleges of further education were designated 'lead providers' of Youth Training (YT) and recruited young people to programmes which combined training on employers' premises with college study.

PARTICIPATION

53 There was wide variation between the schools in the proportion of their 1992 leavers who chose to continue their full-time education (range 33% to 52%), who proceeded to employment (range 9% to 29%), and who joined YT (range 0% to 25%). In comparison with their counterparts in the LEAs as a whole, however, **young people in these areas, and particularly males, were less likely to stay in education, less likely to find work, more likely to join YT and more likely not to have reported their destination either to the school or to the careers office.** Census data for 1991 records levels of self-assessed unemployment for the 16-19 age group in these areas as high as 50%. Informal evidence from careers officers, youth workers and the police confirmed high levels of unemployment among young people ineligible to receive social security benefits. These agencies reported other indications of social stress and disaffection among young people.

54 **Where participation in full-time education and training was high this resulted from a combination of accessible local provision that matched well the aspirations and needs of school leavers with close liaison between the schools and the colleges.** In one school, for example, 52% of leavers stayed in full-time education and a further 23% joined YT, often on college programmes. The college had worked with local schools for a number of years in a 'federation' which aimed to ensure that the programmes available provided for school leavers of all levels of

attainment. Alongside GCE A-level work and BTEC national diplomas they introduced a variety of programmes at NVQ level 2 in all the vocational areas offered by the college. College staff called 'progression counsellors' collaborated with careers teachers in the schools and encouraged pupils from as early as Year 9 to plan to stay on at 16. They informed the young people about all the post-16 opportunities open to them and guided them to make appropriate applications and to make fallback arrangements in case their examination results were less good than they hoped. A large proportion of these students received financial assistance from the LEA; a small number were awarded federation 'bursaries', a kind of sponsorship by local industrial companies which took an interest in the students' progress. Colleges in most areas maintained links with the schools but rarely achieved this degree of collaboration. They served catchment areas which extended well beyond the estates in question and did not target the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. **They faced heavy demand for study places from well-qualified applicants: they were able to give only low priority to extending provision for the less well-qualified and were less concerned to stimulate demand for education from these groups.** Some colleges were unable to meet even the current level of demand for places on courses with low entry qualifications.

ACHIEVEMENT

55 Students who entered the colleges with good qualifications had every opportunity to continue to make progress. One girl had achieved ten GCSE Grade A passes at school and was taking A-level examinations in four subjects to prepare for an application to the university of Oxford. Others who joined post-16 programmes were often strongly motivated by the 'second chance' offered to them to gain qualifications and to progress to more advanced courses. Some felt they fared better in the more mature atmosphere of the colleges and many responded well to the requirement for their active participation or to the bias towards practical activity in some vocational programmes. One young woman, for example, had failed to attend school during Years 10 and 11, though she had received some hours of home tuition, and took no examinations. She was in the second year of a college youth training programme in community care which required her to spend every fourth week in college and the remainder of her time on work placements in old people's homes, nurseries and residential centres. She maintained a careful account of her learning in all these venues in a record of achievement which was to be submitted for a qualification at NVQ level 2. This, she hoped, would gain her admission to a two-year programme of full-time study in nursery nursing at another college.

56 Features of successful work with these students included:

- clear expectations communicated to students with rigorous attention to standards of work;
- learning styles which encouraged students to contribute and which required them to exercise choice and responsibility;
- regular and detailed feedback on progress drawing attention both to achievements and to areas for improvement. In one college, students signed learning contracts and met their tutors for individual assessment and review every six weeks; areas of difficulty or poor progress could be raised by either party and steps taken to remedy any problem which arose. Students here said they particularly appreciated the critical feedback they received;
- learning support systems which identified any need for assistance with literacy or numeracy early in a student's programme and ensured that appropriate tuition was supplied. One college also emphasised the importance of study skills through its tutorial arrangements;
- planned progression routes from the lowest to the highest levels of achievement in academic and vocational courses. Students were encouraged to move from part-time to full-time study or vice versa, and to combine academic and vocational targets.

57 Not all colleges were equally successful on all these fronts. In some, arrangements for learning and pastoral support were weak and there was insufficient follow-up if students failed to attend or to complete work regularly. Monitoring and evaluation were generally under-developed, so that there was little consistently available evidence about overall outcomes of learning programmes such as retention, student achievements and progression.

58 Many of those young people who choose to continue their education or training on reaching school leaving age find the opportunity to compensate for previous low achievement; some progress towards the highest academic goals. **Too few young people from disadvantaged areas choose to stay on, and the encouragement to them to do so, as well as the opportunities available, are uneven in range and quality in different areas of the country.** Systematic planning and co-ordination of provision between the institutions serving any particular area, the targeting of programmes for lower attaining young people, close

liaison between schools and post-16 providers and early and regular guidance and counselling are some of the factors which would improve this position.

Provision by the youth service

PROVISION AND PARTICIPATION

59 Youth work was a function of the local education authority in all but one area, where it was part of a local authority's department of leisure services. Provision in the maintained sector was supplemented by a range of voluntary organisations and groups but contact between the two sectors was rarely good. All but one area had an adequate range of premises for youth work that were accessible to the majority of residents of the estates. Alternative commercial attractions - cinemas, leisure centres, sports facilities - were often inaccessible in comparison because of distance and poor public transport. Despite this, participation by young people in activities provided by the youth service was low on several estates. In almost all the areas young people had a strong sense of territorial boundaries that restricted their movements to a certain part of the estate; physical attack was feared if they moved into another group's territory so that their freedom to choose from the overall range of provision was severely constrained. **Targeted provision of any kind - for example for young women, daytime sessions for the unemployed or after-school club meetings - was infrequent and provision specifically designed for black young people was not generally available even in areas where they formed a substantial proportion of the population.** Detached youth work, a form of provision whereby workers seek to make contact with young people wherever they congregate informally, was a significant omission although one LEA had just begun a project of this kind.

60 Some clubs offering a wide range of activities attracted a large membership and regular good attendance but **specialist clubs and projects appealing to a particular interest or need were the most successful**, and many of these were run by voluntary organisations. Examples included a Red Cross youth group teaching first-aid skills and several projects which capitalised on young men's interest in motor vehicles. Counselling and advice centres were open to young people on two estates and were in heavy demand. In two areas projects for young parents gave them a valued opportunity to support each other and discuss common concerns. One used a 'playbus' to make initial contact with young mothers in their homes. The few initiatives of this kind demonstrated that it was possible both to reach and to involve young people if the right approaches

were made and if the activities on offer were attractive to them. They required careful planning and considerable skill in implementation. Three areas were attempting overall needs analysis although the officers involved anticipated continuing uncertainty over funding levels and possible competition between maintained and voluntary provision for limited resources.

CURRICULUM

61 Much of the work observed in three of the areas visited failed to reflect the aspirations of recent LEA policy statements. The curriculum was narrow and mainly recreational in nature - pool, table-tennis, music and conversation - and, although offered in a warm and accepting environment, provided little that challenged the young people in any way. In some cases youth workers' relationships with young people appeared to depend on there being no challenge or conflict, particularly about their behaviour: they eschewed informal social education and avoided controversial or sensitive issues. This absence of intervention, mirroring the apathy and resignation of some young people, was ultimately unhelpful to them. In other areas youth workers led sessions directly concerned with aspects of personal and social education including drugs awareness, sexual relationships and safe sex, racial and gender stereotyping. When such sessions were skilfully conducted young people's interest was sustained and they had the opportunity to express their ideas and concerns. They demanded highly developed group work skills, however, which not all youth leaders, particularly untrained part-timers, had acquired.

INITIATIVES

62 Some projects were infused by a strong sense of the contribution that well-focused provision could make to the lives of young people. Work observed in these areas was purposeful and explicitly planned both to increase young people's confidence and to teach skills. In the Red Cross group, for example, the members' motivation for their first-aid training was high; they valued the curriculum and were proud of the badges awarded for their achievements. A small group of young men learned mechanics by repairing motorbikes donated by the police. Their youth worker made plenty of opportunities during their instruction for discussion of issues such as 'joyriding' and the use of drugs; two of the boys said that this outlet for their passion for mechanics prevented them from seeking stimulation in crime. A centre based on a college campus offered students from several different ethnic groups a social area during the day with a

range of craft and sporting activities, a programme of debates and discussions and opportunities to participate in residential visits and exchanges.

63 Young people in the seven areas were growing up in communities with a local reputation for social inadequacy, cultural deprivation and sometimes violence. Problems of this nature could clearly not be tackled by the youth service alone but the potential for informal education to confront directly the difficulties experienced by disadvantaged young people is considerable. This was realised only partially and spasmodically in the youth work observed. Careful assessment and analysis of need were generally lacking and provision was not well targeted to secure the involvement of young people and respond to their needs. **The high level of expertise necessary to design and conduct appropriate programmes is not widely available in the youth services inspected: youth workers and area officers need more training and better professional support and leadership if the work is to improve.** Senior managers of the service need urgently to consider ways to provide these in order to reach more young people and to educate them effectively.

Provision for adults

64 The adult population of the seven areas of the study is severely affected by unemployment. The particular districts of the study reported unemployment that was invariably higher than that for the cities overall, sometimes by 50%. The rate of unemployment among the ethnic minorities was twice that for white groups: in Manchester the rates for British white, British black and British Asian groups were 18%, 30% and 28% respectively and in Slough 8%, 13% and 16%. Department of Employment figures for the comparable 'Travel to Work' areas in autumn 1992 confirm that unemployment had risen during the intervening year. Census data also indicate a concentration in these areas of families in the lower socio-economic groups; other survey evidence points to an absence of qualifications, to low levels of skill and relatively poor levels of literacy among many adults which may be associated with early school-leaving.

PROVISION AND PARTICIPATION

65 In all but two of the areas responsibility for the provision of education for adults was divided between colleges of further education (FE) on the one hand and separate services for adult education on the other, with both services maintained at the time of the survey by local education authorities. In the other two areas the FE colleges were the designated providers of all programmes. Providers of both kinds used premises in various locations in the cities. A few maintained a site on the estates themselves and several located classes in the schools which served the estates. A few courses were linked: for example an introductory course in one centre led to entry to a more advanced course in another. However, there was little joint planning by the various providers of the range of courses on offer and in some instances each service was ignorant of what the other was doing. In all the areas the local Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) funded and oversaw a separate series of programmes for the unemployed, and some of these were located in FE colleges or adult centres.

66 The providers were aware in general terms of the level of social and economic disadvantage on certain estates within their catchment area but none had conducted a detailed analysis of the education and training needs of adults in these areas; few felt able to give any degree of priority to this sector and none was able to commit the scale of resources necessary to match provision to potential need. For example, an adult education centre which undertook a survey of clients' preferences found itself unable to respond to those expressed because of budget cuts. In consequence, targeted

provision other than adult basic education was rare, and what was available did not amount to a coherent pattern with opportunities to progress from one part to another. **In only one area, in an LEA where resources were allocated to the adult service according to a formula which took account of social deprivation, was there a local centre for adults with a comprehensive range of courses. Elsewhere, although in principle the full range of post-16 programmes was available to adults, the actual take-up of provision by residents of the estates in question was low.**

67 Barriers to participation - real and perceived - in education were numerous. Some residents saw no value in education or formal qualifications. Information about LEA- and TEC-funded provision was often available separately, from LEA or TEC agencies, so that those who sought guidance did not learn about the full range of opportunities. **Guidance and information services, where they existed, were usually located in city centres and were virtually unknown to the residents of peripheral estates. Much of the provision was on sites which were not easily accessible by public transport, particularly in the evening.** Adults were deterred from using even those centres accessible on foot if pedestrian routes were thought to be unsafe. Daytime provision suited many of those not in work but was not always timed to fit the routine of those with responsibilities for children of school age. Only a small proportion of colleges and centres made arrangements for childcare for those students with younger children. Some services offered partial remission of fees for those in receipt of state benefits but even where such concessions were made, fee levels and bus fares were sometimes beyond the means of those on low incomes. In addition to such practical obstacles to access there were sometimes disincentives which arose from the nature of the provision. In two areas, for example, the range of courses on offer was largely restricted to subjects which would attract that number of fee-paying students which would enable all costs to be met; in a third, an area where English was not the first language of many residents, the qualification-bearing courses to which some adults from the ethnic minorities wished to gain admission made no provision for language support to enable them to succeed.

INITIATIVES

68 A few initiatives overcame such difficulties. One college of FE ran a series of programmes called 'New Directions' about five times a year, each located in a primary school or church hall in a different part of its catchment area and each publicised via the school or community group

which sponsored it. These programmes, which were free of charge, enabled the participants to review their present position, to learn about the availability of education, training and work in the locality and to make plans for the longer term. The same college made special arrangements for guidance to adults within its Student Services function, so that adults unable to put a name or a qualification title to their aspirations were able to seek assistance from a central source rather than to apply separately to different departments.

69 Courses situated on the estates themselves, provided they were well matched to local concerns, sometimes aroused students' interest in courses available elsewhere. Classes based in a secondary school during the school holidays were organised as 'taster days', with the chance for participants to report on the sort of classes which should continue. One college transported a set of microcomputers to an infants' school to run a course in information technology for local women who were then encouraged to progress to a more advanced programme at a better-resourced site. **Successful community-based programmes often drew into schools parents who were interested in enhancing their children's education.** In one city an adult literacy initiative engaged young mothers' interest in helping their children to learn to read; in another a 'health and environment' course developed the knowledge and skills of those with young children and led for some to a qualification-bearing course in FE.

ACHIEVEMENT

70 The quality of learning was almost always high in the work observed with adult students and was at its best when classes drew on the experience of the students and prompted them to share it. Achievement was often good though in some classes greater rigour in assessment and improved feedback to students were needed. **Where adults had been able to overcome difficulties of access, and where ladders and bridges were available to them, some students progressed from the lowest to the highest levels of attainment.** One woman, for example, a lone parent had returned to education to receive help with literacy; over a period of five years she obtained C or D grades in GCSE examinations in four subjects and was aiming to secure employment but also to work as a volunteer tutor in adult basic education. A man aged about 25 who had been unemployed most of the time since he left school also began with literacy classes and progressed first to GCSE subjects, then to an Access course and then to a degree.