



DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

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As requested.

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NEWS

123/86

NOT FOR USE BEFORE
1530 HOURS ON WEDNESDAY
21 MAY 1986

SCHOOLS STRETCHED FOR MONEY AND RESOURCES, SAYS HMI REPORT

The schools sector is generally stretched for money and resources and gives cause for most concern within the education system, states a report* published today by Her Majesty's Inspectorate.

HMI say that not all the problems were directly or indirectly attributable to absolute shortages of money and resources and "it is clear that more of either or both would not solve all the difficulties".

The reasons for inadequate provision are not related exclusively to the level of expenditure. In only just over one-tenth of schools was inadequate capitation judged to be the direct cause of shortages.

By far the greatest single influence was judged to be the teacher's inadequate identification of the pupils' educational needs and potential. There was also a marked need for efficient and effective management of people and resources at every level of the service.

There were sharp polarisations in the provision between schools in different parts of the country and within the same local education authority.

"Where hard decisions about priorities have to be made at LEA level it tends to be building maintenance, re-decoration and furniture replacement that suffer", says HMI.

Schools were "getting by and providing satisfactorily for most pupils in many places by robbing Peter to pay Paul; doing less; or with the help of sizeable contributions from parents".

* Report by HMI on the Effects of Local Authority Expenditure Policies on Education Provision in England in 1985. Copies available free from the Publications Dispatch Centre, Department of Education and Science, Honeypot Lane, Canons Park, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1AZ.

There was a marked need for:

- improved leadership
- in-service teacher training better matched to the identified needs of teachers, schools and colleges
- much clearer perceptions by teachers of pupils' potential and needs, and an improved differentiation of the tasks set so as to better match the pupils' ages, aptitudes and abilities.

While not themselves resource matters, putting any or all of these right "has a cost in money, time, or both and to be effective that cost will not be cheap."

The report states "Throughout the system the large majority of the work was judged satisfactory or better, though the actual proportion in schools was slightly lower than that in the previous two years.

"Taking all institutions together the most frequently noted factor affecting the work was again the quality of teaching.

"In over a quarter of the schools visited poor leadership and management at one or more levels was considered to be adversely affecting the:

- quality of work
- levels and deployment of resources
- organisation and planning of the curriculum
- take-up of in-service teacher training
- behaviour of pupils
- morale of teachers."

"Further and higher education was again this year judged to be better provided for, in relation to its needs, than are schools; non-advanced further education (NAFE) appears to be relatively well placed to adapt to the emerging patterns of student need arising in part from change in trends in employment; and advanced further education (AFE) has some scope to provide for some further increases in the total number of students, "the report says.

"But NAFE and AFE are not so well provided for, particularly if they are to meet new and changing demands, as to make any worthwhile transfer of resources from them to the schools sector a realistic proposition"

The report, which deals with the effects of local authority expenditure policies on the education service in 1985, ranges across quality of work, teachers and teaching quality, non-teaching resources, parental and other contributions, leadership management and deployment of resources.

SCHOOLS

The report notes:

- further improvements in pupil: teacher ratios in secondary schools
- more advisers and advisory teachers
- better provision for in-service education and training
- an increase in the supply of consumable materials
- more attention by LEAs to management, and
- better targetting of resources.

"As always it is high-quality teaching that is at the heart of good education," underlines the report, adding that such teaching was there in the system "but is not as general or widespread as anyone would wish."

On the teachers' pay dispute the report notes that while its consequences had varied from LEA to LEA and school to school, many schools had been operating in conditions "some way removed from the norm".

As a result there had been "reductions in, and in some schools an almost complete disappearance of, for example, curriculum planning and development; staff meetings; INSET; extra-curricular activities; contact with parents; report writing."

Despite having found an increased emphasis on curriculum-led staffing policies and other devices to protect the curriculum in schools, "necessary subject and other expertise was missing from some of the schools visited."

It concludes on this point that "if schools are to have teachers with the necessary expertise and experience to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils of all levels of ability, some deployment will be necessary or, in some cases, more teachers."

HMI found a "poor match between teachers' initial qualifications and experience, and what they were being called upon to do, adversely affected the quality of work in about one-eighth of all the lessons seen."

Quality of work was also affected by poor or unsuitable accommodation in just over one fifth of all the lessons seen, and it was observed that "many pupils and teachers are having to work in accommodation which is inappropriate and does not offer a civilised environment."

On book provision, the report says that "in all types of school it was the quality and the quantity of books which were most commonly referred to."

Looking at the level of equipment across the board the report finds that provision for primary schools was judged to be satisfactory in just over four-fifths of LEAs, and in 11-16 and 16-19 age groups in just less than two thirds and just over three-quarters of LEAs respectively.

It points out that "in special schools provision was judged satisfactory in just over three-quarters of LEAs," and that "only in special schools has the level of provision not worsened compared with last year."

The greatest single influence on provision was "the teachers' inadequate identification of pupils' educational needs and potential, which was referred to in over one-third of all schools," followed by poor school or departmental management (nearly one-sixth of schools) and the schools' policies (or lack of them).

In one-third of all schools visited, there was a need for more INSET opportunities. "For example", the report says, "in one school no teacher in the mathematics department had attended any INSET provision for five years, while in another school none of the teachers in the French department had taken any further training during their careers."

The part played by parental contributions is considered, findings indicating a greater financial amount going to primary rather than secondary schools. "Most commonly the money was used to help towards the cost of educational visits (764 schools), followed by the purchase of computers, audio-visual equipment, library and reference books, PE and games equipment, school mini-buses, musical instruments, textbooks and reprographic equipment," says the report, noting the increase in contributions going to improve school premises.

Overall, findings show that 65 LEAs - the same number as the previous year - "had all or a majority of the aspects of their provision judged satisfactory in 1985/86" and 31 less than satisfactory in a majority of the aspects. As in the previous two years no authority was judged less than satisfactory in all the main aspects of provision.

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Most institutions in FHE met the challenge of changing the size and composition of their teaching force in line with the changing pattern of course demand. The strongest influences on the quality of work were:

- the quality of teaching
- good match between the lecturers' experience and the work undertaken
- the relevance of session content to student motivation and involvement
- the size of the group
- the good organisation and management of class time.

Where work was judged less than satisfactory, poor organisation of class
time was the most commonly identified factor.

The report notes that "the most significant improvement needed in AFE was in the management and deployment of teaching staff and resources; the former was judged less than satisfactory in one-eighth of visits and the latter in nearly one-fifth."

The report recommends that the range of adult education should be reconsidered, and advises changes such as "increased staff training, more appropriate resources, including better produced teaching aids."

"The overall provision for youth and community work was satisfactory in just over three-quarters of LEAs" says the report. It identified the main shortcomings as inadequate provision for the young unemployed and for ethnic minorities.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The report is the ninth in a series of annual reports by HMI. It is based on HMI's visits to schools and colleges last autumn and on returns made by District Inspectors last November for each of the 97 LEAs in England, except for the Isles of Scilly.
2. This is the sixth time such a report has been published, the first being in 1981.
3. The report is being presented to the Expenditure Steering Group - Education (ESGE), the joint Department of Education and Science/local authority associations group at official level. ESGE is chaired by a DES senior official and is a sub-group (as are equivalent groups for other local authority services) of the Consultative Council on Local Government Finance. Its prime task is to monitor trends in LEA expenditure as part of the process of consultations leading to the Government's decision on the annual Rate Support Grant settlement.

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EDUCATION SECRETARY COMMENTS ON HMI REPORT

Commenting today on the report by Her Majesty's Inspectors of the effects which local authority expenditure policies were having on the education service in England, Education Secretary Sir Keith Joseph said:

"I authorised the publication of this report as soon as it reached me - the sixth in the series since my predecessor began publication.

"For me, the main message of this report is that schools and colleges need not only adequate resources, but also a better trained and better deployed teaching force, and better management and leadership.

"Only then will our policies for education bear fruit in higher standards of pupil and student achievement. That is a message on which all concerned with education need to reflect; I urge them to study this report closely.

"HMI describe the range of factors which contribute to the quality of education in schools and colleges. These include the quality of teaching, the scale, appropriateness and employment of the resources available, management of resources, and leadership at all levels. I draw attention to their comments on the varied effectiveness of teaching.

"HMI continue to judge that the quality of most work taking place throughout the system is satisfactory or better, in that the material being taught and its presentation are supported by adequate, appropriate resources and are commensurate with the age, ability and aptitude of pupils and students.

"HMI found that, on the whole, further and higher education are better provided for than the schools and are generally well placed to respond to the changing needs of employers and students.

"HMI judge that the number of teachers in our schools and colleges is adequate, but that there remains a mis-match between the qualifications and experience of some teachers and the jobs they are asked to do. The report suggests a need for more and better in-service training, and a redeployment of some teachers so that their skills can be put to better use.

"HMI clearly state their concern with other aspects of provision. The steady improvement in the supply of school books noted in reports in the last few years has not been generally continued, although the situation has not deteriorated from that applying in 1984.

"The condition of much of the building stock is deteriorating and, to some extent, affects the quality of teaching and learning. This is the result of perhaps twenty years of neglect.

"The present Government's expenditure plans have allowed for improvements in provision for books and for repairs and maintenance, provided that authorities contain costs generally and take advantage of the scope for savings. Some authorities have shown how effectively resources so saved can be redirected to areas of priority - such as those identified in this report.

"I am in no doubt of the need for better management of the resources devoted to education; a view reinforced by the independent findings of the Audit Commission. I am therefore encouraged to read in the report that increasing numbers of LEAs are paying greater attention to some aspects of the management of the service, such as policies for relating staffing to the curriculum, and in-service training.

"But what is happening already needs to be extended to all aspects of the service, and to be pursued by all authorities.

"Local education authorities have this year budgeted to spend 8.5 per cent more than last year on education: significantly in excess of the cost increases which they face, especially in view of a drop of nearly 2 per cent in the number of school pupils. I look to local education authorities to use some of that increase in their spending to make good the deficiencies which HMI have identified.

"I accept that some of the deficiencies identified by HMI also require new initiatives from central government. The Government is acting to improve management and cost effectiveness in the service. We are paying grant for the in-service training of teachers, including their training in management; and in the current Education Bill we seek new grant powers to promote more systematic in-service training.

"We are expanding the programme of Education Support Grants. We remain willing to fund a substantial increase in school teacher pay, in return for a new salary structure and a tighter definition of duties, to include the appraisal of performance. These matters are under discussion at ACAS. The Government will consider the conclusions of those discussions; I hope for a satisfactory outcome.

"The report says that the education service should be capable of raising the general level of standards to that currently achieved by the best schools. The Government's policies are directed towards that end."

NOTE FOR EDITORS

1. The Report by Her Majesty's Inspectors on the Effects of Local Authority Expenditure Policies on Education Provision in England - 1985 was published today (Press Notice 123/86).

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