



BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION SERVICE

**A Description of Aspects of the Education
Service as provided for the OFSTED/Audit
Inspection Team**

SPRING 2002



ASPECTS OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION SERVICE : SPRING 2002**CONTENTS****A. INTRODUCTION****B. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY**

1. Funding for Education
2. LEA Strategy for School Improvement
3. Best Value and Continuous Improvement

C. SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

1. Monitoring, Challenge, Support and Intervention including Performance Data
2. Schools Causing Concern
3. Support for Literacy in Key Stages 1 and 2
4. Support for Numeracy in Key Stages 1 and 2
5. Support for Raising Standards in Key Stage 3
6. Support for Ethnic Minority Pupils and Travellers
7. Support for Gifted and Talented Pupils
8. Support for Leadership and Management
9. Governor Training and Support
10. Promoting Good Purchasing and Customer Practices in School
11. Property Services and Asset Management Planning
12. Provision of Cleaning, Catering and Peripatetic Caretaking Services to Schools
13. Support for Supply and Quality of Teachers
14. School Improvement
15. STEP Training and Development
16. Provision of Financial Services to Schools and Department
17. Information and Communications Technology in Education

D. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**E. PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION**

1. Strategy for Social Inclusion
2. Planning of School Places
3. Admissions to Schools
4. Education Otherwise than at School
5. Attendance
6. Support for Behaviour
7. Health, Safety, Welfare and Child Protection
8. Children in Public Care
9. Combating Racism

F. CORPORATE ISSUES

1. Key Corporate Issues
2. Council Structure and Operation
3. Effective Partnerships and Coordination

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A. INTRODUCTION

- The information in these papers is derived editorially from the documentation produced by a very wide range of people in the Birmingham education service, in schools, other educational establishments, and offices. Most of the information was provided in the form of service descriptions intended to cover all areas to be inspected by the Ofsted/Audit Commission inspection of the LEA which took place, under a new framework, in early January 2002.
- Readers will know that the outcome of that inspection described a good and effective service, with few weaknesses, and with a strong capacity for further improvement, providing a model to which other LEAs might aspire. It was a tribute to the partnerships within the service, focused throughout on securing the appropriate support and challenge at the points where learning takes place. These outcomes were not known nor assumed at the time the service descriptions were produced, in late Autumn 2001 and early 2002. What can be said about them is that they provide an honest analysis of most of the key aspects of the services at that time, and in that particular sense they are a genuine historical record of the way we were then. This historical veracity is worth recording, both for the way in which it can illuminate the subsequent inspection judgements, but more importantly, provide the basis for further progress and development.
- The purpose of this work then is to provide a record of some vital self-assessment which formed the background to the inspection. At the same time it explains the way in which the writers of the originals see their work and by sharing these perceptions in this document we hope to provide insights which will contribute to further improvements in the City's educational partnerships. The original papers ran to well over 300 pages and, even within a determined framework, were of a length which varied from a couple of pages to upwards of twenty. The editorial task was therefore to retain the detail and honesty of the originals, whilst making them accessible to those who wish to read and understand them.