Local government
National report
the national school survey
Schools’ views of their LEA 2002:
the national school survey
The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local and national services for the public. Our work covers local government, housing, health and criminal justice services.

As an independent watchdog, we provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, through inspection, audit, research and other methods, we provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, we monitor spending to ensure public services are good value for money.

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© Audit Commission 2003  
First published in March 2003 by the Audit Commission for local authorities and the National Health Service in England & Wales, 1 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PN  
Typeset by Ministry of Design, Bath www.ministryofdesign.co.uk  
Printed in the UK for the Audit Commission by CW Print Group  
ISBN 1862404267  
Photographs: www.third-avenue.co.uk
Introduction

1 The primary purpose of the school survey is to act as a source of evidence about schools’ perceptions of their local education authority (LEA) services and the support that they provide. This report is the second Audit Commission report on the school survey and focuses on the first England-wide survey carried out in June-July 2002 in 117 authorities. It will be of interest to officers and councillors of LEAs – both those who participated in the survey and those who did not – to headteachers and governors of schools, to education policymakers and to anyone interested in the relationships between LEAs and schools.

2 The school survey is completed by the headteacher who is encouraged to consult other staff and governors. In 2002 it was accessed electronically through a website. A total of 18,240 schools in 117 authorities were invited to complete the survey, and it achieved an overall response rate of 40 per cent (7,340 schools). Although the response rates for individual authorities varied from 4 per cent to 96 per cent, overall the survey has given a clear picture of the views of schools across England. Appendix 1 gives further guidance on how LEAs and schools can use the school survey information as a tool for self-evaluation. More detail on the background to the survey is given in Appendix 2; the methodology is explained in Appendix 3; and more detail on the responses is given in Appendix 4.

3 This report begins with an executive summary of the key messages from the survey. The second section summarises in more detail the results of the analyses covering the overall views of schools; the changes over time; the differences between the responses of primary, secondary and special schools; differences between the views of different types of schools and differences between schools in different types and sizes of LEAs. It also discusses contrasts between LEAs judged to be more or less effective in inspections. This section will be of particular interest to policymakers, headteachers and governors. The main part of the report covers the detailed findings in the five survey sections: LEA strategy; support for school improvement; facilitating access to services, including management support services; access/promoting social inclusion; and special educational needs. It also gives more detail of the differences between difference phases and types of school and between schools in LEAs of different type, size and effectiveness. This part of the report will be of interest to LEAs, researchers and others who would like to know more about the responses to individual questions.

4 A more detailed set of charts and spreadsheets detailing the responses to individual questions by type of school and LEA will also be made available on the internet at www.audit-commission.gov.uk. Information on the participating authorities (including response rates) and a full list of the questions comprising the survey can also be found at this address. Participating authorities and their schools can download the analyses for their own LEA from the survey website (www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey).
Executive summary

- The school survey is an important input into the self-evaluation process of LEAs, allowing them to take account of the views of a key group of local partners and service users. In 2002, the national survey was, for the first time, the result of collaboration between LEAs, the Audit Commission and Ofsted, rather than an inspection-driven exercise.

- Overall, schools rate their LEAs across a majority of services and functions as at least satisfactory. Schools responding to the survey rated their LEA as satisfactory or better overall on 48 out of 67 of the survey questions. Schools’ ratings of their LEAs have improved, but the range between authorities is still marked and LEAs face continued challenge to secure an overall good rating in the face of rising expectations.

- The highest ratings given by schools suggest that LEAs are effectively supporting the implementation of Government policy, in particular the numeracy and literacy strategies; the Code of Practice on LEA–school relations and education development plans (EDPs).

- Schools clearly also rate highly the leadership of their LEA managers and some of the support services they provide.

- Support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) continues to be an area of low satisfaction by schools as are property services.

- Comparisons over time show that schools overall have become more positive on 31 of the 50 comparable survey questions. A strengthened and better-informed partnership between schools and their LEAs is reflected in schools’ more positive views of their LEA’s knowledge and understanding of the school, and the use of performance data to secure school improvement. The improvement in schools’ ratings of electronic communication, support in bidding for external grants and educational psychology support are from a low base – with the previous averages being below satisfactory. This suggests authorities are targeting their support effectively at some areas of weakness.

- However there are also a minority of questions about which schools have become more negative overall. These include some high-profile areas such as support for the governing body, planning of SEN provision and support for promoting attendance, where the increased devolution of responsibilities to schools may have left them unhappy with the support available from their LEA.

- Secondary schools are in general less positive than other types of schools about the support from their LEA across most of the survey questions. They remain particularly dissatisfied with support for behaviour, support in bidding for external grants and support for SEN.
• Special schools were more positive than both primary and secondary schools about many aspects of support for pupils with SEN and questions on access and social inclusion. Their relatively low ratings of their LEA’s understanding of their school and of the relevance of LEA priorities suggest they often feel marginalised.

• Schools in LEAs judged to be more effective in LEA inspections rate their LEAs more positively.

• Finally, the comments of schools indicated that, provided schools could get access to the internet, an electronic survey of this type was both quicker and easier to complete than a paper survey.
Summary of findings

5 The overall findings of this report show a generally positive picture which was similar to that in the previous school survey report (Ref. 1). Schools’ ratings of the summary questions in each of the five sections of the survey show that their LEA’s capacity for school improvement is rated most highly, while its capacity to support special educational needs is rated lowest. The most positively rated individual questions were, in descending order:

- support for numeracy/maths;
- support for literacy/English;
- the quality of professional personnel advice and casework;
- the ‘clarity of your LEA’s definition of monitoring, support and intervention’;
- the quality of financial support and advice;
- the effectiveness of the leadership provided by senior officers;
- the ‘quality of your LEA’s strategic planning for school improvement, including the EDP’; and
- the ‘support to develop self-management (including self-evaluation) in your school’.

A majority of these questions reflect areas where Government policy is being implemented by LEAs.

6 The most negatively rated questions were, in ascending order:

- the efficiency with which statutory assessments of pupils with SEN are made;
- ‘your LEA’s effectiveness in developing your school’s capacity to meet the needs of pupils with SEN’;
- the quality of building maintenance services;
- the quality of programming and management of building projects;
- the effectiveness of LEA support to schools in bidding for external grants;
- the ‘clarity of your LEA’s rationale for the deployment of SEN funding’;
- the effectiveness of behaviour support; and
- ‘your LEA’s effectiveness in monitoring your support for pupils with SEN’.

7 SEN is a very complex area where funding has often been recently delegated to schools. A recent Audit Commission report (Ref. 2) suggested that schools’ low ratings of support for SEN could be due partly to a mismatch between the perceptions of LEAs and schools about the resources that they receive to support pupils with SEN as more are educated in mainstream schools. Property services have also frequently been a cause for concern by schools, as identified in another recent report by the Audit Commission (Ref. 3). Schools’ negative views of LEA support in bidding for external grants may reflect the fact that, for many LEAs, this is not a priority.
Schools’ views have become more positive over time about the majority of areas covered by the survey questions. The questions on which schools’ views have improved most strongly were, in descending order:

- the effectiveness of electronic communication between schools and the LEA;
- the ‘LEA’s knowledge and understanding of your school’;
- the effectiveness of LEA support to schools in bidding for external grants;
- the ‘support to your school for using pupil performance data to secure school improvement’;
- the ‘support to make you an effective purchaser of traded services’;
- support for literacy/English; and
- the effectiveness of educational psychology support.

However, schools’ views have become significantly more negative on the following questions:

- support to develop the effectiveness of the governing body;
- LEA’s planning of SEN provision to meet identified needs;
- the effectiveness in developing the school’s capacity to meet the needs of pupils with SEN; and
- the ‘effectiveness of your LEA’s support for promoting pupil attendance’.

Schools’ views have also become more negative in relation to the effectiveness of LEA support for child welfare and protection. However, the wording of the question has changed from the previous version of the survey, in which schools were asked to rate their LEA’s advice on child protection procedures.

Further analysis showed that the LEA has a significant, but not overriding, effect on schools’ views. On each section of the survey, differences between schools accounted for four-fifths of the variation in responses, while differences between LEAs accounted for one-fifth of the variation.

The statistical analysis and the responses on individual questions show that secondary schools are in general less positive than primary schools about the support that they receive from their LEA. They were particularly negative about the effectiveness of behaviour support, support in bidding for external grants and the development of their capacity to meet the needs of pupils with SEN. Secondary schools’ dissatisfaction with support for vulnerable pupils was identified in the previous report and this survey suggests that it remains high. They also remain more negative about ICT, especially the technical support provided by LEAs.

Special schools were more positive than both primary and secondary schools about many aspects of support for pupils with SEN and about questions relating to access and social inclusion. Some of the questions that were rated relatively negatively by
special schools reflect their sense of being outside the mainstream. These include the relevance of the LEA’s priorities to the school, their LEA’s knowledge and understanding of their school and the support for using pupil performance data to secure school improvement. These negative views suggest LEAs should make more effort to involve special schools explicitly in LEA planning and development work as part of their moves towards inclusion.

13 As in the previous survey, foundation schools remain less positive about their LEA than other types of school. The legacy of opting out of their LEA is apparently still influential. Foundation schools are most negative in their responses to questions relating to funding and support to make them effective purchasers of services.

14 Differences between LEAs and their location are reflected in schools’ views. These are generally consistent with the previous report in that county, metropolitan and unitary authorities tend to be viewed more positively by their schools, while LEAs in inner and outer London are viewed more negatively. The differences were strongest on questions relating to management services – financial support and advice; payroll services; personnel services and the catering service – and this may reflect the difficulty that LEAs in London have retaining high-quality staff. Unitary authorities received the most positive ratings on the questions relating to SEN.

15 Size of LEA seems to have little influence on schools’ views of the services that they provide, but there was a clear inverse relationship with the response rate to the survey.

16 Overall gradings of LEA effectiveness in inspections by Ofsted and the Audit Commission correlate well with the ratings given by their schools in the survey. Schools in LEAs that have been rated as good or very good in relation to their overall effectiveness during an inspection are more positive about their LEA than schools in LEAs graded as unsatisfactory or poor.
Overall findings

Overall, schools rate their LEAs across a majority of services and functions as at least satisfactory, and their views have become more positive over time on most survey questions. Whilst the support LEAs provide for school improvement is rated most highly, SEN continues to be an area of low satisfaction for schools.
Overview

As in the 2001 report (Ref. 1), the average responses to each survey question fall between ‘Poor’ and ‘Good’ (between points 4 and 2 of the 5-point scale used) with an overall rating of 2.76, which is just above satisfactory [Exhibit 1]. Schools rate their LEA as satisfactory or better overall in their responses to 72 per cent of the survey questions (48 out of 67 questions).

Exhibit 1
Overall average ratings of school survey questions

Overall average response for each question in the school survey, sorted in descending order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average rating</th>
<th>School survey question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good = 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good = 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory = 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor = 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor = 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Audit Commission school survey database

The question rated most positively overall was the support for numeracy/maths, rated as satisfactory or better by 96 per cent of schools (average 2.05). The lowest rated question was ‘the efficiency with which statutory assessments of pupils with SEN are made’, rated lower than satisfactory by 37 per cent of schools (average 3.24).

The questions in the survey are grouped by section. Each section has an overall summary question at the end. Factor analysis has shown that there are strong positive correlations between the individual questions and the summary question in each section1, indicating that their responses to the summary questions reflect schools’ overall views on each subject area. The overall average response to each of the questions has also been calculated [Exhibit 2]. This shows that the ‘LEA’s capacity to support school improvement’ was rated the highest by schools overall, while the ‘LEA’s capacity to support SEN’ was rated the lowest.

1 See www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey for a full list of the questions in the survey, and appendix 3 for further information on the factor and multi-level analysis conducted on the results.
Exhibit 2

Average response to the summary questions within each section of the survey

The capacity to support school improvement was rated the highest by schools and the capacity to support SEN the lowest.

| Source: Audit Commission school survey database |

Schools’ views are generally more positive in response to the 2002 survey than the last time they were surveyed (during 1999–2001), with their ratings increasing on 31 of the 50 comparable survey questions. The questions on which ratings have increased the most are shown in Exhibit 3 and, in descending order, are:

- the effectiveness of electronic communication between schools and the LEA (an increase of 7 per cent);
- ‘your LEA’s knowledge and understanding of your school’ (an increase of 5 per cent);
- the effectiveness of LEA support to schools in bidding for external grants (an increase of 5 per cent);
- the support to your school for using pupil performance data to secure school improvement (an increase of 5 per cent);
• ‘your LEA’s support to make you an effective purchaser of traded services, whether from the LEA or from external providers’ (an increase of 4 per cent);
• the support for literacy/English (an increase of 4 per cent); and
• the effectiveness of educational psychology support (an increase of 4 per cent).

**Exhibit 3**
Survey questions on which schools’ ratings have changed the most since they were last surveyed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School’s views of their LEA 2002</th>
<th>Overall findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools’ views of their LEA 2002</td>
<td>Average rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very good</strong> = 1</td>
<td>Most positive changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong> = 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> = 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor</strong> = 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very poor</strong> = 5</td>
<td>Most negative changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current average rating (2002)
Previous average rating (1999–2001)

Source: Audit Commission school survey database
The questions on which schools’ ratings decreased the most, since the last time they were surveyed, are (in ascending order):

- the effectiveness of LEA support for child welfare and protection (a decrease of 6 per cent);
- the support to develop the effectiveness of the governing body (a decrease of 6 per cent);
- ‘your LEA’s planning of SEN provision to meet identified needs’ (a decrease of 3 per cent);
- ‘your LEA’s effectiveness in developing your school’s capacity to meet the needs of pupils with SEN’ (a decrease of 3 per cent); and
- the ‘effectiveness of your LEA’s support for promoting pupil attendance’ (a decrease of 2 per cent).

By survey section

Section A: LEA strategy

The questions in this section cover the quality of the LEA’s leadership, strategic planning and implementation, including communication and consultation with schools. Exhibit 4 shows the questions under LEA strategy in the current and previous school surveys, arranged in descending order of the current average rating by all schools.

Twelve of the 17 questions in this section achieved an average rating of satisfactory or better in the current survey. The question rated most highly was ‘the effectiveness of the leadership provided by senior officers’ (with an overall average score of 2.35), rated by 91 per cent of schools who responded to the question as satisfactory or better. This is closely followed by ‘the quality of the LEA’s strategic planning for school improvement’, with an average score of 2.36, and with 93 per cent of schools rating it as satisfactory or better. The lowest-rated question was ‘the effectiveness of LEA support to schools in bidding for external grants’, which achieved an average rating of 3.12, with 37 per cent of schools rating it as below satisfactory.

Comparison of the responses from the current and previous surveys showed that schools are generally more positive about all comparable questions in this section. In particular, schools were more positive about:

- the LEA’s ‘support in bidding for external grants’, although it was the lowest-rated question overall, was rated as satisfactory or better by 63 per cent of schools who responded to the current survey, compared to 57 per cent of schools who responded to previous surveys;
- the effectiveness of electronic communication between schools and the LEA (from 60 per cent to 69 per cent satisfactory and above); and
- the ‘relevance of your LEA’s priorities to your school’ (from 85 per cent to 89 per cent satisfactory and above).
Exhibit 4
LEA Strategy
Average response from schools to each question under the ‘LEA Strategy’ section of the survey for the current and previous surveys.

Key
- Top 25% of scores
- Middle 50% of scores
- Current average rating (2002)
- Previous average rating (1999–2001)
- Bottom 25% of scores
- Weak over-time comparison due to change in question wording

Source: Audit Commission school survey database
Section B: Support for school improvement

25 The questions in this area cover how well LEAs meet their responsibility to monitor, challenge, support and intervene in schools, as laid down in the Code of Practice on LEA: School Relations. Exhibit 5 shows the questions in this section in descending order of their average rating by all schools for the current survey.

26 On average, all of the questions in this section achieved ratings which were higher than satisfactory. The highest-rated question in this section was the ‘LEA’s support for numeracy/maths’, which achieved an average rating of 2.05, just below ‘Good’ on the 5-point scale (with 96 per cent of schools rating it satisfactory or better). This is closely followed by the ‘LEA’s support for literacy/English’ with a mean rating of 2.14 (and with 94 per cent of schools rating it as satisfactory or better). The lowest-rated question was the ‘LEA’s support for ICT in the curriculum’, with an average of 2.88 – still above satisfactory but rated as below satisfactory by almost one-third of schools (27 per cent).

27 Schools’ views are more positive in 2002 about all of the questions in this section compared to their equivalent responses to the previous survey. Responses to the following questions showed the greatest increase in ratings:

- ‘your LEA’s support for literacy/English’ (from 92 to 94 per cent satisfactory or better);
- the ‘LEA’s knowledge and understanding of your school’ (from 81 to 85 per cent satisfactory or better); and
- the ‘support to your school for using pupil performance data to secure school improvement’ (from 83 to 88 per cent satisfactory or better).

However, the mean rating for the ‘support to develop the effectiveness of the governing body’ has dropped (from 89 to 83 per cent satisfactory or better).

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The Code gives statutory guidance on effective relationships between LEAs and maintained schools in England (Ref. 4).
Exhibit 5
Support for school improvement
Average response from schools to each question under the ‘Support for school improvement’ section of the survey for the current and previous surveys.

Key
- Top 25% of scores
- Middle 50% of scores
- Current average rating (2002)
- Previous average rating (1999–2001)
- Bottom 25% of scores

Weak over-time comparison due to change in question wording

Question only answered by 24% of respondents—question is only relevant to secondary schools

Source: Audit Commission school survey database
Section C: Facilitating access to services, including management support services

28 The questions in this section cover the LEA’s role in ensuring that schools have access to effective services, whether provided by the LEA or by an external provider. Exhibit 6 shows the average ratings for all schools in both surveys, in descending order for the mean response to the current survey.

29 On average, two-thirds of questions (7 out of 11) in this section achieved a rating of satisfactory or greater. The ‘quality of professional personnel advice and casework’ was the highest-rated question, with an average score of 2.21 and 91 per cent of responding schools rating it as satisfactory or better. The lowest-rated question in this section was ‘the quality of building maintenance services’, with an average of 3.17 and over one-third of schools rating it as below satisfactory (35 per cent). There is a particularly wide variation in the responses to the quality of payroll services.

30 Between the previous (1999–2001) and the current (2002) surveys, schools’ ratings have improved on most of the questions in this section. The largest improvements to the average ratings were in these areas:

- ‘your LEA’s support to make you an effective purchaser of traded services, whether from the LEA or from external providers’ (from 63 to 70 per cent satisfactory or better);
- the quality of payroll services (from 80 to 86 per cent satisfactory or better); and
- the ‘clarity of service specification for services offered by your LEA’ (from 83 to 88 per cent satisfactory or better).

The questions on which the mean ratings from schools have decreased the most are:

- the quality of professional personnel advice and casework (from 95 to 91 per cent satisfactory or better); and
- the quality of technical support for ICT (from 78 to 67 per cent satisfactory or better).

However, changes in the wording of both of these questions may also have influenced school’s ratings

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1 ‘The quality of professional personnel advice and casework’ from the 2002 survey has been matched to ‘personnel advice and guidance’ from the previous versions of the survey; and the current question ‘the quality of technical support for ICT’ has been matched to ‘support for ICT in school administration’.
Exhibit 6
Facilitating access to services, including management support services

Average response from schools to each question under the ‘Facilitating access to services, including management support services’ section of the survey for the current and previous surveys.

Key

Source: Audit Commission school survey database
Section D: Access/promoting social inclusion

31 The questions in this section cover a wide range of functions and services relating to the LEA’s role in enhancing access to education and support for socially excluded pupils. These include admissions to school, home-to-school transport, attendance, exclusions, asset management and child protection. Exhibit 7 shows the average ratings to each question by all of the schools to the current and previous survey.

32 Eleven of the 14 questions in this section achieved an average rating of satisfactory or better. The highest-scoring question, although it is only marginally higher than the other questions, was ‘the effectiveness of support for health and safety’, with an average rating of 2.62 (88 per cent of responding schools rated it as satisfactory or better). The lowest-rated question was the ‘LEA’s management of the procedures for re-admission of excluded pupils’, with an average rating of 3.07. However, only 39 per cent of responding schools answered this question. The next-lowest rated question was the ‘support for gifted and talented pupils’, with an average of 3.02 and 27 per cent of schools rating it as below satisfactory.

33 The effectiveness of ‘support for children in public care’ was rated more positively in the current survey than in previous surveys (from 81 per cent to 84 per cent satisfactory or better), while the effectiveness of the ‘LEA’s support for promoting pupil attendance’ decreased in schools’ ratings (from 83 per cent to 80 per cent satisfactory or better).

34 The average rating of the ‘effectiveness of LEA support for child welfare and protection’ has also decreased over time (from 93 per cent to 88 per cent satisfactory or better). However, it should be noted that the ratings may have been affected by a change in the question wording.

I The question ‘the effectiveness of LEA support for child welfare and protection’ from the current survey has been compared to ‘advice on child protection procedures’ from previous surveys.
Exhibit 7
Access/promoting social inclusion

Average response from schools to each question under the ‘Access/promoting social inclusion’ section of the survey for the current and previous surveys.

Key
- Top 25% of scores
- Middle 50% of scores
- Current average rating (2002)
- Previous average rating (1999–2001)
- Bottom 25% of scores

Weak over-time comparison due to change in question wording
Less than 50% of responding schools answered this question

Source: Audit Commission school survey database
Section E: Special educational needs

35 The questions in this section cover the LEA's responsibilities with regard to the assessment of and support for pupils with SEN, with or without statements, within an inclusive environment. Since schools are responsible for much of the direct support received by these pupils, most questions asked for ratings on the effectiveness of the LEA's efforts to develop schools' capacity to meet the needs of such pupils, not the amount of support provided. Exhibit 8 shows the average ratings given to each question by all of the schools to the current and previous survey.

36 This section had the highest proportion of questions rated as less than satisfactory on average (seven out of ten questions), and also included the lowest-rated question overall – 'the efficiency with which statutory assessments of pupils with SEN are made'. This question achieved an average rating of 3.24 and over one-third (37 per cent) of schools rated it as below satisfactory. This is closely followed by the LEA's effectiveness in developing the 'school's capacity to meet the needs of pupils with SEN', with an average of 3.20 and 36 per cent of schools rating it below satisfactory. The highest-rated question in this section was 'the effectiveness of learning support', the average rating for which was 2.83 – just above satisfactory – although 80 per cent of schools rated this as satisfactory or above.

37 Most of the questions in this section in the current survey were not viewed by schools, overall, much more positively than in the last survey – with the exception of the following two questions:

- the effectiveness of educational psychology support (increased from 64 per cent to 71 per cent satisfactory or better); and
- the effectiveness of learning support (increased from 74 to 80 per cent satisfactory or better).

The questions that received significantly lower ratings in 2002 compared to the previous survey were:

- 'your LEA's planning of SEN provision to meet identified needs' (from 76 to 71 per cent satisfactory or better); and
- the 'LEA's effectiveness in developing your school's capacity to meet the needs of pupils with SEN' (from 68 per cent to 64 per cent satisfactory or better).
Exhibit 8
Special educational needs
Average response from schools to each question under the ‘Special educational needs’ section of the survey for the current and previous surveys.

Source: Audit Commission school survey database
Differences between schools

Different types of schools view the support they receive from their LEAs in markedly different ways. Primary schools tended to be more positive than secondary and special schools across most survey areas. Foundation schools rated their LEAs more negatively than voluntary and community schools.
By phase of school

Overview

The differences between the average ratings by primary, secondary and special schools are compared in this section [Exhibit 9]. Nursery schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) are not examined separately due to the low numbers in the sample (only 130 out of 365 nurseries responded, and only 16 out of 167 PRUs).

Primary schools tended to be more positive than secondary and special schools about their LEA across most survey areas. Multi-level statistical analysis showed secondary schools to be significantly more negative than primary schools in their responses to all five sections of the survey\(^1\). Special schools were the second most positive about their LEA overall, but significantly more negative than primary schools about support for school improvement. However, they were more positive than other schools about support for SEN and access to high-quality services.

Exhibit 9

Overall average ratings of the summary survey questions, by phase of school

Secondary schools are, in general, less positive about their LEAs than primary or special schools.

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Source: Audit Commission school survey database

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See Appendix 3 for further information on the factor and multi-level analysis conducted on the results.
Primary schools

40 Of the questions in the survey, primary schools gave their highest ratings to the ‘support for numeracy/maths’ and for ‘literacy/English’, a similar finding to the last national report (Ref. 1). The question rated the lowest by primaries was ‘the efficiency with which statutory assessments of pupils with SEN are made’ [Exhibit 10].

Exhibit 10

Questions given the highest and lowest ratings by primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average rating</th>
<th>Highest-rated items</th>
<th>Lowest-rated items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good = 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfactory = 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor = 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor = 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Audit Commission school survey database
Secondary schools also gave their most positive ratings to the support for literacy and numeracy alongside the ‘quality of professional personnel advice and casework’ [Exhibit 11]. However, they gave the most negative ratings overall – secondaries gave the lowest mean score on 54 of the 67 survey questions. They were particularly negative about, in ascending order:

- the effectiveness of behaviour support;
- support to schools in bidding for external grants;
- the ‘effectiveness in developing your school’s capacity to meet the needs of pupils with SEN’;
- the quality of technical support for ICT;
- the quality of building maintenance services;
- the effectiveness of educational psychology support; and
- the efficiency with which statutory assessments of pupils with SEN are made.

Exhibit 11
Questions given the highest and lowest ratings by secondary schools

Average rating

Very good = 1

Highest-rated items

Good = 2

Lowest-rated items

Satisfactory = 3

Poor = 4

Very poor = 5

Source: Audit Commission school survey database
Special schools

Special schools also rated the support for literacy and numeracy, and the quality of professional personnel advice most positively [Exhibit 12]. They were most negative about the effectiveness of behaviour support, closely followed by the quality of programming and management of building projects and the quality of building maintenance services.

Exhibit 12
Questions given the highest and lowest ratings by special schools

By survey section

LEA strategy: Primary schools were more positive than secondary and special schools on 11 out of 17 questions, and secondary schools were the most negative on 13 of the 17 questions in this section. In particular, secondaries rated the effectiveness of the leadership provided by elected members and the support to schools in bidding for external grants more negatively than other school phases (36 per cent and 47 per cent of secondary schools rated these as below satisfactory respectively). They also rated the support for recruitment and retention, the effectiveness of the information management strategy and the effectiveness of...
electronic communication much more poorly than other school types (37 per cent, 33 per cent and 39 per cent below satisfactory, respectively). Special schools rated the ‘relevance of the LEA’s priorities to your school’ more negatively than others on average – with 19 per cent rating this as less than satisfactory.

44 Support for school improvement: Primary schools were the most positive on 12 of the 15 questions in this section, and secondary schools the most negative on 10 of the 15 questions. Specifically, primaries rated the ‘support to develop self-management (including self-evaluation) in your school’ and also the support for numeracy/maths much more highly than other schools (90 per cent and 96 per cent satisfactory and above, respectively). Special schools were more negative than other phases about their LEAs’ knowledge and understanding of their schools (26 per cent below satisfactory) and the support for using pupil performance data to secure school improvement (33 per cent below satisfactory). Secondary schools were the most negative about the support for ICT in the curriculum (36 per cent rated this below satisfactory).

45 Facilitating access to services including management support services: Special schools were the most positive on 5 of the 11 questions in this section, and multi-level analysis confirmed that they were, statistically, significantly more positive than primary schools. Secondary schools were the most negative on 9 of the 11 questions – in particular, they were likely to rate the support ‘to make you an effective purchaser of traded services, whether from the LEA or from external providers’, the quality of financial support and advice, and the quality of technical support for ICT much lower than other school phases (38 per cent, 17 per cent and 41 per cent below satisfactory respectively). They were also more negative about facilities management – cleaning, caretaking and grounds maintenance (with 26 per cent of responding secondary schools rating this as below satisfactory). However, most secondary schools employ their own staff to cover most of these areas.

46 Access/promoting social inclusion: Special schools were again the most positive. They were more positive than secondary or primary schools on 11 of the 14 questions in this section, in particular, about the reliability of home-to-school transport and LEA support for child welfare and protection (rated as satisfactory or above by 88 per cent and 92 per cent of special schools respectively). However, they were the most negative on the co-ordination of the admissions process – this was rated as below satisfactory by 29 per cent of special schools. Secondary schools were the most negative overall (12 out of the 14 questions), particularly about the LEA’s support for promoting pupil attendance, the management of the procedures for re-admission of excluded pupils and support for health and safety (31 per cent, 38 per cent and 19 per cent of secondaries rated these as less than satisfactory). Primary schools were most positive about the planning of school places – 77 per cent of primary schools rated this as satisfactory or above.
Special educational needs: Primary schools were the most positive on the highest number of questions – five of the ten questions in this section – but multi-level analysis showed that special schools were, statistically, significantly more positive than primaries in this section as a whole. Special schools were the most positive about both the efficiency with which statutory assessments of pupils with SEN are made (81 per cent satisfactory or above), and the monitoring of schools’ support for pupils with SEN (77 per cent satisfactory or above). Secondary schools were the most negative overall – but particularly about educational psychology support, with 42 per cent rating this as below satisfactory.

By status of school

The differences between the average ratings of voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, foundation and community schools are very clear cut and consistent compared to other groupings of the responding schools. All groups gave their highest ratings, on average, to the support for numeracy/maths, the support for literacy/English and the quality of professional personnel advice and casework.

Foundation schools overwhelmingly rated their LEAs the most negatively, giving lower ratings to their LEAs than other groups on 65 of the 67 survey questions – a similar finding to the last survey report (Ref. 1). Multi-level statistical analysis showed them to be significantly more negative than community schools in all of the sections of the survey. They were most negative about, in ascending order:

- the effectiveness of the leadership provided by elected members;
- the effectiveness of LEA support to schools in bidding for external grants; and
- the ‘LEA’s support to make you an effective purchaser of traded services, whether from the LEA or from external providers’.

Voluntary aided schools generally rated their LEAs the most positively overall, giving their LEAs higher ratings than the other groups on 61 of the 67 questions. They were, statistically, significantly more positive than community schools on all sections.

Voluntary controlled schools were, statistically, significantly more positive than community schools in the survey sections covering facilitating access to services and SEN.
Differences between LEAs

There were fairly consistent differences in the ratings given to different types of LEA by their schools. County, metropolitan and unitary authorities tended to be viewed more positively by their schools than London LEAs. LEAs rated as good to very good in their last inspection received higher ratings from their schools than those that received lower inspection judgements.
By type of LEA

Overview

The LEAs surveyed included 27 counties, 27 metropolitan authorities, 36 unitary authorities, 17 outer London boroughs and 10 inner London boroughs, almost identical to the proportions existing nationally. As in the 2001 report, there were fairly consistent differences in the ratings given to different types of LEA by their schools. However, any comparisons are limited by the differences in the numbers of schools in each category (Exhibit 18 in Appendix 4 provides further information on the numbers of schools from each type of authority). County, metropolitan and unitary authorities tended to be the most highly rated by their schools. The multi-level analysis confirmed that schools in county authorities are, statistically, significantly more positive than those in inner and outer London LEAs on all sections of the survey. Outer London authorities were rated the most negatively by their schools (they were given the lowest mean ratings in 35 of the 67 questions in the survey).

By survey section

LEA strategy: The ratings on all questions in this section were fairly similar for all types of authority, with schools in metropolitan authorities giving slightly higher ratings for their LEAs on 9 of the 17 questions and schools in outer London boroughs giving the lowest rating on 11 out of the 17 questions. A noticeable difference between the ratings related to the effectiveness of the leadership provided by elected members – schools in outer London and unitary authorities rated this much less highly than schools in other types of authority (with 31 per cent and 34 per cent respectively rating this area as less than satisfactory).

Support for school improvement: Again, the ratings were similar from schools across all authorities, with schools maintained by counties giving the highest ratings on 7 out of the 15 questions and schools in outer London authorities giving 11 of the 15 questions the lowest ratings. The biggest difference is in relation to the usefulness of the LEA’s financial information in supporting self-management – both outer and inner London schools rated this very negatively compared with the schools in other authority types (29 per cent and 33 per cent respectively rated this below satisfactory).

Facilitating access to services, including management support services: Both inner and outer London authorities tended to be poorly rated by their schools on most questions in this section in comparison to county, unitary and metropolitan authorities. This is especially evident on questions relating to financial support and advice, payroll services, professional personnel advice and casework and the quality of the catering service. For example, the quality of financial support and advice was rated as satisfactory or above by 90 per cent, 91 per cent and 92 per cent of schools...
in county, unitary and metropolitan LEAs respectively; while the same rating was given by only 69 per cent of schools in inner London LEAs and 78 per cent of schools in outer London LEAs.

56 Access/promoting social inclusion: There were few clear differences in the ratings of schools maintained by the different types of authority in this section. Inner London schools giving slightly higher ratings than others to the majority of questions – in particular to the support for gifted and talented pupils, for meeting the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and for combating racism.

57 Special educational needs: Schools in unitary LEAs were more positive about the questions in this section than schools in other types of LEA – they gave the highest ratings to eight of the ten questions. In particular, they were most positive about the quality of their LEA’s SEN strategy, the planning of SEN provision, the clarity of the rationale for the deployment of SEN funding and the efficiency with which statutory assessments of pupils with SEN are made. Schools in both county and metropolitan authorities gave the lowest ratings to the effectiveness of educational psychology support (33 per cent of schools in county LEAs and 31 per cent in metropolitan LEAs rated this as less than satisfactory).

By size of LEA

58 For the analysis based on the size of authorities, LEAs were grouped according to the total number of schools that they maintain: 100 or less (small), 101 to 200 (medium) and 201 plus (large). Of the respondents to the 2002 survey, 27 per cent fell into the ‘small’ category, the same percentage fell into the ‘medium’ category and 46 per cent fell into the ‘large’ category. However, the response rate to the survey varied inversely with the size of LEA – large LEAs received an average 35 per cent response rate from their schools, while small LEAs achieved an average 49 per cent response rate [Exhibit 13].

59 The size of an LEA appears to have relatively little influence on schools’ mean ratings in most areas of the survey – schools in each of the three size groups gave fairly similar responses. There were few differences, for example, on questions such as the ‘relevance of your LEA’s priorities to your school’, the effectiveness of LEA’s communications with schools, and other questions about areas where one would expect that a smaller authority would provide a high level of service. As in last year’s report, small LEAs were rated slightly more highly on SEN-related questions, and slightly lower on management support services than other LEAs.
Exhibit 13
Average response rates from schools within each size category of authority

On average, the larger the LEA, in terms of the number of schools maintained by the authority, the lower the response rate from their schools.

Average response rate from schools

Source: Audit Commission school survey database

By LEA Inspection overall grade

When the responses from schools are grouped into three categories according to the ‘overall effectiveness of the LEA’ judgement (Judgement Recording Statement number 52) that their LEA received for their last LEA inspection\(^{\text{I}}\) there is a strong relationship between LEA effectiveness and more positive ratings by schools. The analysis shows that those LEAs rated as ‘Good’ to ‘Very Good’ by Ofsted and the Audit Commission were given the highest rating in the survey by their schools on 99 per cent of questions. This relationship is illustrated by the mean response to each of the summary questions within the survey [Exhibit 14].

\(^{\text{I}}\) JRSs record the judgements made during inspections of LEAs on a scale of 1–7 where 1= Very Good and 7=Very Poor. JRS 52 is a composite judgement about the overall effectiveness of the LEA.

\(^{\text{II}}\) As at September 2002.
Exhibit 14
Ratings from schools within LEAs receiving different levels of inspection judgement, for each of the summary questions in the survey

LEAs rated as good to very good in their last inspection received, on average, higher ratings from their schools than LEAs that received lower inspection judgements. The differences were particularly large in relation to LEA strategy.

Note: 23 LEAs were categorised as ‘Good – Very Good’ for the overall effectiveness of the LEA in their last LEA inspection, 65 as ‘Satisfactory’, and 19 as ‘Unsatisfactory – Very Poor’. A small number of LEAs (10) did not have a rating for this inspection judgement.
How the Audit Commission will develop the survey with LEAs and schools

61 The school survey website holds the individual analysis for each participating LEA within a secure area. It also holds suggestions on good practice in the use of survey information, such as ideas and examples of how LEAs have shared the results with their schools. We will continue to develop the site so that it can be used as an interactive information tool for participating LEAs and schools. Future surveys and their results will be available on the same website.

62 The survey will be repeated in summer 2003, and the Commission will continue to consult stakeholders, LEAs and schools through the school survey reference group about the survey process. The Commission recently completed a review of the 2002 survey, which incorporated an evaluation survey of the participating LEAs. This has led to a number of suggestions for changes to the method of surveying, the website, and the analysis of the responses, which include the following:

- streamlining the process for LEAs to sign up to participate, and allowing more time for officers to consult colleagues;
- to raise response rates: more direct contact between the Commission and schools; promotion of the importance of schools’ responses; and conducting the survey earlier in the summer term;
- simplification of the survey website to reduce any difficulties with access and decrease the amount of time taken to navigate around the survey. However, a majority of the schools who commented on the 2002 survey website were positive about how easy the site was to use, with many saying that it was preferable to a paper survey;
- development of the analysis of responses to include further comparison groups for local benchmarking by LEAs; and
- the development of a ‘question bank’, based on the local questions used in 2002, to enable LEAs to choose their own questions more easily.

63 As in 2002, a team within the Commission is dedicated to assisting schools and LEAs during the survey process (schoolsurvey-help@audit-commission.gov.uk), and there is a nominated officer within each LEA for schools to contact with queries.

64 The Commission has recently invited all authorities in England and Wales to participate in the forthcoming 2003 survey.

http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey
All LEAs that participate in the 2003 survey are asked to discontinue any other surveys of their schools during the spring and summer terms, as they severely reduce the response from their schools to the national survey. LEAs can use the online survey to replace any local surveys, by including questions at the end of the survey for their schools only.

The Audit Commission will continue to use responses to the school survey as an invaluable part of the preparation for ongoing LEA inspections with Ofsted. The information will also be used in other reports and studies, for example, in the recent report on asset management planning in LEAs and schools (Ref. 3), and in thematic inspection work, for example, on LEA finance issues. Survey information is currently being used by the Audit Commission and LEAs as part of the post-comprehensive performance assessment improvement planning work.
Appendix 1
How to use the school survey information

67 This report aims to provide a national picture of schools’ views of their LEA. It can be used in conjunction with the analyses produced by the Audit Commission for individual participating LEAs.

68 The following sections outline how LEAs and schools can use this report, and the survey findings, as a tool for self-evaluation, benchmarking and improving the services that they currently provide or receive.

LEAs

69 Education authorities now have much more involvement in the survey than ever before – they help the Commission to shape the process and the format of the results. LEAs can participate in future school surveys and use the survey results to compare their own schools’ views with those within a broad range of other LEAs as part of a benchmarking process. The survey results are also important for self-assessment and monitoring by LEAs as part of the post-comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) improvement planning. This report, together with their local survey results, allows LEAs to distinguish between national and local issues.

70 LEAs that participated in the 2002 survey can download their own results from the survey website (www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey). They are urged to share the information with their schools – to extract local messages and summarise them to form the basis of discussion with schools on further improvement.

Case Study
The use of the survey in self-assessment

One LEA found that the survey was a good starting point for improvement. They used the results in an initial study for their management team, which identified the main messages for the LEA. The survey analysis downloaded from the survey website was then provided to the relevant branch of the LEA, with indications of possible areas of improvement. Further work included closer analysis of the detailed data, feeding it into the department’s self-assessment via the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model.

Source: LEA feedback to the Audit Commission

Some examples of ways that LEAs have shared the information with their schools include:

- a summary report is going to the heads representative group;
- one-side A4 summary highlighting successes and areas for action put in the School’s Bulletin; and
- presentations to all primary heads and all secondary heads.
Schools

71 Schools are encouraged to participate in the online survey, to make their views known not only to their LEA but also the Audit Commission and Ofsted LEA inspection teams, and to ensure that the responses are representative of local views. The survey is an opportunity to make positive comments to their LEA, as well as to highlight weaknesses.

72 Schools should be aware that information made available on the website and to LEAs is anonymous and, unless specifically requested to do so, the Commission will only provide their LEA with aggregated data for groups of schools. Individual schools can opt to provide named responses to their LEA.

73 If their LEA has participated in the national survey (see www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey), headteachers and governors can use the outcomes of the survey as a driver for improvement in their LEA’s support and services. They can download analyses for their LEA from www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey (they should contact their LEA or email schoolsurvey-help@audit-commission.gov.uk for password details) and take up the issues arising from these in meetings with the LEA. Comparison with this report will show whether their local concerns are similar to, or different from, schools’ concerns in other English LEAs.
Appendix 2
Background to the survey

74 The first Audit Commission school survey was developed as a data collection and research tool for a national study, which led to the publication of the report, *Held in Trust* (Ref. 5).

75 In 1998, the Audit Commission’s remit was expanded to include LEA inspection work, in partnership with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). At this time the school survey was further developed to capture schools’ views as a key component of inspection evidence – the school survey was sent out to all maintained schools in each LEA being inspected from 1998 to 2002. The survey is also used for Welsh LEA inspection work, which is carried out in conjunction with Estyn, the Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. A report was published in December 2001 examining the findings of the survey in England from the previous two years.

76 During 2001/02 the Commission developed the school survey from a pre-inspection paper exercise into an online annual national benchmarking exercise. The Commission consulted widely during this project, involving Ofsted, LEAs, headteacher and governor associations and other interested stakeholders as well as individual LEAs and individual schools. The aim was to create a tool that would continue to be used in LEA Inspections, but that could also be of use to LEAs and other stakeholders and that would reduce the number of surveys circulated to schools during the academic year. Many LEAs were carrying out regular surveys of their schools and wanted to compare their schools’ views with a wider sample. After a pilot online survey in autumn 2001 involving nine LEAs, 117 (78 per cent) of the LEAs in England opted to participate.
Appendix 3
Methodology – survey and analysis

77 The summer 2002 survey was carried out nationally and electronically through a secure website and was ‘live’ for seven weeks from 10 June to 29 July 2002. Information on how to log on to access the survey was passed from the Audit Commission to all schools maintained by the participating authorities via their LEAs – through email, seminars, letters and visits by advisers. Schools could print off the survey in order to consult all staff and governors. Paper or disk-based versions of the survey were made available through LEAs to schools that had difficulties with access to the internet.

78 Of the 117 authorities that participated in the national survey, the majority of LEAs (92) participated via the website, while schools in the 25 remaining LEAs were surveyed just prior to this period on paper, for inspection or piloting purposes (please see www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey for information on the timing and method of participation in the survey for each of the 117 LEAs). A slightly different version of the survey was used for schools in the pilot – the number of questions was reduced and the wording was clarified for the summer 2002 survey. However, care was taken to maintain comparability over time as much as possible, and all changes were made in consultation with the School Survey Reference Group (Appendix 5).

79 Schools were asked to provide their views by indicating a response on a 5 point scale: 1 = very good, 2 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = poor, 5 = very poor. The lower the score, the higher the satisfaction rating. Schools were also given the option of indicating that they had no opinion about a question where it was not relevant to them (by choosing ‘X’ on the survey).

80 The survey used in this report included sections for schools’ comments, which are used for LEA inspection and were passed to the LEAs if this was authorised by the school. Only the 67 pre-coded questions in the summer 2002 survey, and their equivalents in the earlier surveys, have been included in the report.

81 Schools’ responses are confidential and neither published reports, nor the information that is given to LEAs, identify individual schools. However, schools were given the option of agreeing to provide their named responses to their LEAs and 15 per cent of schools did so. Individual LEAs are not identified.
Comparison with previous school surveys

82 The summer 2002 survey is the first national survey of schools carried out simultaneously in all participating LEAs. Though the Commission intends to repeat the survey every year, it is not yet possible to make direct comparisons over time. However, all of the LEAs have been surveyed before as part of their LEA inspections so comparisons have been made with the most recent school survey carried out in these LEAs.

83 Previous surveys carried out between summer 1999 to autumn 2001 have been used. Surveys conducted prior to this in 20 of the 117 LEAs have been excluded, due to the large number of questions that have no current equivalent. Any surveys conducted during the 1999–2001 time period within LEAs that did not participate in the national survey have also been excluded. Of the 97 remaining LEAs, 28 per cent were surveyed in 1999, 49 per cent in 2000, and 23 per cent in 2001. Again, information on the dates of the ‘previous’ surveys for individual LEAs can be found at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey.

84 Although the survey has evolved during this period, with revision of the questions in summer 2000 and then again for the 2002 national survey, responses have been matched up (where possible) with the current equivalent. Of the 67 questions in the current survey, 50 can be compared to questions in previous versions of the survey. Wherever a question comparison is felt to be weak (because the wording has changed over time), this is indicated on the relevant exhibit, in pale grey shading.

Analysis of responses

85 The ‘overall findings’ section of the report uses box and whisker diagrams to indicate not only the mean response from schools to the current and previous surveys, but also to demonstrate the range of responses (using mean scores for each LEA). Although all responding schools have been included in the average response calculations (the dashes on the diagrams), only LEAs with response rates of 50 per cent or higher on a particular question have been included in the highest/lowest mean and quartile calculations (the boxes and whiskers). Therefore, only 50 LEAs are included in the box and whisker, to prevent skewing of the data caused by LEAs with very low response rates. Note that the median is not indicated on these diagrams.

86 In the 2002 analysis of responses, infant and junior schools have been classed as primaries, while middle schools have been deemed as either primary or secondary depending on the age range of their pupils. All responding schools that provided details of their sector have been included in the ‘overall’ analysis, including nursery schools, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and PRUs.
Some questions are not relevant to all types of schools. Where less than 50 per cent of responding schools have answered a particular question with a grade 1–5, this is indicated on the relevant exhibit, with dark grey shading.

Wherever the percentage of schools answering a question as ‘satisfactory or above’ or ‘below satisfactory’ is referred to, this has been calculated using all schools who answered 1–5 as the total. Schools that didn’t answer the question, or that responded with ‘N/A’, have been excluded from the calculation.

A factor analysis was carried out on the questions in sections A–E of the survey, excluding the ‘overall’ question in each section, with the aim of obtaining a summary measure for each section that was a composite of its questions. A single factor emerged for each section of the survey that correlated highly with the majority of questions in this section, and with the ‘overall’ question. This indicates that the factors can be interpreted as good overall measures.

These five factors were then used in a multi-level analysis using the following groups:

- school level: school phase, school type; and
- LEA level: LEA type, size of LEA.

This analysis allowed differences in mean responses on the five survey sections between the different groups to be identified and the statistical significance of these to be assessed. The findings of the multi-level analysis have been reported within the relevant section of the report.
Appendix 4
Response to the survey

A total of 117 LEAs with 18,240 schools were invited to complete the 2002 survey. The overall response rate was 40 per cent (7,340 schools). Response rates for each LEA are listed in the ‘detailed response statistics by LEA’ section below and varied from 96 per cent to 4 per cent. Although the different types of schools that responded are generally proportionate to the national picture, primary schools (77 per cent of all responding schools), community schools (66 per cent) and schools within county LEAs (43 per cent) dominate the overall findings.

The following exhibits (Exhibits 15 to 18) illustrate the proportion of all responding schools by type, status, author and LEA type in order to give a picture of the make-up of the ‘current’ survey database on which this report is based.

Exhibit 15
School survey responses 2002, by school phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>5,680</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRUs</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Audit Commission school survey database

---

Exhibit 16 shows a breakdown of the schools that responded to the 2002 survey by status – community (or county), foundation, voluntary aided (or special agreement) and voluntary controlled schools. The proportions are similar to those of all primary and secondary schools by status in England in 2002, for example, 66 per cent of responding schools are community schools, which compares to 63 per cent of schools nationally of community status.\(^1\)

### Exhibit 16

**School survey responses 2002, by school status**

- **Other schools (for example PRUs)**
  - 13 schools
  - (0.18% of all responses)

- **Unspecified schools**
  - 78 schools
  - (1% of all responses)

- **Foundation schools**
  - 307 schools
  - (4% of all responses)

- **Voluntary controlled schools**
  - 768 schools
  - (10% of all responses)

- **Voluntary aided schools**
  - 1,329 schools
  - (18% of all responses)

- **Community or county schools**
  - 4,845 schools
  - (66% of all responses)

---

98 Headteachers were asked for details of who else had been involved in completing the survey – they could select as many options as required from a list of different groups: other senior management team members, SEN co-ordinator, other teachers, governors, administrative staff and ‘others’. Approximately 30 per cent of schools provided this information, with an average of 2.7 ‘groups’ being consulted by headteachers. Exhibit 17 indicates the proportion of schools responding to this question who selected each of these groups.

---

Exhibit 17
Others involved in completing the survey

Other senior management team members
1,881 schools
(29% of all responses)

Others
115 schools
(2% of all responses)

Administrative staff
697 schools
(12% of all responses)

Governors
865 schools
(15% of all responses)

Other teachers
1,186 schools
(20% of all responses)

SEN co-ordinator
1,337 schools
(23% of all responses)

Source: Audit Commission school survey database

Exhibit 18 indicates the proportion of schools that responded by type of authority – unitary, county, metropolitan and inner and outer London. Compared with national totals, counties are under-represented while the other types of LEA are slightly over-represented [Table 2].

Exhibit 18
School survey responses 2002, by LEA type

Counties
3,180 schools
(43% of all responses)

Inner London boroughs
338 schools
(5% of all responses)

Outer London boroughs
668 schools
(9% of all responses)

Unitary authorities
1,317 schools
(18% of all responses)

Metropolitan authorities
1,837 schools
(25% of all responses)

Source: Audit Commission school survey database
### Table 2
Response rates from schools within each authority type, and comparison with national figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of LEA</th>
<th>Number of LEAs (that participated in the 2002 survey)</th>
<th>Response rate from schools</th>
<th>Response from schools as a proportion of all responses</th>
<th>National proportion’ (of schools in each type of LEA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitary</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner London</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer London</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Audit Commission school survey database

Appendix 5
Acknowledgements

The project manager of this study was Jan Hunter. It was carried out by Kath McElhinney, with assistance from Manjit Benning. All are from the Audit Commission LEA Inspection Team.

The Team benefited from consultation with the School Survey Reference Group, consisting of representatives from Ofsted, Estyn, DfES, Confed, The Education Network (TEN), Secondary Heads Association (SHA), National Association of Headteachers (NAHT), National Governors Council (NGC), and the National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM), as well as individual LEAs (including Blackburn with Darwen, Croydon, Hampshire, Kensington and Chelsea, Leicestershire, Lewisham, Sunderland, Wigan and Worcestershire). Multi-level statistical analysis of the survey results, used in the report, was conducted by Jon Rasbash and Fiona Steele of the London University Institute of Education. Useful comments were made by the commentator’s group: Jeff Holman (NAHT), Mary Wallis-Jones (NGC), Nigel Hill (Hampshire LEA), Gill Green (Audit Commission) and Ian Mackinder (Audit Commission).

Last, but by no means least, the Commission is grateful to the LEAs that participated and to all the schools that responded to the survey and made this report possible.
References and acronyms

References


Acronyms used in this report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADEW</td>
<td>Association of Directors of Education in Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Performance Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDP</td>
<td>Education Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estyn</td>
<td>The Office of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs</td>
<td>Local Education Authorities</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ofsted</td>
<td>The Office for Standards in Education</td>
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<td>PRUs</td>
<td>Pupil Referral Units</td>
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<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
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<td>VA</td>
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<td>VC</td>
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