

## Ofsted marks Warwickshire as 'good and improving'

Ofsted inspects Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and reports on how efficient and effective they are. Four years ago Ofsted praised Warwickshire's 'many strengths and much good practice'.

Ofsted reported again in September 2003. Now they say Warwickshire:

- is a 'good and improving LEA'
- 'is well led'
- 'enjoys the overwhelming support of its schools'
- 'is ambitious' and
- 'is well placed to accelerate progress'.

**"Warwickshire is at the forefront of innovation."**

Rob Barr, Ofsted Lead Inspector

## Particular strengths

Ofsted praises the quality of:

- our members' leadership;
- our officers' leadership and their advice to members;
- social inclusion;
- support for pupils in their early years;
- the special educational needs (SEN) strategy, with its 'intelligent, positive and highly regarded leadership';
- our corporate planning and decision making;
- how we target resources on our priorities;
- our collaboration between agencies to support priorities;
- support for raising standards in numeracy and at Key Stage 3;
- the expertise of our staff who support school improvement;
- our approach to monitoring, challenging and intervening;
- our leadership, strategic management and performance management which support school improvement;
- our support for school governors; and
- our finance and human resource services which support schools.

**"16 functions are judged to be good or better. Most importantly, there are good functions in all key aspects of the LEA"**

Rob Barr, Ofsted Lead Inspector



2003

Ofsted

"I am clearly delighted that the report is so positive...it recognises the commitment and effort of all who work in the education service."

Eric Wood,  
County Education Officer

"This confirms that education in Warwickshire is a success story. Leadership by councillors is seen as first class."

Ian Caulfield,  
Chief Executive

“This very good report proves the effectiveness of our cross-party commitment to keep education at the top of the agenda.”

Cllr Ian Bottrill,  
Leader of the County Council

“The LEA has successfully maintained enviably high quality relationships with its schools, characterised by unusually high levels of trust.”

Ofsted Report

“Continual improvements in education in Warwickshire are bringing real benefits to the learning of children and young people.”

Cllr Richard Grant,  
Cabinet Member for  
Education - Schools

## Many other activities have set new or maintained previously high standards:

- the supply of school places;
- asset management;
- admissions to schools;
- the strategy for literacy;
- our provision for looked after children;
- ICT especially the training which has been ‘excellent’;
- combating racism ‘with many areas of strength’ including ‘a very good web-site’;
- support for ethnic minority and traveller children;
- support to improve pupils’ behaviour;
- access to and use of performance data;
- education for pupils with no school place;
- attendance;
- health and safety;
- 14-19 education; and
- support for leadership and management across all schools.



“The relationship with schools has developed from a very strong base into a purposeful, constructive and effective partnership”

Rob Barr,  
Ofsted Lead Inspector

## Improving...

Ofsted recommended we improve in two particular areas.

- Ofsted said we needed to combine our databases on teachers who have undertaken child protection training.
  - We have created this database and it has been externally validated.

“I compliment the LEA on their prompt response to this recommendation.”

Rob Barr, Ofsted Lead Inspector

- Ofsted said we needed to improve some aspects of our support for gifted and talented pupils.
  - We started work on this area before the Ofsted report and further improvements will soon follow.

“Importantly, there is an evident hunger for improvement.”

Rob Barr, Ofsted Lead Inspector

Ofsted made 6 broad recommendations for even better improvement focusing on simplifying the strategic plan, ICT, SEN, target setting with schools, recruitment and retention and race equality. These will form the basis of the action plan we will publish in the Autumn.

**“All areas of previous weakness have been tackled with determination.”**

Rob Barr, Ofsted Lead Inspector



## Ofsted focuses on...

Ofsted focused on key aspects of our work which directly support raised standards and higher attainment by our pupils: school improvement, leadership, social inclusion and special educational needs.

**“An LEA committed to challenge.”**

Rob Barr, Ofsted Lead Inspector

### School Improvement

School improvement is highly satisfactory, with increased effectiveness of many elements:

- clear strategy
- well-organised;
- effective and very well focused support, especially for schools causing concern;
- expert staff;
- accurate and robust understanding of each school's strengths and weaknesses;
- the literacy strategy is a model of good management;
- the numeracy team has high credibility in schools;
- Key Stage 3 support agreements are models of good practice; and
- improved ICT support.

### Leadership

- stronger leadership by officers and members who are committed to ambitious targets for improvement in all aspects of education;
- Warwickshire has continued to be principled, fair and honourable in its actions;
- highly satisfactory start on implementing an ambitious strategic education plan, with clear priorities and targets that are imaginative, ambitious and include a local flavour;
- (a) high standard of planning and performance management at corporate and departmental level;
- stronger, highly organised, approach to partnership;
- excellent and productive relationships between the LEA and the diocesan authorities continue; and
- the overall quality of leadership and management in Warwickshire schools is improving at a faster rate than in similar authorities.

“The pace of improvement (of standards and quality of education in Warwickshire schools) has been faster than that found in national and statistical neighbours.”

Ofsted Report

“(Support for schools causing concern has been) very well led at all levels.”

Ofsted Report

“In particular, leadership of members has strengthened.”

Ofsted Report

“The quality of pupils' experience and the standards they achieve are improving every year. Students are well served in Warwickshire.”

Stella Blackmore,  
Chief Inspector, LEA

“It is an excellent report, achieved in spite of the poor funding that we have received.

Congratulations to all those serving Warwickshire's children so well.”

Cllr John Burton,  
Conservative Spokesperson  
for Education

“I am particularly pleased Ofsted has recognised the enormous improvements made in our Special Needs Service.”

CLr Susan Juned,  
Lib Dem Spokesperson for  
Education

“The LEA’s support for SEN has improved and is highly satisfactory.”

Ofsted Report

“The County Education Officer is singled out for particular praise for embodying the values, principles and purpose of the education authority.”

Ofsted Report

“The LEA has a track record of making necessary but difficult decisions.”

Ofsted Report

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Iain Duck and Martin Neeves

## Special Needs

- all aspects of support for special educational needs show significant and sustained improvement;
- good quality officers have developed the supportive ethos that has facilitated change; and
- the standard of support services for special educational needs is one of the LEA’s strengths.

## Social Inclusion

- support provided by Warwickshire for social inclusion is very good;
- there are many good examples of multi-agency working; and
- officers and members have taken positive action to promote equality and value the contributions made by different cultures.

## Resources

All this has been achieved even though:

- Warwickshire’s local schools budget for 2002/2003 is less than for similar authorities and 10% below the national average; and
- the funding per pupil delegated to schools and the authority’s spending on centrally provided services are less than for similar authorities and the national average.

# What this means for pupils now

The Ofsted report emphasises how our support for schools benefits pupils and young people:

- the standards and quality of education in our schools are improving faster than in schools nationally and in similar authorities;
- standards at Foundation Level, Key Stage 3, post 16 and Advanced level are improving and are generally above those for similar authorities;
- in schools causing concern the Literacy and Numeracy teams have helped boys to increase their attainment and pupils to attain higher qualifications;
- students are benefiting from the many examples of 14-19 projects; and
- elsewhere, pupils are improving in line with those in similar authorities and above the national average.

**“This second successful inspection confirms the strength of our education service. From this secure base, we look to a future where we expect excellence for all children and young people. We are moving forward, in partnership, to become a learning county second to none.”**

Eric Wood,  
County Education Officer

