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Report on Education in Toxteth

EDUCATION

May 1982

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CONFIDENTIAL



cc DOE JF

C. Edmonds

10 DOWNING STREET

24 May 1982

From the Private Secretary

EDUCATION IN TOXTETH

The Prime Minister has seen and noted your Secretary of State's minute of 20 May. She remains doubtful that it will be possible to apply sufficiently strong and sustained pressure on the elected members of the LEA but she recognises that your Secretary of State cannot take over Liverpool's education functions.

I am copying this to David Edmonds (Department of the Environment).

W. P. S. RICKETT

Mrs. Imogen Wilde,
Department of Education and Science.

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister 4

Wm
20/5

PRIME MINISTER

EDUCATION IN TOXTETH

I have reflected on your Private Secretary's letter of 11 May about action to follow up the report by HM Inspectorate on Toxteth.

I agree with you that the failure in this case is principally that of the LEA. I have arranged to see the leaders and education spokesmen of the three main parties on 26 May, together with Michael Heseltine. Our aim is to get the elected members to pull together sufficiently to adopt a plan for improving education in Liverpool and to carry it through. I may not succeed, but I intend to apply strong and sustained pressure on the elected members, in private and in public. Officials here, who have close contacts with the Merseyside Task Force, will continue to drive home my message with the LEA's officers. Further pressure for improvement will be generated when HMI report to me on the inspections of Liverpool primary schools which they are now embarking on (and inform the LEA of the results.)

If none of this does the trick, I shall have to see whether I could use my section 99 powers, the only powers to take default action which I have. They enable me to direct Liverpool to take specified action to remedy a specified breach of duty and, if necessary, to enforce that direction by mandamus. At present, on the basis of the HMI evidence, Liverpool are clearly not in breach of the relevant duty of securing sufficient and efficient provision for nursery, primary and further education: if they do not act, they may come to be in breach in relation to some secondary schools.

I cannot take over Liverpool's education functions. Neither education nor local government legislation empowers me to act for the LEA, and they have no power to divest themselves of their duty to act by transferring it to me. (The Merseyside Task Force, too, does not, and cannot, exercise any of Liverpool's statutory functions.)

How?

CONFIDENTIAL

When Parliament gave the Secretary of State these limited powers in 1944, it also required him to finance LEAs by specified grants. That valuable source of influence was removed in 1958; my proposal for an education grant (my letter of 6 May to Willie Whitelaw) bears directly on this issue.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael Heseltine.

KJ

Department of Education and Science

20 May 1982

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 May 1982

EDUCATION IN TOXTETH

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's letter to Mr. Heseltine of 7 May, with which he enclosed a copy of a report on education in Toxteth prepared by HM Inspectorate of Schools.

Mrs. Thatcher notes that while the report is not overly critical of the schools in Toxteth, it does express concern over the inefficiency of the local education authority, and the apparent inability of elected members to agree on, or pursue, any positive responses to many of the City's major problems (paragraph 9 of the report). In these circumstances, the Prime Minister would like your Secretary of State to consider whether his Department should take over the administration of education in Liverpool. She recognises that such a step could clearly only be taken with the consent of the authority, or at the behest of representatives of the school children's parents; but she notes that the appointment of Mr. Heseltine as Minister with special responsibilities in Liverpool, and the setting up of the Department of the Environment's task force are a precedent for central government involvement in Liverpool's local government.

At this stage, I am not copying this letter to those who received a copy of Sir Keith's letter to Mr. Heseltine.

I.W.F.S. RICKETT

Nick Cornwell, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-928 9222
FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 3EB

7 May 1982

Prime Minister 2

You may wish to glance
at paragraphs 9, 11.2, and
13.2 of the attached report which
give the background to Sir Keith's
concerns.

WH
7/5

Dear Michael,

EDUCATION IN TOXTETH

I enclose a copy of a report on education in Toxteth prepared by HM Inspectorate of Schools. It confirms and adds substance to our worries about the state of education in Liverpool. The Chief Education Officer, who has seen the report in draft, has agreed with the Inspectorate that it should be made public, and I intend that the report should issue as its authors have proposed on 11 May.

By then the local elections will be behind us and I intend to press on with my plans to hold urgent discussions with the Authority about the need for decisive action to take surplus school places out of use. The HMI report shows that there are many problems affecting education in Toxteth. The effectiveness of the education service in coping with these problems and in making its contribution to general improvement in the area is adversely affected by the Authority's failure to respond effectively to the dramatic fall in the school population which is at the heart of the problems now facing Toxteth and other parts of Liverpool.

I welcome your readiness to lend your support in these discussions and I shall keep in touch on the appropriate moment when you might join in. But to keep the ball rolling, I would propose to meet the Authority myself to underline the compelling educational reasons for urgent action. I shall be announcing this by way of the attached written Answer in the House on 11 May.

I am sending copies of this letter and its attachments to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Lord President and the Secretaries of State for Social Services, Scotland and Wales.

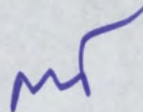
Yours faithfully,
Michael Heseltine

Keith
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the left
of what
parents?

DRAFT PARLIAMENTARY WRITTEN QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q; To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, will he make a statement on education in Toxteth.

A: HM Inspectorate of Schools today issued a report on education in Toxteth to the Liverpool Education Authority and I am arranging for copies to be made available in the Vote Office. Based upon HMI's inspections, visits and general work in the area, the report examines the educational provision made in Toxteth within its social and economic context. The report identifies a number of matters requiring attention and I am inviting the new Authority to discuss their implications with me as a matter of urgency.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS

on

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION BY LIVERPOOL EDUCATION
AUTHORITY IN THE TOXTETH AREA

March 1982

Copies of this report are supplied to the Liverpool LEA for use by its relevant committees and officers and by the governing bodies, heads or principals of schools and other institutions maintained by Liverpool LEA. If required further copies of the report will be made available to the Authority on application to the Department.

Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH

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1530 HOURS TUESDAY 11 MAY 1982

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This is a report on part of an education authority, namely the Toxteth area of Liverpool. Comment is made about the LEA's policies, management and provision where this is necessary to set education in the Toxteth area in its wider local context. However, this is not a report on the whole of the provision made by the Liverpool LEA.

1.2. The report is based on the normal range of HMI activities undertaken in Toxteth and more widely in Liverpool during the past two years.

2. THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

2.1. Liverpool is an area of high unemployment: the MSC's January figures show 33 per cent of the 16-18 population unemployed; there is not a large number of vacancies waiting to be filled even if the poorly qualified young people in this group (about 90 per cent of that total) were to improve their qualifications. Several districts in Liverpool suffer from poor quality housing, rapid depopulation and the attendant derelict sites, particularly where the employment base has diminished. Analysis of the 1971 census data classified four Liverpool constituencies as being areas of extreme urban deprivation; Toxteth was the second most deprived of these.

2.2. Since then, Local Authority indicators show the incidence of children in care in Toxteth as being about six times the City average, illegitimacy four times and job instability, long-term unemployment, infant mortality, delinquency, infestation, and parasitic disease rates all more than twice the City average. Preliminary analysis of 1981 census data for the Abercromby and Granby wards of Liverpool 8 shows 10.9% of the population was born overseas (compared with 3.3% in Liverpool as a whole), 9.4% of heads of households are of New Commonwealth origin (1.7%), 18.7% of the children live in single parent households (8.3%), male unemployment is 34.7% (21.6%), female unemployment is 15.3% (8.9%), 83.2% of the households have no car (61.8%); the Granby area, with 39.9% of the population in council property is very close to the City average of 39.6%, but the figure for Abercromby is 61.9%. The area contains about a quarter of the City's New Commonwealth population and most long-established "Liverpool blacks" live there. Generally, the area is losing population twice as fast as the City as a whole (Abercromby has dropped 28.6% since the 1971 census, Granby by 37.8%, the City by 16.4%). It appears to be becoming increasingly deprived as those who are able to do so move out. Schools speak of hostility and distrust among pupils towards the police. A recent television report referred to local shopkeepers being unable to buy insurance cover since the July 1981 riots.

2.3. Because it is not possible to talk in isolation of schools in Toxteth, this paper considers the 25 primary schools (of which 13 are voluntary schools), and 16 maintained secondary schools (11 voluntary) which mainly accept pupils from the Toxteth community. Liverpool 8 also has one nursery school, one ESN(S) school, 3 independent secondary schools, several adult education institutions and 32 youth centres, of which 27 are sponsored by voluntary agencies and receive funds from the LEA. Students may go to any college of FE; two are in the immediate vicinity.

2.4. In the past year HMI have, for a variety of purposes, visited 11 of the primary schools, 10 of the maintained secondary and 2 independent schools, all the colleges of FE and a third of the youth centres.

2.5. The following sections summarise HMI's view of the individual sectors and of the policies and provision within the authority, taking into account the existence and influence of the large voluntary sector.

3. PRIMARY SCHOOLS

3.1. Of the 25 primary schools which serve Toxteth and the immediate vicinity of Liverpool 8, 12 are located within Toxteth itself; 12 are wholly maintained by the local education authority and 13 are denominational (5 are C of E and 8 RC). In Toxteth itself 6 are county and 6 are voluntary (2 C of E and 4 RC).

3.2. Of the 25 schools, 8 cater for the full primary age range of 5–11 years, 9 are infant schools only and 8 are junior schools. Seven of the 9 infant schools and all the combined junior and infant schools, including St Saviour's, have a nursery class. In addition, there is one separate nursery school located in Toxteth itself. The nursery school and 12 of the 15 nursery classes admit children for a full day or half-day according to parental preference and/or the maturity of the child.

3.3. In general, the quality of work and the provision in the nursery school and the nursery classes is good and beneficial both socially and educationally. The children are introduced to a steady routine and teachers who receive them into infant classes comment on the increased confidence and willingness to cooperate observed among the children who have attended nursery school or classes.

3.4. In the light of recent events at St Saviour's it should be emphasised that the primary schools in the Toxteth area are normally calm and orderly. Children are observed to be happy and cooperative in school and the teachers caring and understanding but firm in their dealings with the children. While standards of pupils' achievements are not generally high, nevertheless, teachers work hard and, in all the circumstances, achieve creditable results. Considerable emphasis is placed on establishing basic literacy and numeracy. Between 1969 and 1981 the LEA's annual tests of the reading attainments in 16 Toxteth junior schools have shown a steady improvement. However, many children still experience difficulty in these when transferred to secondary education. There are no written LEA guidelines and the curriculum tends to be narrow in range although there are notable exceptions such as the C of E primary school recently featured in a DES film on primary science. This school also makes the study of the local environment a positive feature of its curriculum.

3.5. Equipment and resources are generally adequate but, in the absence of clear guidelines other than where to buy, individual schools are left largely to their own devices. This can result in the deficiencies that arise from unwise buying policies on the part of some individual schools not being noticed or rectified by the Authority. There are approximately equal numbers of old and new buildings and it is noticeable that reductions in maintenance are cumulatively bringing about a deterioration in both old and new premises. Vandalism outside school hours is a continuous problem although not confined to school buildings. Apart from the events at St Saviour's, no incidence of vandalism has been reported to HMI as taking place during school sessions. On a recent inspection visit to the school the physical damage was found to be relatively slight and, while not minimising the seriousness of events, HMI felt that this aspect had been exaggerated in press reports.

3.6. The primary schools in Toxteth and the immediate vicinity suffer in an acute form the worries which beset many primary schools in inner city areas. Rapidly reducing school rolls and the fear of closure produce an atmosphere of uncertainty among the teachers and instability in the schools. However, one Toxteth primary school faced with certain closure made a virtue of necessity and gave a focus to the work of teachers and pupils by recording the work and life of the school in

a booklet entitled "The Last 100 Days". But for many schools uncertainty about their future still exists and to this must be added the consequences of the Authority's policy of employing some 50% of its new teachers on short term temporary contracts. This is a common practice at the present time in order to avoid adding to a pool of surplus teachers awaiting redeployment and to avoid redundancies. While this is an understandable policy from the administrative point of view, it makes for additional difficulties in a school such as St Saviour's where, two years ago, according to the head, five of his staff had come to the school as first appointments, three were on termly contracts and two had been redeployed from other schools. Since that time the staff in the junior department has changed completely and, in the present exceptional circumstances, consists of three supply and one permanent teacher. This pattern of staffing also results in there being fewer experienced senior teachers to assume special responsibilities and offer curricular leadership. In addition to the social deprivation and high unemployment endemic in Toxteth, the schools have also had to face the aftermath of last summer's riots and heads reported children to be over-excited and disturbed by the events they had witnessed. Teachers were also concerned as to what they should do about pupils who were known to have been involved in the fighting and looting. It is understood that a number of local heads met with representatives of the local police to discuss the implications of this. It is to the considerable credit of the schools that in a very short time they had reestablished a calm atmosphere and normal working conditions.

3.7. A promising development within the Inner City Partnership scheme in Liverpool has been the setting up of the Parent Support Programme. Phase 1 of this programme includes two primary schools in the Toxteth area, the nursery school and the Crown Street Language Centre. This scheme is designed to involve the local community, including parents, in the affairs of the school and for the school to offer a community facility. Each school has been provided with accommodation suitable for use by parents, and a Teacher Key Worker and an Outreach Worker (working mainly off-site) have been appointed to the staff of each of the 17 schools participating in the scheme in Liverpool. All reports by HMI and others of the work of the Parent Support Groups are favourable and the four centres in Toxteth have developed varied programmes ranging from English language classes for parents for whom English is a second language (emphasising practical themes such as shopping or visiting the doctor), family health, knitting, sewing, cooking, keep-fit, badminton, swimming, mothers' and toddlers' clubs and a range of outings which have included visits to the art gallery and museum in Liverpool as well as hospitals, clinics and the shops. A particularly encouraging feature has been "culture swap" activities which have included explanations of Easter and Ramadan, an African hair plaiting demonstration, displays of multi-cultural books on food and fashion and Chinese New Year celebrations which took place in the nursery school.

3.8. It is particularly unfortunate that phase 2 of the Parent Support Programme, which was to have included St Saviour's school, was abandoned when the City Council accepted a recommendation from the Partnership Committee to give priority to the economy and physical environment when agreeing to the budget for the second year of the programme. It can only be surmised, but it would seem very likely, that had parents been present on the site and involved in these ways at St Saviour's the events of last month would not have taken place. Much of the work of the Teacher Key Workers and Outreach Workers in this scheme is of high quality. This is reflected in the evaluator's report of the increased self-confidence and self-esteem of the parents, many of whom are under considerable stress and find coping with the day-to-day demands of family life, often without much support, exhausting and debilitating. In addition, many of the parents' own educational experiences were of failure and, in their eyes, rejection, leading to feelings of personal inadequacy and, in a few, hostility towards teachers and schools.

3.9. Many teachers are resilient and resourceful in the face of the difficulties of working in the area and in most schools they work hard to provide a welcoming atmosphere and a pleasant visual environment for the children which is often in striking contrast to the immediate environs of the schools. In general, the primary schools in Toxteth are orderly communities where children are happy and industrious. The events at St Saviour's, though not the conditions in which they were set, were exceptional. This serves to highlight the good job being done by most primary schools in these difficult areas and the support they need to maintain it. In a volatile situation it is important that heads and teachers have confidence in the guidance which can be offered by the local authority's advisory service and are prepared to seek this support early on. This emphasises the need for the Authority to strengthen the advisory service on the primary side, particularly in relation to the junior age-range as currently proposed by the LEA and the CEO.

4. SECONDARY SCHOOLS

4.1. There are no secondary schools in Toxteth. The maintained secondary schools that principally serve Liverpool 7 and 8 are two comprehensives (329 and 1,114 pupils) and three secondary modern schools containing 270, 210 and 240 pupils respectively. Pupils from the area go to a wide range of secondary schools: selective (county and voluntary), comprehensive (county and voluntary) and secondary modern (county and voluntary). One Toxteth primary school sent its eleven plus transfer pupils to seven secondary schools in 1981. In these circumstances curricular liaison is almost non-existent and the social cohesion of the pupils is fragmented. The RC grammar schools, organised on a city-wide basis, take 59% of the age group and as numbers fall the effect is felt more acutely by the residual RC secondary modern schools. There are ten of these — all of the 11–16 age range — serving parishes or groups of parishes in Liverpool 7 and 8. All are small by present standards. The largest contains 425 pupils and the smallest has only 96 pupils. Six of the RC secondary schools have fewer than 200 pupils. Of the sixteen or so schools serving Liverpool 7 and 8 district, 5 are designated 11–18, though very small 6th forms are to be found in a number of modern schools. There is no rational pattern to 6th form provision.

4.2. The school buildings range from the old and unsuitable (the selective schools) to pleasant 1980s buildings, including those of several RC secondary moderns. One comprehensive operates on two sites and the main building is bleak and uninviting (there is no main entrance). Most of the schools lack adequate playing fields; most are situated in a depressing environment. The RC reorganisation proposal would create two split site schools and the need for children to travel further. There is already a considerable reluctance on the part of pupils to travel far to school unless it provides something which they want, such as selective schooling.

4.3. Liverpool 8, which includes Toxteth, contains the majority of Liverpool's ethnic minority population. In addition to the other problems affecting the area, these communities suffer from the condition described as 'racial disadvantage' in the Home Affairs Committee's recent report. The minority population in secondary schools varies in number, one school having 15% whereas the population in two nearby schools is around 50%. Some months before the civil disturbances of July 1981, the Liverpool Teachers' Association published 'Before the Fire'; a pamphlet prepared by the LTA's Race Relations Sub-Committee. This document, as well as stating prophetically that the events witnessed in St Paul's Bristol could happen in Liverpool, also drew attention to what it claimed "was an undisputed fact that black children in the City are under-achieving in education." The report further claimed that the LEA provision had concentrated on the English language needs of recent immigrants and that what initiatives there were in schools were the result of the work of individual heads with little or no support from the LEA. In support of this claim, 'Before the Fire' refers to an LEA working party report on "the education of the descendants of immigrants" called 'Meeting Their Needs', the recommendations of which the writers claim were ignored by the LEA.

Some of the recommendations have financial and resource implications for the LEA and the fact that it has not yet felt able to respond to these does not necessarily imply that they have been ignored.

4.4. In the area generally there is a high incidence of single-parent families and, in some schools, as many as 60% of the children's fathers are unemployed.

4.5. HMI have seen work that is soundly prepared and shows the dedication of the teachers but it is often limited in range and its expectations of pupils. There is a great deal of passive learning and mechanical work, and, frequently, a lack of match between the work and the ability of the pupils. These issues are true of schools in other parts of the City and, following full inspections, there has been discussion with the LEA about them. The new LEA Chief Inspector hopes to be able to appoint several specialist advisers who could give help to teachers in many crucial areas of the curriculum.

4.6. There is aggression among pupils which, on occasion, leads to discipline problems in schools. In general, the schools have a positive calming influence in an area which lacks stability. However, some pupils have appeared to be subdued rather than involved and poor attendance is a feature of the area; many pupils likely to be of concern to staff are not regular attenders: in two schools at least 80% attendance is regarded as good. Staff report growing cynicism among 5th year pupils, many of whom regard examination courses as irrelevant and MSC courses as meaningless jobs with low pay.

4.7. Many teachers comment on the low ability of the schools' intake. This view may be influenced by the very wide band of ability chosen to receive grammar school education. Since many children go out of the area for their secondary education, even the comprehensive schools could be said to be providing for a secondary modern intake.

4.8. Certainly attainment is low. Even though the LEA's own survey reveals a decrease in the number of poor readers and an increase in the number of good readers in 16 Toxteth junior schools, in one comprehensive school only 30% of the intake had a reading age of ten or more on entry. External examination results in some of the small secondary schools have been poor. (HMI have not been able to get from the LEA the analysis of the 1981 results because the gathering of data was delayed by the clerical strike.) The 1980 results are presented in a way that makes a comparative analysis difficult. The low attainments noted appear, in some measure, to be a result of low expectations on the part of teachers, parents and the pupils themselves. These are reflected in the low numbers staying on into the 6th form: for one comprehensive, for example, the figure is 26 with 9 on an A level course. Some 6th forms in modern schools are impractically small; one has a 6th form of nine pupils, one on an A level course, shared (for practical work) with another school. On the other hand, another comprehensive has an open 6th form which is one of the successes of the area: 70 full-time students, 50 part-time and 50 day-release. The part-time "Return and Learn" scheme has the support of the MSC and is in operation in 13 secondary schools in Liverpool.

4.9. There is little that is unusual or striking about the curriculum on offer in the secondary schools. However, in the smallest schools, some subjects (such as Music and Modern Languages) have been phased out and others are threatened. At Easter last year one comprehensive school's only two English specialists left for other posts with the result that English was to be taught by non-specialists. In a number of schools the one-person department is common. There are some more positive attempts to motivate pupils and to respond to the need for pupils to widen their horizons. Among these are the World Studies course in one school and the attempt in another to reflect the interests and cultures of the ethnic minority communities in the area. In addition, a secondary modern school has an ambitious education and industry programme and at another there is an "Education for Leisure" course related to the life and problems of the community.

4.10. Despite the commitment to improving the education of Liverpool children shown by many teachers and the concern to bring about improvements and change evidenced, for example, by the authors of "Before the Fire", low staff morale is a characteristic of this and other parts of Liverpool. There are few opportunities for promotion; the ability level of intakes for the RC secondary moderns has fallen steadily; RC teachers are worried about their future in the proposed newly constituted schools in September 1982. It is perhaps inevitable that there are few curricular initiatives. Many of the teachers were appointed in the 1960s and early 1970s when it was difficult to attract staff to some Liverpool schools. HMI have constantly referred to the need for relevant INSET for the many teachers who have not taught elsewhere, and who might have inappropriate expectations because they have not taught very able pupils. While some schools appear to be generously staffed (one Secondary Modern has an average class size of 15), there is not always curricular correlation between the qualifications of teachers and what requires to be taught and, in some schools, the average proportion of time actually spent in teaching is low.

4.11. But there is little evidence that teachers feel that they are short of resources. In many schools staff feel that capitation is adequate. Occasionally, this is because of an unimaginative view of education provision. Some schools, faced with falling rolls, have resources which are no longer fully used (the large library in one school is stocked for 1700 pupils but the school contains only 329 pupils). There has been some suggestion that Inner City Partnership funds might allow for the further development of community secondary schools, and that residential units might be provided at two comprehensives.

5. FURTHER EDUCATION

5.1. Advanced further education in Liverpool is provided in the Polytechnic and four colleges of HE. Non-advanced further education (NAFE) is provided in eight maintained colleges. None of these is situated in Toxteth although two are on the edge of the area. Further education in Liverpool carries out traditional functions and is organised accordingly.

5.2. The colleges provide city-wide, specialist, educational services rather than attempting to cater for a particular locality. The location of MSC activities where there happens to be suitable accommodation is, however, leading to a less specific distribution of courses. The LEA's policy of specialist centres constitutes an efficient deployment of resources but may make access to certain courses difficult for individuals who live some distance away.

5.3. Following the civil disturbances, HMI investigated the number of students from Liverpool 8 on certain courses in the colleges nearest to Toxteth. In full-time GCE courses in these colleges, some 15% of the students on one-year 0 level courses were from Liverpool 8. These were mainly over 21 years of age and there appeared to be a higher than average drop-out rate among these students than for the group as a whole. One-year courses are, in some cases, too intensive, particularly for students who have been out of full-time education for a long time. Two-year courses may be more useful as may be the pre-0 level work that is beginning to be a feature of the parent support programme.

5.4. On 2 full-time catering courses and one hairdressing course provided by one of the two colleges, Liverpool 8 students seemed to be under-represented. These courses cater together for some 200 students and, of these, the teaching staff estimated that only 3 or 4 were black. These courses are fully subscribed at least six months before they commence and there are at least 3 applicants for each available place.

5.5. The quality of further education in Liverpool is variable. HMI comment on specialist courses often commends the work of the teachers while pointing out the shortages of resources. A great deal of the time and energy of staff is taken up by preparing reviews and reports, called for by the Authority's committees, that too often appear to lead to no action. There is good work going on as in one college near to Toxteth where the English teaching in several departments is of high quality. In the area of basic education in colleges, there is a clear need for staff training for teachers who have not previously worked with students needing this type of education.

5.6. Overall, the further education system in Liverpool does not attempt to cater for particular localities and there has been no expansion aimed at increasing the participation rates of particular groups of 16 year olds or to cater for the increased numbers of 16 year olds in the population. What growth there has been in this area has largely been a result of MSC funding.

5.7. Within the colleges, there is little sign of the active development of more or different courses, nor is there any staff development to equip teachers to run such courses. In part, this is because there are not the accommodation, facilities or teaching staff available to cater for any increase in provision. A building programme intended to provide for additional catering and hairdressing courses was approved by the LEA for 1982 but has been withdrawn.

6. YOUTH AND COMMUNITY

6.1. The youth service is administered within the LEA's community education department which covers play and recreation, youth work and community organisation; there are three officers whose area includes the Toxteth district. In this area there are some 32 youth centres with full-time staff, 5 of which are situated in LEA premises.

6.2. The youth work in these facilities tends to emphasise recreational activities and to appeal mainly to boys in the 13 to 14 age range. The majority of youth workers in the voluntary sector are unqualified and there is a need for in-service training to assist staff to widen the scope of their work. The Manpower Services Commission's Community Enterprise Programme enables 34 additional youth work aides to be employed on temporary contracts.

6.3. The youth provision in this area is almost exclusively based on centres which young people may attend. The LEA has no detached youth workers who can work off site with young people gathering in the streets. (There is one voluntary organisation detached worker but this post is in jeopardy.) The lack of detached workers considerably limits what can be achieved in an area such as Toxteth.

6.4. One large voluntary club, situated in the heart of Toxteth, is notable for the high attendance of young black people and for the attention which it gives to education and employment questions: it is also the base for a project concerned deliberately to boost the educational achievements of black youngsters. The club successfully attracts and retains young black people. It has a small library which is used by the young people as a place in which to do their homework and it also contains books about black people in Britain. The recreational activities are also of a high standard and a member of the club recently won the Merseyside disco-dancing competition, a matter for considerable pride in the area. In common with other voluntary clubs, it is having to raise funds to meet ever increasing costs for maintenance, light and heat in its building which is open throughout the day.

6.5. Much of the time and energy of the voluntary sector of the youth service is spent in attempting to find secure sources of funding. The general shortage of resources and the uncertainty of LEA support mean that the voluntary and maintained sectors are becoming very dependent upon special funds of one kind or another. This leads to uncertainty within the service and to a lack of coordination of provision.

7. ADULT EDUCATION

7.1. Adult education for the Toxteth area of the city is provided in a variety of centres, including the parent support programme based in schools which are described in the primary education section of this paper, and in two LEA evening institutes.

7.2. Canning Street Adult Centre organises the City's literacy programme which uses over 200 voluntary tutors, provides basic literacy and numeracy classes and develops teaching materials for tutors throughout Merseyside. Good resources and impressive levels of enthusiasm and professionalism were noted during an inspection carried out a year ago.

7.3. Windsor Street Adult Centre organises a corresponding city-wide scheme for students of English as a second language. The standards of teaching are satisfactory and the plan to develop classes in community centres should minimise some of the difficulties that arise from the fact that the Centre is not ideally located.

7.4. The Charles Wootton Centre in Upper Parliament Street is concerned largely with the education of Liverpool-born black people. It has become the base for the Liverpool 8 Defence League. It began life as an Action Centre funded through the DOE's Inner Area Study. Delays in setting up the Centre led to it being taken into Inner City Partnership funding before its four year life as an Action Centre had come to an end. There is a history of difficult relations between the Centre and the LEA which grant-aids it. Payment of the 1981-82 grant has been delayed and the future of LEA funding is uncertain. Recently it has been chosen by the DOI to be an Information Technology Centre. Courses at the Centre include pre-O level English, local history and an 18 week full-time course for the MSC. The Centre was visited immediately after the summer riots and again in October 1981, but the circumstances affecting it at those times made an objective assessment of the work impossible.

7.5. The Phoenix Centre provides traditional classes - cookery, needlework, English literature - both day and evening, led on a voluntary basis by a former headmistress and now supported by LEA and partnership funds. Provision is well conceived and of a high standard, but somewhat over-dependent on one individual.

7.6. 'Home Link' utilises an ordinary terraced house to provide a drop-in centre for women with young children who are cared for downstairs while the mothers attend study groups upstairs. The organisation, which has been at work in Liverpool for many years, is at present funded through the Urban Programme. Studies include English language, health, child-minding and welfare rights. The sense of liberation and excitement among its members is impressive as is the part played by its staff in helping to establish the Parent Support Programme.

7.7. WEA provision ranges from English for immigrants to a Second Chance course lasting for two years. The District Secretary has to spend too much time securing funds and premises for this range of courses and finds it difficult to devote enough time to monitoring his programme. However the "Second Chance" programme's thoroughness, and emphasis upon establishing basic

study skills and confidence in presentation, seem well suited to the needs of the students. Some of the graduates of this scheme have gone on to University.

7.8. The amount of inspection that is possible is limited by the small number of HMI specialising in adult education and this makes it difficult to give an overall view of adult education in the authority. However, there have been significant improvements in quantity and quality of adult education in the inner city in recent years. Partnership funds have been crucial to these developments, since most of the recipients are not charged fees, being unemployed or on supplementary benefit. Without these funds the service would not continue to operate at its present level. Particularly vulnerable would be the second chance courses and the inner-city education courses that contain a residential component.

8. UNEMPLOYMENT

8.1. Youth unemployment is a major problem in Liverpool. It is difficult ahead of the census data to get exact figures but Liverpool 8 has the second highest number of unemployed 16–18 year olds of all the 25 Liverpool postal districts. The informed estimates of the careers service and MSC put the figure for Liverpool 8 at approximately 35% of the 16–18 age range. In December 1981, 532 young people between the ages of 16 and 18 were registered by the career service as unemployed. This does not take into account probably as many as 30% more registered at job centres. Of the 532, 72 were 16 year olds and 179 had no formal qualifications on leaving school. Only 19 had GCE Advanced or Ordinary level passes or CSE Grade 1 qualifications although 165 were described by the Careers Service as having average CSEs. In Liverpool 8 there are 774 Youth Opportunities Programme places and, in addition, city-wide YOP places on courses in colleges of further education. Some 338 YOP places are unfilled in Liverpool 8, the City centre and its environs. There is some reported evidence that lack of take-up of available places may reflect disillusionment on the part of young people about the quality and relevance of the opportunities offered but equally it may reflect a mismatch of the type of places available and those who have not enrolled. Sixty-one boys in Liverpool 8 had not done any kind of work or YOP scheme since leaving school in 1981 and most of them had no formal qualifications of any kind.

8.2. As a result of the initiatives being pursued by the Secretary of State for the Environment's Task Force, some 1100 "traineeship" places are being established in cooperation with private employers; 500 of these places are already filled but the Task Force is known to be concerned that only 24 places have been taken up by young blacks.

9. THE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

9.1. The education service in Liverpool, as elsewhere, is having to change markedly in response to sharply falling pupil numbers, expenditure restraints, curricular reappraisal, the need to rationalise 16–19 provision and to interrelate with the Manpower Services Commission. The presence of an unusually large proportion of voluntary schools creates special difficulties for the management of the system. In addition, no aspect of the City's education service is untouched by large-scale social and economic deprivation, chronic adult and youth unemployment, urban decay and neglect. In the central area of the City, racial disadvantage affects minority communities; the large, featureless, council estates on the periphery are often characterised by low aspirations, indifference or hostility to education and widespread vandalism.

9.2. Liverpool's difficulties are further compounded by several features unique to this Authority. The recent NALGO strike seriously delayed many staff appointments, including 13 headships, and caused a virtual breakdown of ordinary communication between the LEA and its schools and

colleges. Also generally unsettling was the suspension of the CEO for 10 months and the 6 months delay in the appointment of a new chief inspector. These difficulties have now ended but they have left considerable marks.

9.3. Of greater enduring significance, however, is the apparent inability of elected members to agree on, or pursue any, positive responses to many of the major problems. The recent volte-face after the Secretary of State had approved the proposal to close Croxteth School is one indication of this indecision. These elements have caused feelings of insecurity and uncertainty in every institution and area of the education service. Consequently, the effects of social conditions, that in kind at least are not unique to Liverpool, are exacerbated and problems of the management of resources at a time of educational contraction common to all LEAs are less open to resolution in this Authority than in many others.

10. LEA PROVISION

10.1. In 1967, following the publication of the Plowden Report, the LEA designated all the primary and most of the secondary schools in the Toxteth area as Educational Priority Area (EPA) schools. Over the past 10 years the Authority has made a large capital investment in replacing or remodelling primary and secondary schools in the Toxteth area. The EPA designation carried with it increased resources, enhanced capitation allowances and an allowance for senior teaching posts that was 25 per cent above that provided for in the Burnham primary and secondary reports. Since then, the Authority has redesignated the schools that were EPA's as Social Priority Schools (SPS). This has ensured that the schools continue to receive enhanced capitation allowances which are now inflation linked. In Autumn 1980 the observed level of resources in schools was assessed by HMI as at least satisfactory. That level has been maintained except in some aspects of in-service training which have decreased since then and non-teaching staff which has decreased slightly in the current year. Nursery school pupil/teacher ratios improved by 1.9. In all other types of school they worsened marginally within the range of 0.2 to 0.3.

10.2. As a policy the Authority staffs those primary schools that merit "positive discrimination" at 19.2:1 (others at 23.5:1) and secondary at 14.5:1 (others at 16.8:1). The January 1981 averages for all metropolitan districts were 22.4:1 in primary schools and 16.4:1 in secondary schools. The national averages for the same period were; primary 22.1:1 and secondary 16.6:1. These ratios in Liverpool should, in theory, enable schools to organise their curricula in a suitable manner to provide enough small group working to cater for the individual or special needs of pupils in areas such as Toxteth.

10.3. However, catering for these and general curricula needs in small schools is very expensive in staffing terms. The Authority's undue reluctance to produce a coherent long-term plan in the face of falling rolls is producing some very small secondary schools. One 11-16 county secondary school has 218 on roll, one 11-18 girls' selective school 319 and one 11-18 comprehensive has 329 on roll. The voluntary RC sector is affected even more seriously with one secondary school having only 96 pupils and a further six with fewer than 200. Next year the numbers on roll will be even lower.

10.4. By designating the inner-city schools as EPA's, the Authority hoped to check the high rates of teacher turnover that affected many of them in the 1960's and early 1970's. Overall, it had some success in this and the teaching force became more stable. Ironically, that very stability creates some problems in today's changed situation in which some teachers must be redeployed and where the experience of having taught in a variety of different contexts is at a premium. Currently, the Authority has a policy of no redundancies and relies upon natural wastage and its early retirement scheme to reduce the number of teachers surplus to need. The Authority's code for redeployment

permits direction but, like any good employer, it prefers to reach agreement rather than use direction. But as difficulties increase and teacher attitudes become more resistant, this polite code has come to a standstill. About 50% of newly trained teachers are employed on short-term contracts. There is as yet no curriculum-led staffing policy. The combination of these policies, or lack of them, and rapidly falling rolls in both primary and secondary schools has led to a number of employed teachers surplus to requirements and others being unavailable to teach where needed. This is leading to an increasing mismatch in secondary schools between teachers' qualifications and the subject they are required to teach. The absence of a policy for curriculum-led staffing, despite the generous pupil/teacher ratios, is leading to the loss of some subjects in the secondary schools (French, CDT and music). This is particularly damaging to small schools and many exist in a constant state of uncertainty about their future; these include one of the main secondary schools providing for Toxteth pupils.

10.5. There is no evidence of a clear policy for in-service training although, up to three years ago, such a policy existed and was coordinated with those of neighbouring LEAs. Although the LEA provides for up to 30 secondments to long courses, only 12 were supported this year as other applications were not regarded as meeting the educational needs perceived by the LEA. There is a plan to provide in-service training to prepare all secondary teachers in the RC schools for their reorganisation. HMI were consulted at the planning stage and were involved in the courses that took place in cooperation with the local advisory service.

10.6. There is, at present, no LEA programme of induction for newly qualified teachers. Sixty-six were appointed in 1981/82. The schools are left to provide their own induction programmes. This absence of induction support is surprising as Liverpool was one of the three authorities included in the pilot induction programme funded by DES from 1974. It is a matter of concern that this programme has been withdrawn but its reinstatement would be difficult to organise or finance in current circumstances.

10.7. The current programme of repair and maintenance of school premises puts an emphasis on routine maintenance. The present aim remains of a 5-year cycle of external and seven-year cycle of internal painting. The programme is barely adequate and in many cases the state of repair is barely satisfactory. Standards of caretaking in schools seem generally satisfactory and in a few cases are exemplary, particularly considering the environment of the schools.

10.8. Very little has been done about the large amount of surplus accommodation. The Authority has not responded adequately to the need for the reorganisation of schools to take surplus places out of use. Consequently much is spent on un-needed premises.

10.9. Per capita allowances have increased slightly in real terms this year compared with last year's levels. The supply of materials and equipment is judged satisfactory overall; books are barely satisfactory overall, but there is considerable variation in levels among schools which may be accounted for more by schools' own purchasing policies and effectiveness of management than levels of available funding. The delivery of supplies has been considerably delayed recently owing to strike action by clerical staff in the Authority.

10.10. The current strength of the advisory service is 21. In calculating the appropriate level of advisory support in an LEA, HMI use the AEC basis that all authorities need at least 15 advisers. On top of this basic figure the need in a particular LEA is calculated in relation to its size, pupil population and number of schools. On this basis Liverpool should have around 30 advisers with some addition if allowances were made for the high incidence of problems and difficulties. Numerically, and in the range covered, the advisory support given to schools is inadequate. The advisory service cannot provide specialist advice or inspection in English, mathematics/science,

humanities, CDT, modern languages or in junior school work. The nursery/infant phase needs strengthening. Although there is an advisory teacher who can do a certain amount of work, there is no full-time adviser on multi-cultural matters. With few new appointments over the years, the team has become unbalanced. Restructuring is planned but has not yet been implemented. This measure is urgently needed, as is a careful definition of the role of both the advisory service and the individual advisers within it and a clear policy to guide the inspection practice of the advisory team. The Authority has these matters to hand.

10.11. Educational support agencies, such as the education welfare and school psychological services, are provided on an area basis to coincide with social service divisions within the Authority. In area 2, which includes Toxteth, the educational welfare service consists of one Area Officer plus 14 EWOs and there is a remedial teaching team of a senior teacher plus six others working in the primary and secondary schools of the area. In addition, there is an educational guidance unit for children suspended or excluded from schools, a social education team to coordinate education and social services activities and a youth liaison tutor who works with pupils of 15 plus years of age who are disaffected or alienated from school. Two school psychologists, one of whom is a senior psychologist, are based in the area and deal with school referrals to the psychological service.

10.12. The Authority has an English as a second language centre which was, until recently, based in Toxteth and is now accommodated in a secondary school nearby. This caters for children with Chinese, Asian, European and African backgrounds who require English as a second language teaching.

10.13. Under the Inner City Partnership it has established 17 now flourishing and helpful parent support groups; regrettably the next phase of this development has been abandoned or postponed.

10.14. The level of resources for NAFE was assessed as low in Autumn 1980. Levels of expenditure have shown little change in real terms since then. Exceptions to this have been an increase to staff courses for handicapped students, and MSC funded expenditure in support of YOP and TOPS. Savings have been made by the ending of all overtime and severe restrictions in extra-district permits. However, income has been reduced as more students become exempt from fees due to rising unemployment and the 21-hour rule.

10.15. The LEA's policy of maintaining level funding in FE over the past five years means there has been no expansion to cater for the increasing numbers of 16 year olds or to increase the participation rate. There has been a growth in college-based adult education. In general, the failure to achieve rationalisation in the schools sector has led to a high level of unjustified expenditure. Meantime, FE has had to find savings at a time of increasing numbers of 16 year olds in the population.

10.16. In all FE institutions providing NAFE, there is an increasing problem of redeployment of teaching staff from vocational courses, where demand has fallen, to YOP courses. Retraining for teaching staff is limited by the absence of funding for teacher release.

10.17. Shortages of non-teaching staff continue and have been a feature of Liverpool's FE provision for the last five years.

10.18. Premises have unsatisfactory features; notably affecting communal amenity spaces, libraries and staff work-rooms. The repair and maintenance programme operates at "crisis level".

10.19. The Authority is in the process of reviewing its grant aid to all voluntary youth and community organisations and is likely to reduce it. There has been no clear statement of criteria and no parallel examination, as yet, of the LEA's own facilities. Decisions on some of the organisations and facilities in Toxteth have been deferred, adding to uncertainty.

10.20. Since some 60% of the total youth and community provision of the city is provided by the voluntary sector, the review of its grant aid has worsened relationships between the Authority and the voluntary sector. This had led to a failure to get agreement across the maintained and voluntary sectors about priorities for youth work.

10.21. The City does not have a principal youth officer and the assistant director (Community Education) moved to schools work last year and has not been replaced. In consequence, formation of policy and the management of the service are adversely affected and hold out little hope for either continuity or innovation.

11. HMI CONTACTS WITH THE LEA

11.1. HMI frequently meet senior officers of the Authority: the District HMI (Schools) meets the CEO (or the acting CEO during the period of the CEO's suspension) and, separately, the Chief Inspector about once a month. The District HMI (FHE) meets the Senior Assistant Director responsible for higher and further education regularly each month. Despite the two major upheavals the LEA's top management has experienced in the past 15 months, relations have been cordial and HMI have received answers to questions. HMI also receive all committee papers in advance of meetings. Naturally, education officers neither choose nor need to discuss every matter of concern with HMI but they rarely initiate discussion or request advice about issues to which HMI, by virtue of their particular position and national perspective, could make a positive contribution. With the present LEA Chief Inspector, professional discussion on matters of educational significance is good.

11.2. In the regular contacts with the Authority's senior officers in the last two or three years, HMI have discussed many substantial issues concerning Liverpool generally, all of which have a bearing on educational provision in Liverpool 8. These matters have included the need for the LEA:

- (i) to take out of use some of the 4,000 surplus places in secondary schools (several secondary schools serving this area now have under 200 pupils in all) and to close or amalgamate some of the very small primary schools;
- (ii) to develop policies on staffing including, as rolls fall, questions of redeployment, redundancy and early retirement;
- (iii) to rationalise organisation for the 16-19 year olds, in view of falling rolls, the low staying-on rate and to take account of the effect on FE of secondary reorganisation;
- (iv) to improve the general standard of schools and FE premises;
- (v) to broaden the primary school curriculum, especially for the most able, while maintaining much good work in basic skills;
- (vi) to provide in-service training for teachers, generally, to overcome the large degree of professional isolation/insularity evident in the Liverpool teaching force, and, more specifically, for teachers in RC schools about to reorganise on the comprehensive principle.

11.3. HMI have also raised major issues concerning quality and effectiveness arising from full inspection reports of schools (6 issued in the last 2 years) and have reported the results of local HMI inspections of GCE provision at Central Liverpool CFE and educational provision for 16–18 year olds in Liverpool and St Helen's (both 1979). HMI have also discussed with officers the findings of the national "Survey of Adult Education for the Disadvantaged" (November 1980) and the HMI report "Education in Inner Urban Areas" (September 1981).

11.4. Generally, HMI's relations with the governing bodies of schools following full inspections have followed the normal pattern of courteous discussion. In at least two recent cases, however, HMI encountered difficulties. At the end of one session in which HMI reported to the governors, the Chairman dismissed the whole report as being "only the work of DES" and moved the meeting on to the "real business". In another case, when the governors were reluctant to meet HMI, the CEO intervened and the meeting subsequently took place.

12. THE LEA's RESPONSE

12.1. In Toxteth, HMI's advice seems to have played some part in finding accommodation for the "Second Chance" programme, and supplementing the discretionary award vote for this programme, forging a link between a secondary school and the local college of FE to improve the progression of a BEC course, changing (though for only one year) a decision to withdraw MSC and LEA funding for the Charles Wootton Centre.

12.2. More usually, where there has been action, it is not possible to disentangle the influence of HMI advice from other influences or from the fact that certain changes and events make some kind of LEA response inevitable. Examples of this are the decision to study the staffing, curricular and community implications of falling rolls in 6 affected schools (including 2 serving Toxteth), the provision of in-service training for teachers in those RC schools proposed for reorganisation (HMI were major contributors to the courses arranged), the small amount of secondary reorganisation proposed for Liverpool 8 using Paddington School as a base, and the Authority's early retirement scheme to ease some of the overstaffing. The new Chief Inspector willingly initiated discussion on restructuring the advisory service.

12.3. Officers of the LEA are well aware of the need for action on a number of major structural issues. However, progress is sometimes slow. The Authority's policy for teacher redeployment is at a standstill with the result that subjects drop out of secondary schools' curricula. The LEA working party reviewing 16–19 arrangements has met on three occasions in 18 months. The low level of consultation between schools and FE endures. The management and deployment of resources in the youth service are adversely affected by the current merging of the responsibility for community education and youth work with another post.

13. TRENDS

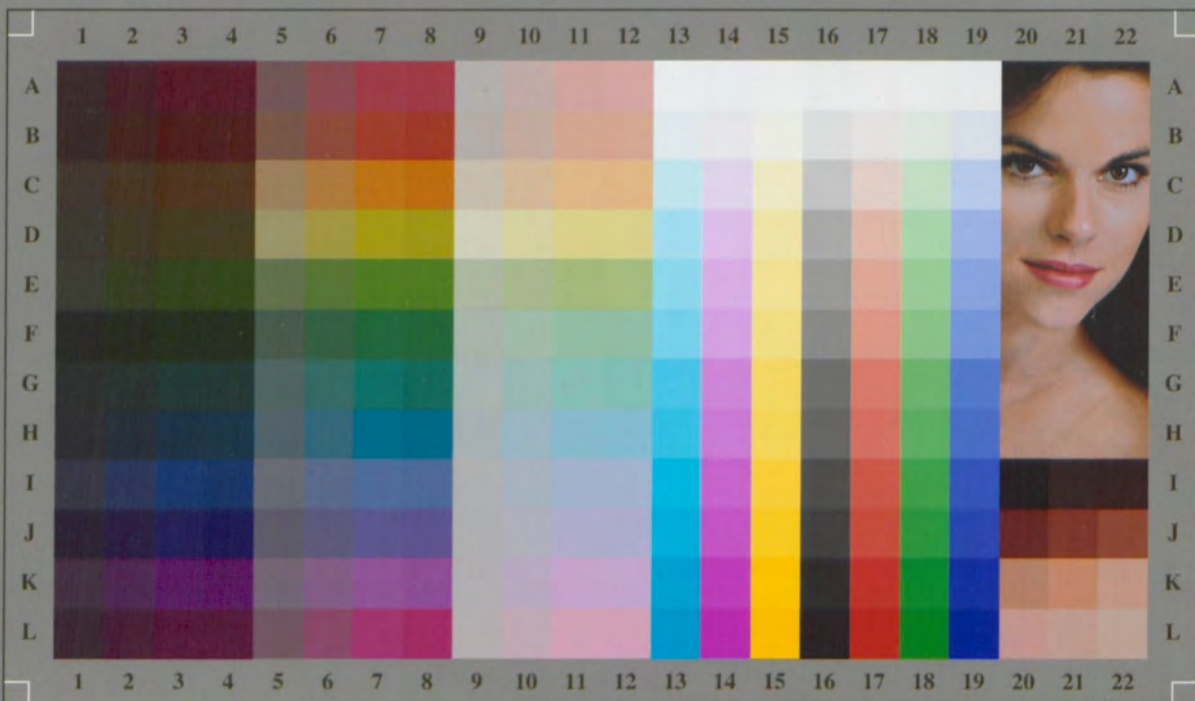
13.1. The instability at senior officer level ended with the reinstatement of the CEO and the appointment of a new chief inspector after a long interregnum. The latter's wish to restructure the advisory service is welcome. The political uncertainty in Liverpool is unchanged and dependent on factors outside the control of the education service. None of the social or economic conditions appears to have improved and some may well be deteriorating. On recent visits HMI have the impression that tensions in Toxteth remain high and the comments made by teachers and others to HMI have confirmed this.

13.2. Financial and other resources for education are also important considerations. Their presence and availability do not guarantee educational quality but good and effective education is not possible where they are in short supply or absent. Liverpool is a high spending authority and now faces the possibility of losing Government grant or making drastic cuts in its services including education. The high cost of education in Liverpool is a result of there being too much educational plant in the schools' sector for the clients who use it and the difficulties of operating an effective policy for the management of the teaching force in the current run down. The Authority's policies, or lack of them, in these areas effectively mean that neither will be resolved in the near future. Consequently, if there are to be further cuts in educational expenditure, it is likely that they will have to be made in other costs such as the provision of books and materials, the repair and maintenance of buildings, additional teaching support for vulnerable groups of pupils such as those in need of remedial help, classroom ancillaries and the youth service. Further reductions in financial and other resources will make the conditions under which many teachers work less tolerable and have an adverse effect upon their morale and effectiveness.

13.3. There is little to suggest that the pressures on the education service will ease significantly. The conditions surrounding the civil disturbances still exist, as do the shortcomings of the education service. It is not possible for HMI to state categorically that there will be further outbreaks of trouble within the community or in the schools, nor to offer assurances that they will not occur. HMI are unlikely to be able to identify the precise location of any such outbreak before it occurs.

13.4. Given present manpower and the many other calls on their time, HMI will continue to work in Liverpool in the ways outlined in this paper. In part, the nature and effectiveness of this work will depend upon the responsiveness of the LEA, since much of what needs to change or develop is beyond the influence and control of institutions and their staffs, however able and willing.

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