



TRIBAL

## SWINDON LEA inspection June 2003

**“The progress made by the LEA overall is highly satisfactory.”**  
**“The overall effectiveness of the LEA is now satisfactory.” This is a tremendous improvement.**

### A thank you

- To all staff in the Education Department
- Colleagues in the Council
- Education Partnership Board
- Tribal Group
- Elected Members

And to all the headteachers and staff in schools who helped in making the inspection a success.

### Areas that did well

We are delighted that the work with Children in Public Care was found to be very good. This is an excellent example of partnership working between education, social services and elected members.

Other areas which were judged to be good were:

- Support for Literacy
- Support for Numeracy
- Support for Governors
- Financial Services
- Attendance

### Areas for improvement

- Corporate plans and planning
- Democratic scrutiny
- Leadership of elected members
- Performance of schools
- Strategic planning of services to support school improvement
- Asset Management
- Property services
- Support for ICT

Hilary Pitts, Director of Education said:

“We are pleased that the inspection has recognised the progress that has been made in a very short time. We know that we have a great deal of work to do but this is a very positive outcome and recognises all the hard work by staff. We are sure that we can achieve excellence through partnership and the inspection report is a recognition that we are moving rapidly down the path to success.

### Quotes

David Miliband MP, Minister of State for School Standards said:

“Overall, OFSTED have reported that Swindon now provides a satisfactory level of service. Although there are a few areas that are unsatisfactory, OFSTED judged the LEA to have the capacity to deal with the report’s recommendations and to improve further in the future. I am pleased that, with support from the Department in addressing the recommendations in their 2001 report, Swindon has made highly satisfactory progress overall.”

Martin Davies, Chair of the Education Partnership Board said:

“I am very pleased with the new Ofsted report, which is a fair and accurate analysis of the services currently provided by Swindon LEA. The inspectors recognise the impressive progress made by the Director of Education and her staff in the last year and the valuable input from Tribal plc. I am also pleased that the contribution of the Education Partnership Board is acknowledged. Quite rightly, the report emphasises that much remains to be done, especially in co-ordinating services across the Council and in ensuring effective leadership and management at corporate level.”

Cllr Mike Bawden, Leader of the Council said:

“The Council recognised the need to improve education in 2001. We are really pleased with success achieved by working in partnership with the DfES, and Tribal plc.”

Cllr Kevin Small, Leader of Labour Group said:

“This is our first step towards being an improving Council and making sure that in partnership with our schools, Swindon’s children and young people receive a higher quality of educational opportunities”.

Cllr Evemy, Leader of Liberal Democrat Group said:

“I am very pleased, the report shows that progress is being made and I am confident we are well on the road to recovery.”

The report said:

“The role played by the education partnership board has been fundamental to successful and appropriate decision making. The independent chair of the partnership board brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the post and has helped establish the credibility of the partnership.”

### Communications

We are pleased that the inspection report noted that: “Communication with schools is improving.” and “Relationships between senior officers and elected members are satisfactory.”

### Leadership

- “the leadership provided by new senior officers is satisfactory”, which is a marked improvement on the previous inspection and
- “..they have high expectations and a determination to succeed.”

### Major improvements since the last inspection

The inspection found that more than 85% of functions performed by the Education Service were satisfactory or better compared with 30% in 2001. This is a significant improvement.

### Success stories

Special educational needs provision has moved from very poor to satisfactory. This is a major achievement.

The monitoring, challenge and support for schools have improved.

The links between admissions, school place planning and asset management planning have been strengthened

The allocation of resources to priorities has improved and is now satisfactory. This is a significant improvement.

John Simpson, Tribal Group’s Director of Education said:

“We are very pleased that the inspectors commented favourably on the partnership now in place, judging it to have been a success and with the capacity to further improve. All involved with Swindon’s education department can be proud of what has been achieved in such a short time. I believe the rate and degree of improvement sets a new national standard. We are all very optimistic about the future.”

John added “This is a key intervention contract for us and we are pleased that Ofsted recognised the expertise and qualities that we have brought to Swindon. This has been complemented by positive stakeholder involvement through the partnership board, a new focus on education by the Council and the good work of the LEA officers. This is a powerful alliance that is making a real difference to education in Swindon.”