learning
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Equal opportunities and diversity

14–19: strategies and case studies

14–19: Programme of Support
for Delivery of Change on the Ground

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Further information

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14–19 equality and diversity

Introduction

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) White Paper *14–19 education and skills* was published in February 2005 (DfES 2005a). Many of its proposals drew on the experiences of the 14–19 pathfinders; 39 were set up as part of the process of reforming learning in the 14–19 phase of learning. Their remit was 'to develop and test various models of local collaborative arrangements and in various settings, including a range of social circumstances, in order to allow young people access to greater choice and flexibility and to follow pathways more tailored to their aptitudes and aspirations'. The White Paper made particular reference to improving vocational education and introducing specialised lines of learning.

Pathfinders in both phases of the 14–19 Pathfinder programme were set performance targets. These had to include:

- increases in participation rates post-16

- increases in numbers achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications at age 19

- decreases in numbers achieving no qualifications by 19

- reductions in truancy rates at 14–16

- reductions in drop-out rates at 16–19

- increased entry to higher education.

There were also two key principles for 14–19 pathfinders: that there should be greater collaboration between education and training providers, and broader curriculum offerings, with a particular emphasis on work-related learning.

It was expected that pathfinder partnerships would track the impact of their interventions on different groups of young people, separately. The groups included ethnic minority groups, children in public care, underachieving gifted and talented students, and young people with disabilities. In addition, pathfinders were expected to monitor the extent of gender stereotyping in the take-up of vocational courses. However, this expectation was not specifically included in the performance targets set by the DfES, and the research by Exeter University (Jive and University of Exeter 2005) found that few pathfinders had collected data of this kind. Because of this lack of monitoring by the pathfinders there are gaps in available information about strategies that work for challenging stereotypes, widening choices, improving access and removing barriers for specific disadvantaged groups of learners in the 14–19 phase.

It is the aim of this research to identify support materials for the 14–19 phase on issues affecting target groups in relation to ethnicity, gender, disaffection, learners with special educational needs, and gifted and talented young people. The research acknowledges the key role of *Equality and pathfinders* (Jive and University of Exeter 2005). The four strategies recommended in the report were:

- making equality issues a priority
- improving monitoring, evaluation and accountability
- increasing involvement with organisations working in the equality field
- tackling stereotyping in order to open up choices.

A number of publications have added to the call for social justice and inclusion in 14–19 education and training. In March 2005 the Department for Education and Skills published *Getting on in business, getting on in work* (2005c), a White Paper aimed at employers, which claimed, 'We seek a fair society which ensures that every individual, irrespective of background, ethnicity, gender, faith, disability or postcode, is helped to realise their own capability for learning, and raise their quality of life.' The White Paper makes suggestions about improving skills, including the need to 'tackle the obstacles that continue to prevent fair access for all to high-quality training and good jobs, so that no group is held back by prejudice, discrimination or stereotyping. Through better tailoring of information and guidance, we will help people work out the best options for them on skills, training and jobs, in order to achieve their ambitions.'

Realising the potential: a review of the future role of further education colleges (DfES and LSC 2005) noted that FE colleges attract a higher proportion of disadvantaged learners than the local population average. They can potentially fulfil an 'immensely valuable role which meets both economic and social needs'. The DfES's *14–19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan*, published in December 2005 (2005b), also stressed the importance of partnerships taking account of equality and diversity in a more systematic way. The DfES is funding through the LSDA a programme of training in equality and diversity approaches, which will work with equality organisations and ensure that equality and diversity issues are central to planning, implementing and delivering the 14–19 phase.

This report provides a summary of possible ways to operationalise strategies to make education and training more inclusive, an audit of resources and organisations that can support providers in doing so and case studies of interesting practice. Each of the five main chapters begins with a short summary of the main issues followed by general references, which are usually to websites. The main strategies used by 14–19 pathfinders and other projects are placed in several categories with useful (usually web-based) resources. Each section ends with some case studies which have been largely drawn from the 14–19 pathfinders, but some were drawn from other publicly funded projects.

1 | Ethnicity

Introduction

Some young people from some minority ethnic groups continue to underachieve, for a variety of reasons. Minority ethnic groups have different needs in terms of provision to overcome underachievement. These needs may relate to the social and economic position of the group in the geographical area, low aspirations and peer-group pressure to underachieve at school, the relationships between different ethnic groups in the school, the prevalence of community languages being spoken at home, the expectations of families for their children, or the expectations of the educational or training institution.

All education and training institutions have a statutory duty to promote race equality. The Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE's) *Code of practice* came into effect in May 2002, together with guides on the implementation of the code of practice, ethnic monitoring and standards for racial equality in schools. Recent research (DfES 2003, 14) showed that teachers in schools with few minority ethnic pupils tend to be less confident in preparing their pupils for life in Britain's diverse society. Furthermore, individual school and local authority data show a more complex picture: in some areas, bilingual groups are among the highest performing pupils. Other smaller minority groups, such as Turkish and Portuguese pupils, tend to underachieve throughout school. Gender also has a significant impact: in most cases girls outperform boys of the same background at all Key stages.

However, many of the 14–19 pathfinders did not collect data on the achievements of different ethnic groups as part of their development work. Where there was a focus on ethnicity, the pathfinders involved identified their location as ethnically diverse or comprising particular minority groups. Minority ethnic groups in England are significantly concentrated in five areas: London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds / Bradford and Leicester, and it is from within these areas, not surprisingly, that a small number of pathfinders addressed the issue of achievement and ethnicity.

Ofsted has shown that Gypsy / Traveller children, mostly either Gypsy / Roma or Travellers of Irish heritage, have the lowest results of any minority ethnic group and are the group most at risk in the education system. They are also more likely to be excluded from school than most other pupils. Data on their achievement was collected as part of the 2003 Pupil Level Annual Schools Census so that their needs can be considered alongside those of other minority ethnic pupils.

The cost of failure to address the causes of underachievement of ethnic minority pupils is high, both for the individuals themselves, and also for the stability of our society and growth of our economy. The main issues to be addressed are:

- differential needs of specific groups, including use of community languages
- low self-esteem and aspiration, and negative peer pressure
- low expectations or stereotypical assumptions of education or training institutions.

The language and terminology of ethnicity

There are always issues about the use of language in relation to minority ethnic groups and education especially during in-service training. The DfES offers useful advice which is reproduced below.

Language is continually evolving. The history of race equality and inclusion has also been marked by the evolution of language and terminology. Some terms have fallen into disuse either because they were challenged over time or seen to be archaic or derogatory, being associated with a negative stereotype or an historical or implicit value system or hierarchy. Sometimes a term would fall into disuse as it was insufficient for the purpose or context for which it was originally intended.

No definition that relates to any individual's perception or self-definition of their own identity is likely to describe fully the complex and subtle factors that contribute to that identity. These factors could include skin colour, language, national or regional origins, faith, culture, ancestry or family history in any or all combinations.

Here are some terms commonly used with an explanation of why the DfES uses or does not use certain terminology.

Black/White

The DfES recognises that the term 'black' has been questioned by some groups recently as being potentially divisive or confusing. This arises in part from the fact that some ethnic background categories in the national census relate to race or skin colour while others relate broadly to national or geographic origins. While strongly supporting the principle of self-definition, for the reasons outlined above, the DfES will continue to use the current ethnic background categories which reflect those of the national census.

Minority ethnic

The use of this term is intended to recognise that everyone has an ethnicity. 'Minority ethnic' in this regard signifies belonging to a minority ethnic group in the context of schools in England. Normally we would expect to use this term in conjunction with, for instance, a noun or abstract noun such as 'minority ethnic pupils' or 'minority ethnic achievement'. We believe this term is not entirely synonymous with 'ethnic minority' and while the nuances are debatable, we feel that 'ethnic minority' implies a limited and less inclusive meaning. We therefore prefer the term 'minority ethnic' as described above.

Black and minority ethnic (BME)

The DfES has not previously used this phrase in official documents to a significant degree. However 'black / minority ethnic' (or 'black and minority ethnic') is the phrase that is currently most commonly used by external partners, community and equality organisations. The Department's use of this phrase will be with the understanding that 'black and minority ethnic' or 'BME' also includes minority ethnic groups in England who are white (those recorded under any of the 'white' groups other than 'White British').

Visible minority ethnic

This Department does not promote this term as an alternative to 'minority ethnic'.

Gypsy/Traveller

The term Gypsy / Traveller is used in recognition that within different communities there may be a preference for the separate term 'Gypsy' or 'Traveller'. Many, but not all, Gypsy / Traveller communities maintain a nomadic or transient occupational or traditional lifestyle. The use of this term by the DfES does not exclude Gypsies or Travellers who are housed or live in static accommodation unless stated as such in a specific context. The DfES also recognises that there is a stated preference within sections of the Traveller community to self-define as 'Nomadic' rather than as 'Traveller'. However, at present the DfES will continue to use the terms Gypsy and Traveller as these terms are the most widely recognised and accepted.

Refugee

Someone who is recognised by the government of that country as having met the definition of a refugee under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees as having a well founded fear of being persecuted.

Asylum seeker

Someone who has fled their home country, possibly because of war and / or human rights abuses, who makes an application for asylum in another country.

(Source : DfES)

General references on ethnicity

Black Information Link (BLINK)
This is the website of The 1990 Trust, which is an independent, community-interactive site for justice, equality, anti-racism and social inclusion. There are useful links to black-led organisations and to resources for teaching race equality issues in schools.
www.blink.org.uk

Britkid
This is a website about race, racism and life, as seen through the eyes of British young people.
www.britkid.org

Ethnic Minority Achievement website
There is a DfES website for teachers, local education authorities and others with an interest in ethnic minority achievement. The DfES has a commitment to closing the unacceptable achievement gap that exists between children from different ethnic groups. The Ethnic Minority Achievement project is working to ensure that all the government's policies contribute to raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils.
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities

Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004/07, LSC, November 2004
It is important for all institutions being funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to be familiar with the national equality and diversity strategy.
www.lsc.gov.uk

Commission for Racial Equality
The CRE publishes separate guidance for educational institutions and employers. It outlines legal obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, and contains general advice on developing policies to safeguard against discrimination and harassment.
www.cre.gov.uk

Multikulti
The Multikulti website aims to support citizenship through the delivery of culturally appropriate and accurately translated information. It provides access to 13,400 agencies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland including agencies specialising in ethnic minority communities, including Turkish, Gujerati, Somali, Spanish, Farsi, French, Chinese, English, Albanian, Arabic and Bengali.
www.multikulti.org.uk / agencies /

The Runnymede Collection at Middlesex University
The Runnymede Collection at Middlesex University is a resource for the study of the history of race relations and the development of multiculturalism and cultural diversity in Britain since the 1960s.
www.mdx.ac.uk / www / runnymedecollection /

The Runnymede Trust
The trust exists to promote a diverse multicultural Britain and publishes a range of briefing and research papers, many of which can be downloaded.
www.runnymedetrust.org

Strategies

1 Special programmes for specific groups

Courses and programmes have been planned and run for students from specific minority ethnic groups, sometimes out of school hours or at weekends. The programmes often make use of adult role models from the community, and the involvement and support of parents is crucial to their success. Making the Grade and Global Graduates are two examples of programmes run in Lewisham as part of the 14–19 pathfinder initiative (see case study on p18). Another example is the Eastside Young Leaders' Academy, whose mission is 'to nurture and develop the leadership potential of young African and Caribbean males, empowering them to become the next generation of successful leaders'. The Academy stresses the importance of academic learning and business leadership. It should be noted that some have expressed concern that an over-emphasis on selection of seemingly disaffected students onto vocational courses could, in the case of minority ethnic students, reinforce underachievement (Gillborn 2002a, 2002b).

Other examples of special programmes have focused on the use of community languages. For example in the Black Country Pathfinder case study (p20) focusing on modern languages, Punjabi was used within a vocational programme in health and social care.

Some areas have provided special support for Traveller students including:

- training for all staff on raising awareness of Traveller culture, educational and social issues

- providing advice and information to families regarding the education of their children

- access to an onsite classroom to promote uptake of early years' provision

- access to appropriate resources and learning materials

- improving access, attendance and staying on rate for Traveller pupils

- in class targeted support for Traveller pupils according to needs.

Achievement of black Caribbean pupils: good practice in secondary schools, Ofsted, April 2002

Data from inspections on attainment and exclusions were analysed for secondary schools with 10% or more black Caribbean pupils. Based on 2000 data, there were 129 of these schools, which between them catered for about 40% of the black Caribbean pupil population. There were responses from 47 sample schools and the report summarises findings and best practice.
www.ofsted.gov.uk / publications /

Eastside Young Leaders' Academy

This is a private, non-profit-making organisation, which works in partnership with local schools in the London Borough of Newham. Boys of African-Caribbean origin are admitted after interview with their parents and attend on Saturdays and some evenings. The Academy is based on the work of American, John Littleford, and aims to raise the aspirations and achievements of its students. Parents are required to attend some sessions and help with fund-raising.
www.eyla.org.uk /

The DfES Black Pupils' Achievement programme

In this programme, which commenced in October 2005, there is a strong focus on whole school strategies to raise attainment of black pupils, on leadership, teaching and learning, parental engagement, pupil voice, and a continuing emphasis on understanding and using data. Currently 84 schools in 20 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) are involved, and the long-term aim is to involve 100 schools. Schools are provided with support from a regional director and local authority training programme. Guidance is based on:

- effective practice
- a package of resources and tools to support delivery of key milestones
- support from the National College for School Leadership 'bespoke' programme
- targeted support for middle managers in core subjects
- funding to cover supply costs for senior / middle managers to attend training and networking meetings.

  www.standards.dfes.gov.uk / ethnicminorities / raising_achievement / bpaprogramme /

2 Strong leadership and inclusive ethos

Organisations need strong leadership from senior managers to promote an effective strategy in which high expectations, effective teaching and learning, and an ethos of mutual respect are the norm. Community involvement is paramount for the success of the inclusion strategy. This applies to all education, training and employment organisations. The important role of colleges in widening participation of non-white ethnic groups in education is noted in the Foster review of further education (FE) (DfES and LSC 2005). The report noted that 14% of FE learners are from minority ethnic groups compared with 8% in the overall population.

Schools have a particularly important role to play. The case study of Valentines High School in Ilford, Essex (p22), provides suggestions for ways in which a school can reach out to the different groups in the community. The school employed a female Muslim education welfare officer, made contact with local mosques, used imams (local holy men) as mentors, and ran events for Somali parents with the support of a bilingual link person, as part of the RAISE project.

The RAISE project
This was set up in 2002, funded by Yorkshire Forward (the Regional Development Agency – RDA) and organised by the Uniting Britain Trust, in association with the Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humberside. It is managed and coordinated by the Insted Consultancy. The project was created because in many parts of England there is a substantial gap between national averages on school attainment and the attainment of pupils of Pakistani and Kashmiri heritage. The project aims to demonstrate through a series of case studies that the attainment of Pakistani and Kashmiri heritage pupils can be raised and describes the factors that underlie success.
www.insted.co.uk / raise.html

Tackling black and minority ethnic underachievement : teacher professionalism and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Carol Adams and Shiraz Chakera, General Teaching Council for England, Viewpoint 4
This paper argues that the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 offers teachers the opportunity to maximise all pupils' potential and suggests some key changes to the educational environment if this is to be achieved.
www.gtce.org.uk

Class acts : diversity and opportunity in London schools

The Association of London Government (ALG) set up the Commission on Race and Education in September 2000 to examine the underlying reasons for underachievement among black and minority ethnic pupils at the city's maintained schools. The Commission looked in detail at the levels of educational attainment among different minority groups at the Key stage assessment levels up to GCSE, and undertook its own survey of local education authorities to examine patterns of achievement across the capital. This report shows the results of that survey.

www.alg.gov.uk

Class acts : the contribution of voluntary sector organisations to the education of BME children and young people in London, ALG, October 2005

The ALG currently provides £2.17 million funding for 10 voluntary sector organisations working to deliver community education projects in London. Research has been undertaken to evaluate the key contribution of these and other projects to the educational achievement of children and young people from London's BME communities. This report examines ways in which voluntary groups work in partnership with statutory agencies to tackle underachievement, the support they receive and the challenges they face, and it generates a series of recommendations to promote and support good practice among London's statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

www.alg.gov.uk

The role of further education in relation to equality, diversity and social inclusion, Ewan King, David Love and Paul Tarplett, Office for Public Management, April 2005

An interesting paper produced for the Foster review of the future of FE colleges.

www.opm.co.uk

3 Tackling ethnic stereotypes through training for careers advisers, teachers, trainers and employers

There is statistical evidence to show that certain occupations do not recruit minority ethnic staff in large numbers, particularly the police force and the army. Moreover, statistics show that Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African-Caribbean men are more likely to be unemployed than white men; African-Caribbean and Bangladeshi men are only half as likely as white men to be working in professional jobs; few Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are in paid work; and African-Caribbean woman who are working are less likely than white women to be in jobs matching their qualification. See the Gender Equality and Race Inclusion (GERI) website (www.geriproject.org) for more information about understanding gender and racial occupational stereotyping. Guidance is available from the CRE and LSC to ensure that employers comply with race relations legislation covering recruitment and promotion policies.

There are also common stereotypes of the kinds of work undertaken by different ethnic groups, which need to be challenged by educational and training organisations. Materials and training are provided by the GERI project, led by Lancashire Connexions and funded by LSC and the European Social Fund (ESF).

Gender Equality and Race Inclusion project
The GERI project, led by Connexions, Lancashire, aims to implement a series of initiatives to reduce gender and ethnic stereotyping in careers information, advice, guidance and choice. Materials include guidance for teachers and activities for students, as well as a DVD and ideas for a drama workshop. The UK partners in the project include Connexions / Careers companies, E-Skills UK (the Sector Skills Council for ICT), an award winning multimedia design house and organisations from the voluntary and private sectors, learning providers and the LSC. It receives funding from EQUAL, an ESF programme.
www.geriproject.org / teachers / elibrary.php

Complementing teachers : a practical guide to promoting race equality in schools, Runnymede Trust, February 2003
This report offers practical guidance on the promotion of race equality and cultural diversity within the classroom. It was compiled by a group of teachers and other educationalists to support professionals in the implementation of changes to classroom practice brought about through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. It includes a CD-ROM with downloadable lesson plans and activities. Available from schools@lettsed.co.uk, price £30.

LSC guidance : Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (03/2002) equality and diversity guidance, March 2002

This guidance note sets out what the LSC has to do to comply with new race relations legislation. Following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report, the government brought forward new legislation that places duties on most major public authorities, including the LSC and FE colleges, to be proactive in achieving race equality.

4   Mentoring of students by successful BME professionals

A number of organisations exist to promote mentoring of young people by volunteer BME professionals in order to raise the achievement and aspirations of young people. For example, the Minority Ethnic Role-models for Learning and Inspiration (MERLIN) initiative is run by Business in the Community (BiTC); the RAISE project, described above, has involved imams in the mentoring of young Pakistani and Kashmiri students (see case study of Valentines High School on p22); and Inspired (see below) was set up to promote mentoring of young people by BME undergraduates. These projects, and many others, sometimes involve one-to-one mentoring, but also encourage the use of postive role models in industry events, enterprise projects and citizenship programmes, with the aim of broadening young people's horizons.

The MERLIN Initiative

This is a project run by Business in the Community. It works with large companies and London schools and provides volunteers to work with students on a variety of activities. The common factor among the volunteers is the desire to motivate young people by inspirational example. The programme has developed a video, CD-ROM and the teachers' pack Keep on Moving, drafted by Bertie Ross.
www.bitc.org.uk / regions / bitc_in_your_region / london / programmes / merlin.html

Made in Britain, Steven D'Souza and Patrick Clarke, Pearson, 2005, £9.99

This book focuses on role models from minority ethnic communities, who have achieved success in Britain. 'It highlights a range of occupations that are not career choices within these communities, or in which they are under-represented.'
www.possibilityplanet.co.uk

Inspired

This is an organisation that aims to build on existing mentoring programmes within the UK by encouraging BME undergraduates to become mentors. The undergraduates are supported by financial awards of £1500 per year for their mentoring work with younger BME students. The awards are intended to decrease the likelihood of dropout from university because of financial pressures.

www.inspiredmentoring.org.uk /

Mentoring : a handbook for business and schools working together, Linda Appiah, Runnymede Trust and the Bank of England, June 2001

This handbook, aimed at business outlining the steps in running a successful mentoring programme, was written for companies involved in minority ethnic mentoring programmes, but the principles apply to all good programmes.

www.runnymedetrust.org

Case studies

1A Making the Grade and Young Graduates : programmes to raise aspirations

Context

Lewisham is the second largest inner London borough, and includes several wards that feature among the 10% most deprived nationally. The population is highly diverse, and 56% of students in Lewisham schools are from minority ethnic groups. Many students are from African or African-Caribbean backgrounds, and there are significant numbers of refugees and asylum seekers living in the borough, which contains over 100 language communities. In Lewisham, the 14–19 Pathfinder and AimHigher programmes worked collaboratively with a private organisation, Global Graduates, to run two programmes : Making the Grade (MtG) and Young Graduates (YG). Both are aimed at raising the aspirations of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and in particular those from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds.

The programmes

Students who wish to enter MtG and YG must complete an application form, in which they describe their interests and future plans. Members of staff from Global Graduates select students. In the case of the YG programme, a member of the Global Graduates staff interviews all applicants. MtG is aimed at 'the middle-mass group in class', and encourages them to take their education seriously and focus on their potential. It is a five-week modular programme covering study skills, communication skills, future path, creativity and personal development. Some students then progress to the YG programme.

YG is targeted at Year 9, 10 and 11 students who have been identified as underachieving, gifted and talented, from backgrounds where there is no history of participation in higher education. Its aims are to enable the students to get the best from their formal education, and make informed choices to support their future career aspirations. The first part of this programme comprises 12 Saturday sessions held weekly. The sessions cover four main themes : personal organisation and professional focus, enterprise and work, citizenship and identity, and monitoring and self-development. A student support officer, employed by Global Graduates, provides pastoral support for students and liaises with schools and parents. Following successful completion students move on to the YG alumni programme of development (for five years), offering 'master classes', which they attend approximately once a month.

Strengths of the programme

The 14–19 Pathfinder became involved in offering these programmes to students in six schools following a successful pilot at one of them. Regular liaison between the pathfinder coordinator, AimHigher and the chief executive officer of Global Graduates was crucial. Global Graduates has efficient systems in place which enable it to deliver the programmes effectively, including a strong administrative framework for managing the admissions process, and effective procedures for monitoring and ensuring attendance. One of the advantages of engaging an external organisation in the delivery of such programmes is that there are few additional demands on already over-stretched school staff.

Parental involvement is a prerequisite of young people's acceptance onto the programme, and the parents' role is considered to be crucial in providing a supportive learning environment in the home. Additionally, the tutors employed by Global Graduates come from a range of backgrounds, and are positive role models for the students. Students attending the programme enjoy the structure and content of the sessions, and value the informal style and opportunity to be with students of a similar ability and commitment. A small number reported that participation in the programme had helped them to break out of peer relationships at school which had been having a negative impact on their academic progress.

Successes

To date, over 120 students have participated in the programme, and there have been relatively low levels of drop-out. The programmes have improved students' focus and motivation for their education and their futures. Students' comments have included:

They're giving us a wider view of what's going on out there and what we can achieve. The students are more aware of the opportunities available to them in further and higher education, and their career pathways.

As one school teacher pointed out: 'There is more time to focus on possible courses and options than schools ever have.' Anecdotal evidence also suggests that the sessions on study skills are improving the students' performance in school.

(Source: Lewisham 14–19 Pathfinder)

Contact

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1B Meeting employer demands for foreign languages

Context

The Black Country 14–19 Pathfinder covered an area west of Birmingham was made up of the four LEAs of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. It worked with over 50 schools to improve the quality of modern foreign languages curriculum and tools, in response to employer demands for improved language skills in the workplace. The partnership initially found it difficult to gain 'buy-in' from some vocational teaching departments to develop programmes that incorporated foreign languages into generic provision.

Excellence networks

The Pathfinder developed 14–19 Networks for Excellence to foster collaboration, particularly at local, regional and national levels. The partnership included the Education Business Partnership (EBP), employer groups, four LEAs, 46 schools, two universities, four FE colleges, the Specialist Schools and AcademiesTrust (SSAT) and the sub-regional Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) network. The partnership produced a series of curriculum tools in modern foreign and community languages, and trained staff in delivery. Training providers and employers helped develop the vocational language courses, in response to growing demands for employees to speak several languages. The EBP network proved successful in securing language champions from industry to promote the relevance of language skills to business.

Personalised learning

The Pathfinder developed an area-wide curriculum, encouraging providers to offer complementary aspects of a flexible curriculum, to support personalised learning. The Pathfinder created a range of language modules, tools and materials and incorporated these into vocational programmes, including vocational GCSEs, apprenticeships and work experience programmes. Apprentices studying towards qualifications in travel and tourism, early years, health and social care were given language training. For example, Punjabi and British Sign Language learning were linked to the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) in Health and Social Care through a combination of work experience, vocational learning and tailored language provision. The materials were designed to promote the relevance of language skills to students' future career aspirations. Employees and Modern Apprentices in local businesses featured in a 'Language skills for work' DVD and video explaining how they use language in the workplace. The four EBPs in the Black Country also hosted a workshop at the International EBP Conference to promote the importance of language skills for business.

The language tools also helped students to work at their own pace. For example, the Certificate in Business Language Competence (CBLC) supported individual learning in one school by offering an entry level qualification which provided an intensive, fast-track programme. Other schools applied CBLC over a longer timescale to a broader range of mixed ability students, and linked the course to apprenticeship programmes to develop language skills post-16. Language lessons took place on Wednesday afternoons at college when school timetables were cleared to enable additional study. Students enjoyed the link the language courses made between different areas of learning and their career aspirations, and welcomed the opportunity to do something different.

The Pathfinder supported continuing professional development (CPD) activities for staff, including training 48 teachers across the Black Country as vocational language examiners. The teachers took CBLC exams including peer assessment. Over 20 teachers fed back positively on a one-day workshop held at the Spanish Embassy on delivering Spanish ICT resources. Teachers also received training in using interactive whiteboards in language training.

Successes

The Pathfinder explored accreditation options, and registered as a regional centre for vocational OCR examinations. Over 7107 students, 242 teachers, 224 schools and 16 organisations participated in pathfinder activities, including visits from local employers, higher education (HE) and FE providers to promote take-up of the programme. The CBLC resources received national interest, with orders placed by 53 schools outside the Black Country. The materials are being developed further at entry level, and Levels 2 and 3, in languages such as Spanish, German, French, Italian and Japanese. The 'Language skills for work' DVD and video generated considerable interest, with over 135 copies disseminated. The Pathfinder informed the development of a special schools network to share good practice, and a language academy, which will offer academic and vocational qualifications to post-14 learners across the Black Country. The University of Wolverhampton has also set up a British Sign Language tutor support network to maintain this aspect of the pathfinder programme.

Staff awareness activities, such as FE providers publicising the Punjabi and care course at New Cross Hospital, raised interest in pathfinder activity. To ensure high levels of support were given to students, teachers received training to 'bring them up to speed' as part of CPD. For instance, teachers were shown how they could use interactive whiteboards to their full potential in language lessons.

(Source : Black Country 14–19 Pathfinder)

Contact

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1C A whole-school approach to raising the attainment of minority ethnic students

Context

Valentines High School (VHS) is a multi-ethnic secondary school located in an urban area of north-east London. Some 70% of pupils possess English as an Additional Language (EAL); 50 different home languages are spoken; 10% of pupils are refugees; and there is a high representation of Pakistani pupils, the lowest achieving ethnic group nationally. A majority of pupils are Muslim. The school was recently praised by Ofsted for its very inclusive atmosphere, excellent relationships and strong achievement culture, where all pupils are valued and encouraged to succeed. Every ethnic group now achieves very well at Valentines, but this was not always the case. Four years ago particular groups of pupils were underachieving, attendance was below the national average and exclusions were high.

Whole-school approach

Improvement began with a whole staff debate about ethnic achievement. On the basis that a continuation of this situation was unacceptable, the school undertook detailed analysis of the achievement of different ethnic groups on entry and at each Key stage. Achievement by ethnicity was tracked from Year 7 to Years 9, 11 and 13. It was found that Pakistani boys and other Muslim boys performed poorly at school, as did African-Caribbean pupils. In 2000 their average point score was 31.5 points, compared with an overall average for boys in the school of 38 points.

The staff realised that much of what was central to the self-concept of the students was left outside the school gates. On reflection, it seemed logical that if the language, customs, clothing, religion and culture of young people were ignored by the school, then it was unlikely that pupils would feel positive about themselves. The following specific strategies were adopted to counter this.

Strengths The school decided to adopt a multi-pronged approach to tackle underachievement, by making links with 'hard-to-reach' community groups and using these links to lever-up attainment.

Contact with local mosques The school brought in imams (local holy men) to mentor underachieving Muslim boys. Imams were trained in target setting and use of data. This supplemented our own mentoring and use of data programme. The boys involved spend many hours in the mosques and the imams have a good deal of influence. Contact continued when boys underperformed in coursework and this was picked up in the mosques or with parents by the imams. Importantly, the self-esteem of these pupils improved when they saw their own community representatives being recognised by the school. It also improved relationships between pupils and staff.

Improving Behaviour project for challenging pupils The school worked with Dr Tony Sewell of Leeds University to develop and use drama materials in Years 8 and 10 to teach students the essentials of conflict management, the lack of understanding of which is a fundamental problem underlying poor behaviour. A group was created, which comprised both pupils with good behaviour and those with difficult behaviour, in order to avoid stigmatising the pupils. This group investigated strategies to resolve conflict without escalating it, based on the theme of 'giving it, and taking it'.

The school employed a female Muslim educational welfare officer for additional time
This assistant works with groups of parents, often mothers with minimal English language skills, bringing them into school to explain the expectations of the education system and how it works. Also, where necessary, this staff member is able to speak with parents and counter misperceptions about the need for girls to gain a good education. Rigorous chasing of absence, using a dedicated attendance officer, has also led to hugely improved attendance. This is supported by a system of first day absence calls.

Special events for hard-to-reach communities The school also attempted to reach out to other communities. A Somali and Bravanese evening was held, inviting parents from a range of local schools, via their community leader, to attend a Somali evening, with food, music, sixth form interpreters and a community play by Somali pupils. A bilingual classroom assistant was appointed as link person. This person is available to take calls at a set time from Somali parents across the LEA. Parents produce a Somali newsletter that is funded by the school. Similar events are run for Urdu and Punjabi parents.

The community part of the specialist school bid was also useful in providing a backdrop for raising standards Subsidised ICT, numeracy and literacy courses were provided in the evenings for parents of target ethnic groups. Bilingual classroom assistants were provided to work with teachers, and marketing of this provision was undertaken with the assistance of local faith leaders. This meant that many parents came into school who would not normally have done so. This provides an excellent backdrop for building a dialogue and an understanding about the work of the school.

Successes

All of these strategies, taken together, have levered up attainment over time. As a result, by 2003 the attainment of every ethnic group had significantly increased. In every group, attainment was above the national average for that group and overall attainment was well above national averages. The proportion of pupils achieving at least five A*–C GCSEs results improved from 51% in 1999 to 67% in 2003, making Valentines the ninth most successful specialist school in terms of value-added in England. Attainment by ethnic group at Key stage 4 is shown below.

2002 GCSE results by ethnicity : five A*–C grades at VHS compared with national results

	VHS five A*–C grades	National	Difference results*	Sample size
Black	50%	37%	+13%	15
Pakistani	64.4%	30%	+34.4%	45
Bangladeshi	60%	30%	+30%	5
White	66.7%	50%	+16.7%	36
Indian	71.9%	62%	+9.9%	57
Other	75%	43%	+32%	15

*2000 Youth Cohort Study

(Source : adapted from Specialist Schools and Academies Trust)

Contact

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1D AimHigher black and minority ethnic mentoring

Context

The Education Development Plan of Leeds sets out key strategies for raising attainment in Leeds. The Aimhigher mentoring initiative is part of this plan and targets underachieving school and college students (14–19 year olds) who have the potential to achieve at least five grade A*–C GCSEs, to progress to post-16 education and to enter university. Leeds Mentoring, as an integral part of the AimHigher school improvement initiative, provides mentoring support to 14–19-year-old students in 41 high schools and eight FE colleges.

BME mentoring programme

BME mentors are postgraduate or undergraduate students recruited from one of the Leeds universities. They support and help motivate less experienced BME school or college students reach their true potential. In this project the university mentor, a more experienced person, has progressed to higher education and been successful. Mentors are trained in mentoring and motivational skills and techniques, and become positive role models. They are matched with an underachieving student and provide one-to-one quality mentor support. Action planning and target setting provides the focus for progression and achievement. The case study that follows shows the impact of mentoring on one young woman.

The mentee

A Year 11 student at a Leeds school Jodi (not her real name) had personal problems. She left home, moved into a flat and supported herself. Although this had a detrimental affect on her GCSE results she had good enough grades to gain a place at Leeds College of Art. But lack of finance proved difficult and Sonia gave up her art college place and obtained a job at a Leeds call centre. Three years later, realising there were no prospects and finding the work 'boring and monotonous', Sonia decided to enrol onto a part-time GCE A-level course at Park Lane College of FE. She was studying AS level Law; staff at Park Lane recognised her potential and put her forward for AimHigher mentoring support.

The mentoring relationship

Christine, a solicitor and volunteer mentor, was partnered with Jodi. Initially Jodi found it very difficult re-entering education because her motivation and self-confidence was very low. This led her to question re-entering education and she decided to withdraw from her AS level course. Christine had already seen Jodi's potential and was able to use her mentoring skills

and persuade her to stay in education. She was a very supportive role model and provided an insight into the legal profession. Mentoring support was personal, professional and a sounding board for giving professional (law-related) advice. Help covered examination techniques, researching university law courses, work experience placements with barristers and law firms, visits to court, applying to UCAS and preparing university personal statements.

As a result of her experience, Jodi was motivated to become a mentor herself and provide personal support to similar BME students. She was mentor to 12 BME Year 10 and 11 students at a Leeds high school. She mentored one day per week, meeting her mentees for one hour each fortnight. Jodi said:

Mentoring BME students has been inspirational. It works both ways because most people want to achieve and the personal rewards of helping others has helped me to focus on passing my GCE A-levels. It makes you think and reflect on what I am telling them and has helped me develop my own examination techniques.

One of Jodi's mentees said:

I found Jodi to be really helpful, she was like us, and she talked slang and understood our problems and issues. I felt so comfortable with her. We negotiated goals and targets and she helped me to work towards them. She helped with my ASDAN work showing me how to research and find out relevant materials This enabled me to achieve the gold standard. She also helped with my English coursework, helping me draft and plan it. Working one to one was great because we could focus and get a lot done. If anyone was to ask me if they should have a mentor I would say 'go for it'. It is brilliant and really helpful.

Other successes

Christine and a senior partner at her firm helped Jodi prepare her application to read law at university. She applied to Leeds, Sheffield, Warwick, Nottingham and Leicester and was delighted to be offered an unconditional place at Nottingham University. Although excited she felt that she would be out of her depth and 'Did not want to go to Nottingham – it was too good, too high'. Christine did not accept this and built Jodi's self-confidence with good advice. Jodi accepted the place and Christine and Jodi celebrated with lunch and tears. In 2004 Jodi received the Lord Mayor of Leeds special award for Mentee of the Year for the student who had made most outstanding progress. She admits that without her mentor she would never have achieved her true potential.

(Source: adapted from article written by Barry Hilton of Leeds Mentoring)

Contact

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1E Involving parents in gifted and talented projects

Context

The City of Leicester School has a student population of 1400, made up
of 60% Asian, 30% white and 10% black and / or dual heritage pupils aged
11–18 years. Many of the students' families see education as the school's
responsibility and many, though not all, come from working class homes.
Owner occupied housing surrounds the school. Many of the neighbours
are elderly and middle class. Most students do not live in the immediate
vicinity and have to travel some distance to school. Although the parents
are mostly supportive of their children's education – the number of parents
coming to parents' evenings is anything from 50% to 75% – fewer than
eight parents attend parents' meetings with governors, rewards evenings
are for students only and the PTA has closed down. So unless their children
are musical or involved in team sports, there is a social gulf between the
majority of parents and the life of the school.

Gifted and talented

The school saw the gifted and talented strand as an opportunity to alter
this situation. Knowing that children achieve better results and enjoy a
more rounded education if their parents are admitted into partnership with
the school, parents of students on the gifted and talented register were
invited to come into school for discussions. An evening event was planned
for a large, fairly informal meeting at school. To keep the atmosphere
casual, easy chairs were used, which were not positioned in rows. Parents
were welcomed with refreshments. The aim was to look at the situation
from the parents' point of view, to give them ownership of the meeting so
that they could play a more active part in their children's education if they
wanted to.

Towards the end of the meeting the parents were asked what they wanted
to do next. They said that they wanted to be kept informed with a newsletter
and to have a meeting once each term, and they wanted information about
higher education. They wanted to have more information about university
life to help their children make decisions about the future. They spoke
informally with individuals for a further 30 minutes. The next term the
schools liaison officer came with several students to talk about their
experience of dealing with barriers to learning in higher education. In the

summer term the vice chancellor of a local university spoke about the nature and role of universities in general. Attendance was consistently high but the parental population varied with each meeting. The underlying agenda was the parents' own education – that might have been cut short for a number of reasons. Recognising that they could be more helpful to their children if they had information about routes into learning some began to see that there were still opportunities for themselves.

Successes

The involvement of parents has continued and their involvement has spread, for example, all the parents attending a recent governors' meeting were 'gifted and talented' parents. Their improved understanding has supported their children and the gifted and talented initiative. Examination results have improved. Parents are now more willing to discuss their children's progress informally with the gifted and talented coordinator after parents' meetings. Barriers to parental involvement are not based on a lack of understanding but lack of opportunity and knowledge. It is important for schools to listen to students' parents if they are going to help in supporting inner city schools to the benefit of their children's education.

(Source : adapted from Jenny Martin,
City of Leicester School)

Contact

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2 | Gender

Introduction

Gender segregation of jobs continues in this country despite nearly 30 years of equal opportunities legislation and general recognition of the economic consequences of skills shortages in key areas. Recent research by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) showed that there are high levels of support for change in order to give young people a true choice of vocational courses, training and work. The research also showed that job segregation is a class issue as well as a gender issue, since in areas such as medicine and law the gender divide has become much less relevant, whereas in manual trades such as plumbing and construction there has been slow progress. The male-dominated sectors are construction, engineering, plumbing and ICT. Men are also over-represented in science-related occupations. The EOC found that two-thirds of working women are still found in five occupational groups – the five 'c's: cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical; most jobs in these sectors are poorly paid. It would appear that where girls are achieving academically, they are breaking into the professions. However, they are not breaking into the trades, where pay is much higher than in traditional female work. In addition, boys continue to underachieve at school, relative to girls.

The main aim of the 14–19 educational reforms was to allow young people access to greater choice and flexibility to follow pathways more tailored to their aptitudes and aspirations. It is ironic, therefore, that the provision of specialised lines of learning and a greater choice of vocational courses has done little to challenge gender segregation, and may even have reinforced it. The new Equality Bill currently going through parliament will from April 2007 place a duty on all public sector providers to promote gender equality in the same way as they have a duty to promote race equality. The Equal Opportunities Commission is working on a code of practice, but 14–19 providers will have to take steps to mainstream equalities in a way that they have seldom achieved in the past.

The main issues to be tackled are:

- young people's attitudes to and information about vocational courses and work

- factors influencing gender segregation in vocational education, training and apprenticeships

- boys' underachievement.

General references on gender

JIVE (Joint Intervention) Partners
This is funded through the ESF initiative, EQUAL, which endeavours to test and promote new ways of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market across the European Union. It provides a range of resources and guidelines to promote its aims.
www.jivepartners.org.uk

Gender and achievement website
DfES website for teachers, LEAs and others with an interest in gender differences and achievement.
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk / genderandachievement

Employers, young people and gender segregation (England), Working Paper Series no. 28
Research carried out for EOC by University of Leicester, December 2005.
www.eoc.org.uk / PDF / wp28.pdf

Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004/07, Learning and Skills Council, November 2004
www.lsc.gov.uk

Strategies

1 Improved careers information, advice and guidance

In a telephone survey of 1100 adults carried out for the EOC (2004), around half the people interviewed thought that the advice they received on leaving school and deciding what kind of job they wanted to do was influenced by their sex. Young people need up-to-date information about qualifications, pay scales and career prospects. The Gender Equality and Race Inclusion project is helping the Connexions and careers guidance sector, schools, colleges, training providers and employers tackle gender and ethnic stereotyping by providing materials and training for careers advisers and teachers. Materials supporting careers education have also been provided by the EOC and other national bodies.

Gender Equality and Race Inclusion project

The GERI project, led by Connexions, Lancashire, aims to implement a series of initiatives to reduce gender and ethnic stereotyping in careers information, advice, guidance and choice. Materials include guidance for teachers and activities for students, as well as a DVD and ideas for a drama workshop. The UK partners in the project include Connexions, careers companies, e-Skills UK, an award winning multimedia design house and organisations from the voluntary and private sectors, learning providers and the LSC.

www.geriproject.org / teachers / elibrary.php

Works 4 Me

An interactive website for 11–15 year olds, launched by the EOC, which aims to raise awareness of issues such as pay, choice and wider opportunities. It provides a virtual careers centre with interactive features, games, quizzes, animation and music. Users can browse information about case studies, pay scales, qualifications, work experience, myths and reality, and what employers say.

www.works4me.org.uk

Know Your Place website

This is for young women considering a career in construction, engineering, ICT or plumbing. The site provides answers to frequently asked questions and details of organisations that can give advice and support.

www.knowyourplace.org.uk /

Action for Change series

Action for Change is a series of good practice guides aimed at a range of stakeholders: LSCs, training providers, employers, careers advice professionals, teachers and those involved in work-related learning. They provide practical guidance based on examples of actions taken by organisations to open up non-traditional opportunities for women and men.

www.eoc.org.uk / Default.aspx ?page=17333

Women and Equality Unit

The Women and Equality Unit (WEU) produces *Does Sex Make a Difference?*, an equality resource aimed at teachers, careers advisers and those who work with young people aged around 14. Updated for 2004, the pack contains useful statistics and general information. It also includes a number of lesson plans to support each of the main topic areas (WEU Publications, 2004).

www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk / publications / sex_make_difference_04.pdf

A better way to work
This resource pack is produced by the TUC and is designed to help young people aged 14–19 prepare for the world of work. It contains five units, one of which focuses on equal opportunities.
www.tuc.org.uk / organisation / tuc-9310-f0.cfm

JIVE training for professionals
Programmes offered by JIVE for careers advisers and other providers in how to carry out their role in a way that promotes non-traditional careers to both girls and boys. Based on research of the perceptions of females in non-traditional sectors of the careers advice they have received, the training offers practical ways of overcoming gender stereotyping using case studies and good practice models of how to engage girls' interest in exploring occupations that they have hitherto been told are for men.
www.jivepartners.org.uk / activities / careers.htm

JIVE how to guide : careers advice
This guide provides handy suggestions of effective ways to encourage and support girls and women to choose and be successful in non-traditional careers paths.
www.jivepartners.org.uk / activities / documents / jivehowto_careers.pdf

LSC Guidance : Sex Equality (05/2002) Equality and diversity guidance, April 2002
This guidance sets out the LSC's approach to mainstreaming sex equality. Its purpose is to establish a framework for action, within which all LSC activities can contribute towards eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between women and men. It uses illustrative examples to show how local LSCs might meet the requirements set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and other relevant statutory and non-statutory regulations that influence sex equality.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) is the primary statutory instrument for tackling sex inequality. The SDA applies to women and men and impacts on the work of the Council as it makes sex discrimination unlawful in employment and vocational training, education and the provision of goods, facilities and services.

2 Positive role models

Education and training providers have invited successful local people in non-traditional work roles to take part in careers events and industry days, in order to persuade young people to consider those areas for themselves. 'What's My Line?' is an example of a familiar activity, in which students and trainees guess the occupation of a range of people on a panel, all engaged in non-traditional work. Role models have also been involved in simulations, task-based exercises and witness sessions. Ex-students or ex-trainees can play a useful part in explaining to other young people what is involved in taking on non-traditional jobs, what obstacles they faced and how they overcame them. Role models can also be involved in mentoring young people who have shown an interest in a particular area of work, and they can arrange tours of their workplace for interested students.

Gender Equality and Race Inclusion project
The GERI project, led by Connexions, Lancashire, aims to implement a series of initiatives to reduce gender and ethnic stereotyping in careers information, advice, guidance and choice (see above). The materials include 40 case studies of people involved in non-traditional work.
www.geriproject.org / teachers / role_model_list.htm

Women in Science, Engineering and Technology
The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) is set up to complement the government's new 10-year investment framework for science and innovation. The resource centre provides accessible, high-quality information and advisory services to industry, academia, professional institutes, education and research councils within the SET and built-environment professions, while supporting women entering and progressing in SET careers. It provides posters, videos, magazines, teaching materials, case studies and a list of role models.
www.set4women.gov.uk

JIVE how to guide : mentoring
This guide provides information on how to use mentoring to support and inspire women and girls in science, engineering, construction and technology.
www.jivepartners.org.uk / activities / documents / jivehowto_ %20Mentoring.pdf

MentorNet

MentorNet is a non-profit-making e-mentoring network that addresses the retention and success of those in engineering, science and mathematics, particularly but not exclusively women and other underrepresented groups. Founded in 1997, MentorNet provides highly motivated protégés from many of the world's top colleges and universities with positive, one-to-one, e-mail-based mentoring relationships with mentors from industry and academia. In addition, the MentorNet community provides opportunities to connect with others from around the world who are interested in diversifying engineering and science.
www.mentornet.net

3 Wider choice of work experience placements

Research (EOC 2005) has revealed that the uptake of work experience placements is overwhelmingly gender-stereotyped. Work experience organisers tend to see freedom of choice as more important than extending opportunities. 'Own finds' are encouraged as entrepreneurial. Organisers acknowledge that stereotypical perceptions influence students' choices, but they also recognise that some students are deterred by sexist workplaces. The main problem for organisers is to find and keep placements that conform to health and safety regulations. It is not in their interest to discourage 'own finds' or to challenge employers about sexist workplaces. However, work experience is a major opportunity to broaden students' horizons pre-16, and this opportunity is largely being wasted.

Schools and organisers need to consider:

- how they can promote equality of access, to ensure that all pupils have access to work experience and that both young men and young women have access to non-traditional placements

- whether they have established equal opportunities procedures, to ensure that employers cannot reject students on grounds of gender or race, and to address incidents of harassment or discrimination on the placement

- how they can counter gender-stereotyped placement choice, by providing appropriate pre-choice preparation and materials that are free of negative messages

- how they can develop assertiveness skills so that young people can cope with reactions they may encounter at the workplace.

Since unrestricted student choice of placement may reinforce stereotypes, it may be that students could be offered two short placements, in different occupational sectors. In one Connexions company, funding was obtained for a post to work with work experience advisers to consider ways of promoting equal opportunities through work experience. In another, an award of £500 was offered to young people who chose interesting and unusual placements. Students who do choose to undertake a non-traditional placement need considerable support and preparation, as do their employers, since a negative experience can reinforce negative attitudes among students, peers and teachers.

Gender equality in work experience placements for young people, Institute for Policy Studies in Education for EOC, Working Paper series no. 27, autumn 2004
The research highlights the current stereotypical allocation of placements and makes recommendations for change.
www.eoc.org.uk / PDF / wp27.pdf

Work related learning and equal opportunities, Centre for Education and Industry, University of Warwick (forthcoming, 2006)
A pack of materials that can be used to prepare young people of both sexes for work-related experiences in non-traditional sectors, including assertiveness and confidence-building activities.
www.warwick.ac.uk / cei

Works 4 Me
An interactive website for 11–15 year olds, launched by the EOC, which aims to raise awareness of issues such as pay, choice and wider opportunities. It provides a virtual careers centre with interactive features, games, quizzes, animation and music. Users can browse information about case studies, pay scales, qualifications, work experience, myths and reality, and what employers say. There is a section on non-traditional work-experience placements with the names of employers willing to offer them.
www.works4me.org.uk

4 Improved access to vocational courses and Young Apprenticeships

The five sectors in which job segregation has persisted – construction, engineering, plumbing, ICT and childcare – all suffer from skills shortages. Moreover, areas of work dominated by women pay less well, with workers earning on average 18% less per hour than men working full-time. Schools and colleges can encourage more girls to make non-traditional choices of vocational courses, perhaps by running events, involving Sector Skills Councils and / or local employers, to educate students about the benefits of working in non-traditional jobs. Some have provided single-sex taster courses, on-site or at local colleges or training organisations. The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the Sector Skills Council for construction, runs girls-only taster courses in school, in carpentry and joinery, brickwork, electrical installation, surveying and operating a mini-digger for Year 9 students. Industrial visits, hosted by positive role models, can also enthuse students.

JIVE how to guide : inspire future women in SECT
This guide provides the recipe for a successful promotional event aimed at inspiring the future generation of girls and women taking up careers in science, engineering, construction and technology.
www.jivepartners.org.uk / activities / documents / jivehowto_womeninSET.pdf

Women Into Science and Engineering
Women Into Science and Engineering (WISE) promotes these sectors as career options to girls and women across the UK, through brochures, posters, websites, a video, hands-on courses and presentations. WISE supports single sex teaching for science, engineering and technology, and has produced a guide to good practice : *In a class of their own*. It describes the experiences of some schools and offers practical guidance on how best to achieve equal access to the curriculum for boys and girls.
www.wisecampaign.org.uk

5 Retaining apprentices in non-traditional workplaces

Apprentices in their first job can find their first weeks difficult, especially if they are in a minority in a non-traditional workplace. Good practice employers will already have in place policies on acceptable standards of behaviour at the workplace, and these should be communicated to everyone. Broad diversity training for all staff can help relationships. Some employers run induction programmes for apprentices and provide

mentors and opportunities for apprentices to network with others in similar circumstances. A member of senior management can be available for apprentices to speak to about any concerns they have. JIVE has provided a range of 'How to' guides for providers of apprenticeships.

JIVE how to guide : troubleshooting for women ICT tutors

The guide is aimed at training providers who recognise the value of using female 'role models' as ICT tutors to challenge the balance of men and women training and working in the ICT sector. This guide is for training providers to give to female ICT tutors to aid their teaching.
www.jivepartners.org.uk / activities / documents / Jivehowtoguide-Troubleshooting.pdf

JIVE how to guide : recruit and retain female apprentices

The guide provides information on how to recruit and retain female apprentices in science, engineering, construction and technology. It is aimed at employers, training providers and managing agencies.
www.jivepartners.org.uk / activities / documents / Jivehowtoguiderecruit.pdf

JIVE how to guide : inclusive learning environments

The guide provides advice on how to create an inclusive learning environment. By following this guide training providers can support women at a crucial stage of their education and help them towards a successful career in science, engineering, construction and technology.
www.jivepartners.org.uk / activities / documents / Jivehowtoguideinclusive.pdf

Women and Manual Trades organisation

Women and Manual Trades (WAMT) is the national organisation for women in the trades. It works in partnership with training bodies, employers, public sector organisations and tradeswomen to address the issues that prevent women entering, or continuing to work in, the trades. It produces videos and teaching packs for schools.
www.wamt.org / Home

Women into the Built Environment project

Women into the Built Environment (WITBE) is a project based in South Yorkshire. It aims to encourage, motivate and inspire women and girls to choose construction and the built environment as a career.
www.shu.ac.uk / witbe /

Let's Twist project

This is a national project run by Bradford and Ilkley College to encourage and support women and girls into engineering and construction careers.
www.letstwist.bradfordcollege.ac.uk

Free to choose – tackling gender barriers to better jobs

The EOC has carried out a two-year investigation looking at why women and men continue to work in traditional jobs and why young people choose apprenticeships and other vocational training in traditional sectors.
The investigation focused on five sectors where there are currently skills shortages and an imbalance in the concentration of women and men : male-dominated were construction, engineering, plumbing and ICT; female dominated was child-care.
www.eoc.org.uk / segregation

6 Raising boys' achievement

Schools that have been active in addressing the underachievement of boys relative to girls have often found that achievement of girls as well as boys improves, so that the gap between them still exists. Gender monitoring of achievement is important in order for schools to be clear about the extent of the gap between boys and girls. Both need clarity about the criterion for a successful piece of work, and some schools provide visual prompts in the classroom to remind pupils of the levels they are working at or towards and how they can make the next step up. Boys can benefit from approaches that take into account different learning styles and provide appropriate time for feedback within the lesson. Some schools have found that group work needs to be managed in the same detail as whole-class teaching. Students need to be taught how to work in a group and how to recognise the different roles that members will play in the group at different times. In some subjects single gender groups may be needed to focus different teaching and learning styles on boy and girl groups. Constructive competition has been found to work well with boys and girls.

Gender and achievement website

DfES website for teachers, LEAs and others with an interest in gender differences and achievement.
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk / genderandachievement

Using the national healthy school standard to raise boys' achievement

A toolkit for school improvement that addresses the current gender gap in pupil performance, produced by the DfES.
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk / genderandachievement /

Case studies

2A Challenging gender stereotyping in career choices

Context

The Doncaster 14–19 Pathfinder developed a range of projects to address gender stereotyping in students' careers choices. The lead organisation was Lifetime Careers and the pathfinder partners include the LEA, 11 schools, two colleges, Business Education – South Yorkshire, training providers, Connexions and the Doncaster Education City project.

Three different approaches were tested out by the Doncaster 14–19 Pathfinder: the Skills Road Show, Women into the Built Environment (WITBE) and the Developing Dads programme.

Skills Road Show

This is a 'hands on' initiative aimed at Key stage 4 students who were given the opportunity to 'taste' a variety of vocational courses, including hair and beauty, catering and hospitality, motor vehicle maintenance, construction and engineering. Before the Skills Road Show, there had been a careers convention where students had collected lots of leaflets but, it was generally acknowledged, had gained little insight into what a course or career would really be like. For the Skills Road Show, a number of different training providers, colleges and employers transported their staff and their equipment to Doncaster schools.

Women into the Built Environment

WITBE was specifically targeted at encouraging female students to consider careers in the construction industry. This involved collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University in conjunction with JIVE and offered school-aged girls the chance to learn about practical construction work by undertaking activities such as house surveying, design modification and visiting a construction site.

Developing Dads programme

This programme was initially developed with funding from SureStart Plus. Its core aim was to work with young fathers to try to increase their confidence and self-esteem. Referrals to the programme were made from a number of sources: schools, health professionals, social services and the Connexions service. The young men were supported in taking responsibility for their children and in finding employment. Pathfinder

funding allowed a programme worker to visit schools. Sessions addressed gender stereotyping in careers and the impact of terminology and the media on young people's perceptions of appropriate gender roles, as well as discussing differential rates of pay.

Although this programme was originally targeted at boys and young men, the sessions in the schools involved both boys and girls and aimed to raise aspirations for both groups.

Successes

All schools were invited to take part in the Skills Road Show. It was left to the schools to decide whether to target Year 9, 10 or 11. Typically, approximately 150 students took part from each school. In total 1437 young people had visited the Skills Road Show, to date. The Skills Road Show significantly increased the number of young people in Doncaster schools who can 'taste' different types of vocational course.

Students appreciated the more adult atmosphere of the taster sessions, compared with their normal school environment. Although this was only a one-off event for the young people, there was evidence that it had increased their levels of confidence in thinking about their future. For some of the young people with disabilities who had been apprehensive about entering the world of work, the experience had been a positive one, suggesting to them possibilities for the future. Where the event had been evaluated by schools, the feedback was positive: the young people had enjoyed the 'hands-on' features of the activities within the different types of vocations being showcased; and it had raised awareness of possible curriculum and career pathways. Schools had also forged closer links with local training providers as a result of the Skills Road Show. In the case of the special school, these new links had afforded the opportunity for its students to go out subsequently to some training providers.

Two Doncaster schools were involved with WITBE. The female students interviewed understood and supported the rationale behind events such as WITBE. The opportunity to undertake a 'taster' in a non-traditional occupational sector within a female-only group was valued. Girls felt more confident in this environment. Collaboration between Doncaster Pathfinder and Sheffield Hallam University was cited as effective. The opportunity to experience a variety of hands-on activities was valued by the students interviewed.

The Developing Dads sessions challenged young people's stereotypical beliefs about gender roles, both in the workplace and in the home. Terms such as 'matron' and 'sister' were unpicked and the effect terminology can have on perceptions of careers was discussed. A male play worker was invited to one session, in order to present the students with a positive role model of a man in a non-traditional occupation.

Learning points

There was little parental involvement in these projects, apart from parents giving consent for their child's participation, where this was required. Evidence gathered throughout the research suggested that a major barrier to challenging young people's stereotypical choices is their own entrenched attitudes and those of their parents. Both the Skills Road Show and the WITBE project organisers commented on the need to involve more female role models, both to discuss their experiences of the jobs and career pathways, and also to act as mentors. There was general agreement that finding female role models is often problematic. In addition, there are issues relating to funding the costs of their time and travel, which is exacerbated if the women are self-employed.

In the early Skills Road Shows, young people were able to choose which activities to 'taste'. Most of the young people were reluctant to try something different. There was a strong case here for ensuring that all students are given the opportunity to taste a variety of courses, including those that are non-traditional. Ideally, the aim should be for programmes which not only introduce young females to non-traditional occupational sectors, but also provide mentors to them throughout their training and early careers to help them to overcome the barriers involved in working in a traditionally male-dominated environment.

(Source: Doncaster 14–19 Pathfinder)

2B Fit 4 Employment project

Context

The Fit 4 Employment project is a collaboration of five schools, an FE college, and a local construction company, the Esh Group, in Durham. The project began in 2002 as a partnership of a mainstream comprehensive school, an independent school for pupils with special educational needs, and the Esh Group. The Esh Group comprises 11 autonomous companies each specialising in a specific section of the construction industry. In 2003, the project applied for and was granted pathfinder status, and expanded to include a further three schools. Fit 4 Employment is open to all Year 11 students in the four mainstream schools. For those students from the special school, the project is only open to Year 11 students with moderate learning difficulties, as it is thought that these students are the ones who would benefit most. Since the project has been operating, female students have shown the same high level of enrolling for the first phase of the project as male students.

The project

The main aims of Fit 4 Employment were to:

- engage employers in relationships and activities with the schools
- extend the curriculum outside the schools
- provide employability skills
- engage young people in educational activities that they see as relevant to them.

From the point of view of the Esh Group, the project is helping to address skills shortages locally in the construction industry by enabling the company to recruit young people who had shown good skills and positive attitudes to work while they had been involved on the project. The young people recruited at the end of each year by the company were following an apprenticeship programme.

The first phase of Fit 4 Employment, known as Week 1, takes place during the autumn term. Throughout the term, groups of around 10 to 12 students participate in activities for one week at the Esh Group's training centre. About 120 students were involved in 2004. This first week is spent mainly on generic and employability skills, with students typically working in groups of four. The work is led by trainers from the Esh Group's training company, with the tasks undertaken set within the broad context of construction.

Students then have the option of deciding whether or not they wish to continue with the project. For 2004/05, 60 students showed an interest in going on to the second phase of the project, Week 2, which takes place in the spring term. Of these, about 40% were female students.

Much of the work of Week 2 was focused on skills relating to particular construction job roles (such as joinery, plumbing, landscaping, quantity surveying and, finance), again with students working in small teams. At this time, Fit 4 Employment has on occasions made use of female role models working in the construction industry, such as civil engineers, but there are few such workers locally.

Week 3 takes place in the summer, after students have left school. The 60 or so students who had participated in Week 2 are cut to 30. For this period, each student is paired up with an employee of the Esh Group, and undertakes appropriate activity relating to that employee's profession. At the end of the project, around 20 students are be offered employment with the Esh Group linked to an apprenticeship programme, as was the case for the 2003/04 project when 10 male and 10 female students were offered jobs.

Successes

Students reported that they had enjoyed working at the Esh Group's training centre, and also at the company's main site, working in an adult environment on a range of tasks that they found stimulating. The Esh Group has devoted considerable time to devising meaningful activity, giving students appropriate experiences of working in teams within a construction theme, and is continuing to look at developing the materials and teaching and learning approaches. The model of this project, with a series of connected 'weeks' in which student numbers are reduced throughout the programme leading to a number of offered jobs, is one that the LEA is particularly interested in developing in other areas of the county.

A particular strength of Fit 4 Employment was the support and advice offered to young people through the Connexions service. A Connexions adviser works with all schools in the project throughout all its phases. This work includes:

- conducting 'personality assessments' of participating students so that they are aware individually of their styles of working

- supporting students in applying for the project and in progressing from one phase to the next

- interviewing students who are hoping to continue

- supporting students while they are working in their groups at the training centre

- tracking all students when they leave school.

The competitive nature of progressing from one phase of the project to the next, with the possibility of employment with an apprenticeship programme at the end, was a powerful motivating factor for students throughout Year 11. According to the head teacher of one of the schools, Fit 4 Employment was having a positive impact on attainment, school attendance, punctuality and the reduction in exclusions. He said: 'The Fit 4 Employment project has galvanised students' purpose about what they want to do for the rest of their lives.'

(Source: Durham 14–19 Pathfinder)

2C Raising boys' achievement through CPD

Context

Raising the achievement of boys has been a subject of concern at Greenford High School for the best part of eight years. It is an issue that has gradually been tackled with greater sophistication as a result of increased training and staff development. Greenford High School is a mixed comprehensive situated in West London. Of nearly 1500 pupils, over 90% come from ethnic minorities, predominantly but not exclusively Asian, including over 80% who speak an additional language at home. The school has progressed significantly in recent years with the five grade A*–C GCSE results rising from 20% to 62%. However, even within the context of such success, the gap between boys' and girls' achievement continues to be a primary issue for staff development.

Whole-school strategy

Within school, the issue was first raised at staff meetings within the context of the whole school, before being discussed within separate curriculum areas, where debate could be informed by the department's own breakdown of results by gender. At the same time, work that the school had undertaken with Thames Valley University to study language use within Greenford High allowed staff to consider the varying language needs of boys and girls. This work led to each department creating their own individual set of targets addressing language and gender issues. A whole school Inset day on the purpose and nature of effective assessment also contributed to thinking about how this area could best address boys' needs.

The next step was to increase the profile of the issue, inviting an external speaker with some expertise in the area to train all of the teaching staff during an Inset day. We chose an ex-deputy head whose work in this area became well known to teachers after *Panorama*'s 'The Future is Female' was broadcast. His views and suggested methods divided the staff almost equally between converts and those decidedly less enthusiastic; however, debate was never less than interesting and the issues involved could hardly have been raised with more vitality and enthusiasm. The speaker's style, a mixture of provocatively challenging assumptions while offering practical techniques for the classroom, led to endless debate on this area, both formal and informal, for weeks to come. The training was a great success in terms of widening the debate on boys' performance to all areas of the school and staff room. It became obvious that the first step in developing staff in this area was not simply one of raising awareness but of putting the issue vocally and prominently at the top of the school's agenda.

From this point on, staff development became more diverse and less centralised. Departments met during training evenings to discuss the suggestions made by the trainer and to decide which areas to adopt as a trial. These were later evaluated and many were subsequently integrated into departmental development plans. When discussing professional development needs with staff within their departments, curriculum managers would encourage pupils' interest and further training in this subject. Awareness of the issue was further promoted through the training of our newly qualified teachers, at weekly meetings and training weekends, and by individual members of staff researching their MA degrees, supported by the school.

Successes

A number of strategies were introduced with positive results. Girls were seated next to boys in class, which provided a little more maturity for the boys and gave examples of risk-taking in answering questions to the girls. Teachers in some departments were encouraged to invite boys and girls in turn to give answers to questions in class to ensure they were treated equally. Single sex assemblies were started in order to challenge boys to compete with the girls and achieve similar results. Acknowledging that boys are 'competitive and hierarchical' and seek 'immediate gratification' (theories advanced by the trainer) led to the introduction of weekly news and general knowledge quizzes during tutorial times for all years in the school.

Attendance improved when forms and individuals had to compete for the best attendance and were suitably rewarded. Underachievers were targeted, especially at Key stage 4, and interviewed by a learning mentor at regular intervals. Sixth form boys were used as learning mentors, classroom support and, most importantly, role models for certain targeted students. The limited concentration span of boys was addressed by encouraging teachers to set shorter and more achievable tasks with similarly shorter deadlines for homework or coursework. Homework is now often set with a time limit – spend 15 minutes on a particular task – rather than left open-ended. Teachers were encouraged to use writing frames with their students to help them to structure their work.

It was suggested that boys are 'post-analytical', preferring to act first and evaluate later. This encourages risk-taking, but is not much use in an exam that requires analysis of an unexpected task before undertaking it. Boys are therefore taught to plan their work from Year 7 onwards. The recognition that male role models are important for boys led to the English department increasing the number of male teachers from one to five in a department of eight, although English is traditionally perceived as a 'female subject'. Results have improved considerably.

The school's experience suggests that in order to develop staff it is not enough simply to raise awareness of boys' underachievement: the topic needs to be placed at the top of the agenda. Disagreement over the issue, because of its social implications, is inevitable but should be welcomed. Anything that keeps the debate alive and at the forefront of teachers' minds and their professional development should be encouraged. Outside expertise must be used in tandem with internal training, but such training must eventually be differentiated to allow individuals and separate curriculum areas to address their particular concerns and needs. Above all, there can be no room for complacency. The boys' results improved impressively, but the girls continued to improve at an even faster rate. Staff development needs to focus on raising achievement of all students!

(Source: Greenford High School, Ealing)

3 | Special needs

Introduction

The term 'special educational needs' is used to cover a wide range of educational needs. In this audit of materials, it is used to refer to young people with disabilities and / or learning difficulties. The White Paper *14–19 education and skills* recognises that learners with different kinds of special needs will require different kinds of support:

There are…several very different groups in need of additional support in order to make the most of the new 14–19 phase. We want to ensure that those with special educational needs have the support that they need in order to progress and achieve.

DfES 2005a

Personalised learning is the main strategy for ensuring that differing needs are met, and as part of this the new Framework for Achievement will contain coherent provision below Level 2, including bite-sized qualification units. In addition, as a way of ensuring that learners with disabilities have an entitlement to all aspects of 14–19 provision, the government intends to extend the Disability Discrimination Act to cover general qualifications.

It is important that all young people have a free choice of educational pathway, since some symptoms of learning difficulties may mask academic ability. There should be no assumption that young people with particular disabilities or needs are more or less suited to a particular pathway. If a vocational pathway is deemed by learners, carers and staff to be most appropriate, it should be available, even if the learner has physical disabilities or sensory impairments.

Many of the pathfinders included special schools in their partnership arrangements, but only a few aimed interventions specifically at young people with disabilities.

The issues to be addressed are:

- the identification of appropriate pathways
- developing approaches to learning that can take place at different paces
- providing support from employers.

General references on special needs

Disability Rights Commission website
The website of the Disability Rights Commission provides information on the law, education and employment rights of people with disabilities. It also publishes guidance for schools, colleges and employers.
www.drc-gb.org

Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, DfES, 2001
This code of practice outlines the rights of learners with special educational needs and the responsibilities of LEAs, schools and other interested parties in meeting these needs.
www.teachernet.gov.uk

The SEN toolkit
The special educational needs (SEN) toolkit contains practical advice on how to implement the code of practice and should be read and used in conjunction with the code of practice. Chapter 10 is relevant to staff working with young people aged 13–19.
www.teachernet.gov.uk / wholeschool / sen / teacherlearningassistant / toolkit

Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools
Every Child Matters is a government initiative to ensure the well-being of all children from 0 to 19 years. Through a multi-agency approach, IT aims to ensure that they have the support to 'be healthy', 'stay safe', 'enjoy and achieve', 'make a positive contribution' and 'achieve economic well-being'. The links to 'Education, training and employment' show aspects of the document related to 14–19 education and special educational needs.
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Removing Barriers to Achievement
Building on the proposals outlined in Every Child Matters, Removing Barriers to Achievement sets a 'new agenda for improvement and action at national and local level'.
www.teachernet.gov.uk

Equals
Equals is a national organisation for teachers of pupils with learning difficulties within special school and mainstream education. The website provides information about publications, events, research, teaching and learning, and assessment. It includes pages on 14–19 provision, and information about Moving On, a flexible post-16 curriculum, which allows for students to be assessed and awarded nationally moderated certificates.
www.equals.co.uk

Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools, Ofsted, 2004
This is a report of special needs provision in 115 mainstream schools visited during 2003.
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Through inclusion to excellence, LSC, November 2005
Through inclusion to excellence is a report of the steering group for the strategic review of the LSC's planning and funding of provision for learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities across the post-16 learning and skills sector.
www.lsc.gov.uk

Strategies

1 Learning at the appropriate pace

Effective strategies for personalised learning should involve helping learners to achieve goals at their own pace. This will include providing tailored information, advice and guidance so that learners have a clear map of what they aim to achieve and what they will move on to when they have achieved their goals. It is important for providers to collaborate with other organisations, to ensure that there are progression routes available for young people who achieve at a slower rate. Providers also need to use techniques that help learners make connections between learning and other areas of life, and to gain ownership of the learning process, if appropriate, through e-based personalised learning. The East Manchester Pathfinder case study (p54) illustrates how learning can be accelerated or decelerated, and how students made use of web-based individual learning plans.

QCA 14–19 learning
This website gives advice and guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) on the provision of programmes that vary pace and progression.
www.qca.org.uk /14–19/6th-form-schools /68_249.htm#PaceOfProgression

Your guide 2…e-learning : personalised learning, LSC Skills and Education Network, January 2006

This guide explains personalised learning and what the barriers to its adoption might be. It looks at the contribution that the strategic use of e-learning and ICT can make to provide a personalised learning experience for all learners, particularly those who have special curriculum, learning or additional educational needs.

www.senet.lsc.gov.uk / guide2/ elearnpersonalise / index.cfm

Success for All

By offering a complementary framework for implementing the 14–19 agenda, this website helps to ensure that education providers 'offer high quality learning to meet the needs of young people, adults and employers'.

www.successforall.gov.uk

2 Supported work experience and involvement of employers

Young people with disabilities or learning difficulties can benefit from work experience if care is taken in selecting and working closely with the host employer. Risk assessments need to be conducted and employers carefully briefed about the specific needs of pupils. Young people also need to be carefully briefed and supported by staff from their education or training organisation. The Durham Pathfinder case study (see p58) describes a project in which a small number of students with special educational needs were supported within a larger cohort of students on placement with a construction company.

Work experience : a guide for employers, DfES, 2002

This booklet offers general advice and practical guidance on the main issues relating to work experience placements for students in their last two years of compulsory schooling. It is intended to assist employers in establishing structured programmes that generate the maximum benefit for both employers and students. The general advice given in this booklet would need to be tailored to students with specific needs.

www.dfes.gov.uk /

The right start, work experience for young people : health and safety basics for employers, a leaflet produced by the Health and Safety Executive, 2002

Available from the Health and Safety Executive.

www.hse.gov.uk

Tommy and Tammy Trident Resources, Trident Trust
The materials include a health and safety booklet, a poster set and a work experience diary for use with students who need special help to prepare for a successful work experience. Diary £1, booklet £1, poster set £25.
www.thetridenttrust.org.uk / work_experience / tommy_tammy.asp

Into work experience, produced by Skill : National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, 2003
This is a concise guide for disabled people who are thinking about undertaking work experience. The guide includes practical suggestions and advice about finding and starting a work placement, legal rights, a section for employers, profiles written by disabled people about their work experience, and a reference section ; £6.50.
www.secure.skill.org.uk / index.asp#1

Providing work experience for disabled students : a good practice guide for further and higher education institutions, DfES, 2002
The guide provides information about the institution's duties for work placements and offers practical advice on what they can do to ensure quality work placement opportunities for disabled students.
www.lifelonglearning.co.uk / placements / front.htm

3 Use of e-learning and ICT

Specialist schools within pathfinder projects have developed e-learning resources for students with severe learning difficulties and physical disabilities to increase access to qualifications. Becta provides advice for teachers on use of ICT with learners having special or additional needs, including physical disabilities, dyslexia, learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, visual or hearing impairment, and English as an additional language. E-learning needs ongoing support staff time to introduce learners to the materials and ensure that they build their ICT skills. Materials must engage learners by being interactive and fun. The case study of the South Gloucestershire Pathfinder (p60) describes how teachers worked together to develop e-learning strategies so that learners with special needs could access Level 1 courses.

Becta – ICT advice for teachers

Becta provides advice and guidance on the Support for Learning page of its website. The guidance covers a variety of special or additional needs including physical disabilities, visual or hearing impairment, dyslexia, emotional and behavioural difficulties and English as an additional language. The site also provides a useful overview of recent developments in SEN policy and where to find key documents relating to the use of ICT.
www.ictadvice.org.uk

The e-strategy – Harnessing Technology : Transforming Learning and Children's Services, DfES, March 2005

This strategy describes the use of digital and interactive technologies to achieve a more personalised approach within all areas and sectors of education and training.
www.dfes.gov.uk / publications / e-strategy / docs / e-strategy.doc

Beeline

The Trident Trust produces this online package, which gives young people the skills required to develop their own CV, personal statement and individual learning plan through self-assessment quizzes.
www.thetridenttrust.org.uk

4 Dedicated provision

Special work-related courses have been developed for students working at Entry level and Level 1. Institutions themselves have developed some of them ; others are available from external organisations, for example the Trident Trust or Young Enterprise. Courses vary according to the particular needs of the learners, but all should provide good quality contacts from the world of work, demonstrate the relevance of learning to future working life, build employability skills, and encourage participants to achieve qualifications or awards.

Employability programme and trainers' package

This is a 13 half-day modular programme from the Trident Trust designed to improve the employability of young people. The programme is largely off-site and delivered with an ethos of positive reinforcement with young people taking responsibility for their learning.
www.thetridenttrust.org.uk

Business Dynamics

Business Dynamics is a business education and enterprise charity that offers a variety of programmes. Volunteers from companies offer young people opportunities to improve their skills in preparation for the world of work.

www.businessdynamics.org.uk

Young Enterprise team programme

This is provided by Young Enterprise and is specifically designed for young people aged 15–19 who have difficulties with learning and / or have disabilities. It offers practical experience of young people running their own company, supported by their teacher and volunteer business advisers. The programme operates over one or two years and material, staff training and business volunteers are provided by Young Enterprise.

www.young-enterprise.org.uk / programmes / tp.asp

A brief guide for personal advisers on E2E, produced by the Connexions Service National Unit, July 2003

This explains the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme, which aims to help those young people who are not yet ready or able to enter apprenticeship programmes or other employment directly. E2E is for students at Entry level or Level 1 and provides learners with support in basic and personal skills as well as vocational tasting.

www.lsc.org.uk

Case studies

3A   Managing accelerated and decelerated learning

Context

The East Manchester 14–19 Pathfinder aimed to increase flexibility at Key stage 4 by enabling students to vary their pace of learning according to their ability level and support needs. Local providers were used to competing for student numbers. The pathfinder partnership included mainstream high schools, city learning centres, UMIST, Connexions, schools, colleges, training providers, employer representatives, complementary education, which provides appropriate education away from school, and special schools. The Pathfinder also encountered practical difficulties in trying to establish 'joined-up' provision, such as timetabling differences between organisations, initially reducing opportunities for joint activities during the school day.

The 14–19 strategy manager oversaw project activities. The pathfinder coordinator role provided an impartial voice, essential to reduce competition and increase collaboration between local providers. The coordinator was skilled in change management approaches and able to facilitate organisational change, such as encouraging partnership organisations to dovetail timetables to increase opportunities for collaboration. Development time was therefore essential to address partnership challenges through regular meetings. A key concern for the Pathfinder was to raise awareness of young people's differing needs. The Pathfinder developed opportunities for young people to play an active role in partnership developments to inform this process, and ensure activities were well informed by the target group.

Varying the pace of learning

The Pathfinder offered both accelerated and decelerated learning opportunities at Key stage 4. Key stage 4 was offered over three years to all students in Years 9–11 to suit individual learners' needs, and enable students to be entered for GCSE examinations either at the end of Year 10 or Year 11. Accelerated provision enabled some young people to take GCSEs a year early. The partnership agreed a Year 11 curriculum for students completing GCSEs in Year 10. These students participated in curriculum extension activities in Year 11, such as developing enterprise abilities and team work skills through Duke of Edinburgh activities. Extended learning opportunities were made available for these students in 2005/06, for example, an AS level course in critical thinking.

Decelerated provision enabled learners at two special schools to start Key stage 4 a year later. Partnership collaboration enabled this cohort to study towards appropriate qualifications such as GNVQs, BTECs and applied GCSEs, and offered subjects of interest to young people such as horticulture. Level 1 BTEC certificates and diplomas were developed for delivery in 2005/06 to offer a more personalised curriculum.

Decelerated learning approaches also helped prepare students for life in the outside world. For example, the Pathfinder worked in partnership with two special schools and identified cohorts in mainstream schools, The Prince's Trust's Excel Club and Young Enterprise to deliver enterprise activities, supporting students completing Key stage 4 over three years. The Prince's Trust and Young Enterprise elements, which cut across the curriculum, helped learners prepare for life after school.

Varying the pace of learning at Key stage 4 was designed to improve post-16 progression routes by helping young people make appropriate choices. Information, advice and guidance provided essential support to help learners identify post-16 learner pathways. The Pathfinder promoted personalised learning approaches to encourage young people to take ownership of this process. A comprehensive web-based individual learning plan (ILP) system was developed and made accessible to all staff and students. Each participant was supported to develop and manage their ILP online. Participating schools used ILP information to support the planning and management of learning systems that could be tailored to students' needs.

Successes

All young people in Years 9–11 were offered the opportunity to participate in accelerated or decelerated activities at Key stage 4. The immediate results included improved student attendance and a reduction in exclusions. Schools reported increased engagement and motivation across Key stage 4, particularly in Year 9. School managers were confident that the increased flexibility and vocational curriculum would result in improved retention and achievement rates in the long term. Early indications of improved progression were provided by the cohort of 27 Year 11 students participating in complementary education through the Pathfinder. Three-quarters of the 2004/05 cohort secured progression routes into FE, apprenticeships or full-time employment.

A number of new qualifications and extra curricula activities were developed through the Pathfinder for delivery in 2005/06. For example, one school developed a Level 1 BTEC for delivery alongside Level 2, to provide differentiated, personalised learning in a number of subjects. An enterprise work experience project was developed with Manchester City Football Club, Aria Technology, the Manufacturing Institute and ASDA supermarket chain to give students an insight into the recycling industry.

(Source: East Manchester 14–19 Pathfinder)

Contact

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3B E-individual learning plans

Context

The East Manchester 14–19 Pathfinder wanted to improve the support available to help young people make informed choices at Key stage 4 and post-16 progression routes, and make the most of opportunities offered through increased curriculum flexibility. Limited information on post-16 progression routes had reduced the impetus for some students to accelerate their learning or broaden their subject choice.

Improved independent advice and guidance

Increased access to independent advice and guidance (IAG) was needed to illustrate progression routes to students, to raise awareness of accelerated learning and non-traditional subject choices. The Pathfinder provided IAG support for all learners to identify appropriate post-16 learning pathways. Connexions personal advisers provided IAG sessions for Key stage 4 students, and this was subsequently extended to Year 8 students making subject choices to begin Key stage 4 in Year 9. However, the Pathfinder viewed personalised learning approaches as the most appropriate form of tailored support to help students take ownership and responsibility for their own learning. The pathfinder partnership included city learning centres, students at UMIST, the 14–19 senior managers group and young people.

e-ILPs

The Pathfinder initially developed web-based individual learning plans (ILPs) to help students taking part in accelerated and decelerated learning make informed choices, for example, Key stage 4 students taking GCSE options a year early. The electronic ILP (e-ILP) also provided targeted support for learners in Year 8 and complementary education (appropriate education provided away from school), choosing decelerated learning options. The ILP was seen as a motivational tool, enabling young people to chart distance travelled along their career pathway. Developing the e-ILP in a user-friendly format was essential to ensure take-up.

The Pathfinder commissioned students from University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) to develop the ILP and young people helped design the tool. Schools, Connexions and Jobcentre Plus also collaborated on the ILP development, providing information to help young people examine their longer term options. Consultative groups were held with between 600 and 700 Year 8 students at three local schools to pilot the e-ILPs and gain feedback before the live launch. Each participant was supported by their school to develop a comprehensive ILP to inform their personal choices. The web-based ILP system was accessible to all staff and learners, and students were encouraged to manage their ILP online.

Equal opportunities strategies

A key objective of the ILP process was to help young people make informed choices and enhance their employment prospects. The ILP process promoted equal opportunities by raising awareness of opportunities in non-traditional subjects and local growth employment sectors. Activities included 95 students attending a 'Careers into Health' day. A mentoring project was developed with the Joint Mental Health Team called Boys into Health. Girls were encouraged to participate in a Young Women into Management programme, which provided an opportunity to discuss career options with women role models working as a director of marketing, a chairperson of a concrete firm, and a CEO from the Manufacturing Institute. Twelve female students from Year 10 participated in this programme. Heather Small (from the band M People) helped promote the event and acted as a strong positive role model. The ILP process also provided an opportunity to increase awareness of Level 4 opportunities, to help raise aspirations and progression rates. Activities included university summer schools and university undergraduate mentoring projects, such as a mentoring scheme to support girls into science, engineering and construction. These activities also supported local economic regeneration priorities by encouraging skills development in target employment sectors.

Successes

The e-ILP was subsequently adapted for use by Years 9, 10 and 11, and post-16 learners. The e-ILP was rolled out to all Key stage 4 learners in East Manchester. It was continually updated and adapted according to user feedback. Staff training to help deliver ILPs to post-16 learners was provided. A city-wide training event took place at the end of the second year of the Pathfinder to ensure all staff were skilled in ILP delivery before the roll-out of ILPs across Manchester in 2005/06. Two pathfinder schools established staffed independent learning centres, with extended opening hours, to promote self-directed learning and the use of e-ILPs.

The success of the e-ILP approach in raising awareness of post-16 progression routes has been widely disseminated. The Pathfinder developed links with a number of Level 4 initiatives to aid progression. For example, the Pathfinder supported the development of an initiative, which New East Manchester Ltd designed to provide bursaries for post-16 students not in education employment or training to overcome financial barriers to continue their education and training. The Pathfinder also developed progression routes with the local Social Employment Agency, and negotiated for more than 100 construction apprenticeships. The e-ILP approach has also been adapted for use by adults participating in a family learning project in Wythenshawe, to help students and parents make informed training and employment choices.

(Source : East Manchester 14–19 Pathfinder)

Contact

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3C From work-related learning into work

Context

The Durham 14–19 Pathfinder wanted to develop work-related learning in conjunction with local employers and colleges to improve and expand progression routes into local jobs. The project built on previous collaboration between a large local employer and a school seeking specialist status to address skills shortages, and was extended to include five local schools, an FE college and training provider. The lead partner was the Esh Group, the largest indigenous construction business company in the north east. A steering group and implementation group managed the project. A member of the FE college's construction department provided specialist input to the development of the training programme, in collaboration with the training provider, schools and local employer.

Training weeks

The Pathfinder developed a new area on the project website for learners to access core curriculum lessons missed by attending work-related learning. However, competing demands during the training weeks led to school work being viewed as a low priority, and some students did not have internet access at home. Training demands also limited the time that students were able to spend on key skills work, and suggested the need for additional follow-up activities at school. Information, advice and guidance formed an integral aspect of this programme.

The training programme consisted of three phases. In phase one, 120 students from Years 10 and 11 took part in a one-week training programme in general employability skills. Of these, 60 students progressed onto phase two, a one-week course on the construction industry. Phase three provided an opportunity for 30 students to gain work experience on a construction site. The project also provided a high level of support to four students with special educational needs, enabling them to be integrated with mainstream students in phase two. These students were supported to complete basic skills tests.

The project developed a transition route for students from school to college, for those going on to combine employment with apprenticeship training at the college. The project prepared students for this transition by providing training and support in the completion of Construction Industry Training Board tests, which will form part of apprenticeship entry criteria in the future.

Successes

Following course completion, the construction company offered 20 students from Year 11 apprenticeship jobs. Students viewed the course as enjoyable and worthwhile, helping to inform their career development. The Pathfinder worked to develop sustainable transitions for students with SEN by exploring support arrangements with the Welfare to Work organisation and employer in the longer term.

The Pathfinder explored opportunities to roll out the programme to other local schools and remained committed to this process. A training provider from the Esh Group volunteered as a school governor, informing the school's business planning process and action plan to engage local employers.

The project received recognition from the School Effectiveness Team for Telford and the Wrekin, and gained an award for excellence in construction at the Constructing Excellence in the North East awards ceremony. The pathfinder model is to be replicated by providers in North Tyneside. A project website was developed to promote the project to students and providers.

(Source: Durham 14–19 Pathfinder)

Contact

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3D Supporting learners with special education needs

Context

The Pathfinder wanted to develop an inclusive 14–19 curriculum framework to engage and support all young people across the ability range. There was a need specifically to improve provision for special education needs learners to support this process. The Pathfinder wanted to challenge the lack of synergy in school timetables which, in the past, had resulted in specialised provision being planned individually at different schools. The benefits of sharing information and resources could also be exploited through the Pathfinder. Schools were protective of their budgets, and managers needed to be encouraged to pool resources to develop opportunities for 'joining-up' local provision.

The Pathfinder was led by the South Gloucestershire (Kingswood Partnership) Pathfinder, which had encouraged collaboration between local providers for the past 15 years. The Kingswood Partnership had helped providers share post-16 courses to some extent, given the LEA requirement for all local secondary schools to have sixth forms. However, significant collaboration had only been achieved in recent years by introducing blocked timetables, ringfencing common time for activities across provider institutions.

The Kingswood Partnership

A great deal of development work still needed to take place to create a fully collaborative delivery model across the Kingswood Partnership. The Pathfinder therefore pooled resources, such as staff release time for fortnightly half-day joint meetings, to develop effective communication channels, common objectives, and working practices between the six participating schools, FE college and Connexions. The pathfinder coordinator viewed the resulting collaborative model as a 'bottom up reform process', with some participating schools subsequently using these approaches to influence their individual school management systems.

Pathfinder activity focused on staff and curriculum development, and a key aspect of this work was to improve the targeting of special needs provision and e-learning to support SEN learners. Teacher learner groups (TLGs) were established to take forward curriculum developments. A teacher representative from each school was involved in each TLG and the Pathfinder funded supply cover to enable them to meet fortnightly. The group leaders, known as development managers, received training from the International Learning and Research Centre to enable them to chair and direct the activities of their TLG. The TLGs provided a catalyst for tangible collaboration and generated attitudinal change among teachers. They demonstrated the greater opportunities for curriculum improvement derived from pooling teacher development time and resources to design comprehensive and transferable materials, and establish a common curriculum.

The purpose of the SEN TLG was to adapt and transfer improvements made to the quality of wider 14–19 education to SEN provision. In some cases, participating schools identified a common, dedicated timetable slot to provide college-link courses. The SEN TLG enabled SEN developments to be piloted and implemented across the Pathfinder. This was a significant development as local schools had previously purchased SEN provision individually from the City of Bristol College. SEN provision was improved to increase student access to a broader, more flexible curriculum.

The SEN TLG developed e-learning tools to help SEN learners develop the skills and aptitudes required to access Entry level qualifications. Representatives from a specialist school in the TLG informed the development of e-learning tools for students with severe learning difficulties and physical disabilities in specialist subjects. The Pathfinder was committed to enabling all students to use personalised learning tools.

The e-learning materials were accessed on the pathfinder extranet, built by teachers to be compatible across all LEA schools. The extranet also provided unified guidance and a learner information portfolio to support learners in managing their own learning. The SEN TLG tailored these tools for SEN users. An information booklet was also produced to promote SEN provision to learners and parents.

Successes

The Pathfinder's collaborative working arrangements extended the cluster model for 14–19 education and training established by the original Kingswood Partnership. The Pathfinder was committed to developing a sustainable curriculum structure. The collaborative working practices developed through the TLGs increased local staff capacity and willingness to develop common curricula in the longer term. Staff feedback consistently reported the value teachers placed on the TLGs as providing a forum for teachers to contribute to the process of change and improve 14–19 curricula through informed debate and consensus. All the Pathfinder's delivery centres were committed to sustaining and, where possible, enhancing delivery. For example, the inclusive curriculum framework development for the local area was continued through a series of activities, including the development of specialist diplomas with the City of Bristol College, continuing skills development work with specialist schools, and producing a three-year planning cycle to extend advice and guidance support for local progression routes.

(Source: South Gloucestershire (Kingswood Partnership) 14–19 Pathfinder)

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4 | Disaffection

Introduction

Disaffection of students in the 14–19 phase of learning has a number of different causes, many of which overlap with other aspects of disadvantage. Disaffected learners may experience low expectations from schools that focus on academic achievement as the main criterion of success. There may also be conflicting values between home and school, where the need to contribute to family income is seen as more important than gaining qualifications. Disaffected young people may become involved in truancy as part of peer group norms, adding to low expectations of teachers. They may suffer also from a lack of helpful advice about appropriate pathways for their futures.

Many of these disaffected students disengage from education, employment and training at 16+. A disproportionate number are from minority ethnic groups and 'looked after' young people; many have been previously excluded from school and there may be evidence of difficulties at home. Some disaffected and 'hard to reach' young people resent professional intrusion in their lives, but support from adults whom they respect, and contact with voluntary sector agencies, can sometimes provide a route out of their situation.

Many pathfinder organisations have tackled the general issue of disaffection and the case studies illustrate some of their innovative approaches. The DfES's 14–16 Re-engagement Programme, part of the 14–19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan, focuses on strategies that have been found to work.

The main issues to be tackled are:

- low self-esteem and aspirations, and negative peer pressure
- alienation from learning because of previous failure and perceived irrelevance of education
- financial hardship post-16.

General references on disaffection

Your guide 2… engaging young people: what motivates young learners to engage? LSC Skills and Education Network, December 2005
This guide explores the reasons behind low motivation and gives providers practical advice on motivating young people to engage in learning.
http : // senet.lsc.gov.uk / guide2 / youngmotivate / index.cfm

Your guide 2… engaging young people: overcoming the barriers LSC Skills and Education Network, November 2005
There are many barriers to participation that cause young people not to engage in or to drop out of education and training. *Your guide 2* looks at some of the most common barriers and suggests ways providers can help young people overcome them and re-engage with learning.
http : // senet.lsc.gov.uk / guide2 / youngbarriers / index.cfm

Transitions: a Social Exclusion Unit interim report on young adults, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005
A report of work being carried out by the Social Exclusion Unit aiming to narrow inequalities and improve opportunities for the most disadvantaged people, with a particular focus on improving service delivery.
www.socialexclusion.gov.uk

Survey of alternative education provision 2003
This research report by TNS Social Research for the DfES gives an overview of all types of alternative curriculum provision based on a survey of 150 LEAs.
www.dfes.gov.uk / behaviourandattendance / about / newsdetails.cfm ?id=11

Extending work-relating at Key stage 4
This is the 2001 Ofsted report based on 60 visits to examine extended work-relating programmes under the then disapplication regulations.
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QCA's work-related learning section of their 14–19 website includes good practice guidance for schools and their partners in setting up and running extended work-related learning programmes.
www.qca.org.uk / 14–19/11-16-schools / 110_1388.htm

Strategies

1 Individual guidance and support

Schools and Connexions services identify those students most likely to need additional guidance and support at Key stage 4. Where progression to post-16 education and training has been identified as a particular cause for concern, with a number of students at risk of dropping out, specialist transition advisers or progression mentors have been allocated to schools. Programmes of structured guidance and support for Foundation level and at-risk students have included senior staff, learning mentors, community mentors and personal advisers. The case study of work with progression mentors at Central Gateshead Sixth Form (CG6; p77) illustrates the success of this approach. Sometimes a 'learning broker' can be a useful tool. Learning brokers – people who act as matchmakers between individuals and organisations providing education or training – can play a vital role in encouraging the 'education-shy' to get involved in learning.

Your guide 2... 14–19: individual support for learners, LSC Skills and Education Network, December 2005
This guide looks at how collaboration between schools, colleges and other partner organisations can offer effective support for learners aged 14–19. It describes some of the obstacles to 'joined up' support and suggests practical action for providers.
www.senet.lsc.gov.uk/guide2/1419support/index.cfm

Learning brokerage: building bridges between learners and providers, LSDA, December 2005
The report of a two-year study carried out by the Institute for Access Studies at Staffordshire University. It revealed that learning brokerage is well established and widespread.
www.lsda.org.uk

Learning brokerage in the workplace, LSDA, December 2005
The report of a study carried out by researchers at Leeds Metropolitan University and the University of Hull. This study looked specifically at the role of intermediaries, such as union learning representatives, within the workplace.
www.lsda.org.uk

Tackling NEETS: research on actions and other factors that can contribute to a reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training [NEET]; Connexions research brief no. CNX 01 2003
A research summary, which identifies actions that have successfully contributed to a reduction in the numbers of young people who are not in the NEET category.
www.connexions.gov.uk

2 Mentoring

Mentoring programmes for disaffected learners take place in schools, colleges, training organisations, places of employment and voluntary organisations. Some mentoring programmes target specific groups, such as girls or members of minority ethnic groups. Usually they are aimed at improving the aspirations and achievement of young people who are not meeting their full potential or who are disaffected. In some circumstances, organisations work with mentors from outside the organisation; but use of internal staff is a common approach and can involve staff at all levels – from senior management to non-teaching staff. The case study of Glyn Technology School (p75) describes the use of support staff and teaching assistants as mentors and contact points for parents. Mentoring programmes always require adequate training and support of mentors, and the appointment of a mentoring coordinator is important for the success of the programme.

Your guide 2… mentoring, LSC Skills and Education Network, December 2004
This guide explores the issues surrounding mentoring of young learners.
www.senet.lsc.gov.uk / guide2 / mentoring / index.cfm

National Mentoring Network
The National Mentoring Network was set up in 1994 and is funded by membership fees and support from the DfES and the Home Office. It promotes the development of mentoring, offers advice and support to those wishing to set up or develop mentoring programmes and is a forum for the exchange of information and good practice. It has been renamed the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation.
www.mandbf.org.uk

Mentoring : a handbook for business and schools working together, Linda Appiah, Runnymede Trust and the Bank of England, June 2001

A handbook aimed at business outlining the steps in running a successful mentoring programme. The handbook was written for companies involved in minority ethnic mentoring programmes, but the principles apply to all good programmes.

www.runnymedetrust.org

Mentoring students and young people : a handbook of effective practice, Andrew Miller, Kogan Page, 2002

The best book on mentoring in an education and community context in the UK, but using international case studies as well as the best of UK practice.

3 Special programmes

A range of special programmes have been designed specifically for the hard to reach. Some of these are provided out of school, some in school, some in colleges, and some by partnerships between schools, colleges, training providers and / or community groups. Post-16, E2E programmes have been particularly successful in raising participation for those whose achievement was low at Key stage 4. In some areas, bridging, pre-E2E courses have also been developed. The Neighbourhood Support Fund, managed by Connexions, has enabled small voluntary groups to work with disaffected young people on community projects, which they themselves have planned, and has helped 68% of participants to move on to further education or employment.

The Neighbourhood Support Fund : a model for delivering services to 'hard-to-reach' groups

An initiative involving a multiplicity of small, community-based projects working with 50,000 hard-to-reach 13–19 year olds, due to run until March 2006. The summary provides key features and messages for policy-makers, managers and field workers. A good practice guide has been produced : *Transforming lives: re-engaging young people through community-based projects.*

www.connexions.gov.uk / partnerships / documents / NSF.pdf

My mates are dead jealous 'cause they don't get to come here : an analysis of the provision of alternative, non-school-based learning activities for 14–16 year olds in the East Midlands, Paul Baker et al, LSDA, 2003

This report presents findings from a research project focused on the extent of alternative educational provision for young people aged 14–16 and on the experiences of the young people and the practitioners involved.
www.lsda.org.uk / pubs

A brief guide for personal advisers on E2E, produced by the Connexions Service National Unit, July 2003, explaining the Entry to Employment programme

E2E aims to help those young people who are not yet ready or able to enter apprenticeship programmes or other employment directly. E2E is for students at Entry level to Level 1 and provides learners with support in basic and personal skills as well as vocational tasting.
www.lsc.org.uk

Xl clubs

A Prince's Trust initiative, xl clubs have been going since 1998 and now serve around 9000 pupils in England in 820 clubs in 500 schools plus 70 clubs in Scotland. The clubs replace a subject on the curriculum for three lessons a week for the last two years of compulsory schooling. The clubs are aimed at the kind of students who are at risk of underachieving at school, either because they keep getting into trouble or truanting, or because they lack confidence, and for whom the current 14–19 curriculum has not enough to offer.
www.princes-trust.org.uk

Getting Connected

Getting Connected is a curriculum framework designed to help young adults on the margins of education and employment to reconnect with learning and foster their personal development. The framework is intended to enhance the self-esteem and emotional literacy of those young adults outside the formal education and training system. It is aimed primarily at young adults aged 16–25 but is also benefiting many aged 14–15.
www.gettingconnected.org.uk / introduction.htm

4 Vocational programmes and Young Apprenticeships

The provision of vocational programmes for 14–16 year olds is at the heart of increased choice and flexibility. They have been found to work successfully with many learners, and particularly with those who are disaffected. Courses can be short tasters, part-time Young Apprenticeships (while following core national curriculum subjects), and / or vocational GCSEs. The courses can be held at school, college, with training providers or employers. In some cases, vocational programmes are brokered for individual students. Short courses in employability skills have been offered to those at risk of dropping out at Key stage 4. Vocational taster courses with Open College Network accreditation have been provided by colleges for Year 11 students, and some one-day stand-alone courses have been provided on school premises by training providers, as illustrated by the Derbyshire Pathfinder case study (p72).

In the Hampshire Pathfinder programme (p74), mobile training units were set up by a private training provider and offered to schools that also provided support staff. The units are staffed by tutors qualified to deliver Entry level and Level 1 vocational courses in building and construction, including brickwork, carpentry and plumbing, and motor vehicle maintenance, and are capable of accommodating a maximum of 10 students at any one time.

For 16–19 year olds there is the possibility of following a largely vocational programme in the sixth form, at college or with a training organisation, or taking up an apprenticeship with an employer.

Guidance for coherent vocational programmes
QCA has devised a set of design principles, which can be used when planning vocational or largely vocational programmes for 16–19 year olds. They apply to the design of programmes at Levels 1, 2 and 3. Case studies of good practice are also provided.
www.qca.org.uk /14–19/6th-form-schools /68_242.htm

LSC apprenticeship website
This site has portals for young people, employers and partners and provides a newsletter every two months.
www.apprenticeships.org.uk / partners / news /

Vocational learning website
This is provided by the LSDA and gives information on all aspects of vocational courses and qualifications for teachers, students, parents and employers.
www.vocationallearning.org.uk / teachers / YoungApprenticeships / support / artdesign.asp

5 Innovative approaches using new technologies

There has been considerable development work involving the re-engagement of reluctant learners through the use of various new technologies, such as 'smart phones', personal digital assistants (PDAs), laptops and e-learning. E-learning has now become part of government strategy to transform teaching and learning, connect with the hard-to-reach and open up education to partnerships with other organisations. The strategy was published in March 2005. Mobile phones can provide users with access to a range of materials including quizzes, language courses, and collaborative learning capability using camera phones, games and so on. The case study of the use of PDAs at Thomas Adams School (p79) illustrates the range of uses and benefits accruing from this approach.

The e-Strategy – Harnessing Technology : Transforming Learning and Children's Services, DfES, March 2005
This strategy describes the use of digital and interactive technologies to achieve a more personalised approach within all areas and sectors of education and training.
www.dfes.gov.uk / publications / e-strategy / docs / e-strategy.doc

E-learning and technology : continuing professional development
This is a website provided by the LSDA to support teaching staff in the use of learning technologies. It contains links to resources, and examples of e-learning. There are also tools for self-assessment, examples of effective practice, support materials, including free DVDs and information about research and evaluation.
www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk /

Mobile technologies and the m-learning project, Jill Attewell, LSDA, 2005, ref no. 041923
The publication provides an update on the development of mobile phone technologies with the potential for supporting and / or delivering some elements of teaching and learning processes. It reports briefly on the work and key findings of the m-learning development project, which completed three years of work in September 2004.
www.lsda.org.uk

M-learning website, LSDA, Cambridge Training and Development and partners
This website provides information about training, events and resources available to find out more about m-learning. Cambridge Training and Development (CTAD) has developed a large pool of materials for m-learning. They vary from simple text messages to more complex, interactive multimedia designed to be delivered on handheld computers that can provide animations, sound and colour.
www.m-learning.org / resources.shtml

6 Financial support

Many young people, disaffected or not, experience financial barriers to participation in education, particularly those from lower income families. The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a weekly payment paid directly to qualifying young people who stay on in further education after the statutory leaving age. They may also receive incentive bonuses of £100 if they remain on their course and make good progress. The universal extension of the EMA, following the pilot, has contributed to raising participation and retention. One pathfinder project supported learners in their applications for the EMA and held an evening session where they were helped to complete the application form.

Education Maintenance Allowance, DfES, 2003
Web-based information explaining what an EMA is, who is entitled to it and how to get it.
www.dfes.gov.uk / financialhelp / ema / index.cfm ?SectionID=1

Case studies

4A Stand alone vocational courses

Context

Schools within the Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire Pathfinder Consortium have provided Year 10 students with a range of 'stand alone vocational courses', as a means of engaging young people likely to leave with few, if any, GCSEs. It was felt that the sense of accomplishment in achieving a work-based qualification at school would help to motivate underachieving students, and encourage them to pursue further training. In addition, some of the participating schools decided to offer these additional qualifications to students studying related courses at school, thereby offering them greater breadth.

The courses

The Consortium worked with the Derbyshire Network of Training Providers to agree work-based qualifications in a range of subjects: food hygiene, manual handling, health and safety, first aid and fire safety, each to be delivered in a day on school premises. The Consortium offered a programme of days to schools within the area on a first-come-first-served basis. The training providers offering this training were Chamber Training, St John's Ambulance, PS People Specialist and NLT Training.

Peter Jessop, the facilitator for the Derbyshire Network of Training Providers, said:

Activity of this nature is so important if training providers are serious about improving relationships with local schools and addressing the 14–19 agenda. Head teachers are very much under pressure to increase the vocational learning available for Key stage 4 students. Training providers, working in collaboration with schools, can play a major part in addressing this urgent need.

Qualified trainers delivered the courses, with places restricted to 12 students a course.

The feedback from schools and training providers was used to improve delivery of the next round of courses, which started in September 2004. It was agreed that schools and training providers need advance warning (ideally a month) in order to allocate appropriate rooms and a member of staff, inform students and send information to the parents or carers. To fit the delivery of the course into one school day, the start and finish times should be altered, or the amount of time allocated for breaks should

be reduced for students undertaking the courses. Some of the courses should take place over two days. A service level agreement, which all parties sign, needs to be in place to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Successes

During the autumn term 2003, 172 students from five schools within the area completed the courses. Only two did not achieve the qualification, and the training provider presented them with an in-house certificate of recognition. The success of the programme was reflected not only in the number of students achieving an accredited vocational qualification in one of the following subjects: food hygiene (32), health and safety (31), fire safety (32), first aid (54) and manual handling (23), but also in the comments the students made:

I found the course very interesting. I learnt new skills and terminology which will help me when I enter the world of work. I learnt about 'work symbols', health and safety at work, roles, responsibilities and how workers are protected.

All schools recognised the need to celebrate the students' achievements, and ensured that the presentation of certificates took place during assembly or awards evenings.

A deputy head teacher at Springwell Community School, who was instrumental in bringing about this programme of courses, said:

The short courses funded by Pathfinder provided an alternative qualification for over 50 students at our school. The courses were well received by all students. For most of them, this was the first 'real' qualification they have achieved and they were delighted with their success.

In 2004/05, 192 students completed courses in the following subjects: manual handling (36), first aid (48), health and safety (24), fire safety (60) and interview techniques (24).

(Source: Derbyshire 14–19 Pathfinder)

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4B   Mobile units for delivering vocational skills

Context

The Hampshire 14–19 Pathfinder covered two geographically distinct areas – East Hampshire and West Hampshire. The East Hampshire area is predominantly rural, centred on a few small market towns and large numbers of outlying villages. There are eight 11–16 schools and a sixth form college. Within the area there had been a history of poor access to vocational provision, partly because of travel difficulties and problems establishing viable group sizes. To address this, a local partnership of schools, colleges and training providers, led by the deputy heads, has put in place an appropriate curriculum at Entry level and Level 1. The partners have worked closely together to agree a common timetable for the vocational offer, share provision and find cost-effective solutions to the problems posed by the rural setting.

The mobile units

As a result of the partnership, a private training company, Look 2 Training Ltd, set up two mobile units, staffed by qualified tutors. One unit delivered building and construction, including brickwork, carpentry and plumbing. The other was set up for motor vehicle maintenance. Each unit was capable of accommodating a maximum of 10 students at any one time, and any school wishing to use the mobile units had to agree to provide access to classroom space and some supervisory support (usually a learning support assistant).

A successful trial of the construction unit took place over two terms with 10 Year 11 students, drawn from three schools. Following this, the two mobile units were made available to the Year 10 cohort in September 2004. A third unit was also added – a truck towing a mobile hairdressing salon that included 10 workstations, two backwash units, a small reception area, its own supply of water and a generator.

All three units offered two half-day sessions on a Wednesday, switching locations between schools at midday. Where necessary, pupils were transported, via minibus, to the school where their chosen option was taking place. The deputy head at the Petersfield School and chair of the East Hampshire Pathfinder group commented:

The mobile units have provided a really exciting opportunity to re-engage and re-motivate youngsters who were previously at risk of exclusion. They find the environment and the learning style highly appropriate.

Students received accreditation in the form of Open College Network units for the courses provided by the construction and motor vehicle unit, and the facilities within the hairdressing unit enable NVQ1 to be offered. The aims were to augment the mobile provision during Year 11, with a linked work-experience placement wherever possible. As the students progressed through Year 11, the careers guidance process led them towards appropriate work-based training or further education.

Successes

The students' reaction to the units was very positive. Equally positive feedback came from staff at the schools who were pleased with the effect the provision had on the attitude of those attending. The deputy head at Mill Chase Community School commented:

After only eight months, pupils further down the school are seeing what the mobile units are providing and are already talking about when it's their turn.

Source: Hampshire 14–19 Pathfinder
(East Hampshire)

Contact

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4C Mentoring by support staff

Context

Glyn Technology School for Boys is a comprehensive school for boys aged 11 to 18. It currently has 1257 pupils. It is located in a part of Surrey where it competes with grammar schools for pupils. The school's Ofsted report in 2000 described it as a good school with very good discipline. The training and development provided for all staff was described as a particular strength. Even though the attainment of the pupils on entry is average, their performance at Key stage 3 and GCSE is well above average.

Glyn Technology School has expanded the roles of many of its support staff and teaching assistants to take over several functions previously undertaken by teachers. They are involved in attendance monitoring, mentoring difficult students and parental contacts.

The project

Some support staff were already involved in monitoring student attendance, mentoring and providing behaviour support, and the head teacher aimed to involve as many of the teaching assistants, reprographic staff, administration staff and technical and ICT staff as would like to participate. Induction into these programmes was professionally addressed and all participants undergo a thorough preparation. The teacher who coordinates the mentoring scheme led the training. Additional mentor training was provided as and when appropriate as part of the school's Investors in People programme.

The head of pastoral care trained the team in attendance monitoring, supported by the education welfare officer. A clear process of identification, parental contact and appropriate communication was negotiated and agreed with everyone concerned.

Several support staff members were trained to be mentors to students who encounter difficulties in the school, in the school's 'personal pastoral plan'. One teaching assistant who works with children described her responsibilities:

My current case load includes a boy who cannot organise himself, and when he fails to take his medication he becomes a serious behavioural problem. Another suffers acute domestic difficulties, and this influences his behaviour in school. I am helping another boy to manage his anger and he is a special needs child as well; it is very frustrating for him. I am a part of the pastoral team and I work closely with the teachers. We compare notes, allocate responsibilities, and generally participate in the training together as and when appropriate.

When students are identified as a cause for concern by the school's care committee they are brought to the attention of the receptionist or one of her colleagues. When students are perceived as being suitable for mentoring they are involved in deciding who will be their mentors.

The head of the mentoring system negotiates with the students their choice of mentor. I think that this is a sensible system because it's no use being forced to be mentored by someone you don't like. Sometimes I think a student is not best suited to be mentored by me, and that is taken into consideration as well.

The receptionist checks the late list for students every day and collates and manages it for the tutors and the head of pastoral care. Another member of the support staff records parental requests for leave of absence.

Successes

The head teacher found that involving teaching assistants in the work with students who present challenges to the school leads to significant improvement in their attendance and performance:

Firstly, the attitude of the pupils is changed, when they feel someone has direct concern for them. Secondly, there have been dramatic and positive changes in the attitudes of the participating staff. It is not just the performance of the pupils that improves; the mentors help them to stay the course as well. The great thing about the participating staff is that their charges feel they have no axe to grind in dealing with them.

The head considers the greatest benefit was how the teaching assistants release the teachers from these responsibilities.

These staff save an enormous amount of teachers' time. Previously much of the mentoring and follow-up of attendance was considered the exclusive domain of the teacher. Now, thank goodness, there is more reason and common sense in the system. The participating staff's work raises the morale of the teachers. They feel their work in the classroom is being recognised and that we care for them. Additionally, the participating staff enjoy their new responsibilities.

(Source: Glyn Technology School for Boys)

4D Progression mentors

Context

Improved progression was one of the main aims of the Gateshead 14–19 Pathfinder. It sought to raise the aspirations of students by drawing their attention to opportunities and pathways available to them.

Progression mentors

Progression mentors were appointed to work with students from the Central Gateshead Sixth Form (CG6), and with the rural strand of the Pathfinder. The two posts were established using pathfinder funding as an interim measure, until anticipated Single Programme funds became available through the Tyne and Wear Learning Partnership. A range of professionals including tutors, careers teachers and Connexions personal advisers addressed progression issues. However, the unique contribution of the progression mentors was that they can be totally focused on this one issue, and this was seen as a cost-effective way of increasing post-16 engagement.

Successes

The progression mentor at CG6 was only in post for eight months when the benefits of her role had already become apparent. Recruitment to CG6 in September 2004 was significantly stronger than at the same point last year. Some students pointed to her influence as an important factor in helping them to select CG6 provision. Other students, already in the sixth form, reported the positive benefits of access to a progression mentor.

Jane (not her real name), a student following AVCE courses in health and social care and leisure and tourism, commented,

I think I am a shy person but I know I need to overcome my shyness if I want to reach my goal of working with young children and their parents. It has been easier to work on this with my mentor. For a start the teachers are very busy and do not have the time to work with me on this. Secondly, because she is not a teacher, I know she will not criticise me for falling behind. She gives me the confidence to go to teachers and sort out the problems in an adult way.

The progression mentor acknowledges that her work so far is only a start:

I think there are a lot more practical things I can do to help students, like Jane, reach their goals. The great thing about my role is that I am able to take time with young people to get to the bottom of any real or imagined barriers to continuing learning. It helps the teaching staff by enabling them to concentrate on their all important job of managing learning in classrooms. I believe that I have an important role, both in helping to raise achievement and improve progression into post-16 learning.

Other benefits to students were that they:

- were better informed of the opportunities available to them

- had access at all times to advice and support in all of the areas which are liable to give them concerns

- were supported especially through the key decision and transition times

- were encouraged to make the best of the opportunities open to them.

The benefits to teachers were that they:

- were freed from time-consuming organisational activities and can spend more time with students supporting their learning

- are not required to spend a disproportionate amount of their time on non-academic matters such as dealing with welfare officers and Connexions.

(Source: Gateshead 14–19 Pathfinder)

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4E Personal digital assistant project

Context

Thomas Adams School, an 11–19 comprehensive school in rural North Shropshire, has been testing a range of strategies to improve the motivation and achievement of Key stage 4 students. One of these has been to use 'mobile computing' to help improve students' organisational skills. As part of Shropshire's 14–19 Pathfinder, since January 2004, 34 personal digital assistants (PDAs) were allocated to the school for students and staff working on the project to use.

The PDA project

The school selected students for the project on the basis of their performance at Key stages 2 and 3, together with their predicted performance at Key stage 4. The school wanted to target students whose performance at Key stage 3 was lower than might have been expected from their Key stage 2 scores. Additionally, the school wanted to select students in a way that avoided generating any resentment from their peers, which might result in them being reluctant to use the PDAs with other students present. Some initial research indicated that about five pupils in a room would need to have the PDAs in order for them to be used openly.

Final selection of students was as follows:

- three broad ability groups
- gender balance was roughly equal
- all pupils who were chosen were then in Year 10, in order to create a critical mass in the year group.

The school was also aware that, for PDAs to be useful, the project would need parental support. This was gained by holding a meeting for parents and pupils, where the PDAs were issued and some initial training was provided.

Successes

Students made considerable use of the PDAs, and the school has continued to monitor their activity both informally and through termly questionnaires. Students used the PDAs for different tasks, such as:

- homework tasks set by staff
- sharing elements of research carried out for coursework
- making notes while on field trips for later inclusion in class-based work
- planning the lighting and programme for evening events
- recording exam details and coursework deadlines
- using language dictionaries.

The school looks for constant feedback from the students now in Year 11, and the following comments are typical:

Since I've had my PDA I've been much better organised and get homework in on time!

It's great – I'm able to use it in class just like having pen and paper. It makes my notes much tidier by having them word processed.

The project still has time to run, but early indications are that the PDAs are of great benefit for the more able students (particularly boys) who make imaginative use of them. Students at the lower end of the ability range find they are helpful in organising work and preparing short pieces. Collaborative work has improved, and students have been sharing ideas and tips for using the PDAs.

(Source: Thomas Adams School, Shropshire)

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4F Experience in Preparation for Life

Context

Experience in Preparation for Life (XPL) was an opportunity for students in East Manchester schools to use their option choices to gain experience of the world of work and to broaden their understanding and knowledge of the opportunities available to them when they leave school.

XPL project

Students in mainstream secondary schools and special schools in East Manchester participated in the XPL programme in a number of different ways. The number of students involved in the programme varied from school to school. Those students who took part were encouraged to get involved for a variety of reasons but the main reasons for their inclusion appeared to be disaffection and lower academic achievement. All the students volunteered to be involved having been guided or persuaded by school staff that this would be the best option for them.

In two mainstream schools the course was taken as part of the option choices. In a third school staff identified those suitable for XPL and after the students had selected their option subjects they were encouraged to swap two options for XPL. Students selected included those whose behaviour had caused concern and those who had little chance of achieving any academic qualifications. In one school they also encouraged those who were considered 'fragile' and had been victims of bullying to take part. All schools were keen to take the pressure off those who would not be able to succeed at an academic level and to give exciting opportunities to those who were less likely to work hard enough to achieve their full potential in a normal school situation.

In a special school a craft company was set up and staff encouraged any pupil who was interested to take part in the group. Students made greetings cards, bookmarks and bracelets and have learnt the basic skills needed to run a business. The project meant that the students involved improved a number of skills, particularly IT, communication and interpersonal skills as well as craft skills. Pupils' self-esteem grew, as they have been involved in trade fairs with mainstream schools, including independent schools. Students were very enthusiastic in their work and became more confident in their work and dealings with other people.

One mainstream school formed a group made up of less academically able students, who staff felt would not be able to cope with a full range of GCSE subjects, some disaffected students and a number of students at risk of exclusion in the future. Staff wanted to take the pressure off these students and also allow the more able and academically motivated pupils in school to work without distraction. One group followed the Edexcel Skills for Working Life programme, which involves six modules of work and students completed portfolios on running a business including health and safety, interview skills, ICT, understanding business and administration. Individual students also looked at health and beauty, sports and leisure and animal care. Another group completed more varied units and took part in a number of exciting activities, such as go-karting and rock climbing. Students also studied plant and animal care and hospitality and catering, which involved them in planning and making something to eat.

Successes

All schools reported that the students enjoyed being part of the project, which had also had beneficial effects in other areas of their school life – for example, attendance and schoolwork had improved. English, mathematics and ICT were the areas mentioned that had shown a marked improvement. The special schools in particular reported that their pupils' self-esteem and confidence had grown while taking part in the programme. There were reports of good feedback from parents. Students from all the schools were much better behaved when in school because they did not want to be taken off the project. As a result parents did not receive phone calls from the school complaining about their children. One group studying e-media had previously been recognised as consisting of the 12 worst behaved children in the year. As a result of being involved in the programme they were now occupied with a project that interested them and their behaviour problems became less of an issue. One school highlighted the fact that other pupils in the school were happy that the disaffected students had been removed from the classroom as it enabled them to concentrate on their work. All schools reported that although they had one or two students who had fallen by the wayside the vast majority had become better people for taking part.

The overall opinion from teachers and students was that the opportunities provided by the XPL programme have widened the horizons of pupils, and improved their self-esteem and behaviour when in school. In addition the course showed students that they can achieve and that there are many opportunities available to them when they leave school.

(Source: East Manchester 14–19 Pathfinder)

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4G Re-engaging disaffected students

Context

The Knowsley 14–19 Pathfinder developed a programme to re-engage 14–16 year olds at risk of disaffection. The Knowsley Collegiate was established to coordinate the work of all local 14–19 providers in developing and supporting learners on various curriculum pathways. The Collegiate included the LEA, the community college, 11 secondary schools and five special schools, Merseyside Connexions, Greater Merseyside LSC, Knowsley Training Provider Network and Jaguar.

The programme combined substantial off-site vocational provision with educational elements, such as access to GCSEs. Although all schools agreed to ring fence Wednesday afternoon for vocational provision, additional common timetabling was needed by most courses, such as NVQs, which required two half-days or one whole day. This resulted in some piecemeal timetabling arrangements between the college and individual schools. The Pathfinder set up a group to explore how common timetabling arrangements could be improved. A referral process was developed with schools and the Youth Offending Team to ensure the Pathfinder was 'not seen as a dumping ground'. However, the Pathfinder was unable to provide placements for all referrals and therefore a pathways board was set up to assess students before a placement offer was made. The pathways board included representatives from schools, the college and training provider network.

The 14–16 programme

The LEA-led model provided effective leadership. Senior teachers were seconded to the Pathfinder to set up an 'out of school' programme for excluded students, those at risk of disaffection, or those for whom school was not an appropriate learning environment. A vocational skills centre, which received £2.5 million capital funding from external sources, was built to enhance vocational learning provision. Learners could choose from over 35 optional courses outlined in an LEA-wide prospectus, including GCSEs and vocational subjects. Learning on the 'out of school' programme was provided in small groups. Students combined vocational skills development with key skills study. Vocational areas included hairdressing, motor vehicle maintenance, construction and game keeping.

The FE college, training providers and local employers such as Jaguar delivered the provision. Students were supported by information, advice and guidance from Connexions and a basic skills tutor. Young people received off-site vocational provision for between three and five days a week. Three schools also established an 'inter-school' offer allowing students to study GCSE Media at a city centre provider. These activities were designed to increase retention and achievement among disaffected groups in vocational learning.

Successes

Student feedback demonstrated that off-site training increased interest in their school work. Staff also reported that the programme retained a significant number of students who would otherwise have disappeared from the schooling system, with some achieving national qualifications at 16 and progressing to FE or training post-16.

Ofsted praised the work-based learning programme at the last LEA inspection, both for the quality of provision and level of student engagement. A number of other colleges were interested in adopting the vocational skills centre model to increase the capacity of their vocational programmes. Over 1000 Key stage 4 students had accessed at least one day a week off-site training in the Pathfinder's first year.

In the academic year 2003/04, the Knowsley Collegiate enabled an additional 500 students aged 14–16 to learn for part of the week at institutions other than their home school. They chose from a wide variety of vocational courses promoted in an authority-wide prospectus. Combined with the 250 students at risk of disaffection on the 'out of school' programme, around 33% of the 2003/04 Year 10 cohort had received some training away from their home school. The majority of this provision was provided at the College's vocational skills centre, although some training providers offered placements and a small number of students attended courses at other schools.

(Source: Knowsley 14–19 Pathfinder)

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5 | Gifted and talented

Introduction

Through the DfES Excellence in Cities, Excellence Clusters and Excellence Challenge initiatives, gifted and talented programmes have been introduced to over 1000 secondary schools, 500 primary schools and 100 post-16 institutions. The White Paper *14–19 education and skills* (DfES 2005a) makes a number of references to the need to stretch the most able students and includes a specific reference to the role of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. The White Paper says that all young people should be 'stretched and challenged to do their best… We will remove any barriers to acceleration, and ensure that performance tables and the inspection framework recognise accelerated achievement.'

The question for providers is, what does 'stretch' mean in the 14–19 phase? Is it a question of providing more options, or offering more breadth within subjects? Should gifted young people specialise early or be offered a wider choice of learning pathways? And will vocational learning be beneficial to able students who have traditionally followed academic routes? It is important that providers identify gifted and talented learners and plan an appropriate programme for them, since disadvantaged or disengaged gifted learners may not necessarily benefit from the same kind of provision as less gifted ones.

Projects supporting gifted and talented young people have collaborated with higher education institutions, with independent schools and with businesses. They have supplied master classes; have facilitated accelerated learning and early exam entry; have allowed for independent progression through virtual learning environments and mentoring (including e-mentoring); and have encouraged out-of-institution learning. The issues to be addressed are:

- the underachievement of disadvantaged gifted and talented youth
- the lack of differentiation of provision in some institutions
- the variable quality of provision and the need for staff training.

General references on gifted and talented learners

National Quality Standards in Gifted and Talented Education, from the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY), October 2005
The national Quality Standard is designed to be accessible and relevant to all schools and colleges, with varying experience and expertise in gifted and talented education, and in all areas of the country.
www.nagty.ac.uk

Providing for gifted and talented pupils: an evaluation of Excellence in Cities and other grant-funded programmes, a report from HMI, Her Majesty's Inspectors 334, December 2001
This report is concerned with the use made by schools of the opportunities presented by the grant-funded programmes. It highlights points for consideration about the nature of the programmes and their relationship to mainstream school provision.
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Guidance on teaching the gifted and talented, QCA, 2004
General guidance covering the identification of gifted and talented learners, policies, management of provision, transfer and transition and case studies of good practice.
www.nc.uk.net / gt / general / 04

World Class Arena
This is an international initiative designed to identify and assess gifted and talented students around the world. It was devised by England's DfES, and World Class Arena items have been trialled by teachers and students in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the US. World Class Arena provides World Class Tests in mathematics and problem solving aimed at upper primary and lower secondary students. It also offers classroom support materials and research.
www.worldclassarena.org / v5 / what_is_wca.htm

cpdgifted
These are training materials for gifted and talented coordinators, produced by Oxford Brookes University as part of a continuing professional development programme run on behalf of the DfES.
www.brookes.ac.uk / schools / education / rescon / cpdgifted / home.html

Strategies

1 Master classes

Provision of master classes for gifted and talented learners has proved to be a popular approach. Classes can be offered within an institution or on business premises by a business partner, at local colleges or universities; for example, the Harrow case study (p91) describes critical thinking classes at Middlesex University. Specialist schools and academies also provide support in their specialist subjects. Many of the funded Aimhigher national projects have incorporated master classes, sometimes as summer schools, or after-school clubs, in a wide range of subjects, including modern foreign languages, chemistry, engineering and mathematics.

The schools network of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust
This network provides information about specific initiatives and programmes, particularly in relation to the specialist subjects.
www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk /

Chemistry : the next generation
This is an Aimhigher-funded project led by the Royal Society of Chemistry and the University of Leicester, which is developing materials and activities to raise the aspirations of potential students to take up courses in chemical sciences. Activities include hands-on access to modern laboratories through summer schools and open days.
www.rsc.org / outreach

Guidance on teaching the gifted and talented, QCA, 2004
General guidance covering the identification of gifted and talented learners, policies, management of provision, transfer and transition, and case studies of good practice. The case studies offer many examples of master classes in different subjects.
www.nc.uk.net / gt / general / 04

2 Accelerated learning and fast track routes to exam entry

Several of the pathfinder projects developed fast track options for gifted and talented students. The East Manchester case study (p54) describes how young people who took GCSEs a year early had time to develop other skills through Duke of Edinburgh award activities. Some fast tracking occurred within vocational programmes, moving more able students from completed Young Apprenticeships to mainstream apprentices. Accelerated learning techniques have been developed to use with gifted and talented learners, and useful resources and case studies are provided on the Teachernet website (www.teachernet.gov.uk).

Supporting gifted and talented, David Goddard, Pearson Publishing, April 2005, £75 plus VAT

This CD-ROM provides practical guidance and strategies to identify the more able, and challenging activities to help them fulfil their potential, including giving guidance on offering fast track options and accelerated learning. It is designed for anyone who has special responsibility for (or even just encounters) the intellectually gifted or students with particular talents in art and design, music, drama and sport.
www.pearsonpublishing.co.uk

Learning CHAMPS

This is a learning course that suggests techniques for teachers to use with students who are self-motivated and self-managed learners. Available to buy online from the website.
www.accelerated-learning-uk.co.uk

Teachernet

The DfES website provides a page on gifted and talented, called G&TWISE. The page contains links to materials, guidance and quality standards, and allows the user to search for relevant materials on topics such as accelerated learning.
www2.teachernet.gov.uk / gat / default.aspx

3 Additional learning

Additional out-of-school learning promotes the development of skills and competencies outside the examination framework and raises achievement, particularly in terms of curriculum-related extension activities, such as literacy and maths clubs, and general study-centre-type provision. It also operates less directly through a huge range of activities to improve motivation and raise self-esteem. Some out-of-school learning takes place out of school hours, and can be provided by a number of different organisations, but it often falls to support officers in local authorities to join up all the local initiatives, manage funding and provide an accessible service.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
This is a registered charity, which offers a voluntary, non-competitive programme of activities for anyone aged 14–25. It offers an individual challenge and encourages young people to undertake exciting, constructive, challenging and enjoyable activities in their free time. Just over 7% of those in the UK aged 14–17 participate in the Award, through Award groups in youth clubs, voluntary organisations, Open Award centres, schools, colleges, young offender institutes and businesses.
www.theaward.org /

Young Enterprise
The programme range offers students the opportunity to run a real company in the Company Programme, Team Programme and Graduate Programme ; and to learn about aspects of business from their first hand experiences. Some programmes run in school, but most take place out of hours or off-site, some on residentials.
www.young-enterprise.org.uk

Millennium Volunteers toolkit
Millennium Volunteers provides opportunities for young people aged 14–16 to help others by volunteering to do something they enjoy. The toolkit provides all the necessary information to get involved.
www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk /

ContinYou

ContinYou was formed in November 2003 when two well-established charities, Education Extra and the Community Education Development Centre, joined to form a new organisation. It provides guidance, resources and information about out-of-school-hours learning.
www.continyou.org.uk /

4 Virtual learning environments

The use of information and communications technology (ICT) is providing more flexible approaches to supporting gifted and talented learners. It can be used both in and out of school to address specific aptitudes, to provide fast feedback on students' work, to monitor progress, to allow students to test themselves and to facilitate the development of individual learning programmes. ICT can take the form of CD-ROMs, digital resources, e-mail mentoring and the internet. It allows learners to pursue their own interests and develop high-level skills in handling information. Staff or consultants with ICT expertise are important for the effective use of virtual learning environments (VLEs).

BECTA
BECTA offers advice on the use of ICT resources, and gives advice on the value of ICT for gifted and talented learners.
www.ictadvice.org.uk /
index.php ?section=tl&rid=631&catcode=as_inc_sup_03.

Learnpremium
This is one of the largest providers of online learning materials, with more than 130,000 pages. The content is written by teachers for teachers, and covers reception through to AS level. One subscription provides password access to everyone in the school for use in class and at home on their own computers. One annual subscription allows unlimited access to curriculum-linked whiteboard activities, interactive lessons, worksheets and tests.
www.learnthings.co.uk / info / Learncouk / LP / introduction.aspx

Progress file : achievement planner
This is a set of interactive materials designed to help young people and adults manage their own learning and career development. It does this by supporting individuals in reviewing and planning their development, and recording their achievements. The 'kit' of materials helps individuals understand, engage in and manage the process.
www.dfes.gov.uk / progressfile /

BBC Learning
Online learning support and advice for adult learners, but with information on a wide variety of courses and subjects that can be used individually by gifted and talented students.
www.bbc.co.uk / learning /

Case studies

5A Accelerated learning partnership

Context

The Harrow 14–19 Pathfinder wished to improve progression opportunities for learners completing Key stage 4 early, to reduce the proportion of higher attaining learners accessing education options outside the borough post-16. The Pathfinder designed a collaborative model incorporating schools, colleges and higher education providers to develop higher level curricula materials and promote local post-16 progression routes. The Pathfinder required considerable staff development time to bring together schools and colleges to agree a mutually beneficial model.

Accelerated learning model

The Pathfinder developed an accelerated learning model, which schools led in partnership with colleges. The partnership included six schools and three colleges. Several fast tracking options to promote accelerated learning were developed. Some schools gave learners at Key stages 3 and 4 the opportunity to start AS modules early, while others offered parallel AS, GCSE and GNVQ qualifications tailored to individual needs. Initially accelerated courses were offered in AS level Mathematics, Religious Studies, Physics and Music. AS level courses were subsequently offered in ICT, chemistry and business studies.

The accelerated AS courses were delivered largely in schools through breakfast or twilight sessions or on Saturdays. However, some vocational options were delivered at college. The Pathfinder focused on those subject areas directly related to each school's specialist status, and colleges led on their respective specialisms. This enabled specialist tutors to teach in different schools, ensuring staff time and resources were used efficiently and effectively to support learners taking exams early.

The partnership was supported by management structures that promoted joint governance, safeguarded by clear roles and responsibilities. For example, common timetabling was achieved through provider collaboration. Block timetabling at college increased learners' attendance during core hours and freed up college tutors to teach in schools at other times. Schools and colleges jointly developed timetables to ensure that higher achievers did not miss school lessons to attend college. College staff delivered AS level lessons in schools to prepare students for progression to college and equip them with the reasoning and analytical skills required to achieve higher grades.

Accelerated learning was viewed as a key personal development tool for young people, rather than a narrow preparation for external examinations. The Pathfinder created a number of personal development opportunities for participants to apply their higher level thinking and reasoning skills. For example, students were encouraged to take ownership of their individual learning plans to plan their career development. Participants were also consulted on curriculum design, leading to the development of accelerated learning in non-traditional subjects. Pathfinder schools and colleges agreed not to push students to complete the full AS level in one year, preferring to encourage high-achieving students to develop breadth as well as depth in their knowledge. For example, AS-level Mathematics was supplemented with topics not developed to the same extent at GCSE, such as algebra. Similarly, the AS ICT course was designed to develop generic skills to improve students' performance across the curriculum.

Successes

Over 150 students benefited from accelerated provision. The pathfinder coordinator described the model as a 'win-win' situation for both schools and colleges. The accelerated programme was extended to develop new Level 5 courses in critical thinking, maths and theatre studies in conjunction with Middlesex University and St Mary's College. A conference was held to promote the new accelerated AS level Business Studies course to other local schools, and share good practice. The Pathfinder worked with providers interested in mainstreaming the AS accelerated programme, and helped develop an e-learning package by Imperial College to support AS accelerated learners.

(Source : Harrow 14–19 Pathfinder)

Contact

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5B Developing enterprise education with a university

Context

The Coventry 14–19 Pathfinder wanted to promote vocational education across the ability range. The Pathfinder initially sought expertise from other local providers on how to promote to high achievers the link between education and work. Practical issues delayed the start of activities, such as Criminal Records Bureau checks on staff from partnership organisations before they could work directly with pre-16 year olds. Some teachers did not have experience of developing enterprise and partnership approaches. Entrepreneurs also had to be compensated for their time.

Enterprise education

Initially, gifted and talented young people were targeted for a two-week module in enterprise education. This was delivered in partnership between the University of Coventry and local schools, and built on earlier small-scale enterprise activities. The Pathfinder developed a personalised approach to work experience by linking with the business school at the university to develop an enterprise education delivery model. The enterprise course focused on skills development such as: marketing, business planning, communication and presentation skills. Coventry University's Business School provided facilities and staff to help young people develop their enterprise ideas. Students developed a business plan for a unit available in the local sports stadium. Learning in a higher education environment also helped raise students' aspirations by demonstrating the progression routes available from vocational education.

Successes

The success of the initial project, which focused on high achievers, was adapted for use with less able young people. The underachievers' enterprise education model is located at newly developed partnership centres, and includes involvement from large local employers in addition to Coventry City Football Club. A menu of enterprise opportunities for learners has been developed, which includes support to work with local businesses to develop their entrepreneurial skills. Local school enterprise funding has helped sustain and expand the project.

(Source: Coventry 14–19 Pathfinder)

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5C Helping young people to learn at their own pace

Context

Previous e-learning tools were only available on CD-ROM, such as the Hot Potato programme which enabled learners to take multiple choice tests. The Pathfinder wanted to develop an online package that could be available at any time, to enable learners to fit training around other commitments such as shift work, and to complete work at their own pace.

Introducing Moodle

The Cumbria Pathfinder introduced e-learning tools to improve support for young people wishing to learn at their own pace. Learners worked in small tutorial style groups to test approaches. The Moodle is a free open course management system for online learning. It was developed by the Moodle Partners, a group of service companies responsible for optional commercial services, including Moodle hosting, and remote support contracts. Moodle enabled teachers to focus attention on students most in need of support, without delaying other learners, as it supported those able to work independently at their own pace. Moodle was developed as a tool to be hosted on school websites in the longer term. Hosting costs from £100 to £200 a year. Although initial time commitments are required to install and maintain Moodle in schools, this will decrease once the system becomes established (for more information on Moodle see www.moodle.org/).

Moodle is a course management system which provided a virtual learning environment coordinating online courses. Learners taking City and Guilds Process Plant Operations used Moodle to take classes online. The work-based learning provider GEN II employed a training consultant to develop the online materials.

Moodle was designed to be an easy to use, intuitive learner-centred system. The modules were detailed to ensure they provided a stand-alone tool that did not require teacher explanation or support. However, ideally Moodle was combined with some face-to-face contact and tutorial support. Moodle included communication tools to allow remote communication and support. Sub-sections of each module were followed by an exercise and short test, with a test at the end of each module, in the form of practical multiple choice assessments.

Learners appreciated the instant feedback as this enabled them to gain confidence before completing the assessed tests. Moodle tracked and recorded learner performance and answers for each test, providing detailed feedback and analysis on progress. Learners requested an expansion in the range of online learning materials further to support learning at their own pace. Iggesund Paperboard, a manufacturer of virgin fibre paperboard for use in the packaging and graphics sectors, offered employment to learners completing their courses early as an additional incentive.

Employer involvement was crucial to the development of Moodle. Iggesund Paperboard used its own on-site learning centre for the delivery of City and Guilds training to its work placement students on the process plant operations course. The centre was equipped with eight computers, providing access for each trainee, each with a broadband connection. Learners were encouraged to use the company intranet, to access company statistics and diagrams to supplement their coursework and understanding. Young people were involved in the review of Moodle and had some control over improvements.

Successes

All students completed the course ahead of schedule. The progress of the whole group was three weeks quicker than normal, with one student completing the process plant operations course six weeks ahead of schedule. However, trials would need to be conducted with a larger group to determine whether outcomes could be systematically reproduced. Students' IT skills improved through Moodle, the pathfinder coordinator referring to participants as 'great thieves of information', skilled at finding up-to-date, relevant information to inform their learning. This approach improved the ability of learners to work independently and direct their own learning. These skills gave learners the confidence to benefit from individual learning plan (ILP) approaches rather than the traditional information, advice and guidance system. The Cumbria and East Manchester pathfinders have shared learning to inform the development of a common electronic ILP, which will be transferable and accessible across their partnerships.

(Source: Cumbria 14–19 Pathfinder)

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5D Raising aspirations and employer involvement through e-mentoring

Context

The Norfolk 14–19 Pathfinder wanted to develop effective education and business links in a rural area to raise students' aspirations. The Pathfinder was led by the LEA, local LSC and Local Learning Partnership, and included four schools (two 11–18 schools, a 12–18 school and an 11–16 school), three colleges (including the College of the Countryside), the local Education Business Partnership (EBP), Connexions, a local university, the Chamber of Commerce, an industry training board and local employers. It targeted one of the most rural areas within West Norfolk, which has few large local employers. This limited the availability of work placements with local employers and training providers. Transport problems also limited student mobility, with many students spending more than 90 minutes a day travelling to school or college. Local LEA research found that Year 9 students had limited aspirations, focusing on the type of jobs available locally, which were often unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in agriculture, food processing and tourism. Consequently, students often viewed the school curriculum as having limited relevance to their future aspirations.

E-mentoring programme

The four schools worked closely together. Two Business Link coordinators were appointed from the private sector to recruit and work with employers on the strategic and operational management of the Pathfinder. Employers helped design activities demonstrating the relevance of the curriculum to the world of work to enhance students' employability skills. Activities included mentoring programmes, master classes, enhancing information, advice and guidance, and student apprenticeships.

An e-mentoring programme called CommunEcate was created to support students, raise their aspirations and encourage progression into post-16 education, training or employment. The scheme was suited to the rural context as it reduced reliance on traditional work placement approaches, and the need for student travel. Mentoring activities were trialled with students at risk of disaffection, and also gifted and talented young people, linked to the Aim Higher Widening Participation Programme. Students were expected to demonstrate their commitment when they applied to the CommunEcate programme.

Employer engagement

Business in the Community (BITC) approached employers and worked with the LEA and schools to develop the CommunEcate programme, and agreed an agenda of subjects to be discussed in weekly mentoring sessions. Two large financial and legal companies (Norwich Union and Eversheds) provided e-mentors for students on post-16 business studies courses in three schools. The volunteer mentors were carefully selected and ranged from junior staff to senior managers. A full class of 16 AVCE Business Studies students from one school were matched with 'e-buddies' from Norwich Union (the largest employer in Norfolk). BITC and school and business representatives worked together to match students to mentors according to their individual interests. All business mentors received a Criminal Record Bureau check and risk assessment before being matched with students.

An initial face-to-face meeting was held to enable students and their e-buddies to get to know each other and identify common objectives. Weekly e-mail contact was then established for 14 weeks. At the end of the second week, students and mentors met at either the school or employer premises to share information through presentations and seminars.

The college tutor and Norwich Union coordinator viewed the mentoring e-mails to ensure common issues raised in the e-discussions were related back to the curriculum in class discussions. Norwich Union also attended a lesson to ensure mentor advice was tailored to the education context. For example, Norwich Union mentors related discussion topics directly to the Introduction to Management module of the AVCE examined during the spring term. Topics included leadership styles, communication, motivation and problem solving. Mentors asked questions, shared ideas and discussed skills, attitudes and behaviours with students, exploring how skills learnt at school were applied in the workplace.

The mentors gave students an external perspective on behaviour such as team work and showing respect. At the end of the CommunEcate programme, students spent a day on-site at the employer premises, gaining practical work experience directly linked to their vocational learning. In another project, mentors and students followed a 10-week course structured around a European Union module, culminating in a student visit to the company.

Successes

The college tutor and coordinator from Norwich Union reviewed and evaluated progress each week. Positive feedback was received from students, staff and employees, who cited a number of personal development benefits from participation. These included improved presentation, communication, management and organisational skills, and increased confidence. Norwich Union explained the programme as: 'a two-way effort – a two-way learning process linked with personal development plans'.

Go-East (the Government Office for the East of England) promoted the CommunEcate programme as good practice across the region. Many local, regional and national organisations expressed interest in the CommunEcate model and students gave presentations at a number of events including the Norfolk 14–19 Connexions Conference. The e-mentoring programme continued in 2005/06. For example, the University of East Anglia continued activities through the Aim Higher Widening Participation Programme, helping to raising students' aspirations to work towards gaining a place in further or higher education.

(Source: Norfolk 14–19 Pathfinder)

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