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Partnership in Action

Providing flexible work-related curricula for 14-16 year olds



A project supported by
the Government Office for the East of England

Project Report April 2003



Partnership in Action Providing flexible, work-related curricula for 14 -16 year olds

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Contents

Foreword	4
Background and Context	5
Contributors and Participants	6
Providing work-related 14 -16 curricula through partnerships – reflecting on the experience	7
Providing work-related 14 -16 curricula through partnerships – four key aspects	8
Case Study 1 – The Appleton School, Benfleet	13
Case Study 2 – Belfairs High School, Southend	15
Case Study 3 – Cecil Jones High School, Southend	19
Case Study 4 – Chalvedon School and Sixth Form College, Basildon	22
Case Study 5 – Partnership working in the Chelmsford, Brentwood and Maldon Area	24
Case Study 6 – CTS Training, Chelmsford	26
Case Study 7 – Clacton County High School and the Clacton and Harwich EAZ	29
Case Study 8 – Grays Convent High School	31
Case Study 9 – Harlow College	36
Case Study 10 – St Chad’s School, Tilbury	38
Case Study 11 – Sir Charles Lucas Arts College, Colchester	40
Case Study 12 – South East Essex College and Southend EAZ	43
Case Study 13 – The Trident Trust	49

Foreword

This publication results from the true spirit of partnership and collaboration that exists among many providers of learning and skills across Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, and between LSC Essex and the three Local Education Authorities. I am grateful to the Government Office for the East of England for funding the work of the partnership and this publication.

By working together in this way we are confirming that we all share the common objectives of ensuring that learning is appropriate to the needs of learners and that by making it more relevant, the retention and achievement of young people in learning will increase.

The original concept behind the work was to create a partnership that would act as a development forum to explore the Green Paper; "14 -19: extending opportunities, raising standards." The specific area of focus was to work towards ensuring that the curriculum is, "flexible enough to allow young people to choose from both academic and vocational routes and switch between options as new interests and aptitudes become apparent." However, the partnership has subsequently begun to address some of the challenges raised in the response to the DfES publication, "14 -19: Opportunity and Excellence." These include:

- **the necessity for a coherent 14 -19 phase of learning;**
- **the importance of information, advice and guidance for young people;**
- **a much stronger vocational offer;**
- **improving participation and achievement rates;**
- **the importance of local collaborative arrangements.**

I am particularly pleased that the partners wish to continue their work beyond this publication and work collaboratively to address some of the other challenges that face us all, including:

- **coherent strategic planning between LSC Essex, the three LEAs and learning providers;**
- **increased curriculum opportunities and progression routes for young learners;**
- **increased opportunities for learning in the community;**
- **increased engagement of employers in learning.**

I hope you find this a publication helpful in the further development of a flexible curriculum that meets the needs of all young people and in the expansion of collaborative arrangements between schools, colleges and private training providers.

Alison Webster

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Learning and Skills Council Essex

Background and context

This project has its origins in a Government Office for the Eastern Region (GO EAST) grant to LSC Essex to foster and publicise partnership working between schools, colleges, training companies and employers in the interests of 14 -16 year old learners following work-related programmes. GO EAST also wished to support the adoption and proliferation of the new GCSEs in vocational subjects.

Following discussions between LSC Essex and the local LEAs, it was concluded that within Essex the small grant would be used to form a development group which would consolidate or work up 14 -16 curriculum models with a strong emphasis on vocational partnerships, for publication to a wide range of local stakeholders. The group was broadly representative of the spectrum involved in this area of work: schools, colleges, training organisations, the Trident Trust and the Connexions service. LSC Essex and the three local LEAs were also prominently represented. The group met three times early in 2003, received a variety of updates and inputs and had opportunities to share current developments and issues. The collective wisdom of these practitioners was 'captured' and is now written up in this publication. Most, but not all, delegates came from institutions which were participating in the current DfES-funded 'Increased Flexibility for 14 -16 year olds' initiative. Some were also overseeing related programmes, such as 'alternative education' provision.

Format

The publication features some generic sections on what the group concluded were key areas of interest. These were: identifying the real costs of programmes, marketing and promoting them to students, parents, employers and others, seeking to match provision to local employment and skills needs and, finally, an attempt to arrive at a 'vision' of how such programmes could develop longer term. There was also lively discussion of the successes, opportunities and challenges presented by these collaborative programmes. Issues raised have been aggregated and briefly summarised at the beginning of the publication.

The bulk of this booklet consists of case studies of practice on the ground. Most are authored by practitioners from individual schools, colleges or training

companies but some are the work of more than one institution describing their consortium working. To make the contributions easy to follow, group members were asked to follow a common format, that is: institution and cohort profiles, management and resourcing, current and planned curricular models and so forth. They were also asked to describe 'the ideal scenario' which would make partnerships flourish as there was a consensus that where they are successful it is often despite, rather than because of, present circumstances and resource models. Contributions have been edited but the integrity of each has been left intact. The project management team is indebted to all who offered their work with alacrity, meeting a tight deadline!

Who is this publication for?

Copies of this publication will be made available to all secondary schools across Essex, Southend and Thurrock plus colleges, training companies and other interest groups like the LEAs, Trident, Careers Essex and the Connexions Partnership. At the time of writing local dissemination events are in the planning stage.

The publication should be of interest to all who manage or are involved day to day in collaborative work-related programmes for 14 -16 year olds. The recently-published DfES document "14 -19 Opportunity and Excellence" gives a clear signal that the work-related programmes and pathways delivered through collaborative local partnerships are to play a vital role in the government's plans for this phase of education and training.

Acknowledgements

The project managers are indebted firstly to the development group who have shown through their contributions high levels of commitment and strategic thinking which have allowed learners to gain access to these new opportunities. We are also grateful to GO EAST and LSC Essex for respectively resourcing the project and facilitating it locally. All three LEAs within Essex have also made a prominent contribution, as have other organisations such as the Trident Trust, Essex Southend and Thurrock Connexions Partnership and the 'Link Ed' consortium. We are also grateful to Rosemary Peck of the Essex Advisory and Inspection Service for her excellent secretarial support.

Contributors and participants

School/College/Organisation	Contributor	Role
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Cecil Jones High School, Southend	John McEachern	Assistant Headteacher
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LSC Essex	Liam Sammon	Head of Research
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Providing work-related 14 -16 curricula through partnerships - reflecting on the experience

At the first meeting of the group, colleagues were invited to discuss in small groups the successes and challenges involved in partnership working to date. Their reflections were aggregated and summarised as follows.

What has worked well?

- The forming of consortia and working together as a group of schools and outside providers, including employers. This has re-established lapsed ways of working co-operatively, with all partners benefiting from the range of ideas and perspectives offered by the membership. Local lines of communication have improved and, having a collective voice, partnerships have developed the confidence to seek further resources or make competitive bids for external funding.
- School age students have benefited from access to a much broader range of experiences and accreditation than any one institution could offer. There have also been benefits to them where advice and guidance has been of good quality. Schools have noticed improved behaviour, attendance and motivation in many student participants. Where targeted students have been disaffected the fact that much of their learning is off-site brings benefits for the bulk of the cohort back at school.
- Schools have felt that the ethos of the participating cohort has changed for the better and relations between the school and parents has also improved.

What challenges remain?

- Getting the selection criteria right. Targeted cohorts often comprise a range including statemented learners, able but disaffected students and modest achievers for whom GCSE is not wholly appropriate. Meeting the needs of such a disparate group of 14 -16 year olds is quite a challenge for outside providers.
- Building in and resourcing management time and effort. Much time is consumed by chasing, checking, telephoning and monitoring in general. This is likely to become more pressurised as further cohorts start programmes.

- Costing the programmes effectively. In practice collaborative working is expensive in time and money. Fixed costs remain, even when students are learning off-site.
- Travel and geographical considerations remain a barrier to access and can be costly.
- Getting an appropriate range of relevant work experience placements which match learners' interests is still amongst the greatest challenges. Other concerns relate to insurance matters and finding a means to reward employers who offer placements.
- Getting the accreditation right. In practice many NVQ programmes are not appropriate or admissible for 14 -16 year olds for reasons of health and safety or age-relatedness.
- Coping with health and safety and Child Protection issues, when students of compulsory schooling age are spending much of their time off-site.
- Parity of esteem issues. Many groups, including parents, governors, some teachers and senior staff as well as students themselves remain unconvinced of the benefits of work-related learning.

What could potentially develop further?

- A better profile for work-related programmes as more and more students beneficiaries experience this.
- Further gains in student motivation and commitment as they adjust to the different, 'more adult' environment at colleges and workplaces. This represents a 'new start' for many students.
- Enhanced partnership working as local consortia develop, especially where employers and educators increasingly work together.
- Students can benefit from new progression routes at 16 plus, as they develop skills for employability and life beyond school.

Providing work-related 14 -16 curricula through partnerships – four key aspects

Following the first meeting of the group, colleagues identified four key aspects of this work which they wished to discuss and debate. Time was therefore set aside for four small groups to look at the identified areas:

- Marketing and promoting the programmes.
- The extent to which provision meets local skills and employer needs.
- The real costs of programmes.
- A vision of how such programmes could develop in the future.

The outcomes of the small group discussions are summarised below.

1. Marketing and promotion

What are the messages about programmes that need to be promoted to?

Students

- What are the courses: their content, value, learning style, links to their future, assessment methods and links to the future aspirations of students.
- Essential differences from what has been experienced already. Promotion should highlight the development of particular skills: independence, research and investigation, managing one's own learning.

Parents

- The value of courses and their relevance for students.
- Progression routes for students.

School Governors

- Hard marketing needs to be done.
- Curriculum Committees need to be informed.
- A governor could be linked to the work-related programme.

School/college/work-based learning provider staff

- The benefits arising from student progression.
- The value of programmes.
- The importance of the mentoring role. Positive support from LSAs.
- More understanding about work and school by both parties.

Others

- Programmes also need to be promoted to: headteachers, senior managers, subject leaders and advice and guidance staff.

What are the barriers to these messages being heard and having impact?

- Student expectations and experiences in years Seven to Nine.
- Performance Tables which only measure GCSE/GNVQ at present.
- The lack of equivalence to GCSE of some vocational qualifications.
- Student and adult attitudes, perceptions and lack of understanding.
- Small employers with a lack of personnel.
- Clarity about benefits and rewards of such programmes is missing.
- Poor communication between parties at times.
- Practical access difficulties such as student transport.

What strategies might overcome the barriers?

- Availability of promotional leaflets/information.
- Consistency in the badging and naming of programmes – constant name changes cause confusion.
- Depoliticisation' of programmes – they are at the mercy of local institutional competition, for example.

What key actions would help the successful implementation of these strategies?

- LSC involvement in a national strategy to support collaborative programmes.
- A national and/or regional strategy which set out the vision within which successful programmes could be implemented.
- Opportunities for teachers to go into work placements to plan coherent programmes.

What needs to happen next?

- The development of a model programme based on successful practice as a guide to schools and providers.
- Champions' generate the enthusiasm, vision and inspiration essential to have credibility and to develop dynamic programmes.
- Access to the key locums is needed – headteachers, governors, business people and so forth.
- A strategic plan is required – LSC-led in partnership with the local LEAs.
- A 'Champions' Strategy Group could be formed.

2. The extent to which provision meets local skills and employer needs

How do Schools/Colleges/Work-Based Learning Providers access information about local area needs?

It was the view of this group that schools do not access information on local area needs, particularly local labour market needs. Schools primarily focus on the learning needs of students as opposed to 'local area' needs. The analysis of student learning needs focuses more on the social/behavioural needs of students as opposed to their vocational needs. However, addressing social/behavioural needs will impact upon the employability of students, by improving their generic skills, so there is a work/enterprise element to this needs analysis.

The group was not aware of any comprehensive source of information on local area needs, particularly the needs of local employers and they were not clear as to how schools could access such information.

What are the barriers to this information having impact?

The obvious barrier to using information on local area needs to guide provision is the absence of such information. Even if such information does exist the lack of awareness of such information will have the same impact as its absence.

What strategies might overcome the barriers?

There needs to be a communication strategy. A key component of this strategy would be the production of comprehensive information sources on local area needs directed at three audiences – students, parents and employers.

This strategy would go beyond addressing the current information gap on local area needs and would involve extensive promotional activities to raise awareness of the benefits of 14 -16 flexible provision to the three key audiences.

The group expressed concern that any promotional activities could raise student expectations that might not be met by either existing resources or employer interest. The group was confident that the sorts of schemes currently provided under the 14 -16 flexible programme would be highly desirable to a significant number of students.

Strategies need to be in place that will lead to effective planning so that providers are able to meet the possible increase in student demand and stimulate sufficient employer interest to meet any increase in demand.

What key actions would help the successful implementation of these strategies?

- The development of mechanisms for supporting schools in preparation for the expected increase in pupil demand following any communications campaign. This could involve the assistance of an intermediary agency established to address the personnel constraints of providers, which can inhibit full participation in the 14 -16 flexible provision programme.

- Action to address timetable constraints in preparation for the expected increase in student demand following a communications campaign. Timetable restrictions can be a barrier due to the difficulties of balancing National Curriculum (NC) requirements with work placement needs and the difficulties of students working at a number of sites (school, college and workplace). The group suggested two ways of possibly overcoming this barrier. The first involves exploring alternative ways of meeting NC requirements during the period that pupils are off-site, delivering non-GCSE programmes, so that this requirement is taken away from the school timetable. The second possible way would be grouping together students who participate in flexible provision from schools in a common area and deliver NC required courses to the group collectively at a single site. This is feasible if student demand is as high as expected, for if this was, say, 20%-25% of the cohort then four or five mid-sized schools would have enough pupils to make such provision workable.
- A form of business planning would be needed so as to plan for the financial and human resource implications of increased demand.
- A Communications campaign should be undertaken.
- If employer interest following a communications campaign was insufficient to meet student demand then there could be a need to explore different forms of workplace provision such as Intermediate Labour Markets or College enterprises.
- Delivery costs: the fixed costs of providing education remain for schools unless a discrete group is targeted for flexible provision – even then tuition costs for this group remain.

Costs for other providers involve: staffing, rooming, consumables (who pays?) learning support – if they pay – candidate registration and qualification fees, for example VGCSE £40, NVQ £90 per candidate. Where provision is discrete, for example VGCSE where it is not offered to FE students, delivery costs are still 'over and above' regular course costs. Even college 'infill' provision triggers extra expense when 14 -16 year olds are involved.

Absenteeism/withdrawals protocols are an issue for providers. They need to ensure they are invoicing for the correct students at the right time.
- Management and co-ordination: are real costs factored in, for example reflecting pay scales of involved staff? Different models exist varying between general oversight and/or day-to-day supervision and monitoring. Administration and invoicing costs need to be considered too. Variable amounts of time, and therefore funding, are allocated to individuals involved in managing this work. Much time is consumed in liaison meetings.
- Staff development: schools staff can benefit from observing college/provider provision on site. Induction and ongoing development sessions for staff from all institutions also have value.
- Associated costs: who pays for student transport and subsistence? Transport can consume a disproportionate percentage of budget where geography is unhelpful. Student equipment: hard hats, catering whites, protective footwear and so on are also costs. Are schools/providers obtaining additional cover to ensure they are indemnified?

3. The real cost of programmes

What are the aspects that need to be identified to calculate the real cost of 14 -16 flexible provision?

- Guidance, induction and support: Parents evenings, 'Taster' events, college/WBL provider presence at schools' Year Nine options events, school careers teacher time, Connexions/Careers staff time. Learning Support – who pays? This is even problematic where a pupil has an SEN statement.
- What are the barriers to these aspects being fully identified?*
- Short planning lead times for the Increased Flexibility (IF) programmes, for example, meant many 'hidden costs' were absorbed and not fully factored in.

- The IF funding model meant trade-offs, for example, if schools wanted funds to be largely focused upon delivery, little was left for other considerations such as transport, staff time, management and co-ordination.
- Some 'costs' were not anticipated, for instance, even students travelling on foot meant they were unable to get to the next lesson at school, therefore representing an opportunity cost. Student absenteeism was often not factored in either.

What strategies might overcome these barriers?

- Collaborative programmes featuring in costed institutional development plans.
- Institutional use of resource checklists showing clear units of costs of, for example, tuition per student per hour: estimated as £75-85 per hour per student group on college provision.

Add to this disaggregations of other overriding costs such as liaison meeting time, co-ordination. In practice critical mass is key – what are the minimum cost effective group sizes? Cross-subsidies, that is large groups subsidising small ones, also needs consideration.

What key actions would help achieve calculation of the real costs of provision?

- Agreement at national level (LSC? DfES?) on a funding model where students learn on more than one provider's premises, including employers. No wrangling about 'Who owns the learner?'
- Official recognition that collaborative provision is dearer than that provided 'in-house'.
- Employers providing placements need to identify their real costs, which partnerships would then be able to factor in as a guarantee not subject to bidding. In this way, partnerships would be rewarded for offering a firm number of guaranteed placements for learners.
- OFSTED 14 -19 Area Inspections should pick up on funding anomalies and inefficiencies.

What needs to happen next?

- LSC Essex could establish a senior group to agree and publish a costing framework, which reflects real costs and to produce a checklist to guide institutions and partnerships in costing their provision.
- LSC Essex could work with relevant partner organisations and representative groups to establish locality-based head of institution/chief executive forums to agree overall vision and framework for 14 -19 collaborations in each locality. Beneath these groups could be representative operational groups to convert the locality vision into practice. This could be within the current Learning Partnership framework.

4. A vision of how collaborative programmes could develop in the future

What are the potential radical and bolder approaches to providing 14 -16 flexible curriculum opportunities for students?

- Entrepreneurs in Residence to improve the business element of programmes.
- NVQ2 together with the core curriculum. Learners would gain more qualifications than those on mainstream programmes.
- 'Mix and match' modules could be provided which later extend to post 16 education.
- Partnerships could appoint trainers from industry (£200-300 per day) for part of each week.
- An increase in the specialist nature of institutions within partnerships: specialist schools, centres of vocational excellence (COVEs) in colleges.
- A cumulative curriculum where students gain points to make up a GCSE or equivalent qualification.
- An extension of teacher placement opportunities – personnel in education change so quickly that long term placements mean teachers need new induction.

What are the barriers to these ideas being implemented?

- Employer engagement and availability is not always reliable.
- Awareness of accredited qualifications is sometimes lacking.
- The work-related curriculum can be perceived as lacking kudos.
- Travelling by students.
- Some parental resistance is evident, though some are very positive.
- Collaborative programmes are not cheap and often rely on external funding.
- Timetabling rigidity can make partnership working difficult.

What strategies might overcome the barriers?

- A Young Enterprise model with NVQ one day per fortnight being delivered by a work-based learning provider.
- Learners taking greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Successful operation of the Connexions service once fully established.
- Better preparation of students during Years Seven to Nine.
- Learning within business methodology – variety of skills/trades.
- Schools having their own assessors to assess work-based learning.
- Access to a wider range of vocational sector for learners of all abilities.

What key actions would help the successful implementation of these ideas?

- Asking employers what the barriers to their involvement are.
- New hybrid GCSEs: how can they be mapped into the curriculum?

- The availability of specialist resource/facilities – community facilities perhaps.
- ‘Ownership’ of the learner should be less of a preoccupation for institutions.
- The development of credit accumulation and transfer modular schemes recognised by the full range of providers.

Case Study 1 – The Appleton School, Benfleet

Contributor: Karen Kerridge

School Profile

The Appleton School is an oversubscribed comprehensive, 11-16 school: it is one of the first secondary schools to obtain Business and Enterprise specialist status. Its catchment includes Pitsea, one of the most deprived areas of Essex and part of the East Basildon Education Action Zone. We are situated in the densely populated district of Castle Point, which has a thriving small business tradition. The school takes students from twenty six different feeder primary schools, and has about 240 students in each year group.

Profile of current Years 10/11

The school has a diverse curriculum at Key Stage 4 including a wide variety of GCSE and applied GCSE courses, GNVQ Part One, GNVQ full Intermediate award and alternative education programmes. There are also extensive opportunities for students to engage with e learning programmes in the curriculum areas of ICT, Business Studies and Mathematics.

Gifted and talented students in English, Mathematics and Science are given the opportunity to take part in enrichment courses run by the neighbouring SEEVIC college in Year 10. These courses are organised so that students from six secondary schools have the opportunity to work, socialise and mix with other gifted and talented students. The course operates as an extended day activity for half a term.

All students take part in a three week work experience programme run by Trident. Most follow work placements in the local area. However, a small minority of students also complete their work experience in Cologne in Germany.

Many students are also involved in "fast tracking" GCSE courses, completing their GCSE in Year 10. During the past four years this has been offered to students studying GCSE qualifications in English, Business Studies, Art and Geology.

Approximately 50% of Year 10 are currently involved in piloting applied GCSE courses, 20% of the year are involved in full Intermediate GNVQ qualifications, 10% in Part One GNVQ accreditation and under 5% involved in alternative education programmes. Students on alternative education programmes spend two days with trainers such as Prospects College or Endaim and three days in school. These learners will complete at least five GCSEs within their time at school.

Curriculum planning for 2003-04

The planned timetable shown on the next page is based on a fifty period fortnight of one hour slots. The school has taken the opportunities offered within the recent Green Paper to further diversify the curriculum, with the effect that Modern Foreign Languages and technology are no longer offered as core subjects at Key Stage 4.

KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM 2003 - 4

Core					Options				
English & English Lit.	Mathematics	Science	PE	CZ	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
6	6	6	2	2	6	6	6	5	5
		Science or Applied Science			French	Art	Music	Applied Art	Photography
					German	Food	German	GNVQ	Drama
					Ceramics	Graphics	Applied ICT	Ceramics	Media
					Photography	Applied ICT	Photography	Science	Dance
					Applied Art	Resistant Materials	GCSE PE		GNVQ Business
						Systems and Control	History	Religious Studies	Geography
					ICT	Applied Business	GNVQ Art	GNVQ Art	
					GNVQ ICT		Applied Business	Geography	GNVQ Art
					GNVQ Business	Drama	Applied Science		History
								GNVQ ICT	GNVQ ICT

Management arrangements

The alternative education programme is managed by an assistant headteacher and run in conjunction with SEEVIC College. It is funded with a Learning and Skills Council grant and has operated for only one year. Students embarking upon such a programme are selected by Year co-ordinators and they are usually disaffected students who are at risk of not completing their education.

All off-site learning opportunities are provided by trainers, either Endaim or Prospects College. Students are accredited with Level one qualifications. The students attendance is monitored on a daily basis by the school and the training organisation. These students spend three days in school following GCSE courses.

Funding

The real costs of the alternative education programme are difficult to quantify as each student's requirements are slightly different. However the average costs per student are as follows:

£1,700 paid to the training provider for two days per week training;

£100 per student travel budget;

£100 monitoring programmes;

£200 management costs.

Estimated real costs are £2100 per student for two days per week. This is funded through finance from the LSC and is run in conjunction with SEEVIC College

It is envisaged that this programme will continue next year in the same format. However some schools are considering setting up their own training placements.

The ideal scenario

The ideal scenario for alternative education programmes would include:

- The ability to facilitate an area wide response to alternative education programmes. This would result in courses within schools becoming cost effective for students on their return to school;
- Accreditation for training experience which was reflected in performance tables;
- A wider variety of placements offered to students.

Case Study 2 – Belfairs High School, Southend

Contributor: Melanie Leeks

School Profile

Belfairs High School (11-18) is the only non-selective school operating in a Borough that comprises of grammar, denominational, specialist schools operating a 10% selection policy and a school in special measures. Its population is unique amongst secondary schools in the area: a diversity of cultures featuring special needs, and unusual family circumstances. Working in challenging surroundings has encouraged dedicated staff to refine and develop teaching and learning strategies to engage students and prepare them for their life ahead.

The recent successful bid for Media College status and a wide range of Education Action Zone (EAZ) initiatives is turning the tide of the school's fortunes. Strategies for improvement are holistic but hold at their centre the needs of individuals. Supportive leadership and a Headteacher who believes that all young people should be able to experience success whatever their starting point, are the spur to our progress.

The growth of Vocational and work-related education at Belfairs High School is part of the drive to equip our students to negotiate the rapidly evolving and expanding demands of their worlds. The learners who pass through our doors have greater opportunities and choices as confident, motivated people who understand the value of teamwork, commitment and communication, capabilities for which the world of work is increasingly looking.

Profile of current Year 10 and 11

Currently we have 210 students in Year 10 and 217 students in Year 11. Our approach to flexibility beyond GCSEs has been successful. Across Key Stage 4, 40 students are involved in the Work-Related Education Programme (WREP) which offers an opportunity to start a career path early and achieve NVQ level 1 and/or 2. This involves a reduced timetable in school and work with training providers on specified days. A real team effort between all stakeholders – tutors, heads of year, students and parents is employed; the WREP team organise Connexions Service interviews for students and liaise with parents. Parents and students apply for the student to become part of the programme.

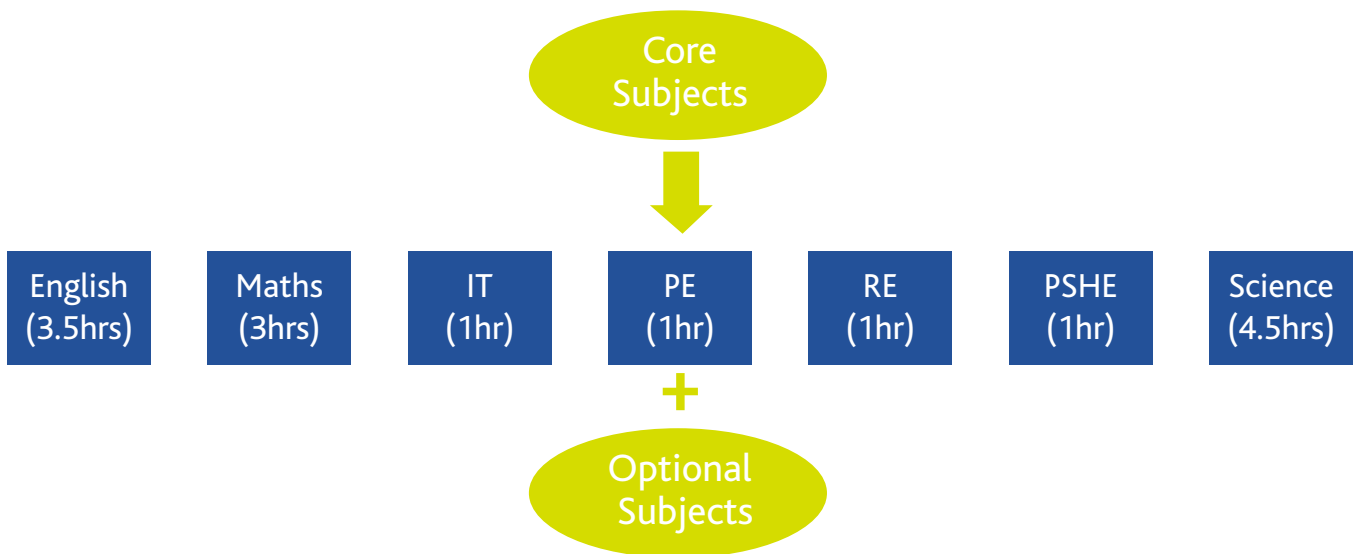
280 students are enrolled on various vocational courses leading to GNVQ Part One Intermediate or Foundation qualifications in Year 11 and GCSEs in vocational subjects for the current Year 10 cohort. We also offer the GNVQ Full Award ICT using the Thomas Telford CTC distance learning resources. These courses are part of the options offered to Year Nine students. Students generally have freedom of choice and can opt to combine traditional GCSEs with the vocational qualifications.

The growth and success of work related and vocational education at Belfairs in the last three years has been astounding and at present this is within the constraints of a four-block options structure, each option allocated two and a half hours per week. A fresh look at the timetable structure could promote further growth and expansion of vocational education. It may be that a radical design is called for to enhance the flexibility that has been started through the current curriculum model.

Curriculum Model for Key Stage 4 2002 – 2003

Vocational courses must be selected across two option blocks (see overleaf) to allow time to cover the specifications. The Work-Related Education Programme stands alone but students must complete the option process and select subjects from all four option blocks.

At Key Stage 4 we currently offer vocational courses in Business, Engineering, Health & Social Care, Leisure & Tourism and ICT. This year is transitional between the Part One GNVQ and the GCSEs in vocational subjects. The current Year 10s started the GCSEs in vocational subjects in September 2002 with planned completion in July 2004. These courses are supported by the Southend EAZ "Optima" Partnership which aims to bring together schools, colleges and training providers to develop enhanced vocational and work-related learning opportunities for young people aged 14 -16 in four Southend schools. This has proved a fantastic opportunity to work collaboratively with other schools in the area with the benefit of additional funding.



Column A (2.5hrs)	Column B (2.5hrs)	Column C (2.5hrs)	Column D (2.5hrs)
Business	→	Engineering	→
Health & Social Care	→	Leisure & Tourism	→
GNVQ ICT	→	GNVQ ICT	→
Drama	Music	Food	Food
Art	Geography	Geography	Child Development
History	PE	RE	Textiles
Sociology	History	Life Skills	Art
Life Skills	Spanish	Media Studies	French
Dance	Drama	Graphics	Dance

or

Work Related Education Programme

Management Arrangements

All vocational and work-related programmes have a clear management structure involving staff who are committed and enthusiastic about a different approach to teaching and learning. An understanding of the nature of these types of programmes coupled with commitment to a flexible approach is the key to success at Belfairs.

The Work-Related Education Programme’s senior leadership link is the Inclusion Director, it is managed by the part-time Head of Work Related Learning (non-teaching) and has a dedicated full time WREP Co-ordinator, who does not teach in any other area of the school.

The Head of Vocational Education, who is also attached to the Senior Leadership Team, manages the vocational

courses. Each subject area has a team leader who co-ordinates the day-to-day running of the courses.

The students on the Work-Related Education Programme start Year 10 on a full timetable but are in constant contact with the WREP Co-ordinator. During this period the timetable is tailored to individual needs in consultation with the student and specialist staff. There is enough flexibility in the system to allow the Co-ordinator and student to negotiate days out of school. It is designed so the student can maintain some GCSE/Vocational courses and benefit from the experience with the training provider.

The WREP Co-ordinator manages the day to day contact with the training providers and makes regular personal visits. At regular intervals the WREP Co-ordinator and

Head of Work Related Learning complete reviews and evaluations which are submitted to the EAZ. The training provider and WREP Co-ordinator monitor attendance.

When in school but not in lessons the students can use the dedicated base, which is equipped with computer facilities. Students receive additional Maths and English support. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) provides additional workshops on topics such as self-esteem, life skills, anger management and bullying. Subject teachers provide coursework. There is a maximum of six students in the base at any one time so enabling individual support.

The vocational courses involve a different approach as students continue to follow a full week's timetable. The difference comes in the approach to teaching and learning. All courses start with an induction period, different depending on the subject area but the principle in each is the same – a practical activity involving contact with the local community. All unit work contributes to the final qualification in all vocational courses so it would be unfair to launch all students into the unit work without some preparation.

Each unit is project-based and students are encouraged to make and use contacts with the local community. Although we are only in the second term of the vocational GCSEs, Business students have interviewed employees from large and small organisations. Health & Social Care students have visited clinics and surgeries and received a visit from the Primary Care Trust. All three subject areas have dedicated rooms/areas which are equipped with ICT facilities.

The Optima Partnership has enabled us to purchase Scantek modules, which can be used by other schools in the partnership. This will enhance the resources in Engineering in a real way and make possible the introduction of a work-related motor vehicle course.

Staff encourage independent learning with continual examination of the world of work. Use of the ICT facilities is essential and student skills and application of technology are improving. Students work at their own pace but to termly deadlines, an assessment plan providing guidance on the term's work is handed out at the beginning of the period. Staff can work with individuals to provide guidance and support.

A Steering Group of senior partners and an Operational Group monitor the Optima Partnership and these are co-ordinated by an EAZ representative.

At Belfairs we have come a long way in three years but recognise that we are starting on the journey of curriculum change and a flexible approach to provision to meet the needs of our students. We are moving in the right direction. How do we know?

- The quality of work produced in vocational areas;
- Students are keen to work;
- Students are working independently and managing their time effectively;
- Students' behaviour is generally good and improving;
- Students' choice is wider now than three years ago;
- There has been a positive impact on the development of ICT skills;
- Students acquire increased confidence levels and improved communication skills. They have an ability to communicate with different people at different levels in organisations;
- Increasing student numbers on vocational courses and the Work-Related Education Programme;
- A more positive attitude to Post 16 education is emerging.

If examination achievement is an indicator of our success then in the Part One Intermediate examinations (Summer 2002) 90% of Business students achieved pass or above, 77% of Health & Social Care students achieved pass or above and 85% of Engineering students achieved a pass or above. This represents achievement in an environment where examination success at this level is not the norm.

Funding

It is difficult to list all costs, but they include transport, teacher cover, time dedicated to management, administration and organisation, training provider and placement costs, travel and equipment. We know it is expensive. The Vocational Education budget is approximately £3000 per year but this is the provision for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. The Optima Partnership

has provided £15,500 for the year 2002-2003 with an additional £27,000 for the installation and introduction of Scantek. The estimated costs for the Work-Related Education Programme for 2003-2004 are £60,000.

The main issue for vocational education is time. Teaching staff are valuable resources and there is a need for change here. The success of the WREP at Belfairs can be attributed to many factors including the drive and commitment of the staff involved but they do not have the demands of a teaching timetable. The vocational staff all teach a full timetable and have other commitments around school.

Curriculum Planning for 2003 – 2004

Plans for WREP involve consolidating the success of this year including the induction period; consultation between stakeholders and maintaining the flexibility in the system that allows us to meet individual needs. There are plans to improve computer access and software to include key skills provision and there is a need for LSA support. The future suggests a need for closer links between WREP and vocational qualifications; we can learn from each approach and mix and match provision.

The vision for KS4 vocational education through the Optima Partnership is exciting and will help improve provision and flexibility in all four partner schools. The EAZ Co-ordinator has a real understanding of the problems faced by the schools in providing vocational education. The Partnership is in its infancy and many lessons have been learned in the first six months. Working collaboratively is a difficult concept to grasp in schools when so many of us are adept at working in isolation and have been encouraged to compete with other schools in the area. The vision is to address the problems of time, funding, risk assessments and the variety of links we could use but usually do not have time to research and organise. A centrally provided Co-ordinator could pull all these aspects together and the partner schools could then request contacts and help with organisation. The aim is also to reduce the impact on employers in a town where potentially we could have up to 280 students making demands on their time. We need to rethink our approach and bring more employers into schools – this could be done through training providers running sessions on Communication, IT, Application of Number and other workshops relevant

to specific subject areas. Plans to provide work fairs, taster sessions and work shadowing could be organised by the central body for partner schools and funding dedicated to this provision.

The Ideal Scenario

An ideal situation would include:

- A number of curriculum models to include provision for vocational education. Timetables of partner schools linked to allow for collaborative work or sharing of resources;
- An increase and improvement in employer input. Trident, or similar organisations, could provide a mix and match service not just block placements but including checks for work shadowing, interviews and small group visits. A menu of services offered by Trident with a sliding scale of prices would be attractive;
- A central directory that schools could consult which brought together training providers, large and small employers and a menu of options offered by the employer/provider;
- Improved information provided by large organisations related to the requirements of specifications of each GCSE in a vocational subject;
- An entrepreneur in residence/Engineer in residence/Health worker in residence paid for by external funding and shared by partner schools;
- A central facility/mock business organisation/simulated environment with all relevant functional areas. Students could work in this organisation for a set period of time. Consultants from the world of work would be involved. A Prospects-type set up but available to all students on vocational courses in the area;
- The ability to answer the employer's question: 'What's in it for me?' Providing employees for the future is not enough when we put so many demands on their time/resources;

Creation of a 'School to Career' ethos with clear links between educational pathways and employment outcomes. Identification of skill shortages within the local employment market would be relevant here.

Case Study 3 – Cecil Jones High School, Southend

Contributor: John McEachern

School Profile

Cecil Jones High School is a heavily oversubscribed 11-18 co-educational urban comprehensive school of 1500, with 10 form entry in Key Stage 3; nine form entry in Key Stage 4, and 160 in the sixth form. Last year witnessed over 640 applications for 280 places in Year seven. We are a split site school with Years Seven and Eight accommodated approximately one mile away in a 'middle school' environment. We are located in the highly competitive environment of Southend, with four grammar schools and two selective Roman Catholic schools making up the other parts of the state secondary sector. We are a community school in the truest sense, with part of our 'catchment area' being some of the most socio-economically deprived areas in the Borough. University participation rates are amongst the lowest in the Borough. We have a below national average intake at Level 5 and above, and broadly average at Level 4. The proportion of pupils with special needs and English as an additional language are slightly above national averages. We have proportionally few students of higher ability, though we are members of the Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex (CSSE), and thus admit approximately 10% of our intake based upon the selection test.

We are presently applying for Business & Enterprise specialist status, as we believe passionately in this as a vehicle for further equipping our students with the required skills to be active participators and stakeholders in a modern society.

We are innovative in our approach to teaching and learning, and in 2001-02 introduced a school day structure to allow for the development of concentrated, immersion learning. As such we operate a three period day of 105-minute lessons across the whole school which has revolutionised the learning climate and proved to be a huge success. Amongst the many and varied benefits has been the reduction of 'negative stress' upon students; reduction in (disruptive) social interaction time; increased time into Key Stage 4 and, most significantly, the enhancement of the range and depth of teaching and learning activities.

Years 10 and 11 profile

There are approximately 510 students in Key Stage 4, the

vast majority of whom study for the traditional 9 or 10 GCSE "diet". All students complete the GNVQ ICT (Intermediate level) qualification as part of their core curriculum, leading to either a Part One or Full Award.

Approximately 180 students follow GNVQ qualifications across Key Stage 4 as part of their optional curriculum - Business (60 students); Art & Design (60); Leisure & Tourism (20) and Health & Social Care (40). These have proved to be popular and relatively successful programmes. They are motivating opportunities for those students involved. All courses have work-related learning involved to varying degrees – ranging from one day visits to work shadowing placements at a large local employer.

Up to 20 students are targeted each year as being at risk of poor motivation, indifferent attendance or refusal to attend and/or challenging behaviour and are placed on an alternative education programme called 'vocational horizons'. These students then have relevant work placements for two or three days a week (in conjunction with Prospects College and Trident) and spend the remaining time in school following a core curriculum of Maths, English and ICT to GCSE level and PSHE/RE and Careers.

Our main collaborative programme within the Increased Flexibility programme is the 'Optima Project'. This is a pilot of the new Applied GCSE courses, run in partnership with local schools and an FE provider, through the Southend Education Action Zone. This will involve some work-related experiential learning elements and has been piloted with 60 students, who were selected upon ability profile. A 'control group' of 60 students selected upon aptitude is also running concurrently within the school. All students experience one period of taught ICT per week. Key outcomes of the project are for 67% of students to achieve at least one GCSE in a vocational subject at Level 2; 75% of students to progress into further education and improved attendance.

Current Curriculum Model (2002-03)

In developing and evaluating our curriculum model set out on page 21 we were guided by some core principles:

Developing provision that caters for the wide ranges of student ability, motivation and aspiration, thus providing opportunities for success for all at Key Stage 4. Vocational provision has in the past been highly

successful in motivating and developing those students of average ability in particular.

We have taken on board the increased flexibility offered by the national 14 -19 changes to identify those students who would enjoy greater success on a more relevant vocational course and disappled them from Modern Foreign Languages. This is despite Languages producing some of the best academic results in the school with their previously all inclusive approach. We have also taken the opportunity to reconfigure the option blocks so as to enable students to take two Technology or two Arts-based or two Humanities-based subjects should they desire. Flexibility is also built in to allow the combining of more than one vocational area as well.

By replicating our vocational provision across both option lines we will enable the more able students to broaden their 'diet' and opt for a more 'mix and match' approach to their Key Stage 4 curriculum. This will also help continue to tackle the unfounded 'poor relation' labelling of vocational provision and ensure greater parity of esteem in the eyes of students.

Our aim over the next two years is to see all students undertake some form of vocational provision within their Key Stage 4 programme

Management Arrangements

Vocational education in the school is overseen and strategically line managed by two Assistant Headteachers – one for Key Stage 4 programmes and one for the sixth form. Curriculum area managers have a specific operational role, and programmes sit within these subject areas. There is no 'vocational co-ordinator' role school-wide, but obviously representation is achieved via the Assistant Headteachers who are part of the Leadership Group for the school. No additional time is allocated specifically to these staff for these responsibility areas.

The 'alternative education' programme is overseen by the Assistant Headteacher with pastoral responsibility who has a discrete budget. The students are taught their English, Maths & ICT by carefully selected staff and are entered for Full GCSE Level 1 or 2 qualifications.

The 'Optima' project has a steering group consisting of senior partners within the EAZ, and an operations group made up of subject leaders in the partnership schools and organisations. In Cecil Jones our Advanced Skills Teacher for ICT heads up this part of the project, and she reports directly to an Assistant Headteacher.

Possible students are identified for the programme by meeting the agreed criteria of being D/E GCSE ability, and as students who would benefit greatly from a more applied approach to their study. They then undergo a selection process involving a brief application and interview to ensure suitability. Induction into a vocational education programme is integrated within each subject area, but varies greatly in terms of quality and content. This is a development area for the future. Quality assurance for this learning off-site is conducted through the same processes and systems as for the rest of the school, via the visits co-ordinator. Attendance, progress and learner support are monitored via a range of strategies including teacher visits, student feedback/evaluations and placement reports.

Funding

It is difficult for schools to exactly quantify 'real costs' – most costs are subsumed within curriculum area budgets. The usual formula applies in using pupil numbers for calculating capitation, with an add-on enhancement for more practical subject areas with high consumables expenditure. No specific increase in funding is allocated for vocational courses generally, although areas can 'bid in' for developmental monies as appropriate.

The collaborative 'Optima' project has attracted significant extra funding to the school amounting to £11,500. This has been used to date to purchase additional hardware and software facilities and to fund various experiential visits and speakers to apply ICT in the workplace. Future funding will be directed at facilitating more extensive work-based learning activities. The alternative education programme has its own allocated budget of approximately £5,000 per annum to cover the cost of placements and work-related learning experiences.

Curriculum planning for 2003-04

At Key Stage 4: –

- Vocational horizons provision of alternative education for a maximum of twenty Year 11 students involving Trident/Prospects College placements;
- GCSE in Applied ICT (Optima project within EAZ) to be extended and enhanced to involve more students;
- A Vocational GCSE in Manufacturing, combining the school, a tertiary FE provider and Prospects College for regular work related learning placements.

An ideal scenario

- A menu-driven choice of work related experiences provided in the locality;
- Integrated work experiences across all subject area programmes of study;
- True collaboration rather than competition between local partners;
- Live business simulations and/or localised training centres offering realistic work-based environments which schools could buy into at various levels.

PROPOSED KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM MODEL, 2003/2005

Points to note:

The school operates a 30 period 2 week timetable (although the only change week to week, is within the option blocks where subjects have 1 period (week 1) and 2 periods (week 2))

Each period is 105 minutes duration – number of periods allocated is indicated below in brackets

We have taken advantage of recent Government changes to disapplication, to improve the flexibility within our curriculum model

Students are banded by ability with the weakest 70 students being disapplied from Languages and Humanities and they take a vocational course in options 1 / 2

There is free choice for students in blocks 3 / 4 so that they may opt for 2 Arts or 2 Technology subjects or pick up a vocational course across both blocks

We envisage greater flexibility to mix and match traditional & vocational routes; and that all students will take a vocational course as part of their diet over the forthcoming 2-3 years

CORE CURRICULUM

ENGLISH (2) **SCIENCE (2.5)** **MATHS (1.5)** **RE/PSE (1)** **PE (1)** **ICT (1)** = 9 PERIODS

OPTION BLOCKS

(each subject receives 1.5 periods a week)

= 6 PERIODS

Option 1		Option 2		Option 3 & 4	
Band 1	French German	History Geography Business & Economics	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Vocational Business Studies Art & Design Health & Social Care </div>		
Band 2	French German	History Geography	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> Product Design Graphics Product Design Materials Systems Control Food Technology Media Studies Sociology </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> Art Drama Dance Music PE Textiles </div> </div>		
Vocational	Business & Finance Health & Social Care Art & Design Manufacturing				

Case Study 4 – Chalvedon School and Sixth Form College, Basildon

Contributor: Bob Dore

School Profile

The school has had Specialist status as a Technology College since 1994. It is an urban, mixed comprehensive and is the largest school in the area with 1,830 students; 210 in the sixth form. 31.3% of our students are eligible for free school meals and 2.2% of students have special educational needs. The school serves Pitsea, one of the most socially deprived areas in Essex.

Chalvedon is Investors in People and Charter Mark accredited. It has also achieved the Sportsmark and has a reputation for training teachers on the Graduate Trainee programme. The work-related curriculum is nationally recognised for its accredited work.

Profile of current year 10 and 11

There are 321 students in Year 10, nine students are following a work-based learning programme. Year 11 has 295 students, six students following a work-based learning programme, with 3 additional students following an alternative education curriculum (SPACE). All work-based learning programmes lead to an NVQ level one or two.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum Model 2002-03

The current model is shown on page 23.

The students have access to one of three pathways with each pathway providing a choice of options to follow. The pathways are a combination of FULL vocational courses and linear courses with the emphasis on providing the appropriate course for each learner. Up to 5% in the year group are given access to a WBL programme. This in itself allows students to follow some traditional GCSE pathways.

Management arrangements

Programmes are managed by the Assistant Headteacher and Senior Teacher responsible for KS4. A Deputy Headteacher monitors progress and the strategic access to the whole school curriculum. Students are selected at the end of KS3 after consultation with the Head of Year and parents. Attendance is monitored weekly by Senior Teachers within the whole school strategic approach to attendance. Progress reviews are also attended by Senior Teachers to monitor and evaluate progress. The external

agency responsible for the work placement also monitors students' attendance and attitude to learning and attainment.

Funding

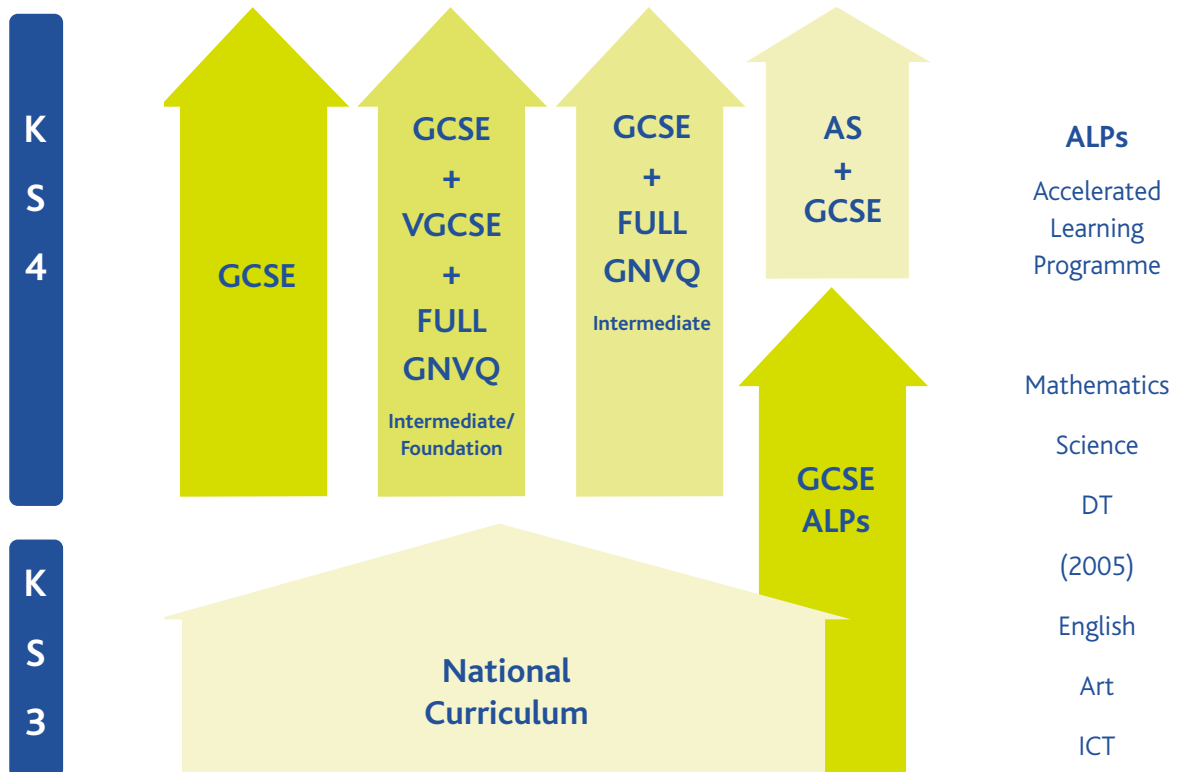
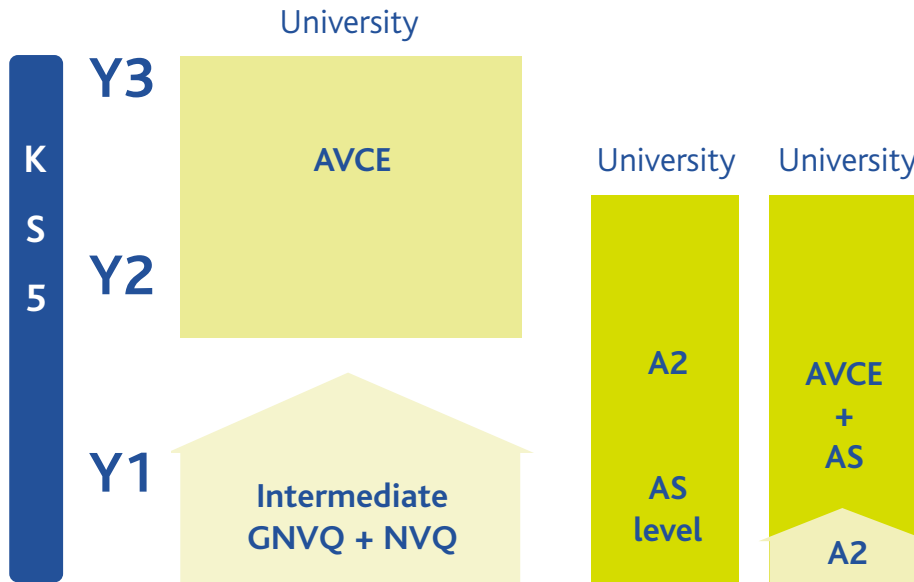
Two training organisations are currently used to provide work-based learning: ENDAIM and Basildon ITEC. ENDAIM charges £140 per student per month and ITEC £166 per student per month. The school provides support for lunch and travel costs where a student receives free school meals or where there are cases of hardship. Specialised equipment has also been provided for students.

Curriculum Planning for 2003 –2004

The current Year 10 model will run through to Year 11. The new Year 10 will, however, follow an 'Enterprise Curriculum' with students undertaking individual GNVQ units with a view to foreshadowing the new 'hybrid' GCSEs. Young Enterprise will form part of the curriculum as will assessment against the requirements of Foundation Modern Apprenticeships. Discussions are underway to enhance our links with local trades-people and professionals.

The ideal scenario

- Trades-people/professionals teaching students on a regular basis;
- NVQs being recognised as credible within industry;
- A move away from less motivated students following WBL programmes;
- Links with current Modern Apprenticeship schemes;
- The Connexions Service to be highly proactive in being 'the Connection';
- Sponsored projects to actually produce/manufacture something of worth in the community: a sort of 'Ask Annika!' approach;
- Provision of training programmes and subjects related to the way a pupil learns at an earlier age than 14 with supported pathways to accelerated learning;
- Introduction of a merits/rewards/finance package for students even if it is used to buy a special package of tools for the students, for example.



Case Study 5 – Partnership working in the Chelmsford, Brentwood and Maldon Area

Contributors: Willis Field (Chelmsford College), Meryl Fraser-Betts (Hylands School) and Helen Lewis (The Plume School).

Partnership profile

The Chelmsford, Brentwood and Maldon consortium consists of 15 schools, a range of private providers and two colleges, covering the Chelmsford, Maldon, South Woodham Ferrers and Brentwood areas. The consortium also includes Connexions and the Trident Trust. Trident works towards placing all the consortium students into appropriate work placements. The Connexions service provides information, advice and guidance on the consortium's programme and is part of the on-going monitoring of these students.

There is therefore a range of local diversity. However, the schools are all local comprehensives and all expressed an interest in working with the colleges to enhance vocational provision. Many have students travelling considerable distances and some already had links with vocational providers, before the DfES Increased Flexibility programme was available. The consortium had established itself prior to this programme, in order to look at Alternative Education in the Chelmsford area.

The examples for this exercise will describe the experiences of the Hylands and Plume schools. Hylands School (950 students) has a rural and urban intake; it also has a Rural Studies Unit. Plume School (1,700 students) is a split-site school, many children travelling into school; for geographical reasons it belongs to two 'Increased Flexibility' consortia.

Year 10 participants at each school

Hylands School has a total of 160 in year 10 and Plume School has 230. Plume has in-house provision: a package designed around core GCSEs and work experience + learning support: twenty-five students in total are on a programme of alternative education provision. Hylands School has fifteen students on alternative provision, within the Consortium or CTS's Impact programme (see case study 6), two of the fifteen on extended work experience.

The Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) provides opportunities for students who are not reaching their potential in school for a variety of reasons and who would benefit from vocational training and off-site provision.

The Programme Model

In both schools there was an early debate in the planning process centred around the decision as to whether to keep the IFP students together as a teaching group or not. Both schools made the decision to keep this group of students together as a group in school for teaching purposes. This has proved to be a sensible, but expensive option. Again, in both schools, the group is taught by highly experienced staff who are skilled at dealing with this cohort of students. Another important early decision taken by the consortium was the timetable for the week: two days set aside for school and three days for college and work experience. For example, at the Plume School in their two-day programme, the students follow Mathematics GCSE, Single Science GCSE, English Language GCSE, an ASDAN programme, Citizenship and PE.

Management arrangements

In the main, the programmes are run by Heads of Year or senior managers, with a suitable level of experience and influence. Time allocation varies from school to school. At the Plume there is a full time post of "Alternative Education Co-ordinator", whilst at Hylands it is one aspect of an Assistant Headteacher's role. The latter is the more common model across the consortium.

Students are selected by the schools and the process is controlled by them as part of the Year 9 options package. As part of the process information is given to providers, including SATs results and learning support needs, and this is followed by interviews with both student and parent.

Quality Assurance of off-site provision is secured because only organisations which are inspected or reviewed by national organisations, such as OFSTED and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), are used.

Good communication is essential: student progress reviews are written, there are school-based reviews, the colleges monitor attendance on a daily basis and there are monthly consortium meetings. Teacher visits to providers as part of the monitoring process are extremely valuable. Induction takes place mainly on the provider's premises. All students have a Connexions interview at some point in their programme. At Hylands and at the Plume school additional support is identified and provided in negotiation with the Connexions Personal

Adviser. All these students receive considerable support at school, for example school-devised booklets and practice bus trips. The consortium makes policy decisions, leads on development issues and reviews and evaluates. The monthly meetings have been very helpful in this respect.

Funding

The Consortium made an early decision that funding would, as far as possible, follow the individual student and that as much as possible would support curriculum delivery. Each school manages its own cohort, including specialist equipment, work experience, transport and so forth. This recognises the individual circumstances of each school.

It must be stressed that keeping the group together at school is a costly model, much more so than infilling, but is more effective. Ten per cent of IFP funding was used to pay for a Consortium Co-ordinator, who manages the overall day-to-day running of the programme.

Curriculum planning for 2003-04

- The Consortium will make the same offer and, we presume, with the same funding, same framework, same schools involved;
- All providers will be involved in the process of student selection;
- Taster days in May will allow young people to "taste" their preferred option. Induction will follow in July;
- The Plume School will appoint a designated tutor for the group;
- Given that European Social Fund (ESF) funding for Alternative Education has now been secured there will be two separate routes: the Alternative Education programme will seek to engage students who are disaffected, while the IFP will focus on the vocationally-motivated learners;
- The consortium wishes to improve work experience provision, by working more closely with Connexions and employers;
- More information is being sought on the student application forms so that appropriate learning support can be in place immediately;

- A Handbook for co-ordinators is being created;
- A Directory of Resources for staff has been created;
- School based IFP managers must have an input into the Connexions Partnership agreement so that resources are identified and allocated in advance.

An ideal scenario for partnership working

- Long term funding and planning and government commitment for this cohort is essential;
- Because of the resourcing and timetabling issues of the school-based element, delivery of the "core curriculum" would be more efficiently done if managed from a central resource. There would still have to be a regular time at school for each individual and the school would still retain responsibility for the student;
- Simulated work experience, for example through Young Enterprise Schemes, could provide a valuable alternative to work placement and could be useful for the less mature.

Case Study 6 – CTS Training, Chelmsford

Contributor: Sarah Ludlow

Organisation Profile

CTS is a private training organisation delivering quality training to young people throughout Essex. As well as delivering Modern Apprenticeships, NVQ training and Life Skills to young adults, CTS also has an Alternative Education programme for students still of compulsory school age.

The schools' "Impact" project was set up over four years ago with local secondary schools. It has been designed so that all students of any background and academic ability can achieve a recognised qualification whilst gaining real work experience. Over the past few months the scheme has grown in size and CTS now offer more qualifications suited to students from secondary school than ever before. Some schemes cover the students' work experience as well as a qualification, whilst others are taught at the training centre which helps them to enhance their basic skills in communication, mathematics, and IT.

CTS currently has 10 students from schools in the Chelmsford area working towards awards suited to their differing abilities. All currently working with local businesses completing work experience as part of the scheme.

The qualifications available to all Year 10 and 11 students are as follows:

- Retail Operations NVQ Level 1 & 2;
- Warehousing Operations NVQ Level 1 & 2;
- Business Administration NVQ Level 1 & 2;
- Using Information Technology NVQ Level 1 & 2;
- Key skills - All areas at Levels 1 & 2;
- Citizenship Entry Level 3 Certificate;
- Preparation for Employment Entry Level 3 Certificate;
- Preparation for Employment Level 1 & 2;
- Career Planning Level 1 & 2;
- Job Seeking Skills Entry Level 3 Certificate;
- Learning Skills Entry Level 3 Certificate;
- National Skills Profile.

Over the past few months CTS has also designed its own modular programme, for use with students with special educational needs such as dyslexia or autism. This scheme takes modules from many of the above qualifications and breaks them down into smaller pieces which, in turn, are completed over a number of weeks. These units are then externally verified and accredited by the awarding body, with the pupil receiving a certificate for each module completed.

Management Arrangements

CTS currently has a two-tier approach to the management of the scheme. Overall management is exercised by Lindsey Ellis, CTS Chief Executive. The amount of time spent managing the programme varies depending on the numbers involved in the scheme. Over the past year the approximate time spent managing the scheme by the Chief Executive amounts to one day per month.

The day-to-day management is conducted by the scheme co-ordinator, Sarah Ludlow. Again the amount of time spent varies as the co-ordinator is currently responsible for assessing and tutoring the students as well as dealing with any day to day problems or queries as they arise. Over the past year approximately 50 hours per month have been spent managing, assessing, tutoring and programme planning.

CTS has very strict quality assurance policies and procedures in place, with regards to the 14 -16 scheme. All the internal systems and procedures for Learning and Skills Council funded mainstream qualifications are applied to the 14 -16 cohort, which in turn are strictly monitored by LSC Essex.

At present all the students who are undertaking this scheme were nominated by their school. All face differing learning and social challenges and found the normal school-based timetable very difficult. Once the school has chosen the prospective participants, a meeting is arranged with both the student and, if possible, the parents to ascertain exactly what the learner wishes to gain from the course and what vocational area they would like their work experience to be in. During this meeting the requirements of the course are explained to both student and parent; it also allows for questions and queries to be put.

After the interviews have taken place, work placements are then contacted and visited. The content of the scheme and the requirements of both the employer and the student are explained. A full risk assessment and health and safety check are carried out to ensure that the student will be covered by both the employer's liability insurance and general health and safety regulations. During the time that they spend in their work placement they are visited regularly by the scheme co-ordinator. The purpose of these visits is to check the progress of the learner and discuss with the employer any issues that may have arisen. It also gives the tutor the opportunity to agree action plans and targets for the student to complete before the next visit. All employers, students and parents can contact CTS at any time if they have any concerns or questions. Both CTS and the employer monitor the students' attendance. All are required to complete a weekly attendance sheet, which must be signed by their employer to confirm that they have attended. In the event of non-attendance the employer will contact CTS and further investigations are made to ascertain where the student is and why they are not at their placement.

During the time the students spend on the scheme they have the full support of CTS staff. CTS will also provide additional support in the form of one-to-one tuition if needed. The scheme co-ordinator makes regular visits to the schools involved and has also attended parents evenings and review meetings with school special needs co-ordinators and local education authority representatives. The majority of the learners spend the remainder of their time at their school completing mandatory subjects. For this reason the scheme is designed and co-ordinated around the school timetable and term dates.

Funding

Over the past few years the costs of the scheme have grown in line with the numbers who attend the scheme. Although the school is charged a rate per learner per scheme, there are various hidden costs that are subsidised by CTS. Examples of the hidden costs are as follows:

- Writing policies and procedures to quality assure the programme;

- Delivering innovative approaches to deliver the scheme;
- Obtaining work placements/health and safety checks;
- Additional management time;
- Curriculum design/lesson planning/resources;
- Researching new qualifications;
- Marketing;
- Student and parent meetings;
- Transport;
- Initial Assessment/basic skills analysis;
- Programme planning;
- Learning support;
- Lunchtime supervision.

Planning for 2003-2004

At the start of the autumn term 2002, CTS already had two different cohorts running concurrently. One group is in Year 11 and the other in Year 10. As the two groups were undertaking different schemes and on different days the logistics have not caused a problem. At present the scheme co-ordinator has other roles and responsibilities within the business, but should the scheme expand further these duties will be passed over to another member of staff.

Both new and existing schools interested in putting students through this scheme have already approached CTS. The interviews with both the students and the parents took place before Easter 2003.

After Easter the next step was to approach active employers to find the work placements. As in previous years the scheme details will have to be finalised before the end of the summer term ready for the new learners to start in September 2003.

During several meetings with the schools involved CTS has decided to change the way in which its customers are invoiced. In previous years the schools were invoiced at the beginning of the scheme and then on a termly basis. Unfortunately this did not take into account the

extra meetings, parents' evenings and workplace visits that took place over the term. To resolve this problem CTS has decided that from September 2003 all invoices will be sent at monthly intervals. This should allow both CTS and the schools to monitor the time spent on the scheme more closely.

The Ideal Scenario

During the two years that I have been co-ordinating the alternative education scheme I have found many areas that cause frustration to me, my colleagues, the school and the parents.

- At present there is funding available through the Chelmsford Consortium and the local LSC. However the amount of money available to both the school and the training providers is insufficient. It costs an average of £3,000 per student for the scheme. Even with funding from the Consortium and the LSC the schools have to pay the remaining monies. Unfortunately the outstanding costs are over and above what the schools are able to pay. If more funding was available direct to the training provider/college we could then subsidise more of the programme, which in turn would allow all the learners to achieve their full potential;
- During the past few years all marketing costs have been met by CTS. As the Government has now decided that this type of scheme should be more widely available it would be helpful if funding was available to help with marketing and set up costs. This in turn would allow us to focus on the students' needs instead of the schools' limited resources;
- It would be helpful in the future if more training providers, colleges and schools were willing to share resources. Most schools and colleges have resources that would be very helpful to all the pupils on these schemes but at present it is very difficult to access them;
- The biggest problem that has arisen over the past few years while working with schools is that of communication. As a training provider we do not close down during school holidays, so it proves frustrating when an urgent query needs to be addressed by the school. It can also be difficult to contact teachers or support staff either before or after the school day. In some cases phone calls, faxes or e-mails have been left unanswered for several days, which, in turn caused difficulties. It would be helpful to both the training provider and the school if a nominated member of staff was available to contact between the hours of 9am and 5pm, if and when, the original contact is unavailable. This in turn would cut down the amount of time spent making calls only to find that there is no one available.

Case Study 7 – Clacton County High School and the Clacton and Harwich EAZ

Contributor: Hazel Rusby

The EAZ work-related alternative 14 -16 curriculum

Programme aim

To provide a planned and coherent alternative route to success for those students aged 14 -16 for whom the traditional school curriculum is not appropriate.

Programme objectives

- To offer an appropriate programme of GCSE and NVQs;
- To offer a coherent Personal and Social Education Programme;
- To create a varied and interesting weekly programme of school, training provider and work experience;
- To provide an opportunity to explore and develop skills within a chosen career area;
- To enable students to successfully complete an NVQ at the appropriate level in the chosen career area;
- To enable students to successfully complete GCSEs in English, Maths and ICT (Business Communication);
- To enable students to have an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience.

Programme partners

The aims and objectives are to be achieved by Clacton and Harwich Education Action Zone working co-operatively with:

- Pelcombe Training;
- Vocational Training Services;
- Colchester Institute;
- NACRO Training Services;
- Blacup Training;
- Endaim Training Services;
- Catten College;
- The Future Training Agency.

The current programme

In 2002-03, the providers offer the following:

Pelcombe Training:

Hospitality and Catering
Performance Engineering Operations
Business Administration

Vocational Training Services:

Childcare

The Future Training Agency:

Childcare (CACHE)

Colchester Institute:

Performance Engineering Operations
Bricklaying
Hospitality and Catering

NACRO Training Services:

Retail Distribution
Customer Care
Administration
Performance Engineering Operations
Life Skills + CLAIT

Blacup Training:

Animal Care
Equestrian Services

Endaim Training Services:

Hairdressing
Customer Care
Retail
Employability Skills

Catten College:

Hairdressing
Sport and Recreation
Adult Care

Student guidance and induction arrangements

- Students and parents express an initial interest following the Year Nine option booklet and information talks. Students are identified at the end of Year Ten;
- Careers interviews seek to identify the aspirations and interests of the targeted students;

- Information goes to parents together with an invitation to an evening presentation as part of the Year Nine Key Stage 4 induction process;
- The schools and training providers run an induction event;
- Interview between students, parents and training providers to take place;
- A Training Agreement is signed by all parties.

Management and monitoring arrangements

- Weekly attendance records are monitored by the school/training provider;
- Learning targets are set by the school/training provider;
- Regular assessments are completed by the school/training provider;
- Regular feedback is given to students by the school/training provider;
- Feedback on achievements at specified times goes to parents;
- Appropriate registration and assessments for qualifications are completed by the school/training provider;
- On-going careers guidance is offered by the school/training provider;
- Appropriate qualifications are awarded by the school/training provider;
- An annual celebration of success event is run by the school/training provider.

2003-04 and beyond

A successful student at the end of Year 11 could:

- Complete the NVQ which has been started;
- Progress to a higher level NVQ;
- Progress to GCE/VCE Advanced courses;
- Enter full-time employment.

Case Study 8 – Grays Convent High School

Contributor: Pauline Harris

Note

The school has not yet been involved in an Increased Flexibility programme so this article describes two collaborative projects which I developed with two other local schools and Thurrock College. It outlines the benefits and the challenges of such inter-school partnerships, and offers advice on how to initiate and maintain successful partnerships. Although the projects presented do not directly relate to vocational education and training, they nevertheless address two salient issues: how to achieve a balance between pupils' educational needs and the skills and competencies required for adult and working life; and how to realise effective partnerships.

School Profile

Grays Convent High School is a Catholic Voluntary Aided 11-16 girls' comprehensive school in Thurrock LEA with approximately 625 pupils on roll. The school's catchment area has a lower than average proportion of adults with higher educational qualifications, an above average rate of over-crowded housing and below average amounts of high social class housing. Despite this level of social deprivation, and the fact that pupils' attainment on entry to the school is about average, performance at Key Stages 3 and 4 has over the past five years been consistently well above the national average, generally and in comparison with schools of similar type. Grays Convent gained Beacon status in 1999, and was granted renewal in 2002.

The Partnership Context

As a faith school, our concept of the gifted and talented proceeds from two core tenets: the uniqueness of every individual and the principle of inclusion. Through our Beacon award we were able to develop two particular gifted and talented partnerships which created real opportunities for collaborative working for pupils and teachers. These partnerships are the Joint Year 11 Study Skills Day with St Chad's School, Tilbury and the Year 9 'PACE' Day with Gable Hall School, Corringham respectively. They have each operated for three years.

The Partnership Programmes

St Chad's is a mixed 11-16 comprehensive school. In the Autumn Term 1999, through my professional acquaintance with the then Deputy Headteacher, I learned that St Chad's were delivering what appeared to be a very dynamic and exciting cluster of activities for what they termed their 'high achieving pupils' in Year 11, known as the "HAP" programme. It involved site and residential activities and was clearly aimed at enriching the curricular and extra-curricular experiences of an identified group of pupils. Having no analogous project at Grays Convent, and seeing an opportunity for our pupils (all girls) to work with a mixed gender group of peers, I discussed the possibility of joint working with the St Chad's Deputy. I discerned the social and educational benefits for Grays Convent girls in being able to interact with other boys and girls from the same LEA. Equally, my St Chad's colleague perceived the potential value for his pupils in terms of access to a different kind of working with their peers, beyond the confines of the school. We decided, given that GCSE mock examinations loomed for both groups of pupils, that it would be appropriate to focus upon a range of study skills which would be inculcated, but we were anxious to avoid limiting what we planned to be a day-long experience to revision and examination preparation alone. We decided that the programme should reflect a balance between pupils' educational needs, and skills and competences for adult and working life. The venue was neither Grays Convent nor St. Chad's for two reasons: we wanted both sets of pupils to feel equally comfortable in their surroundings; and we wanted to emphasise the 'beyond the school'/young adult dimension of the programme. We therefore approached a contact at Thurrock and Basildon College who immediately agreed to host the event. It was a natural choice, because many pupils from the schools progress to the College for post-16 study. Pupils were asked to wear smart business-type clothes, and name badges were provided, to re-create a conference/seminar style ambience. The schools' liaison and marketing manager from the College organised a tour of the college, the accommodation in the main hall, lunch and refreshments. She was our main link with the College, from booking the date to taking and developing photographs of pupils working. Her professionalism and efficiency ensured the smooth running of the day, contributing to the workmanlike yet relaxed atmosphere, and allowing teachers and pupils the time and space to concentrate on planned activities.

The programme for the Joint Study Skills day was as follows:

- 08.45** Arrival at Thurrock College, coffee and registration
- 09.00** Introduction to the Day
- 09.10** Ice- Breaker Activities
- 09.20** What kind of Learner am I? (Exploring individual learning styles)
- 10.00** Coffee Break
- 10.15** Tour of Thurrock College, followed by question/ answer session
- 11.00** Workshop One: Getting to Grips with Exams (Exam preparation)
- 11.30** Workshop Two: How do I find time to study? (Balancing work and leisure)
- 12.00** Workshop Three: Coursework Sorted (Coursework organisation)
- 12.30** Lunch
- 13.00** Workshop Four: How do I look? (Presentational skills)
- 13.30** Workshop Five: The Interview (Interview skills)
- 14.00** Presentation Preparation Time
- 14.30** Group Presentations
- 15.15** Feedback from staff and Close

The sessions were delivered on a carousel basis to groups of twelve pupils (six from each school). The groups were organised by the St Chad's Deputy and me, in order to create a balanced dynamic in each. The pupils remained in their group, following the round of activities. In the last hour, groups were given time to prepare a presentation to deliver to their peers and teachers on what they had learned from the day, having been forewarned in the morning!

So how did we identify the cohort and colleagues for the Joint Study Skills Day?

The pupil and staff identification process was in a sense more straightforward for my St Chad's colleague than for

me. He was able to select from his pre-existing high achieving pupils group (HAP), and was also in a position to recruit staff who had worked with these pupils on-site and on residential experiences. My challenge was twofold: to identify a group of around twenty-five Year 11 pupils (approximately the same number as St Chad's), and to persuade two other members of staff to become involved. Acknowledging the principle of inclusion, I asked all members of staff to nominate girls across the entire Year Eleven ability range whom they felt would benefit from the proposed activities of a Joint Study Day. The verb 'benefit' is key to the spirit of this gifted and talented project from the perspective of Grays Convent: pure academic ability was not sufficient. It was not only crucial that participating pupils should gain and enrich knowledge and skills, but also, in a partnership context, it was vital that our pupils should be able to interact socially with other young people. Therefore, although individual subject leaders submitted names on the basis of pupils' perceived curricular strengths, there was the additional criterion of excellent social skills. This approach ensured that there was no sense of 'elitism', because there was no evident selection pattern, and consequently there was no adverse reaction from parents or other pupils.

In respect of the identification of colleague participants for the first Joint Day in January 2002, I approached individuals personally, on the basis of their professional expertise in particular areas of the proposed carousel, and on their propensity for meeting a new challenge: after all, this was a wholly novel venture, certainly for the schools involved, probably for Thurrock LEA, and possibly for neighbouring authorities.

The Year 9 PACE Day with Gable Hall School Corringham

Interestingly, our multi-strand partnership with Gable Hall, a mixed 11-16 comprehensive school, was initiated by their SENCO who had observed the joint presentations given by St Chad's and Grays Convent Year 11 pupils at Thurrock College in January 2002. There had previously been no formal exchanges between Grays Convent and Gable Hall, apart from routine sports fixtures and some senior management links. The SENCO, who is also a senior manager, and I decided to work towards a joint activities day between our two schools.

The focus of the Gable Hall partnership was the development of what I termed a PACE day (Partnership, Action, Challenge and Excellence). There were two broad similarities with the St Chad's Study Skills Day. It focused on a particular cohort – Year 9 – because Gable Hall had some experience of internally managed initiatives for that year group, and because we considered that such a day would be welcomed by the pupils themselves following the pressures of the SATs examinations. Like St Chad's, Gable Hall already had a targeted high achieving pupil group, but this partnership was also distinct in two other respects. Firstly, the theme was overtly that of personal challenge; secondly, we decided to bring a cross-curricular dimension to the project, in order to provide a varied experience for our pupils and to include as many colleagues as possible from our respective schools.

The first PACE day in June 2000 comprised three curriculum areas: Art, PE and Mathematics, held at Thurrock College. The subject selection was based upon the three 'skill sets' we wished to inculcate, namely creativity, personal challenge and leadership, and problem-solving. Three separate programmes ran concurrently throughout the day, with a total of sixty pupils, thirty from each school. Ten Grays Convent pupils and ten Gable Hall pupils worked on the Art project, another group of twenty on the PE project and another twenty on the Mathematics project. Each curriculum area was jointly led and managed by the subject teachers from each school. The participant identification process was for Grays Convent more tightly subject-focused than for the Year 11 Study Skills day. The departments identified pupils on the basis of their ability in each of the three areas, but because collaborative working with peers was a central principle of the partnership, good social and interpersonal skills were also important criteria. Between March and May 2000, representatives of the participating departments met on a regular basis to plan the programme and devise materials. The final programmes presented to the three groups of pupils were as exciting as they were innovative.

So, what did 'PACE' look like?

The Art programme, based upon the work of artists Andy Golsorthy and Richard Land and entitled Art in Nature, was undertaken in the grounds of Thurrock College. Preparatory to the PACE day, the two departments jointly devised a booklet for each student, as a resource

and as a notebook to include personal evaluations during the day. Joint lesson plans were also devised for pre-PACE delivery in both schools to provide induction for the programme, and to ensure that pupils not selected for this event still had the opportunity to have access to the materials. On the day pupils worked in small cross-school groups to produce a series of outdoor sculptures from natural materials, with a member from each group writing a poem or commentary to complement each sculpture. The Physical Challenge programme also entailed preparatory work, including a joint climbing trip as a team-building exercise at the Danbury Centre in Essex. On the PACE day, the group of twenty pupils was divided into orienteering and problem-solving groups, with a change of activity at the mid-point of the day. The challenge was focused upon the construction and 'road-testing' of a demanding assault course on the College's sports fields. The Mathematics programme was based on the concept of probability, and centred upon the commissioning of a series of fairground games combining the attributes of user-friendliness, sound mathematical principles, profitability and fun. Each smaller group of mathematicians tested each other's games to evaluate their effectiveness. In the last hour of the day, the participants from each subject strand presented their work to their peers and teachers. The Mathematics strand hosted their presentation in the College lecture theatre, and the Physical Challenge and Art strands presented in the College grounds.

Funding

Grays Convent's Beacon funding supported most of the costs relating to the two projects, because their core purpose was the sharing and dissemination of good practice, the key criterion for such funding. Although it is impossible to quantify the cost per learner, it is possible to identify areas across the projects costed under Beacon. The principal cost was that of supply cover, not only to release staff in the schools on the actual days, but also in the preparation period before each project. Grays Convent also hired a coach for the Gable Hall children for the journey to and from Thurrock and Basildon College. Most materials used by teachers and pupils and associated reprographic expenses were also funded by Beacon. It is however important to state that the College very generously provided the spacious and dedicated venues for activities, excellent refreshments through the day with a buffet lunch, and the photographing of pupils presenting their work.

Perceived Benefits of the Projects

The benefits perceived to emanate from the Joint Study Skills and PACE Days are threefold: internal to Grays Convent; on an inter-school basis; and at the level of the LEA. Within our school and from the perspective of the concept of gifted and talented, teachers had the opportunity for the first time to identify pupils with a specific focus in mind: not on the grounds of general academic ability but, as in the case of the Study Skills Day, the incorporation of a vital but perhaps neglected dimension to high achievement: excellent interpersonal and social skills. The PACE day also empowered subject leaders to 'showcase' the potential for challenging work across the curriculum. The partnership framework clearly gave Grays Convent teachers the possibility of designing and delivering a high achievers' programme with colleagues from other Thurrock secondary schools and has considerably enhanced the professional confidence of participating staff who worked with pupils other than their own. Most significantly perhaps, Grays Convent pupils have been able to share their enthusiasm for, and talent in, subject and skill areas with their Thurrock peers in a non-competitive yet demanding context. Individual friendships also developed from the encounters. The cross-school partnership model for planning and achieving outcomes for high achieving pupils benefits the participating schools reciprocally, so that it constitutes not just a greater pool of talent, but also unleashes synergistic creativity among the pupils and staff. The collaborative working which produced the excellent pupil outcomes has also enabled the LEA to gauge the potential for, and implications of, inter-school partnerships, and to have a perspective upon the processes undertaken by individual schools in defining and serving their high achievers. LEA officers were invited to attend each project and did so.

Perceived Challenges of the Projects

There were three main challenges common to both projects. The first was participant identification at Grays Convent. This was resolved by selecting from across the year group and stipulating social skills as a key criterion, with the aim of securing the participation of those most likely to benefit from their encounter with St Chad's and Gable Hall. The second challenge was to ensure that teachers from Grays Convent and the partner school

would successfully 'gel', so that effective joint planning and delivery could take place. At the start of both projects, my contact at the partner school and I organised a series of meetings to introduce our respective subject colleague to one another, and to clarify the parameters and expectations of the initiative. This introductory meeting for each subject area was the launch-pad for subsequent meetings organised independently by the subject staff themselves, so that there was from the outset joint ownership, management and oversight of the subject programme by both schools. In some cases, staff already knew each other from previous curriculum meetings in the LEA or even, as has been noted, because they once taught in the same school! The third challenge, which has been partially met, concerned the evaluative dimension of the projects. Immediately after the Study Skills and PACE days, I had de-briefing meetings with my contact colleague, and evaluations were also undertaken with the participant staff and pupils, in the form of a simple questionnaire. However, there has been no strategic evaluation of the more long-term impact of the days upon the individual pupil participants.

Moving the Partnerships Forward

We recognise that we need to design a suitable evaluative model against which to judge the effectiveness over time of such partnerships on pupils' learning. This in turn would need to occur through more frequent contact between the schools, and a commitment from each to track their pupils' attainment in the skill areas reflected in the projects. In the context of high achievement, this would be possible through policies for gifted and talented pupils which schools must implement. The principles upon which these two partnerships are based could underpin new collaborative links within the LEA, to provide a framework for sharing best practice between schools, and schools and the colleges.

Towards Successful High Achiever Partnerships

Finally, extrapolating from my experience, I would identify the following elements as indispensable for the success of our high achiever partnerships:

- Internally, clarity concerning the principles upon which the high achiever cohort is to be identified, so that they are consonant with the school's own stated mission and ethos;

- Judicious targeting of participating colleagues, preferably those who relish a challenge, those who have already had experience of teaching in different kinds of schools or those who would feel comfortable working with pupils beyond the parameters of their own school;
- Externally, careful identification of a potential partner school. Ideally, it would be a school where strong links already exist or where key organising staff already know one another. It could even be a cross-phase arrangement based on transitional issues within the gifted and talented dimension, with a feeder primary school working with secondary pupils and colleagues;
- Well-organised meetings between, initially, the two leading colleagues from each school to establish appropriate kinds of joint activity, recognising that schools have different approaches to the management of gifted and talented issues;
- High quality, frequent communication between participating colleagues, in order to plan and garner resources and information, overseen by the leading colleagues;
- A venue other than the schools, in order to reinforce the sense of independence, autonomy and innovative working that the event is intended to inculcate;
- Pre-session or 'ice-breaker' meeting between pupils. This was considered particularly valuable in the context of proposed physically-oriented activities, such as the physical challenge strand in PACE;
- On the day itself, a commitment from the staff at each school to share their experiences and impressions in a professionally free and open manner, so that issues concerning, for example, a reluctant pupil participant or a perceived lack of engagement, can be effectively and quickly addressed;
- The inclusion of LEA personnel, if possible and appropriate, in order to give the event a broader educational dimension, and to signal the joint excellence practice emanating from collaborating partners. School governors could also be invited, parents of course and even, to include the citizenship dimension, councillors and the local MP.

Case Study 9 – Harlow College

Contributor: Sheila Sullivan

College Profile

Harlow College was established as a tertiary college in 1984. It provides a full range of programmes for around 10,000 young people and adults from Harlow and the surrounding area including East Hertfordshire.

When post-16 education in the town was re-organised arrangements to co-ordinate progression for students from school to college were put in place and have been maintained.

Currently, over 300 students from local schools participate in programmes at the college. In addition to a new cohort of 'Increased Flexibility' students we offer Alternative Education, a Vocational Skills Challenge, specialist GCSEs in Spanish, Dance and Latin, the Widening Participation Project in partnership with Middlesex University and an Engineering day each week.

To respond to the Increased Flexibility initiative a Harlow Partnership was established. The members are: Burnt Mill, Brays Grove, Mark Hall, Passmores, St Mark's and Stewards schools and Harlow College. There are 105 students involved. The subject offer is: VGCSEs in Engineering, Health and Care, ICT and Leisure and Tourism, and NVQs in Hairdressing, Catering and Construction.

The current 14 -16 programme/management arrangements

Collaboration between the schools and the college is well established in Harlow. The Harlow Heads and Principal Group has oversight of all aspects of collaboration. A steering group provides strategic direction for the Increased Flexibility provision with representation from school deputy heads, a director of the college, the LEA, Connexions, Trident and the LSC. Management responsibility for the Increased Flexibility programme rests with the Head of Curriculum Development in the college and the 14 -16 Co-ordinator. Formal links are maintained by meetings of a School/College group consisting of school link tutors, college subject teachers and the 14 -16 Co-ordinator and the Head of Curriculum Development.

In Harlow Increased Flexibility is an option for year 10 pupils enabling them to continue with the mainstream curriculum; it is not an alternative education scheme.

This is regarded as a strength of the provision enabling the whole range of ability and engagement to participate. Students are selected by consultation between the college and the schools. The college publishes a Learner Guide for each subject which the schools use in the Options process. The schools recommend students and they are interviewed which helps them to feel they have achieved something worthwhile. All subjects provide an induction to help students to settle. The normal processes of target setting, monitoring and reporting on progress are followed. Parents receive reports from the college teachers via the school. Each student has an estimated target grade and a challenging target grade set for each subject. The Co-ordinator monitors attendance on a daily basis. Students have logbooks recording their activities and setting work for them to do in school or as homework. There is a Virtual Learning Environment under development containing registers, notice boards, discussion groups, web links and work posted by staff. School staff and students will be able to access resources and tasks when they are at school or at home.

Funding

Collaborative working is more costly than working in isolation. Schools do not send discrete groups to college and so do not make any savings in staffing their timetables. There is a considerable resource devoted to ensuring that the collaboration is well managed with good very regular communication. There are heavy demands on senior staff in all institutions. Staff development involving all institutions is essential to enable the scheme to benefit from careful review and development. Additional guidance and support has to be given to students and their parents by school and college staff. Separate learning support arrangements have to be made. Many of the very popular vocational subjects are particularly costly: engineering, construction, catering and hairdressing are good examples. Some also require expensive safety equipment or clothing.

Curriculum planning for 2003-04

The partnership intends to continue to offer the wide range of 14 -16 programmes available to students in Harlow including Increased Flexibility. The offer for the new cohort of Increased Flexibility is the same as in 2002-3.

A Modern Apprenticeship Scheme for 14 -16 year olds in Construction and Motor Vehicle engineering is under development.

The ideal scenario

Changes that would transform 14 -16 collaborative provisions would focus on four key issues. The first is employer involvement. We would like to see real incentives for employers from small to medium-sized enterprises as well as the large companies and public sector organisations to contribute in a variety of ways to vocational programmes. A para-professional grade of staff would be useful in managing town wide provision including liaison with employers and other agencies. Funding streams should be rationalised and placed on a more stable footing to enable more medium and long term planning to take place. Lastly, higher funding levels would increase access to high quality vocational learning at 14+ for young people.

Case Study 10 – St Chad’s School, Tilbury

Contributor: Maggie Haddow

School Profile

St Chad’s is an 11 to 16 comprehensive community school, serving the town of Tilbury. It is a small school of just under 500 pupils. The town originally grew up around the fort, and later the port and docks. Changes to employment trends in this area have resulted in a considerable amount of associated hardship and socio-economic problems. The school was placed in Special Measures in Spring 2001, and at that time a new senior management team was recruited to work to bring the school out of special measures and raise attainment. Shortly after this was set in place, in early November 2001 the first announcement was made by Thurrock LEA of plans to close the school. These plans changed over the course of two years, until in early 2003 the decision was finally reached to close the school and amalgamate it with Torells School in Chadwell St Mary, forming one new school. Through all this, the school has continued to work with HMI, maintaining consistently reasonable progress under Special Measures. The school is also part of an Excellence Cluster, and various activities connected with this have enriched the life of the school. Behaviour, however, remains a particular issue for the school, as does poor attendance. This is recognised as a problem within the community and has led to appeals for a multi agency approach to the problems facing the school. This has not so far been successful, though it may be that the new school can adopt this approach.

The school has strong links with Thurrock and Basildon College, which is near at hand. Twelve students in Year 10 and ten students in Year 11 are on college link courses. These are organised as follows:

- One day per week at college, following NVQ Level 1 courses in Catering, Engineering, Retail, Sport and Recreation, Hairdressing or ICT;
- One day per week in an associated work experience, organised by Trident, which offers opportunities for practical applications of the college experience;
- Three days per week at school, following five core subject GCSE courses, together with PE, ICT and RE.

Profile of current Years 10/11 and curriculum model

The majority of our students follow a 10 GCSE course. The introduction two years ago of GNVQs and, more recently, vocational GCSEs in Business, Health and Social Care and ICT, has enabled us to match the curriculum more closely to the needs of some of our young people. A small group of pupils in Year 11 form the last of our “Alternative Education” groups who have combined some GCSEs with an ASDAN award. We have six students in Year 10 who are working on AQA Entry level unit accreditation awards, key skills, and a mixture of GCSEs. Our college groups are described in the paragraph above.

Management arrangements

Our college course (collaborative programme with Thurrock and Basildon College, Trident and the school) is managed by the Careers/Connexions co-ordinator. He is line managed by the deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher attends the Regional 14–16 steering group. Students are selected by discussion in school with the year head, Faculty heads and tutors. A meeting is then held for suitable students, parents and the co-ordinator, at which college representatives are present. Students then apply for the course, naming the areas of study in which they are most interested. They are interviewed both at school and later at college. Places are then offered and confirmed in writing. This process lends credibility to the programme.

At college and on work experience, the students are monitored by the school. This is done on a weekly basis and an experienced LSA who is paid as an unqualified teacher carries out these tasks. She is given six x 50 minute periods per week in which to do this. Further assistance is given to an individual student who requires designated LSA support. His LSA accompanies him on his day at college.

Induction and monitoring are carried out in school by the course manager (Careers/Connexions co-ordinator). It is he who liaises with the college, receives attendance reports and progress checks, and who provides both the induction and evaluation programme. There is ample time for induction and evaluation in school, as the college course is 29 weeks in length. The college also carry out their own induction.

Funding

Costs which have to be met per student by the school are £600 inclusive of fees, exam entry and equipment. On top of this, the school pays fees for Trident placements and we also bear the cost of the two LSAs. When back in school, the students receive instruction in fairly small groups for their core subjects, which is expensive in terms of teaching allocation.

Curriculum planning for 2003/2004

We are currently dealing with two cohorts and so are willing and able to carry on with this. However this school is in a unique position as it is soon to close and combine with Torells School. Torells is involved with this same collaborative arrangement, so it seems set to continue. It is not yet clear how this will be staffed and run, as most of Key Stage 4 is moving to the Torells site until the new school is built.

The Ideal Scenario

- Funding needs have been extremely hard to meet, as no assistance has been available and we have not been part of any pilot scheme;
- The work experience in some, not all, cases seems to have little relevance to the college experience. More collaboration would be beneficial here. Some college staff were not aware that the students were taking part in subject related work experience;
- Behaviour of the 14 year old is sometimes a problem to college staff used to more mature students. This is an area that needs to be tackled through the in-service training of college staff involved in these programmes.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
10.01	EN	EN	MA	MA	GA	SC	SC	SC	AR	AR	AH	AH	AD	AD	AD
10.02	EN	EN	MA	MA	GA	SC	SC	SC	AR	AR	AI	AI	BC	BC	AH
10.03	EN	EN	MA	MA	GA	SC	SC	SC	DA	DA	CT	CT	BS	BS	AR
10.04	EN	EN	RE	MA	GA	RE	SC	SC	MU	MU	BC	BC	GG	GG	AR
10.05	EN	EN	MA	MA	GA	SC	SC	SC	MU	MU	BS	BS	HI	HI	BC
10.06	EN	EN	MA	MA	GA	SC	SC	SC	DR	DR	FR	FR	IQ	IQ	BC
10.07	EN	EN	MA	MA	GA	SC	SC	SC	DR	DR	GG	GG	MU	MU	CI
10.08	EN	EN	RE	MA	GA	RE	SC	SC	DR	DR	HI	HI	MU	MU	DA
10.09									PH	PH	MS	MS	PE	PE	DR
10.10									TT	TT	RE	RE	PE	PE	DR
10.11									TG	TG	SP	SP	TF	TF	IQ
10.12											TR	TR	TF	TF	SP
10.13											TS	TS	TS	TS	ST
10.14															

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9.01	EN	EN	FR	MA	MA	SC	SC	EN	DT	HI	GG	AR	AR	AR	GA
9.02	EN	EN	FR	MA	MA	SC	SC	EN	DT	HI	HI	MU	MU	MU	GA
9.03	EN	EN	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	DT	GG	RE	DR	DR	DR	GA
9.04	EN	EN	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	HE	GG	RE	DA	DA	DA	GA
9.05									HE						
9.06									HE						
9.11	EN	EN	FR	MA	MA	SC	SC	EN	DT	HI	GG	AR	AR	AR	GA
9.12	EN	EN	FR	MA	MA	SC	SC	EN	DT	HI	HI	MU	MU	MU	GA
9.13	EN	EN	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	DT	GG	RE	DR	DR	DR	GA
9.14	EN	EN	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	HE	GG	RE	DA	DA	DA	GA
9.15									HE						
9.16									HE						

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
8.01	EN	EN	FR	MA	MA	SC	SC	MA	DT	DT	HI	GG	AR	MU	GA
8.02	EN	EN	FR	MA	MA	SC	SC	MA	DT	DT	HI	HI	AR	MU	GA
8.03	EN	EN	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	DT	DT	GG	RE	DR	DA	GA
8.04	EN	EN	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	HE	HE	GG	RE	DR	DA	GA
8.05									HE	HE					
8.06									HE	HE					
8.11	EN	EN	FR	MA	MA	SC	SC	MA	DT	DT	HI	GG	AR	MU	GA
8.12	EN	EN	FR	MA	MA	SC	SC	MA	DT	DT	HI	HI	AR	MU	GA
8.13	EN	EN	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	DT	DT	GG	RE	DR	DA	GA
8.14	EN	EN	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	HE	HE	GG	RE	DR	DA	GA
8.15									HE	HE					
8.16									HE	HE					

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
7.01	EN	EN	FR	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	SC	DT	HI	GG	AR	MU	GA
7.02	EN	EN	FR	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	SC	DT	HI	HI	AR	MU	GA
7.03	EN	EN	FR	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	DT	GG	RE	DR	DA	GA
7.04	EN	EN	FR	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	HE	GG	RE	DR	DA	GA
	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL		HE					
7.11	EN	EN	FR	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	SC	DT	HI	GG	AR	MU	GA
7.12	EN	EN	FR	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	SC	DT	HI	HI	AR	MU	GA
7.13	EN	EN	FR	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	DT	GG	RE	DR	DA	GA
7.14	EN	EN	FR	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	IT	HE	GG	RE	DR	DA	GA
	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL		HE					
7.21	EN	EN	FR	SP	MA	MA	SC	SC	Ext	TE	HU	HU	CA	CA	GA

Management Arrangements

The Head of Technology manages the Trident work-placement scheme with one lesson (one hour and forty minutes) per week set aside for this task. The Attendance and Family Liaison Officer supports him in this task. Pupils participating in alternative provision are selected by the Head of Year and parents and pupils are interviewed by the Assistant Head in charge of Key Stage 4. The only means of monitoring pupils is by telephone contact with employers and through Trident.

The balance of pupil time at college is spent attending key subject lessons. Feedback from parents has been very positive and we are oversubscribed with students who wish to take part in the scheme. There has been some difficulty placing pupils in year 11 when there are clashes between key subjects and work placement availability. Pupils who drop out of the scheme are difficult to reintroduce into their original subjects.

Funding

The main costs are funding the Trident work placements and the Catten College courses. These are separate funds. No costs in terms of staff time have been built in.

Curriculum Planning for 2003-4

In the coming year the college intends to develop a programme involving up to twenty Year 10 pupils. The selected group will be placed with approved course providers for up to four days. We are also planning to use the services of Trident to place pupils in relevant work places. At the time of writing the working party is investigating the courses available to our students,

researching and identifying successful schemes developed by other schools, to avoid "re-inventing the wheel". The college is funding the scheme and has budgeted for £30,000. The Year 11 pupils will continue with their extended work placements.

An ideal scenario

The schools who attempt to develop these types of programmes have to investigate the areas of special funding, course providers and educational reform and regulations.

Suggested reforms could include:

- A one-stop shop which can quickly provide information on course providers and accurate costs;
- An organising body designed to develop and monitor the partnerships within a designated area. Its aims could be:
 - To ensure that all schools as far as possible benefit from the resources available;
 - To provide a basic model for the area;
 - To provide feedback to the funding agencies;
 - To encourage collaboration between colleges and schools;
 - To provide relevant information or a simple toolkit for schools, to encourage participation in the scheme;
 - To enable schools to access funds easily in order to provide a customised curriculum.

Case Study 12 – South East Essex College and Southend EAZ

Contributors: Sue Coole (SEEC) and Helen Davies (EAZ)

College Profile

South East Essex College, one of the largest in the Eastern Region, is located in the centre of Southend-on-Sea on four major sites. The College is well located, situated near the centre of town and close to good transport links.

Key Facts about South East Essex College are

- Approximately 15,000 enrolments;
- 5,242 full time, 9,800 part time;
- 14,200 Further Education, 800 Higher Education;
- Employs 750 staff: 500 FTE - one of the largest local employers;
- Achievement rates are well above the sector average;
- Successful FEFC inspections in 1997 and 1999 with Grade 1s for Management on both occasions, placing the College in the top 55 of colleges nationally;
- Successful QAA Higher Education Review in 2001 achieving a score of 22 out of 24, one of the highest for Higher Education provision delivered within an FE College;
- July 2001 designated a Pathfinder Centre of Excellence for Media Technology (First Centre for Media Technology nationally and first Centre of Vocational Excellence in Essex and the whole of the Eastern region).

The College will be relocating to a flagship new building in the centre of Southend in August 2004. The new building will incorporate the latest developments in information, learning and communication technology and will allow for further growth in student numbers and, in particular, the expansion of Higher Education.

The College is fully committed to partnership working and works with, amongst others, the Education Action Zone which it sees as strategically important to the development of Further and Higher Education in the Southend area.

The Optima Project Partnership:

South East Essex College is the lead organisation within the partnership working closely with the Education Action Zone and other partners. The Optima Partnership comprises: Cecil Jones High School, Belfairs High School, Prittlewell Technology College, Thorpe Bay School, South East Essex College, Crown College, Central Training Academy, Prospects Business Technology Training, Learning and Skills Council Essex, Southend Local Education Authority, Careers Essex /EST Connexions Partnership, South Essex Learning Partnership, the Education/Business Link Consortium.

A range of large and smaller employers including Keymed, Southend Primary Care Trust, HSBC, Customs & Excise, WH Smiths, Asda and local care homes also participate.

Schools participating in the Optima Project:

- **Thorpe Bay School**
 - 12 students undertaking GCSE Applied Science;
- **Prittlewell Technology College**
 - 20 students undertaking GCSE Applied Science;
- **Belfairs High School**
 - 47 students undertaking GCSE Applied Business
 - 46 students undertaking GCSE Engineering
 - 20 students undertaking GCSE Health & Social Care;
- **Cecil Jones High School**
 - 63 students undertaking ICT.

The total figure of 208 includes both those funded by the 14 -16 Increased Flexibility project and the LSC Flexibility funding achieved by the EAZ. The number of students funded by the 14 -16 Flexibility Project total 161.

Management Arrangements

South East Essex College is the lead partner and receives the funding for the project from the LSC and will be responsible for providing an end of year report to the LSC. Principal, Jan Hodges, is a member of the Steering Group as is Sue Coole, Associate Director, who also attends the Operational Group and supports Helen Davis, Optima Co-ordinator. The Steering Group is chaired by the Director of the Education Action Zone as a neutral, non-provider partner.

The Operations Group meets on a six weekly basis and comprises mainly of Heads of Department and subject specialists from all schools and South East Essex College. In the original bid a small proportion of the funding was allocated to staffing, within the schools, to cover set up and development costs. The Co-ordinator was appointed following acceptance of the bid and is involved for approximately two days per week on a flexible basis. Management in South East Essex College is incorporated into normal workloads.

Students were selected by the criteria agreed by the partnership and in line with the project requirements. The criteria comprised: regular attendance, predicted 3 A-C passes at GCSE and the student selecting a vocational course as one option of their Year 10/11 programme.

Permanent off site provision involves students at Thorpe Bay School who attend South East Essex College for two afternoons per week. The students are transported from the school to the College by minibus, accompanied by a member of staff. Full induction into the college premises and codes of conduct occurred prior to the students joining the college in September and full partnership meetings provide a means of constant communication. The quality of the curriculum is assured by the normal in-house quality mechanisms operated within the college and via the processes of external verification by the awarding body concerned.

Other schools involved have, up until now, predominantly delivered the curriculum in house however strategies are in place to extend the provision to introduce the world of work via offsite activities, work placements, work shadowing, observations and so forth. For all the schools involved the emphasis has been on introducing the vocational influence via employer input, guest speakers and visits to appropriate organisations and businesses. Work needs to be conducted to identify new business contacts which is currently hampered by lack of teacher time or availability.

Attendance is monitored both within schools and the college and processes are discussed and developed by the Operational Group. Regular meetings take place between Thorpe Bay School and the College to address any issues, to forward plan and discuss delivery of their remaining lessons in school. Thorpe Bay students have required additional

learning support throughout the project and a mentoring programme is also in place. There needs to be recognition that change to an adult learning environment requires time to adjust, extra support and ongoing guidance. Partnership working is essential to ensure student success.

Funding

Original costs across the Optima Partners provided each school with equal sums of money to support the programme: £11,500. This was broken down by each school into staffing, travel/visit costs, technical support, resources and equipment; training liaison/staff development, college/placement provider costs. The remainder of the funding - £4000 was allocated to pay for co-ordination of the project.

A substantial amount of management time, between the college and the co-ordinator, was spent in planning and devising a series of student surveys to determine styles of delivery, monitoring teaching and learning, perception of further/higher education and future planning. This time was largely uncoded however the results of the surveys have provided essential data which will contribute to providing for future cohorts. The partnership considers student perceptions and opinions to be fundamental in reflecting current and future provision.

Ongoing work on the project has identified a mismatch between the projected costing and the actual costing required to produce an innovative, flexible programme as desired. The Operational Group plan to address the issues and report to the steering group, as soon as possible.

The Optima Project has only been operational for six months and the above costings have been based on assumptions regarding operation across the whole year. The activity does show, however that the Optima Project funding allocation of £50,000 (based on 161 students) only provides £310.00 per student whereas the above costing indicates a costing of £617.00 per student. This identifies an approximate shortfall of £307.00 per student. The EAZ additional funding of £65,000 has been incorporated into the programme and covers a range of requirements of the programme, including learning support for students and additional administration staffing within schools.

Optima Project: Approximate Costing of College Management and Additional Staffing/Equipment Costs per annum		
Numbers	Categories	Approx Cost £
3	Preparation for Optima Steering Group meetings	210
3	Optima Partnership Steering group Meetings	630
6	Preparation for Operational Group meetings	420
6	Operational Group meetings	1740
	Hospitality for meetings	200
12	Meetings with Optima Co-ordinator	420
	Development/analysis/report re Questionnaires	1750
	Research Asst collation and preparation of above	1000
6	Review meetings at Thorpe Bay School (all staff)	780
	Prep of monthly reports re Optima to EMG	420
	Prep of various reports to external agencies/partners etc	420
	Additional staffing re Optima Students at college	3600
	Assessment of students needs at college	600
	Equipment costs re students at college	1200
	Approximate amount of college management time	13390
	Original Optima Funding	50000
	LSC Flexibility Funding (acquired by EAZ)	65000
	Approximate Overall costing (excluding overheads)	128390
	Total students 208: Average cost per student excluding overheads	617

The above figures do incorporate some degree of start up and development costs which may diminish as the curriculum development and delivery is more fully understood and embedded. It does have to be recognised, however, that in the timeframe of this report it was not possible to ascertain sound costings related to school/college overheads which may offset any future savings based on start up costs.

Curriculum Planning for 2003-04

The Optima Project has been extremely successful in developing a partnership approach towards vocational education. The processes and practices adopted in the first year have identified that ongoing extended planning; networking and involvement of other agencies would greatly benefit innovation and flexibility of provision. An integrated centrally co-ordinated scheme will bring cost reduction, avoidance of duplication, and greater consistency. It will also ensure quality of provision whilst addressing the cost effectiveness of teacher time and the potential drain on employer willingness and resources. Staff expertise will be utilised and a 'Pathfinder/showcase'

of good practice will be developed for dissemination both locally and nationally, as appropriate.

This more mature strategic approach will incorporate the college, the schools, the widest possible range of training providers and agencies to provide a meaningful, cohesive and coherent pathway for all Optima students

The ideal scenario

Such a scenario could include:

- Additional funding to develop a centrally co-ordinated scheme with external agencies;
- To establish the centrally co-ordinated scheme a school key link person to be appointed;
- A framework for student costing on an individual basis across each pathway;
- Further links to be developed between schools and college within the partnership to maximise provision and opportunity for all Optima students;
- Extended transition planning across all pathways.

OPTIMA MONITORING REPORT JANUARY 2003

School	Subject Title	Give details of any agencies / organisations / businesses / colleges etc. that you are working in partnership with on this project	Activities to date	Future Activities
Belfairs	Applied Business	<p>Started Unit 1 Investigating Business Jan 03. To meet the requirements of the unit students must select a sole trader or partnership and a private limited or a public limited company to investigate. Students are in the process of making appointments with organisations. Examples include, BMW, Ford, Virgin Mega Store. HMV, Southend United and BT. Contacts with smaller businesses include local hairdressers, newsagents, a magician, AC Taxis and Coast Construction</p>	<p>Induction activity- starting a small business and business plan.</p> <p>In pairs students produce a mini-project on the functional areas of a large business of their choice. Students prepared and delivered a PowerPoint presentation using multimedia projector to the whole class.</p> <p>A number of weeks in the Autumn term introducing students to terminology and language.</p> <p>Unit 1 Investigating Business project given to students – deadline Easter 03. Currently students are carrying out secondary research using Internet, books, magazines and leaflets. Students have prepared questions for business contact and are in the process of booking appointments for primary research.</p> <p>Primary research/Interviews with local organisations to help with individual's project. Interviews to be completed by Friday 7th February 2003.</p>	<p>Whole group visit to a large organisation.</p> <p>Small group visits to a large organisation.</p> <p>Work shadowing.</p> <p>Visit large organisation with good IT facilities.</p> <p>Further contacts to be made once Admin assistant appointed.</p> <p>Additional: £4000 needs to be used to employ an Admin Assistant on a regular weekly basis to aid the development of industrial contacts.</p>
Belfairs	Health & Social Care	<p>Unit 2. Promoting Health and Well Being</p> <p>Looking at different stages of health through the life stages – health visitor</p> <p>Alternative health strategies – reflexologist talking and demonstrating this technique.</p> <p>How physical health is measured – school nurse demonstrating – BMI, Blood Pressure, Peak Flow.</p> <p>Help given to teacher from Local Health Promotion Unit- Rayleigh.</p>		

OPTIMA MONITORING REPORT JANUARY 2003 (continued)

School	Subject Title	Give details of any agencies / organisations / businesses / colleges etc. that you are working in partnership with on this project	Activities to date	Future Activities
Belfairs	Engineering	Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers visit 25th March 2003. Afternoon of problem solving. Talk about Engine management systems by ex Ford engineer 19th November 2002.	<p>Induction activity – Small 2 week project to design and manufacture a clock from a manufacturing brief.</p> <p>Students split into 2 groups: each group then does the following:-</p> <p>2 electrical projects (transistor and timer circuits) from design through to manufacture of prototype product.</p> <p>2 mechanical engineer projects (G clamp and Oscillating engine) from planning to manufacture of working prototype.</p> <p>Weekly lesson on design and graphical communication for 3D sketching and use of CAD.</p> <p>Summer groups will begin weekly lesson in application of new technology, by investigating actual products: assemble, sketch, evaluate.</p>	<p>Development of industrial links.</p> <p>Organisation of visits to local engineering firms</p> <p>Possible links with large engineering companies, e.g. Fords.</p> <p>Budget for Admin assistant to develop industry links is in bid.</p> <p>Install develop and use Scantek computer learning system.</p>
Cecil Jones	Applied ICT	Currently developing connection with Waitrose, Stansted Airport, Southend Hospital, Keymed, Southend Fire Station, HSBC, Chelmsford /Southend Police.	None to date, several planned. We do see problems in finding meaningful ICT placements for 59 students.	<p>Whole cohort visit to Stansted Airport to explore the use of ICT in travel and communication.</p> <p>Visit and talk by radiographer from Southend Hospital.</p> <p>Visits by small groups to Southend Fire Station & HSBC.</p> <p>Visit and talk by police on the use of ICT in the Police Force.</p>
Prittlewell	Applied Science	Keymed, Southend Hospital, Southend Fire Brigade.	<p>Visits to fire station (Fire Safety)</p> <p>Visit Southend Hospital (observe lab techniques)</p>	<p>Work placements, some already received confirmation. (Keymed, vet practices, PDSA etc)</p> <p>Planning to visit Mobil (chemical analysis)</p>
Thorpe Bay	Applied Science	South East Essex College	<p>Laboratory practical activities – chemistry and micro-biology.</p> <p>Theory sessions</p> <p>Stansted – 1st assignment.</p> <p>Careers in Science.</p> <p>Visiting speaker on First Aid</p>	<p>Further assessments of activities and practical laboratory work.</p> <p>Visits to places that use science – business and non-profit, including Natural History Museum, Darwin Centre.</p>

Optima Project 2002 - 2003

Schools Participating:	Original Pupil Numbers	Additional Pupil Numbers	Subjects Undertaking	Pupils numbers divided by subjects
Belfairs High School	66	47	Engineering Health & Social Business Studies	47 19 47
Cecil Jones High School	63	0	ICT	63
Prittlewell Technology College	20	0	Applied Science	20
Thorpe Bay School	12	0	Applied Science	12
			Total	208

Funding	
Original allocated funding	£50,000
Additional funding	£65,000

Case Study 13 – The Trident Trust

Contributor: John Peters

Organisation profile

Trident Trust is a registered national charity with over thirty year's experience of working with businesses, schools, colleges and teachers. We provide opportunities for young people to attend Work Experience placements and to develop skills for life.

The company works with 95% of schools and educational establishments within Essex and provides work experience for over 16000 students aged 14 to 16. This involvement includes vetting placement opportunities, managing the process and supporting the schools and educational establishments in their preparation of the students.

At present Trident is placing over 200 students on the DfES Increased Flexibility programmes in Essex and works with a number of consortia.

Management Arrangements

Trident has five offices in Essex, Southend and Thurrock with the capacity to provide a support service to schools and other educational establishments. The company has a County Manager who has a strategic role and has the support of the five office managers. Within each office there is a delegated member of staff with the brief to support these programmes. These members of staff set up the placements to meet the needs of the students and, where possible, provide a placement to support the vocational area in which the student is studying.

Trident also takes the responsibility for ensuring the placements meet Health and Safety requirements and, in addition, produce all the necessary documentation to meet legislative requirements for young people on work experience.

It provides support and advice to employers, particularly related to their role in the programme. Trident furnishes the student with learning support material and provides documents to monitor progress.

Funding

Trident charges the schools for this service at the rate of £300 per student per year. The charge covers Trident setting up the extended work experience opportunities for up to three different placements per student per year and providing all the necessary services to support the placement arrangements, which could include meeting the students, providing Health and Safety training for the student, providing support material and assisting in monitoring student progress whilst on work experience. Trident also aims to provide tailored placements to match the vocational studies of the individual student.

Planning for 2003-04

Trident has plans to recruit more employers capable of providing tailored placements. There is a need to provide more employers in certain occupations to support the students on their vocational courses.

Work experience needs to be more integrated into such a scheme, particularly as a resource for study and for the development of learning outcomes. Therefore Trident intends to work more positively with employers to assist them in structuring work experience placements to meet the needs of the students and the programme.

The ideal scenario

There is a need to provide alternative work-related programmes to be used when it is not possible to provide suitable work experience placements. I believe flexible learning schemes need to consider simulated work experience and to consider enterprise programmes, such as Young Enterprise.

Trident also offers schools and other educational establishments the 'Skills for Life' programme which supports not only work experience but also citizenship education and the development of Life Skills. The programme could greatly enhance the students' experiences on the 14 -16 Increased Flexibility scheme.

