

**Research Report  
No 325**

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# *Evaluation of New Approaches to Work-Related Learning at Key Stage Four*

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## ***Erratum***

Page vi - One of the report's findings has been misquoted in the Executive Summary of this report. The second sentence of paragraph 10 is not consistent with Table 4.2.

The text "similar progress was evident in 'willingness to learn new things' (+6% in project group but -5% among comparator group)" should read "similar progress was evident in 'willingness to learn new things' (+6% in project group but no change among comparator group)".

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- A: Pen Portraits of 21 Action Research Projects
- B: Student Case Studies drawn from Project Reports

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE PROJECTS

1. This study is based primarily on the evaluation of 21 Action Research Projects (ARPs), which explored the impact of work-related learning on Key Stage 4 students in 1998/9 and 1999/2000. Additional material has also been gleaned from the parallel evaluations of 86 Standards Funds projects and the work-related learning components of 14 Education Action Zones.
2. The objectives of the ARPs were:-
  - to improve motivation and attitudes;
  - to increase skills and knowledge;
  - to improve attendance and behaviour;
  - to raise attainment.

In practice, the type of enhancements used varied widely between projects (e.g. extended employer placements, FE links, intensive one-to-one support).
3. Indicators of actual or potential disaffection were the principal criteria used for selection of students for the projects (in approximately 80% of participating schools). This is a crucial contextual point since the project groups were *not*, in most cases, a cross-section of the year cohort (e.g. as measured by KS3 scores or unauthorised absences). The interpretations of outcomes achieved – and distance travelled – need to take this fully into account.
4. There were some significant exceptions to this general picture on selection criteria, however. In the remaining 20% of participating schools, students were selected on other criteria, often linked to curriculum choice (e.g. those taking a specific KS4 option). This enabled additional insights to be gleaned, since it was possible to compare and contrast the differential impact of work-related learning on different types of students. However, the obverse of the same coin was that aggregated findings at national level were potentially misleading since they masked a very wide divergence of practice and impact at the levels of individual student, school and project.

## IMPACT ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES

5. Qualitative data suggested that the self-esteem and self-confidence of participating students were often improved as a result of making a fresh start in a work-related environment and mixing with adults other than parents or teachers. Progress seemed to be made most often where challenges were segmented in 'bite-sized chunks', and where regular feedback and encouragement was given.
6. In general terms, evidence from adults observing students (e.g. employers and teachers) has been stronger and more positive than evidence from students themselves (principally from the national questionnaire). Most project students started with an overwhelmingly negative view of school and its usefulness.

- 
7. Whilst there were several examples of attitudes becoming more positive about the enhancements themselves, these did not always extend to attitudes towards school and learning in general. Indeed there was a small increase in students who felt that 'school is a waste of time for me' over the life of the projects.
  8. In nearly every project, the picture was mixed, in the sense that some students' attitudes and motivation improved considerably, others modestly, but for some there was no progress at all. The latter were very likely to drop out at some stage.

### **IMPACT ON STUDENTS' SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

9. The skills and knowledge explored were those relating to the post-16 world. Most students started from a low base in terms of knowledge of the options, understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, and the self-confidence to try new opportunities. For example around 25% of the project group said they knew nothing about any of the possible options at the baseline stage.
10. Knowledge of post-16 options improved among the project group, not only compared with the baseline stage (+2%) but also compared with the comparator group (a higher starting point, but no change over the life of the project). Similar progress was evident in 'willingness to learn new things' (+6% in project group but -5% among comparator group). However, slight reductions over time were noted for both project and comparator groups in their views on the importance of qualifications for getting a job.
11. There were small improvements over time in project group students' own assessment of their knowledge of local labour market factors. Whilst the comparator groups generally showed small improvements as well, there were two items where only the project group made progress; these were knowledge about 'jobs you could get in your local area' and 'where to look for the kind of job that you have chosen'.
12. Students seemed to have benefited most from their direct experience of the adult world. This brought a more informed view of the behaviour and attitudes expected. Several students remarked that they responded better to being treated like adults. Improved self-esteem was another key outcome for many.

### **IMPACT ON ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR**

13. Statistical analysis of attendance data revealed no significant impact from the projects on unauthorised absences, but a slightly improved record on authorised absences. Project group data for Year 11 in 1999/2000 shows an average absence rate identical to the comparator group (they were higher in Years 9 and 10); it was also slightly below the year cohort average for the participating schools for 1999/2000.
14. Both fixed term and permanent exclusions were lower in the second year (1999/2000) than the first year for project group students. Comparator group data showed an even more marked reduction in fixed term exclusions but an increase in permanent exclusions.
15. Many teachers argued convincingly that the projects' main achievement in this field was in 'retaining' project group students in a learning environment. The likelihood is that many would otherwise have dropped out.

- 
16. The use of incentives (e.g. cash or leaving early) seems to have had a positive effect on attendance and behaviour, although they were only used in a minority of projects and are not without controversy. The two projects which featured theatre, music and dance seemed especially effective in generating enthusiasm, translated into optional attendance during school holidays.
  17. The majority of students who opted out during the two years did so as a result of their own decision, whether positively (e.g. to return to the mainstream curriculum) or negatively. There was, however, evidence of pressure from some teachers for students to resume GCSE studies, giving rise to mixed messages as to whether work-related learning was a valid alternative in its own right or a “treatment” for those unable or unwilling to engage effectively in a more traditional KS4 environment.

## **IMPACT ON ATTAINMENT**

18. The average point scores at KS4 for project group students were slightly below those for the comparator group but these mask wide variations at project, school and individual student levels.
19. However, the statistical analysis explored distance travelled, as well as raw scores. In eight of the projects, the distance travelled by the project group was further than that travelled by the respective local comparator groups. Indeed, in half of these eight projects, the distance travelled by the project group was also further than that predicted by modelling based on national data of KS3 scores and KS4 results.
20. Value added at KS4 was more clearly evident among students in the minority of projects following subject-specific enhancements (e.g. linked to specific GCSE subjects). These projects also demonstrated that it is possible to provide an increased focus on a small number of subject areas and improve the results in those areas, *without* any apparent detrimental effect on the results achieved in other National Curriculum subjects.
21. The percentage of the project group leaving school with no accredited awards (12.2%) was lower than for the comparator group (15.8%). It was also apparent that the outcomes achieved by students who completed the enhancements provided by the projects were significantly higher than those achieved by non-completers.
22. For both project and comparator group students, the percentage entering ‘positive destinations’ post-16 (i.e. involving learning and/or work) was high. Relative to the year cohorts as a whole, project group students were more likely to enter Government-supported training or employment and less likely to stay in full time education.

## **CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS**

23. Additional statistical analysis was undertaken to assess whether one type of model for work-related learning could be shown to be more effective than another (e.g. employer placements compared with FE links). The outcomes (or more precisely the value added) assessed were KS4 attainment, unauthorised absences and post-16 destinations.



- 
24. There were no clear patterns to emerge at the overall 'model design' level. Indeed, it appeared that KS3 results, rather than the type of model followed, was the most reliable predictor of progress at KS4. However, it is more likely that this simply reflects a lack of comprehensive data, although some individual factors at the next level of detail (e.g. the size of the group or the time spent on the enhancement) did appear to make a difference. On this latter point it is important to note that different combinations of design detail led to different types of outcome; they could even pull in different directions (i.e. an improvement in one measure but deterioration in another).
25. The projects generated much valuable material on learning points at project and school levels. The following general themes can be distilled:-
- the importance of prior planning, insightful management and preparation of students and adult participants;
  - the essential pre-requisite of sorting out timetabling issues and generally managing logistics effectively;
  - the major contributions to be made by adults other than teachers in a variety of contexts;
  - the importance of continuity of staff – or well-planned transitions where change is unavoidable. This helps to engender a sense of security, stability and confidence among students;
  - the motivating effects of providing a fresh start in a new environment and celebrating success in a relevant, adult context.

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# I: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

## INTRODUCTION

- 101 This report presents the findings from the national evaluation of work-related learning projects at Key Stage 4. It was prepared by SWA Consulting (SWA) for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) under a contract entitled “national evaluation of new approaches to work experience and the work-related curriculum”.
- 102 The principal focus for the study was the 21 work-related learning action research projects (ARPs), which ran during the academic years 1998/99 and 1999/2000. However, findings from two other groups of projects were also taken into account. These were:-
- 86 Standards Funds projects (SFs) during 1998/99, which focused on work-related learning;
  - 14 Education Action Zones (EAZs) with work-related learning components. These ran during both 1998/99 and 1999/2000.
- 103 The remainder of this initial chapter:-
- sets out the objectives for the projects and this evaluation study;
  - summarises the methodology adopted;
  - clarifies the terminology used;
  - indicates the structure for the remainder of the report.

## OBJECTIVES

- 104 The objectives set nationally *for ARPs* were:-
- to improve motivation and attitudes;
  - to increase skills and knowledge;
  - to improve attendance and behaviour;
  - to raise attainment.

These national objectives provide the consistent framework for measuring the impact of all the work-related projects reviewed as part of the national evaluation.

- 105 There were no objectives applied consistently across all *SFs and EAZs*. All those reviewed for this study had objectives which explored and supported work-related learning, but the precise scope and wording varied substantially between them.
- 106 The objectives defined *for this study* were:-
- to offer an informed opinion on the value of work-related learning in general and the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches;

- 
- to identify the impact of the interventions provided for young people in terms of the objectives of the initiative and learning outcomes;
  - to test the effectiveness of different models of work-related learning in as vigorous a manner as possible;
  - to compare different models of work-related learning with others in an objective manner.

## METHODOLOGY

107 The evaluation strategy for ARPs defined key roles both for the national evaluators (SWA) and 21 local evaluators appointed in each of the project areas. The principal tasks for the national evaluators were:-

- designing an evaluation framework which included definitions of outcomes to be measured and associated data sources;
- preparing standard questions to be included by all projects in student questionnaires, administered at the baseline and project-end stages;
- designing a database for synthesis and analysis of data collected at individual student, school and project levels;
- quality assuring local evaluation strategies;
- undertaking limited fieldwork in all 21 ARPs - and a small sample of 4 SFs and 3 EAZs. These visits had the objective of ensuring that the national findings were informed by a genuine understanding of local contexts and insights, but were not intended to replicate (let alone replace) fieldwork by local evaluators;
- reviewing reports prepared by local project staff and evaluators at the baseline, interim (end of year one) and project-end stages in order to draw out key themes;
- preparing summative reports.

108 Local evaluators had two main roles. These were:-

- collecting and submitting data collected locally to feed into the national evaluation;
- undertaking a self-standing evaluation of the local project, specifically taking into account local contexts, nuances and objectives.

109 The design of the national evaluation strategy stressed two points in relation to quantitative data. These were that:-

- local *comparator groups* should be identified, in order to enable valid comparisons on “value added” to be drawn at local, as well as national, levels. The comparator groups were selected to have students ideally from the same academic year, from the same (or comparable) school, and with similar characteristics (ie. ethnicity, gender, and performance at Key Stage 3);
- data should be collected and recorded at *student level* (as opposed to group/school averages), even though it would be aggregated at local and

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national levels for analysis and presentation. This enabled the impact of different individual student experiences to be tracked and assessed.

110 The approach taken throughout the study as regards data analysis was to base key findings on sub groups of students for whom complete (or near complete) data sets were held. The total number who completed both the baseline and follow up questionnaires were:-

- 409 in the project group;
- 341 in the comparator group.

111 Within these two groups, the numbers for whom other key data were held varied according to the specific factor being described or explored. Table 1.1 provides examples of sample sizes.

**Table 1.1: Examples of sample sizes used in data analysis**

| <b>Item</b>                 | <b>Project Group</b> | <b>Comparator Group</b> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Gender                      | 394                  | 336                     |
| KS3 scores                  | 330                  | 319                     |
| KS4 results                 | 289                  | 258                     |
| Actual post-16 destinations | 243                  | 185                     |

112 Further details of the students, their schools, and the projects are provided in Chapter II. Further information on methodological aspects (including the rationale for focusing data analysis on students for whom near complete data sets were held) is provided in the Technical Annex. This includes sections on:-

- the types of data collected;
- the various analytical techniques used in exploring the statistical relationships between variables.

113 The Technical Annex also contains summaries of responses to the core questions included in the student-completed questionnaires. Whilst the Annex is presented as a separate document – primarily for ease of handling – it should be regarded as an integral part of the report as a whole.

## **TERMINOLOGY**

114 Throughout this report, the term ‘student’ has been used in preference to ‘pupil’, other than where verbatim quotes are being used of material from other sources.

115 Where a full year group is intended, the word ‘cohort’ is preferred (hence the Year 10 cohort includes project students, comparator students and all the others in the same school year). The word ‘group’ is used in this report to signify smaller numbers who are either receiving the project enhancements (‘project group’) or identified for comparative purposes (‘comparator group’).

116 The contract holders for most of the 21 ARPs were the relevant Local Education Authorities (LEAs); thus ‘Barnsley’ should be understood to signify the Barnsley

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project, contract managed by the LEA. Exceptions include Lancashire, Leeds and Wigan where the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and Borough Partnership, respectively, held the contracts.

- 117 There were two ARPs in Manchester. One was led by Manchester LEA and the other by Manchester TEC, which included schools in Salford, Tameside and Trafford LEAs, as well as Manchester. During the life of the project, Manchester TEC delegated management responsibility for the latter to the Education Business Partnership (“City Pride”). These two projects are described throughout as ‘Manchester LEA’ or ‘Manchester TEC’.
- 118 Most of the ARPs were two-year projects where students were in Year 10 in 1998/99 and Year 11 in 1999/2000. There were, however, two exceptions:-
- Dudley, where 4 of the 5 institutions followed the general pattern as described. However, the fifth was a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) which only took Year 11 students. Here, different groups of Year 11 students were selected for involvement in the two years;
  - Lancashire, where different – but linked – projects ran in the east and west of the county. The project in the east followed the general two-year pattern described above; the west ran a one-year project (Year 11) in both years, similar to the position in the Dudley PRU.

## STRUCTURE OF REPORT

- 119 The remainder of this report is set out as follows:-
- Chapter II provides a brief overview of the 21 projects;
  - Chapters III to VI set out our findings in respect of the four national objectives for the projects, namely the impact on students’:-
    - motivation and attitudes (Chapter III)
    - skills and knowledge (IV)
    - attendance and behaviour (V)
    - attainment (VI);
  - Chapters VII and VIII discuss the critical success factors, from a largely qualitative stance. Chapter VII focuses more on *people*, and Chapter VIII more on *processes*;
  - Chapter IX presents the results of our main data analysis, including an assessment as to which of the key variables appear to have had the greatest impact on the outcomes achieved;
  - Chapter X presents our recommendations, directed towards DfES, LEAs/projects, and schools.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 120 The major contributions of school co-ordinators, project staff, local evaluators, and members of the National Steering Group (including the Local Government Association, OFSTED and QCA) are gratefully acknowledged.



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## II: OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

### INTRODUCTION

201 This chapter provides an overview of the 21 ARPs which constituted the principal focus for this study. Looking across the group as a whole, there was considerable diversity and variety; that richness cannot fully be captured in a summary such as that provided here. We have, therefore, added as Appendix A, a 'pen portrait' of all 21 projects.

202 The appendix gives brief details of the following aspects for all ARPs:-

- brandname;
- numbers of participants;
- local objectives;
- key design features;
- project management structure;
- evaluation arrangements.

203 This chapter is structured as follows:-

- project objectives;
- types of approach and content;
- school level profiles;
- student level profiles.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

204 All 21 projects were required to adopt the four *national* objectives as set out in Chapter I. This provided a firm basis for judging impact across the group of projects as a whole, even though the means of achieving those objectives varied widely.

205 In addition, nearly all the projects identified some complementary *local* objectives. In some cases (eg. Leeds and Southwark) these were closely aligned to the national objectives, interpreting them for the local context or drawing out specific points of detail. In other cases, enhancements were added into the local objectives which gave the projects a distinctive flavour.

206 Examples include:-

- to evaluate the contribution of the performing arts in providing a positive and motivating experience (Coventry);
- to increase the pool of part-qualified employees in two key areas – IT repair and electrical installation (Islington);

- 
- to improve the attainment/achievement of boys (Wakefield, but a similar objective in Warwickshire also);
  - to encourage teachers of Science, Technology and Maths to make explicit links to the work-related application of their subjects (York).

## TYPE OF APPROACH AND CONTENT

207 It is particularly difficult to summarise the approaches adopted on a national basis, since they were complex and diverse; even within a single project, approaches often varied significantly between schools. However, Table 2.1 seeks to provide an overview.

208 In this table, projects are segmented by *principal themes*. In several instances, the classification is open to debate but we have sought to follow three principles consistently. These are:-

- to limit the entries for each project to one or two themes only. For a column to be ticked, the project must have placed a *demonstrable emphasis* on that theme;
- to reflect *actual practice*, as opposed to the wording of the objectives or initial plans. In several cases, changes were incorporated during the life of the projects – and rightly so, in the spirit of action research;
- to take account only of *enhancements directly attributable to the projects*. Thus, for example, if schools already had well-established arrangements for mentor support, relevant to comparator as well as project group students, this would not have prompted a tick in column F.

209 In brief, the principal themes adopted were these:-

- A: employer links, over and above work experience which would have taken place anyway. Enhancements included extended placements over a full year or longer (eg. Manchester TEC) or employer involvement in project work (eg. York).
- B: FE links, over and above periodic visits to local colleges. Enhancements included extended study towards accredited outcomes or imaginative use of FE facilities to stimulate new interests (eg. Manchester LEA);
- C: training provider links. These were similar to the opportunities in theme B, but where the host was a work-based training provider, as opposed to an FE College (eg. Islington);
- D: school-based project approach. Here the enhancements were clearly rooted in the school (eg. the maths and science curriculum in York) but drew extensively on employers and other opportunity providers to enrich specific components (eg. an environmental project);
- E: significant alternative curriculum. In some projects, students were no longer based on school premises at all. In Sheffield, for example, the project group was based at the local tertiary college, where an alternative curriculum was designed with a substantial work-related component;



**Table 2.1: Segmentation of ARPs by principal themes**

| Project Area      | Principal Themes |         |                               |                        |                                |             |               | Comment  |
|-------------------|------------------|---------|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|---------------|--|
|                   | A<br>Employer    | B<br>FE | C<br>Training<br>Provide<br>r | D<br>School<br>Project | E<br>Alternative<br>Curriculum | F<br>Mentor | G<br>Multiple |  |
| Barnsley          |                  |         |                               |                        |                                |             | ✓             |  |
| Coventry          | ✓                |         |                               |                        |                                |             |               |  |
| Derbyshire        | ✓                |         | ✓                             |                        |                                |             |               | Training provider in year 1<br>Employers in year 2   |
| Devon             | ✓                |         | ✓                             |                        |                                |             |               |  |
| Dudley 1yr        |                  | ✓       |                               |                        |                                |             |               | See paragraph 116  |
| Dudley 2yr        |                  | ✓       | ✓                             | ✓                      |                                |             |               | Mainly school-based in Yr 1<br>Varied by student between FE<br>and training provider in Yr 2 |
| Islington         |                  |         | ✓                             |                        | ✓                              |             |               |  |
| Lancs West<br>1yr | ✓                |         | ✓                             |                        |                                |             |               | See paragraph 116  |
| Lancs East<br>2yr |                  |         | ✓                             |                        |                                |             |               | See paragraph 116  |
| Leeds             |                  | ✓       |                               |                        |                                |             |               |  |
| Leicester         |                  | ✓       | ✓                             |                        |                                |             |               |  |
| Manch'st'r<br>LEA |                  | ✓       |                               |                        |                                |             |               |  |
| Manch'st'r<br>TEC | ✓                |         | ✓                             |                        |                                |             |               |  |
| Portsmouth        |                  | ✓       |                               |                        |                                | ✓           |               |  |
| Rochdale          |                  | ✓       |                               |                        |                                |             |               |  |
| Sheffield         |                  |         |                               |                        | ✓                              |             |               |  |
| Solihull          |                  | ✓       |                               |                        | ✓                              |             |               |  |
| Southwark         |                  | ✓       |                               | ✓                      |                                |             |               |  |
| T'w'r Hamlets     | ✓                |         |                               |                        |                                | ✓           |               |  |
| Wakefield         | ✓                | ✓       | ✓                             |                        |                                |             |               |  |
| Warwicks          | ✓                |         |                               |                        |                                | ✓           |               |  |
| Wigan             | ✓                |         | ✓                             |                        |                                |             |               | Varied by student/school   |
| York              | ✓                |         |                               | ✓                      |                                |             |               |  |

- F: mentoring. Here, a substantial emphasis was placed on regular one-to-one sessions for students to support either or both of *academic* and/or *personal/social* development (eg. Portsmouth);
- G: multiple. This strand signals a wide spectrum of different types of enhancement. In Barnsley, for example, the specific programme experienced

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by one student could have differed significantly from that experienced by his or her peer in the same tutor group at the same school. The programme was extensively menu-driven and included residentials, activity days at a local university, taster courses at FE, amongst several other components.

210 Other headline data about project enhancements include the following:-

- in about three-quarters of participating schools the content was broadly similar in both years, but in 15% there was one significant difference in the second year. Only 3% of schools incorporated two or more significant changes to the content in year two;
- the principal location for the enhancement in year one was on employers' premises in half of all schools. FE Colleges were the location for a further 22%;
- the amount of time allocated to the enhancements varied from around 0.25 days per week in 2% of schools, through 0.5 days (around half), to a full week in those areas where the entire project was outside the main school curriculum (11% of schools);
- students were offered some form of financial incentive for good performance in about 10% of participating schools.

211 Further details of design features for each project (and other aspects summarised in this chapter), can be gleaned from the pen portraits in Appendix A. More detailed breakdowns of project enhancements and student characteristics are also provided in the Technical Annex.

## SCHOOL PROFILES

212 Across the 21 ARPs, there were originally 103 participating schools. However, a small number "dropped out" during the two years; a figure of 100 schools represents the most reliable picture. The number of schools within each project varied from 1 (eg. Rochdale and Southwark) to 17 (Coventry) and 18 (Manchester TEC).

213 Other headline data about the participating schools include the following:-

- average percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences for Year 10 in 1997/98 (ie. the year preceding the projects) were 10.9% and 3.8% respectively;
- the percentage of Year 11 leavers continuing in full-time education from participating schools was 56.0% in autumn 1998 (average for England was 70%);
- in the year preceding the projects (summer 1998) 9.3% of students in participating schools did not achieve any nationally accredited awards at KS4 (England average was 6%);
- more than half of all participating schools (57%) were assessed as having "inner city" catchment areas. Most of the balance had "outer city" (28%) or "small city/large town" catchment areas. Only 3% were in "mixed urban/rural" settings (further information on the definitions used is given in the Technical Annex);

- 11% of project schools were in special measures or assessed as having serious weaknesses during the life of the projects (nationally, around 3% of schools have been placed in special measures since inspections began. 449 schools were still in special measures as at 1<sup>st</sup> September 1999);
- 7% of project schools were affected by reorganisations (eg. merger with other schools) during the same period.

214 The way in which schools were identified as project participants varied widely. For example:-

- in Manchester LEA, two of the four schools had development of work-related learning as part of their (post-OFSTED) action plans, whilst the senior management team (SMT) in the other two were keen to make progress in this curriculum area as part of their school development plan priorities;
- in Coventry, all secondary and special schools were invited to put forward names of possible participants, based on underachievement using the measure of distance travelled from Year 6 to Year 9. This resulted in a large number of schools (17), but only small numbers of students from each (an average of 3);
- in Portsmouth, all local secondary schools were invited to bid within a local selection process designed to identify two schools where a significant number of Year 9 students already had a pattern of poor attendance.

## STUDENT LEVEL PROFILES

215 Across the 21 ARPs, there were 878 students in the project group at the outset, although this fell to 655 by the end of the end of the second year. The equivalent figures for the comparator group were 764 and 723. The number of students within each project varied from (baseline figures) 13 in Solihull to 117 in Manchester TEC (13 and 118 respectively for the comparator groups). The average number of students per project was 42 (baseline) and 31 (at end); the respective comparator group sizes were 36 and 34.

216 Other headline data about individual students include the following:-

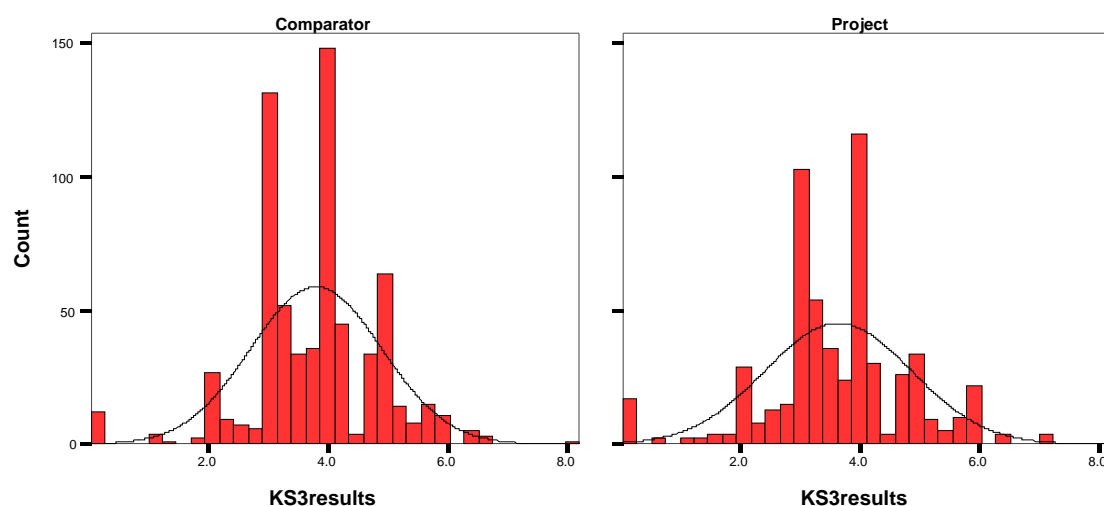
- there were more boys than girls in both the project and comparator groups – (61% and 60%) respectively;
- average KS3 results in the year preceding the projects (summer 1998) for project and comparator group students were 3.63 and 3.79 respectively (expressed as an average of the three Standard Attainment Test results in English, Maths and Science);
- unauthorised absences among the project and comparator groups in the year preceding the projects (their Year 9) were 3.0% and 4.2% respectively.

217 Using the maximum amount of data available and recognised statistical tests (see next chapter for details of the tests used), the data in the last two of the above bullets represent statistically significant differences between the project group and comparator group. Accordingly, despite the best endeavours of many project managers, it appears that the comparator and project groups were not as similar in

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terms of these two important characteristics as was intended and might have been hoped. Figure 2.1 sets out the distribution of the data for the KS3 scores.

**Figure 2.1: Baseline KS3 scores, maximum available data**



- 218 The criteria used for selecting students for the project groups are clearly important if the outcomes are to be placed in an informed context. [No separate discussion is added about selection of comparator group students, since they followed the same pattern.] The most common method was for teachers – sometimes supplemented by LEA advisers and/or project staff – to review the year cohort and draw up a long list of potential candidates using a combination of subjective and objective criteria. Discussions followed with subject teachers – and possibly parents and students – before the final groups were identified.
- 219 Typically (our estimate is in just under 80% of schools), the principal criterion was ‘disaffection’ interpreted widely (eg. as characterised by absenteeism, poor behaviour, negative attitudes or low self-esteem), although in small numbers of cases, specific factors were used (poor behaviour and low attendance in 5% and 3% of schools respectively). Often (about 71% of schools) final decisions were made on the professional judgements of teachers (a sense of who would benefit most from the project), although our assessment is that in as many as 22% of schools, objective data (eg. KS3 scores) were given greater weight than subjective judgement. One implication of using informal, subjective criteria (eg. ‘likely to benefit from the project’) was that, as at least one project candidly pointed out, it is less likely that the comparator group will be truly comparable.
- 220 If dissatisfaction (whether potential or already evident) was the most common criterion, there were some significant exceptions to be noted (affecting around 13% of schools). These included:-
- mixed ability groups (eg. York);
  - groups where participation depended on selecting a particular subject (eg. Rochdale, where the participating students were drawn from those choosing GCSE in Food Technology).

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- 221 In several instances, it is difficult to give a single unequivocal reason. For example, in both Manchester TEC and Wakefield, the participant group was drawn from students taking a particular option at the end of Year 9 (participation in MPower – an extended work-experience programme – and an ASDAN programme, respectively). In practice, this was most attractive to students who were struggling with the mainstream National Curriculum. However, teachers did steer one or two students who had not made the relevant choice, but who met the target profile, *towards* the project group (and vice versa – ie. influencing one or two students who had opted for MPower or ASDAN, but who were high achievers, *away from* the group).
- 222 It will be seen that attributing single bases for student selection is complex. One project made the point that, in a small secondary school, it was very difficult to select any group of students with anything like homogeneous characteristics. And, as implied above, practice varied very widely across different schools (even within the same project) in terms of how ‘voluntary’ the decision to join the ARP was, from the student’s point of view. Some schools only looked for genuine volunteers; most exercised a degree of ‘guided choice’; but in one case it was alleged that students were told ‘it is this or exclusion’!
- 223 Some ARPs, drawing on national research about gender differences at KS4, as well as local knowledge about perceived links between self-esteem, behaviour and skill levels (especially literacy), deliberately selected only boys for the project (and hence comparator) groups.
- 224 A quite different point about the selection of students was raised by the York ARP. There was concern in this project about the *ethics* of giving some students additional resource and attention:-
- “Teachers in both schools had reservations about certain pupils being selected for any ‘extra’ attention that was not to be made available to all. It was recognised that the concepts of ‘control group’ and ‘equality of opportunity’ put teachers on the horns of a dilemma in educational ethics.”*
- 225 The overview in this section inevitably underplays the difficult – often highly traumatic – circumstances faced by many individual students on the projects. The impression gained was that, for many young men and women, not only school, but life in general was a challenging experience. Several projects took care to explain in depth the problems faced by their students.
- 226 Warwickshire ARP, for example, described the their project group as follows:-
- “The characteristics of the selected students (poor motivation, behaviour and attendance, and expected low achievement) could often be traced to considerable problems experienced at home. In the Project group there were repeated examples of students living in a variety of dysfunctional homes. These included:*
- I. abusive step-parents*
  - II. single parents working very long hours, leaving little time for ensuring their son or daughter got to school or placement on time (or at all)*
  - III. drug problems*
  - IV. children being expected to provide care for younger siblings*
  - V. parents who admitted to having lost control of their child’s behaviour*
  - VI. very severe parental health problems.”*
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### III: IMPACT ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES

#### INTRODUCTION

- 301 The first national objective for the projects was “to improve motivation and attitudes”. This chapter summarises the available evidence as to progress against that objective.
- 302 The principal material used is:-
- reports from project managers and local evaluators in ARPs, SFs and EAZs;
  - data from student questionnaires;
  - SWA fieldwork.
- 303 The focus for the chapter is unequivocally *student attitudes towards* the various factors considered (eg. behaviour or learning). Evidence of *actual changes* in behaviour or attainment are reported in the relevant chapter below (ie. Chapters V and VI respectively).
- 304 This chapter is set out under the following headings:-
- attitudes towards school and learning in general ;
  - attitudes towards effort and self-discipline;
  - attitudes towards behaviour;
  - attitudes towards attendance and timekeeping;
  - attitudes towards self-confidence and self-esteem.

#### ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCHOOL AND LEARNING IN GENERAL

##### ***Student questionnaire***

- 305 Student attitudes towards school were explored in the student questionnaires, especially several elements of the first two questions. Summaries of responses to the two questionnaires are included in the Technical Annex<sup>1</sup>.
- 306 Responses to the relevant questions, for project and comparator groups at baseline and final stages, are shown in Table 3.1. This shows the percentage of students giving positive responses to each item – either ‘very important’ or ‘important’ (for question 1 items), or ‘agree a lot’ or ‘agree’ (for question 2 items).

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<sup>1</sup> All percentages in this chapter (and the next) are based on responses by only those students who completed both the baseline and final questionnaires. In practice, therefore, the total number of students included in the analysis in these two chapters is 409 project group students and 341 comparator group students. See the Technical Annex for further information.

**Table 3.1: Responses to “attitudes towards school” questions**

|  | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|--|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|  | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| Importance of coming to school every day   | 93%           | 94%   | 95%              | 94%   |
| Agreement with the following:              |               |       |                  |       |
| - coming to school will help me get a job  | 95%           | 94%   | 96%              | 92%   |
| - the subjects I do will help me get a job | 91%           | 89%   | 92%              | 87%   |
| - school is a waste of time for me         | 15%           | 20%   | 9%               | 13%   |

Note: For the last item, a low figure is desirable, in that a positive attitude would be that school is **not** seen as a waste of time, ie. disagreement with the statement.

307 The above table suggests that there is little difference in responses, either between the two groups or between the two questionnaires for the same group of students. We have tested this data for statistical significance, using chi-squared tests and T-Tests<sup>2</sup>. For the questions in the above table, the only significant difference between the groups arises at the final questionnaire for ‘school is a waste of time for me’.

308 The difference here is that project group students are more likely than comparator group students to think that school is a waste of time. However, the difference between the groups is only statistically significant at the final stage. This might indicate that the exposure of the project group to non-school activities has increased their disaffection with (mainstream) school activities, which they now see as having less relevance to their future.

309 When looking at changes over time within the same group of students, the following significant differences arise:-

- for the *project group*, there are differences in their responses to:
  - ‘coming to school will help me get a job’. The change here was that more students disagreed with this statement at the final stage than at the baseline stage;
  - ‘school is a waste of time for me’. Similarly, more students agreed with this statement (ie. thought school was a waste of time) at the final stage compared to the baseline;
- for the *comparator group*, the difference in responses related to the subjects helping to get a job, and school being seen as a waste of time. In both cases, the responses had become less positive between the two questionnaires.

**Qualitative material**

310 It is important to acknowledge that many – probably the majority – of students who took part in the ARPs began with an extremely negative view of school and what school could offer them. Indeed, that view was closely connected to criteria used in the majority of cases for selecting students for the projects.

311 Thus, the Portsmouth ARP year one report explained that:-

<sup>2</sup> Further details of the tests used are provided in Section IV of the Technical Annex. All references to ‘statistical significance’ in this chapter and the next refer to these tests.

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*“In many instances, the young people cannot see why there is a need to go to school. They are behind now with GCSE course work and feel that there is no way that they will be able to catch up or understand any of the work they have missed.”*

312 In the same vein, Islington pointed out that some of their students started from a point of complete estrangement from school:-

*“Some felt that school was irrelevant in the role it played in their education. Their desire to achieve at KS4 was personal to themselves and to themselves alone.”*

313 It is all the more encouraging, therefore, to note that final reports from all the ARPs provided at least some evidence of major attitudinal change by *some* students – even though that number could be very small.

314 This contrast in impact on different students in the same group was a consistent feature of most of the reports from across all the ARPs, SFs and EAZs. In any one project group, some students gained a *great deal* from the opportunity and this was often reflected in a positive shift of opinion about school; others gained *something* but retained their poor view of school; others still sometimes gained *nothing at all*.

315 The following two quotations from students on placements in the Wigan ARP illustrate what is probably the most common impact – that the project gave new encouragement and opportunity but failed to shift the students’ fundamental views about school:-

*“There are teachers here too but they treat you different. They explain things without yelling at you and making you feel thick. They make us work hard but they listen and explain so you can understand, then you can do it. Why can’t teachers do that too?”*

*“ I don’t think I could ever get an exam at school and the teachers think I am too thick, but [X] says I can get some certificates here so it’s worth trying.”*

316 A similar analysis was offered by the Lancashire SF:-

*“A large minority stated that it [the project] had had a beneficial effect on their approach to learning at school. A majority, however, persisted in their negative view of school, often contrasting school unfavourably with the College or workplace.”*

317 The following letter from a parent of one of the students from the Coventry ARP summarises the change discerned in one individual:-

*“As a mother, I have noticed a change in my son. Not only has his attitude towards school changed (he never wanted to go before), but his confidence has taken a boost. His teachers have even commented on both these points, one of them stating that she thinks it’s due to him being on this course.”*

318 In those small number of projects where students were selected in relation to curriculum opportunities rather than any disaffection (eg. Rochdale), there was some impressive evidence of gains in relation to students’ positive views about work at school *and* at college. This could be attributed, at least in part, to the interest generated by their project experience (in Rochdale, the Food Technology link course) and its perceived relevance to school-based learning.



## ATTITUDES TOWARDS EFFORT AND SELF-DISCIPLINE

### *Student questionnaire*

319 The student questionnaires also explored attitudes towards effort and self-discipline. Responses to the relevant items – again using the ‘positive responses’ approach – are shown in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Responses to “effort and self-discipline” questions**

|  | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|--|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|  | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| Importance of:                             |               |       |                  |       |
| - giving homework in on time               | 79%           | 76%   | 86%              | 81%   |
| - doing well in exams                      | 99%           | 98%   | 98%              | 97%   |
| - doing lots of subjects                   | 65%           | 64%   | 66%              | 61%   |
| - doing work experience or work placements | 88%           | 81%   | 86%              | 83%   |

320 Here, too, the raw data suggests little difference between the groups, and little change over time. In all cases, nearly all the students saw ‘doing well in exams’ as important.

321 In examining differences between the groups, there is, however, a significant difference at the baseline stage (only) in respect of ‘giving homework in on time’ and ‘doing well in exams’. In both cases, the comparator group was more positive than the project group. However, these significant differences were not discernible at the final stage, possibly indicating a positive change in attitude to these items by the project group (and/or a slight worsening of attitude by the comparator group).

322 To clarify this, we have looked for any significant differences over time for the groups. This shows that there is no significant change for the project group on either item. However, there is a change in both items amongst the comparator group – and in both cases there is a worsening of responses of the group. This suggests that the change in the relative responses of the groups is caused by deterioration in the attitude of the comparator group, rather than an improvement in that of the project group.

323 For both groups, there is also a significant difference over time in respect of the importance of ‘doing work experience or work placements’. For both groups, the responses show a reduction in the importance attached to this item. For the project group, this might appear disappointing. However, this response might not represent a commentary on student attitudes towards the projects; it may be that students have taken the question in a narrow way and are commenting solely on work experience per se (ie. the two-week placement at (usually) the end of Year 10). Having tasted the greater variety of experience afforded by the projects, they may be commenting that the narrower work experience is no longer seen as useful. A similar argument cannot be put forward in respect of the comparator group; they may simply consider, as they approach the end of Year 11, that their work experience was not, in retrospect, of much help in their preparation for leaving school and choosing what to do next.

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## Qualitative material

324 Several ARPs pointed out that, while their students initially shunned and rejected all forms of tests and examinations on the basis of past failure, nevertheless - *if their confidence could be slowly restored* - there was a deep-down wish to succeed in both formal and semi-formal contexts.

325 In Solihull ARP, for example, some previously non-achieving and virtually excluded students were supported to enter – away from their mainstream peers – some Certificate of Attainment Tests. Following this experience, they were then positively keen to sit GCSE (Foundation) Maths, alongside the previous year cohort.

326 Warwickshire ARP reported:-

*“The work placement seemed to have crystallised their views of what was important: they understood the need to achieve qualifications, and proper training, and most said that they wanted to achieve good GCSE grades, especially in English and Mathematics.”*

327 A consultation exercise for the Sheffield ARP revealed that:-

*“The vast majority of parents felt that the Workstart scheme had been a good and welcome opportunity for their child and a much better option than staying on at school would have been. These feelings were echoed by the students themselves in the final small group interviews, when many of them said that if they had not attended the Workstart scheme they would currently be without any qualifications and without any direction in life. The fact that the majority of the students had actually sat their GCSE exams was practical proof of this – their sense of pride and achievement in doing something most of them never thought they would, was enormous.”*

328 The project staff in Leicester ARP looked in some detail at the trends in effort grades over the two year period of the project. Some of their conclusions for one school were as follows:-

*“Motivation (as revealed by the overall effort grades) only increased fractionally over the two years for the project group, but when students were analysed individually, it was found that the motivation of 75% of the students had improved. However, the remaining 25% significantly regressed. The motivation of girls was higher from the start and improved substantially. 75% of the girls improved their motivation over the two years compared with 66% of the boys.”*

329 All our visits and the reports made available to us confirmed the importance of designing work programmes in ‘do-able, bite-sized chunks’. Salford and Trafford EAZ, for example, saw this as one of the main attractions of the NVQ/GNVQ route to accreditation and both the schools there also claimed considerable success in this context with the Scantec programme of technology work. This provided individual technology kits for specific assignments, each one highly structured and with progress achieved and monitored electronically through individual computer workstations.

330 It was clearly important for many of the students to see immediate or near-immediate results, and receive regular feedback and reward. One ARP explicitly used ‘going home early’ as an incentive to secure satisfactory progress. The final report explained:-

*“The students were keen to get on with it following our pre-set conditions of study – ‘You get today’s work done to our satisfaction, conforming to expected standards of*

*behaviour, then you can go home early'. This approach works well, as the incentive is great. By providing them with a consent note, it satisfied parents and other authorities."*

331 Opinions may differ as to the desirability of choosing to offer this kind of reward. However, the strongest point in its favour is that, for this group of very difficult and largely disengaged young people, it demonstrably had a motivating effect.

332 Gloucestershire SF provided a particularly good example of the 'bite-sized' approach. At one school, the Year 10 project students were set a total of 15 'challenges' in the course of the year. Each one took two or three weeks to complete, supported by teachers. This allowed students to demonstrate and record a range of skills and to accumulate sufficient points for an ASDAN bronze award. As the external evaluator noted:-

*"In practice, by dealing with one challenge at any one time, pupils were given clear and manageable short-term objectives which served to motivate them through instant reward (each successful challenge accumulated points) and kept pupils on track in building their portfolios."*

333 Derbyshire ARP made the interesting point that a college context seemed to be much more conducive to getting homework or coursework done in a satisfactory manner:-

*"Overall, it seemed that the students were given less homework on the scheme than they would have been at school. When homework was given, students were able to choose to do it in College time and they gave the impression that this method of dealing with homework gave them a greater sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy around it than they had had in school. Parents were not aware of any problems with homework which in itself was felt to be positive and a contrast to school."*

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS BEHAVIOUR

### Student questionnaire

334 Responses to the two key questions in the student questionnaires are shown in Table 3.3, using the 'positive responses' method.

**Table 3.3: Responses to "attitudes towards behaviour" questions**

|  | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|--|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|  | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| Importance of:                                 |               |       |                  |       |
| - good behaviour in lessons                    | 87%           | 90%   | 89%              | 88%   |
| - good behaviour between lessons and in breaks | 52%           | 56%   | 54%              | 52%   |

335 From the above, it is apparent that only just over half of all students saw general good behaviour (ie. between lessons or in breaks) as important. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the responses between the groups at either baseline or final stages, nor over time within each group.

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## Qualitative material

336 Several projects stressed just where many of their more challenging students started from in their attitude to behaviour and any new opportunities that were offered.

337 Thus Solihull ARP explained:-

*“Difficult behaviour in school stems from difficult lives outside it.”*

*“Because they do not recognise challenges as opportunities, everything new is potentially threatening. Their response in these circumstances is then purely one of survival and they will use, in a very meticulous and skilled fashion, their tried and trusted methods of dealing with danger with the inevitable results.”*

338 Islington ARP offered a similar analysis:-

*“They live, however, in quite a surreal world: being very ‘inner city’ streetwise and stereotypically ‘up to date with teenage culture’ on the one hand, but staggeringly immature and ill-informed, with a very poor understanding and perception of the real outside world. Their fear of venturing outside of their immediate local vicinity, for safety reasons primarily, compounds the natural extension of their comfort zones.”*

339 Perhaps even more graphically, Derbyshire ARP spelt out that:-

*“It should be remembered that many of these pupils come from very difficult backgrounds and severe home problems can severely disrupt the planned programme. A feeling of identity is important to everybody but especially so for teenagers. Some have family problems which must make this very difficult. One pupil now has his third surname since starting at secondary school. Another, in just the five school terms of the 39 Steps, has run away from home, been taken into foster care, returned home, been taken into a different foster family and is now living back home again. Another has left home and is now living with her boyfriend.”*

340 The same kind of analysis was offered in many of the SF reports. Swindon, for example, described their experience in these terms:-

*“Most pupils seem to have more confidence, but some do not actually believe in themselves any more than before. Some show a kind of bravado that belies how they really feel. One student, who should have good reason to feel better about her achievements, remains unconvinced that she has improved.”*

341 Given all that, it is hugely to the credit of many of the ARPs and SFs that they were able to secure huge differences in behaviour, attitude – and subsequent achievement – from at least some students. This is best illustrated in terms of individual case studies. We add here three particularly powerful examples where the projects have made a dramatic difference to the attitude and subsequent life chances of individual young people. Further case studies are provided in Appendix B.

342 The first example comes from the external evaluation of the Derbyshire ARP. This quotes a headteacher as follows:-

*“When I first came to the school she was one of the most difficult youngsters I had met for some time. She was disaffected, disenchanting and angry about the world because she seemed not to be making progress, she felt that school had failed her. She made all this very clear to me. But she’s not like that now, she’s preparing for her*

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GCSEs. *She walked in this room this morning and the first thing she did was smile. She is now a lovely, lovely girl who has matured in personal terms.*"

343 The other two come from the Warwickshire ARP:-

*"One student was also enormously proud to describe the impact of the project on his life in a presentation to an audience of teachers and inspectors at a Curriculum 2000 conference held by the Local Education Authority. This boy, who was apparently (and by his own judgement) destined for permanent exclusion during Key Stage 4, became a valued worker at placement and a student who managed to keep out of trouble at school. He described to a teacher that he looked round the playground and thought: 'You lads have a lot of growing up to do – you haven't a clue what it's like in the real world'."*

*"At another school a girl who had experienced enormous problems at home has been transformed by her work placement into a sensible and reliable worker. In her case a significant element of her transition was the excellent pastoral care of her supervisor at placement. Under his guidance she was the only student to achieve a full NVQ at Level 1. Other employers have referred to students becoming much more reliable - for example, proving they can be trusted in customers' homes, or earning the right to use expensive and delicate machinery."*

344 Warwickshire ARP also drew some thoughtful general conclusions about the impact on students' attitude towards behaviour:-

*"Some students have exhibited a radical shift in their poor behaviour patterns – a change which they themselves put down to their increased confidence, maturity and sense of responsibility gained through their work placement.*

*"A significant group failed to maintain their early improvement, so that by the end of the first year they had reverted to poor behaviour in school and lack of responsibility at placement. Another group continued to behave in an adult way at placement, with regular attendance and valued work performance, but rarely attended school or were in trouble again.*

*"A worrying aspect of some students' attitude was the polarisation of their behaviour – rejecting everything the school offered because they felt it was irrelevant to them, saying things like 'What use is Shakespeare to me? I need to learn more about the skills for work'."*

345 There seems little doubt that a robust attitude from employers to the importance of maintaining acceptable behaviour can be very helpful. In the Wigan ARP, it was reported that:-

*"Students indicated in discussion that they are now much more aware of the necessity for good behaviour. They discovered that employers have high standards to which they have to aspire or they lose the placement. Each of the three industrial partners discontinued placements for some of the young people on this basis."*

346 It is also important to record that those projects which targeted a broader band of students (not just the demotivated or disaffected) were able to demonstrate that work-related learning brought considerable general benefits, in terms of maturity and self esteem.

347 Stoke-on-Trent SF, for example, reported that:-

“Nearly all the students on the College Link Programme have quickly become responsible for managing their own learning. As independent learners, they have exceeded expectation. In terms of responsibility, 15 of the 19 students from the 1996-1998 group became school prefects in their final year at school.”

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS ATTENDANCE AND TIMEKEEPING

### Student questionnaire

- 348 At the baseline questionnaire, 82% of the project group and 83% of the comparator responded ‘yes’ when asked if they had ever missed school; these figures had reduced to 76% of the project group and 78% of the comparator group at the final questionnaire. This represents a statistically significant change<sup>3</sup> over time for the project group, but not for the comparator group. The difference between the groups is not statistically significant.
- 349 Where students reported that they had missed school, they were asked to identify all of the reasons why this was the case, using a list of options provided. The percentage identifying each reason is shown in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4: Reasons for ever missing school**

|                                   | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                                   | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| I am ill sometimes                | 74%           | 66%   | 76%              | 74%   |
| I find school boring              | 21%           | 24%   | 14%              | 14%   |
| I find some of my subjects boring | 31%           | 27%   | 17%              | 20%   |
| I don't like some of my teachers  | 26%           | 26%   | 16%              | 17%   |
| I find the work too hard          | 12%           | 9%    | 8%               | 7%    |
| My parents keep me at home        | 5%            | 4%    | 2%               | 2%    |
| Other reasons                     | 19%           | 18%   | 15%              | 14%   |

- 350 With the exception of illness, it is perhaps not surprising that a higher proportion of project group than comparator group students identified *all* the reasons for missing school, especially as many of the reasons could be associated with ‘disaffection’ (such as finding school or subjects boring). For three of the items – finding school boring; finding some subjects boring; not liking some of the teachers – the differences in responses between the groups are statistically significant at both the baseline and final questionnaires. The differences in responses to finding the work too hard at the baseline, and being ill sometimes at the final, stages are also significant between the groups. The only significant change over time relates to being ill sometimes for the project group.

### Qualitative material

- 351 In the Warwickshire ARP, punctuality was a major problem in the first few months of the project. Many seemed unaware that arriving 15 or 30 minutes late at their work

<sup>3</sup> Tests for statistical significance have been carried out by means of T-Tests; further details are provided in Section V of the Technical Annex. All future references to statistical significance in this chapter refer to the use of these tests, unless otherwise stated.

placement with tame excuses such as ‘I got up late’ was quite unacceptable to employers: they got sent back to school! In the second round of the project, this issue was confronted in the student induction programme – with much improved results.

352 In general, the project reports suggest that the students’ attitudes towards attendance and punctuality improved over previous levels, often in relation to FE or work placements – but with limited change back in school. For analysis and comment on *actual* attendance patterns see Chapter V.

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM

### *Student questionnaire*

353 Attempts to ascertain self-confidence are difficult through questionnaires; qualitative interviews are a more effective way of assessing such a subjective issue. Nevertheless, the questionnaires did probe one aspect of self-confidence, namely students’ confidence in their academic ability.

354 Responses to the relevant questions are shown in Table 3.5, using the ‘positive responses’ approach.

**Table 3.5: Responses to “attitudes towards self-discipline” questions**

|  | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|--|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|  | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| Agreement with the following:                            |               |       |                  |       |
| - I think I will do well in my exams                     | 75%           | 70%   | 82%              | 74%   |
| - My teachers think I will do well in my exams           | 68%           | 65%   | 71%              | 69%   |
| - I always get better marks than I think I will in exams | 61%           | 58%   | 62%              | 49%   |
| - I do better in projects and course work than in exams  | 73%           | 71%   | 77%              | 71%   |

355 Again, responses appear to be broadly similar here. The statistically significant differences are these:-

- at the baseline stage, the comparator group was more positive than the project group in respect of how well their teachers thought they would do in their exams;
- at the final stage, the project group were more positive in respect of getting better marks than they think they will in tests and exams;
- between the stages, there were significant changes for the comparator group (only) in respect of three of the items: how well they think they will do in exams; getting better marks than they think they will; and doing better in coursework and projects than in exams. In all three cases, responses showed a decline between the questionnaires.

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## Qualitative material

- 356 The external evaluator to the Derbyshire ARP interviewed a number of the students in depth about their own development during the project. These quotations speak for themselves:-

*"I've made new friends from a different school. Meeting people from the other school was scary at first but now I've got like four new friends".*

*"My Dad says I've grown up from it [the project]"*.

*"One day, after the year had finished [when there was no session] I came all on my own".*

[and, from a teacher] *"He is much more together and obviously gets a lot out of it because he is always talking about it. Like quite a few others, he has told me about his certificates. I think this self esteem thing is very important".*

- 357 Warwickshire ARP reported powerfully on the positive impact of their project on motivation in the following terms:-

*"One of the most significant conclusions about the students in the early part of the project, reported on by almost all the adults involved, was that they were characterised by low self esteem. However, with each passing term, the students began to exhibit greater confidence: their social skills improved; they began to listen to each other; eye contact was made; and their ability to relate to adults improved. These changes in behaviour were most marked in the students who had experienced some success in their work placement."*

- 358 Impressive accounts of the impact of work-related learning on students' self-confidence and self-management were also provided by two SFs. The evaluation report of Gloucestershire SF pointed out that:-

*"Pupils talk of taking responsibility for their own learning; and most demonstrate a high level of awareness about what they need to do to achieve the necessary points for their award. Pupils have therefore acquired important skills in improving their own learning; in particular, they have started to plan their work and to critically evaluate it with a view to making improvements."*

- 359 Lancashire SF reported on the same lines that:-

*"Improvements in confidence and self-esteem were reported by many students and some employers. A noticeable growth in confidence between the November 1998 and March 1999 interviews with students was observed. Often this was marked by a clearer view of the pathway to employment and the skills and qualifications needed."*

- 360 Very positive accounts of growth in the self-esteem and self-confidence of their children were provided by the parents of four students from the Manchester LEA ARP:-

*"It has taught her a sense of responsibility and a clear understanding of how to communicate. She is so much more confident now. I was worried about the extra pressure on her course work but I believe that being on the Arden project [FE link with focus on performing arts] has given her the confidence and incentive to procure her goal that is eventually to go to drama school."*



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*“My daughter was always very shy, but she seems to be much more outgoing now. This was confirmed by her tutors at a recent parents’ evening. She enjoys her afternoons at the college, she talks about it constantly and she is far more confident in herself and makes sure her schoolwork does not suffer in any way. She has always been a responsible child but this has made her much more mature. She has benefited greatly from the project.”*

*“It has been really good for my son, he didn’t tell us about school much, lads don’t, but he is full of this Arden thing. He doesn’t stop talking about it and he is much more confident and works better at school too according to his teachers. I’m very pleased with him. Lads are difficult at this age but he’s tons better now.”*

*“I didn’t think my son would be able to do the things he has been doing; we always felt he was a bit slow; we are very proud of him; he talks non stop about what he has been doing at college and he isn’t shy about coming forward now like he used to be.”*

- 361 As indicated earlier, nearly all the ARPs which focused on trying to build up self-confidence were able to illustrate some major success with some students. This quote from a student on the Wigan ARP is typical:-

*“I would have wagged it for the last two years except when I got caught, but now I have got my Bronze Crest Award in Science. I went to the University about it when I was in Year 10. I never thought I would go to a University even for a day. It was brilliant. We put up a display of our work and we talked about it to all these important people.”*

- 362 On the same lines, the teacher of a Coventry ARP student, who was part of that project’s drama production, wrote as follows:-

*“To get him to be positive about himself is a major achievement. He actually lost me when he got technical, explaining the special effects. He rarely involves himself, but he certainly did on that night.”*

- 363 Where projects included able but coasting/unmotivated students (eg. York ARP) the evidence from employers, teachers, careers staff and parents appears to be that that students presented themselves during the work-related opportunities with high self-worth and enthusiasm. The external evaluator to the York project concluded that the ARP had *“nurtured this development”*.

## **SUMMARY**

- 364 This chapter has been concerned with students’ *attitudes and motivation*, rather than *actual changes* in behaviour, although in practice it is difficult to assess one without reference to the other. In general terms, evidence from *adults observing students* has been stronger and more positive than evidence from the *students themselves*.

- 365 Evidence from students themselves is reliant almost exclusively on the questionnaires. However, these provide only inconclusive evidence (in that there are only small changes between the baseline and final stages and between the project and comparator groups).

- 366 The material from adults is far richer. Key points include the following:-

- 
- most students started with an overwhelmingly negative view of school and its usefulness. Reversing the trend even slightly represents a major achievement;
  - in nearly every project group, the picture was mixed in the sense that some students' attitudes and motivation improved considerably, others modestly, but for some there was no progress at all. The latter were likely to drop out at some stage;
  - there were several examples of attitudes becoming more positive about the enhancement itself, but this did not always extend to attitudes towards school and learning in general;
  - self-esteem and self-confidence were often improved as a result of making a fresh start in a work-related environment, and mixing with adults other than parents or teachers;
  - progress seemed to be made most often where challenges were segmented in 'bite-sized chunks', and where regular feedback and encouragement were provided.

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## IV: IMPACT ON STUDENTS' SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

### INTRODUCTION

401 The second national objective was “to increase skills and knowledge”. For the purposes of this chapter – and in order to provide a distinction with ‘attainment’ in Chapter VI – ‘skills and knowledge’ are understood to refer to the skills, knowledge and understanding that students acquire *which will help them in the post-16 world and enhance their employability*.

402 The evidence of progress towards this objective is set out under the following headings:-

- knowledge and understanding of strengths and weaknesses;
- knowledge and understanding of post-16 options;
- knowledge and understanding of the world of work;
- knowledge and understanding of Key Skills.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

#### *Student questionnaire*

403 Students were asked in the questionnaires to rate their own skills and abilities across a wide range of (non-academic) aspects. Table 4.1 shows the proportion of students who rated themselves as either ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ on each item (the top two “grades” on a 5-point scale)<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 4.1: Students’ self-rating of their skills and abilities**

|  | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|--|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|  | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| Making decisions   | 53%           | 59%   | 52%              | 64%   |
| Being confident when talking to adults other than parents (eg. teachers) | 58%           | 66%   | 53%              | 66%   |
| Improving own learning and performance                                   | 50%           | 58%   | 56%              | 58%   |
| Working with other people  | 75%           | 80%   | 81%              | 83%   |
| Numeracy   | 43%           | 44%   | 45%              | 42%   |
| Communication skills   | 56%           | 56%   | 56%              | 58%   |
| Solving problems   | 48%           | 52%   | 49%              | 50%   |
| Information Technology   | 50%           | 49%   | 53%              | 51%   |
| Finding out information  | 53%           | 47%   | 50%              | 50%   |
| Coping with new experiences and situations                               | 57%           | 52%   | 49%              | 59%   |
| Making yourself do things that you don’t enjoy                           | 35%           | 35%   | 33%              | 32%   |
| Always being on time   | 62%           | 63%   | 68%              | 66%   |
| Making new friends   | 73%           | 76%   | 76%              | 79%   |

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<sup>4</sup> All percentages in this chapter are again based on responses from only those students who completed both the baseline and final questionnaires - see footnote 1 in Chapter III and the Technical Annex.

|  |     |     |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Recognising own strengths and weaknesses | 61% | 61% | 58% | 61% |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|

404 The statistically significant differences in this data are as follows:-

- at both the baseline and final stages, there was a difference between the groups in respect of 'coping with new experiences and situations'. However, whilst the project group were, on average, more positive at the baseline stage (mean score of 3.67, as opposed to 3.51 for the comparator group), the comparator group were slightly more positive at the final stage (mean score of 3.63, compared to 3.61 for the project group);
- in respect of the *project group* only, there were changes over time in respect of 'being confident in talking to adults other than parents', 'working with other people', and 'improving own learning and performance'. In all three instances, students were more positive about their abilities at the final stage than at the baseline;
- for the *comparator group* only, there was also a more positive view about their abilities at the final stage in respect of three items: 'making decisions', 'being confident in talking to adults other than parents'; and 'coping with new experiences and situations'. This latter change reinforces that noted in the first bullet above about the differences between the groups at the two stages.

### **Qualitative material**

405 The position as reported in the qualitative material is more complex, even though students in the ARPs did not, in general find it easy to assess their own strengths and weaknesses (especially weaknesses). This is understandable: we have already made clear what a low base many of them started from, in terms of self-esteem.

406 Turning to the individual projects, Warwickshire ARP noted that the use of local logbooks allowed students to practise the skill of self-evaluation and some elements of action planning. The logbooks were also helpful as preparation for careers interviews.

407 Leicester ARP carried out some interesting analysis of their own baseline and final student questionnaire responses on these themes. They found:-

- the percentage of project students who felt 'they could now make themselves do things they did not enjoy' rose from 24% to 41% over the course of the project while, in the comparator group, there was a drop in the same measure from 42% to 29%;
- both groups improved substantially in their self-perception of 'working with other people' but when it came to 'problem solving', the project group jumped from 40% to 60% over the course of the project, whilst the comparator group hardly changed in their self-perception (from 49% to 48%);
- on the other hand, the comparator group claimed significantly greater progress than the project group in 'information technology' and 'communication skills'. In the latter, for example, the project group ratings increased from 42% to 50%, while the equivalent figures for the comparator group showed a dramatic rise from 26% to 67%.

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- 408 Manchester LEA ARP reported significant progress on problem solving. 95% of their project group felt themselves to be 'good' or 'very good' at problem solving at project end, compared with a figure of 50% at baseline.
- 409 Dudley ARP provided some interesting questionnaire responses from their students about the perceptions of their own key skill development over the course of the project, as well as the perceptions of the teachers of these students in relation to the same suggested measures. The students described greater gains for themselves than the teachers perceived, but there was a fairly strong correlation between the students and the teachers about what were the main features of the gains.
- 410 The Dudley *students* felt that they had 'improved' or 'greatly improved' most of all in the following aspects:-
- starting conversations with people;
  - working with other people;
  - understanding and following simple instructions;
  - being reliable;
  - working to the required standard of quality;
  - having a good attitude towards your future.
- 411 The Dudley *teachers* felt that the students had 'improved' or 'greatly improved' most of all in the following areas:-
- starting conversations with others;
  - understanding and following simple instructions;
  - adapting to changes in routine;
  - showing a responsible attitude towards his/her future;
  - recognising that he/she is making progress.
- 412 Some impressive evidence of attitudinal change towards key skills was provided by West Sussex SF. Here over 3,000 students scored themselves on a number of questions relating to six key skills, before and after taking part in a number of specifically designed local challenges (designed in partnership with local employers). For example, under problem solving, each student rated him/herself on a five point scale, which assessed the degree of self-confidence in:-
- collecting information about a problem;
  - working out possible methods for finding a solution;
  - using the chosen method to reach an acceptable solution;
  - reviewing how successful you were.
- 413 The West Sussex results showed virtually universal gains in confidence levels across all those taking part. Many of the schools concerned have gone on to sustain this scheme in subsequent years through their own budgets.
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414 Looking to the future, the Tower Hamlets ARP report acknowledged that, even though students might have succeeded at KS4 (albeit with considerable mentoring and other kinds of personal support), there was doubt as to whether the students would be able to sustain their (often fragile) progress at 16+, when the project finished:-

*“It was felt by all those involved (including the participants) that continued support was necessary after the official finish date if pupils were going to be successful in their post-16 provision.”*

415 Here, and in other projects (eg. Solihull ARP), it is known that informal support which is not externally funded has continued beyond the life of the project. However, there are obvious limitations on its extent and on the degree to which it can be relied upon in future.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF POST-16 OPTIONS**

### ***Student questionnaire***

416 The student questionnaire asked students to indicate whether they knew about the various post-16 routes and options available to them, and whether they had thought about following any of those routes. At the baseline stage, the responses indicated that:-

- around 25% of the project group, and 20% of the comparator group, said they knew nothing about any of the possible options;
- the highest proportion of project group students said they knew about, and had considered entering, a job with training. In the comparator group, the highest proportion said they knew about doing A Levels at school or college, but - in terms of what they had thought about doing - the highest proportion quoted a job with training;
- around 50% of both groups said they knew about various options at school or college (GCSE re-sits, A Levels or GNVQ/NVQ). Around 30-40% of both groups had thought about following one of these options;
- the option that the least students in both groups knew about, or had considered following, was a National Traineeship<sup>5</sup>.

417 At the final questionnaire, the main points were that:-

- the proportion not knowing about any of the options had fallen to 18% for the project group, but remained at 20% for the comparator group;
- around 60% of students in both groups said that they knew about the three options of school, college, or a job without training. Getting a job with training was the option that the highest proportion in **both** groups had now thought about doing;
- National Traineeships remained the option that the least students in both groups knew about or had thought of doing themselves (although the proportions had increased from the baseline in all cases).

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<sup>5</sup> These are now called Foundation Modern Apprenticeships, but National Traineeship was the correct term at the time of both surveys.

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## Qualitative material

418 Several of the SFs provided positive accounts of the way their activities had appeared to improve the students' grasp of relevant opportunities.

419 Thus, Lancashire SF reported:-

*"Students generally were much clearer about their aims on leaving school. A significant number have signed on for further training at the participating and other colleges. Some have been offered jobs or further training by their placement employers. Some are going directly into other work. Only a few of those completing the Project have no idea of their employment destination."*

420 Swindon SF commented:-

*"Pupil expectations do seem to have changed. The work experience taster has been successful in showing that they can succeed and are valued. All are now clearer about post-16 pathways and are realistically looking at training (eg. modern apprenticeship) or college where previously they felt that they would not reach this level."*

421 Barking and Dagenham LEA reported similar success in their Printing GCSE course. This SF was designed to support the LEA's policy of developing access to the world of work through 'vocational GCSEs':-

*"Pupils demonstrated, during discussions, that they have a clear understanding of the progression routes available to them through GNVQ Intermediate, GNVQ Advanced or A-Level."*

422 The Wirral SF, based on the Laird Foundation (a large multi-skill training centre for 14-21 year olds), was very effective in raising student awareness about the progression route to Modern Apprenticeships. Further comments on this are added in Chapter VIII.

423 Within the ARPs, one of the best informed accounts of the positive impact of the project on students' knowledge of post-16 options came from a careers adviser to one of the Wigan schools. She had worked in this school for five years and described the difference that the ARP programme 'Moving On' had made in the following terms:-

- *"vocational maturity – the students' ideas are far more developed. They are well past the 'fantasy' stage that is typical of young people going through the process of exploring job ideas;*
- *opportunity awareness – the students are far more aware of the range of jobs out in the world of work and in the local job market;*
- *options knowledge – they are far more aware of the options open to them when they leave school and have a better understanding of the difference between these options;*
- *realistic ideas – the ideas which the students have are more realistic, having often been based on real life experiences from the Moving On project;*
- *focussed ideas – the students are often more focussed on one or two realistic ideas rather than being vague or confused or having a range of unrealistic ideas;*

- *motivated – the students are more motivated to try options they may not have previously considered, such as college. They are often more open-minded about further education than they may have been in the past.”*

424 Dudley ARP provided a range of specific examples to show how their programme of extended work experience had helped students on a future work and training path. In some of these cases it appears to have been helpful that the student or student’s family had been involved in finding the original work placement:-

*“A student who was in the army cadets and who had been on work experience with the army was hoping to join his chosen battalion. Another, whose uncle was a bricklayer, had done his extended work experience in a college construction centre. He intended to go back there and complete a Construction NVQ.”*

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD OF WORK

### Student questionnaire

425 The student questionnaires asked students to list three jobs that they might wish to do on leaving school/college. These responses have not been analysed in detail at the national level, although the material was used in local evaluations where specific links between curriculum content and vocational choices could be explored. Students were then asked to identify which, of a given list of qualifications and other items, would be important for their chosen jobs. Table 4.2 shows the proportion of students that selected each item.

**Table 4.2: Items important for chosen jobs**

|   | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|---|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|   | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| GCSEs                                       | 82%           | 66%   | 87%              | 73%   |
| GNVQs or NVQs                               | 56%           | 49%   | 38%              | 43%   |
| A Levels                                    | 60%           | 34%   | 69%              | 42%   |
| Degree or HND                               | 28%           | 19%   | 31%              | 25%   |
| Good Record of Achievement or Progress File | 71%           | 62%   | 77%              | 67%   |
| Confidence in yourself                      | 81%           | 79%   | 86%              | 81%   |
| Willingness to learn                        | 67%           | 73%   | 73%              | 73%   |
| Ability to work on your own                 | 74%           | 74%   | 81%              | 72%   |
| Getting on well with other people           | 86%           | 85%   | 90%              | 86%   |
| Ability to use computers                    | 50%           | 43%   | 51%              | 50%   |

426 The responses of both groups of students are similar at the baseline stage. These indicate that, apart from GCSEs, the non-academic items are seen as more important for the chosen jobs than the academic qualifications (such as A Levels or a degree). This is not surprising, given the nature of the jobs that students tended to identify. These were mainly unskilled or semi-skilled jobs; or occupations (such as ‘musician’), where higher academic qualifications tend to be perceived as less important.

427 At the final questionnaire, the responses of both groups of students are again similar. However, compared to the baseline responses, all academic qualifications (including



GCSEs) are seen as important by fewer students, whilst the proportion seeing the non-academic skills as important has remained roughly the same. The exceptions to this are for Progress File (a reduction in both groups) and the ability to use computers (reduction for the project group only).

428 The statistically significant differences are these:-

- at the *baseline stage*, the comparator group attach more importance to GCSEs, A Levels, ability to work on your own, and getting on well with others. The project group attach more importance to GNVQs/NVQs;
- at the *final stage*, the comparator group attach more importance to just GCSEs and A Levels;
- for the *project group*, there is a reduction in importance over time of GCSEs, GNVQs/NVQs, A Levels, Degree/HND, Progress File and the use of computers, but an increase in importance of the willingness to learn new things;
- for the *comparator group*, there is a reduction in importance over time of GCSEs, A Levels, Degree/HND, Progress File, confidence in yourself and ability to work on your own.

429 Students were also asked to identify two subjects studied at school now that were seen as most helpful to getting a job in future, and two that would be least helpful. Subjects mentioned by more than 10% of respondents are shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Most and least helpful subjects for future jobs**

|                         | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                         | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| Most helpful subjects:  |               |       |                  |       |
| - English               | 59%           | 65%   | 53%              | 58%   |
| - Maths                 | 59%           | 69%   | 52%              | 63%   |
| - Science               | 20%           | 17%   | 22%              | 19%   |
| Least helpful subjects: |               |       |                  |       |
| - Modern language       | 36%           | 36%   | 38%              | 38%   |
| - RE                    | 32%           | 33%   | 53%              | 39%   |
| - PE                    | 29%           | 28%   | 26%              | 24%   |
| - Science               | 15%           | 17%   | 14%              | 14%   |

430 From this table, it can be seen that:-

- there is little difference between responses of the two groups, in general terms;
- English and Maths were clearly seen as the most helpful subjects, especially by the project group;
- the presence of Science in both lists probably reflects the different job choices of manufacturing/engineering versus arts/humanities.

431 Students were then presented with a list of qualifications, skills and abilities and asked to identify firstly the five which they believed mattered most *to employers* when they chose someone for a job; and secondly the five which *students thought* would help them to do a job well. Tables 4.4 and 4.5 show the five items identified by the highest percentage of students.

**Table 4.4: Things seen as important to employers when choosing someone for a job**

|   | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|---|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|   | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| Good GCSE grades at Year 11                   | 78%           | 71%   | 82%              | 74%   |
| A good Record of Achievement or Progress File | 50%           | 53%   | 53%              | 53%   |
| Always getting to work on time                | 42%           | 39%   | 46%              | 38%   |
| Being good at the job                         | 39%           | [36%] | 39%              | 39%   |
| Work experience                               | 41%           | 41%   | [30%]            | [34%] |
| A Levels                                      | [37%]         | [28%] | 46%              | [32%] |
| Being able to speak confidently and clearly   | [37%]         | 38%   | 39%              | 45%   |

Note: Figures in [square brackets] are not in the top 5 in the relevant column, but are shown for comparison purposes.

**Table 4.5: Things students see as necessary to do a job well**

|   | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|---|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|   | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| Getting on well with other people           | 47%           | 56%   | 41%              | 50%   |
| Good GCSE grades at Year 11                 | 47%           | [40%] | 63%              | 44%   |
| Being good at the job                       | 48%           | 41%   | 47%              | 45%   |
| Work experience                             | 50%           | 44%   | 42%              | [40%] |
| Being able to speak confidently and clearly | 39%           | 42%   | [38%]            | 52%   |
| Being willing to learn new things           | [33%]         | 41%   | 39%              | 44%   |

Note: Figures in [square brackets] are not in the top 5 in the relevant column, but are shown for comparison purposes.

432 From these tables, it is apparent that:-

- at the baseline stage, both groups think that good GCSE grades are the most important aspect for employers, and there is also broad agreement on three other items. However, project group students think that work experience is more important than the comparator group; the latter rate A Levels and confidence in speaking as more important;
- by the final questionnaire, there is little difference in what project group students see as important to employers (although GCSEs and A Levels are seen as important by fewer students). A similar position emerges for the comparator group, where A Levels are no longer one of the top 5 items;

- in terms of what is seen as important to doing a job well, project group students – at both stages – are more likely to include work experience and getting on well with others than comparator group students, whereas the latter – again at both stages – see good GCSE grades and willingness to learn new things as more important.

433 The final question asked students how much they knew about various aspects of the labour market. The proportion of students saying that they knew all about, or quite a lot about, each of the items is shown in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Responses on labour market questions**

| How much do you know about.....?                       | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|--|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|  | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| The jobs you could get in your local area              | 49%           | 51%   | 52%              | 49%   |
| Where to find out what jobs are going at the moment    | 65%           | 68%   | 62%              | 69%   |
| The exams and skills you need for different jobs       | 55%           | 56%   | 57%              | 64%   |
| How to find out what jobs there will be in future      | 41%           | 46%   | 41%              | 48%   |
| What sort of jobs there might be lots of in the future | 38%           | 39%   | 38%              | 38%   |
| Where to look for the kind of job that you have chosen | 63%           | 68%   | 68%              | 63%   |

434 The statistically significant differences in the responses summarised in the above table are as follows:-

- the only difference between the groups occurs at the *baseline stage* in respect of the jobs you could get in your local area, where the project group responded more positively than the comparator group;
- there were no changes over time for the *project group*;
- for the *comparator group*, changes over time occurred in respect of three items: where to find out about what jobs are going at the moment; the exams and skills needed for different jobs; and how to find out what jobs there will be in the future. In all three cases, the students reported an improvement in their knowledge about the items.

### **Qualitative material**

435 Turning to the qualitative material, it is apparent that – for those students who started from a position of disaffection and personal frustration – even getting to the ‘start line’, of learning about what employers were looking for and valued, constituted a major challenge.

436 The Tower Hamlets’ final report put this point as follows:-

*“They all accepted that by enhancing their individual knowledge, understanding and skill base they would improve their labour market opportunities. For them, knowing how to do this and how to go about it was, however, the problem.”*

437 However, here and elsewhere, a considerable degree of success with some students seemed to be achieved – largely through intensive personal support, sustained over the duration of the project. Thus, Warwickshire ARP was also able to record that:-

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*“Many students reported greatly enhanced understanding of the world of work resulting from their work placements. ‘I know what work is all about now – I hadn’t a clue before’.”*

438 A student from Wigan ARP put it like this:-

*“My plans for when I leave school are to become a care assistant in an elderly care home, but when I was in Year 10, I would never have thought about this idea.”*

*“My plans are to join the RAF, have lots of money and a good life ... (pause) ... No, this [the project] partly made me think what I really want to do in the future.”*

439 Sheffield ARP reported similarly:-

*“Work experience clarified ideas about future employment for some students, by either confirming existing ideas about what they wanted to do, or enabling them to discover that the reality of it was not what they wanted.”*

440 Sheffield ARP was also able to demonstrate, through local analysis of self-assessment questionnaires, that the majority of project students made gains over the lifetime of the ARP in the following aspects:-

- ideas for future employment. 60% of project students on one college site showed gains ranging from “better” to “a lot better”;
- what skills/knowledge students need to follow their chosen careers. The percentage of students showing gains here was also 60%, using the same criterion;
- what employers are looking for in their employees. As many as 70% of students showed gains here.

441 Manchester TEC ARP provided similar evidence. 95% of the project group felt that MPower had given them a realistic idea of working life. A similar proportion felt that they had been “treated like adults” in their workplace.

442 Those projects which aimed more widely across all student abilities and attitudes were able to demonstrate substantial evidence of gains by students in terms of understanding what employers were looking for – and how that fitted their own aspirations and thinking. For example, the Knowsley SF evaluation showed that 41% of over 100 students involved with link courses of various kinds said that the opportunity ‘had influenced my choice of career’.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF KEY SKILLS**

### ***Student questionnaire***

443 From the list of skills and abilities that were listed in Table 4.1, students were asked to identify any items that they thought were called “Key Skills” (no further guidance on the six nationally-defined Key Skills was given in the questionnaires). Around 40% of both groups stated that they did not know what Key Skills were at the baseline stage. This had reduced to around 25% at the final questionnaire.

444 All 14 items on the list were identified by some students as being a Key Skill, although ‘making yourself do things you don’t enjoy’ was only identified by around 5% of

students in both questionnaires. The five items identified by the highest proportion of students are shown in Table 4.7 overleaf.

**Table 4.7: Skills and abilities identified as Key Skills**

|                           | Project group |       | Comparator group |       |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                           | Baseline      | Final | Baseline         | Final |
| Communication skills      | 27%           | 34%   | 26%              | 38%   |
| Working with other people | 23%           | 26%   | 21%              | 22%   |
| Information Technology    | 19%           | 24%   | [14%]            | 26%   |
| Always being on time      | 18%           | [15%] | 18%              | [14%] |
| Making decisions          | 18%           | [19%] | 28%              | 18%   |
| Solving problems          | [16%]         | 20%   | 19%              | 19%   |
| Numeracy                  | [16%]         | 23%   | [16%]            | 27%   |

Note: Figures in [square brackets] are not in the top five items in the relevant column, but are shown for comparison purposes.

445 From this table, it can be seen that, by the final questionnaire, a higher proportion of both groups of students were correctly identifying 5 of the 6 Key Skills (the missing item was Improving own Learning and Performance). In addition, numeracy had become one of the top 5 items for both groups, whereas it had not appeared in the lists at the baseline stage. It is also apparent that the top 5 items were selected by an increasing proportion of both groups in the final questionnaire, whilst other items were being identified by the same number or fewer students (see the Technical Annex for further details).

### **Qualitative material**

446 Clear distinctions between Key Skills (as defined nationally) and key skills (as used in local discussions) were not always drawn. Most of the qualitative material has, therefore, already been reported in the earlier section on strengths and weaknesses (eg. the material from West Sussex SF in paragraphs 412 and 413).

### **SUMMARY**

447 This chapter has been concerned with students' knowledge and understanding in the context of options post-16 and the world of work. As with Chapter III, the main sources of evidence have been student questionnaires and the stated views of those adults who have observed the students during the projects.

448 The overall sense is of progress having been made, but discernible more from adult commentary than student responses. Most students started from a low base in terms of knowledge of the options, understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, and the self-confidence to try new opportunities. Questionnaire data was not conclusive, although progress was evident in recognition of Key Skills. There was also widespread awareness of the importance of Maths and English to future employment prospects.

449 The gains were mostly around confidence and self-esteem. Whilst there were gains also in knowledge of the adult world, these seemed more specific to the students' individual experiences (at work, FE College or with a training provider), than feeding

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across to a rounded understanding of the full range of options. However, students' direct experience of the adult world seemed to have brought a more informed view of the behaviour and attitudes expected. Several students remarked that they responded better to being treated like adults.

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## V: IMPACT ON STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOUR

### INTRODUCTION

501 The third national objective for projects was “to improve attendance and behaviour”. In reality, of course, two significantly different elements are incorporated in this one objective. However, the available evidence on both items is included in this chapter, to link to the objective as defined. We also comment on students who did not complete the project, both in terms of numbers and reasons.

502 The main headings used here are simply:-

- attendance;
- non-completers;
- behaviour.

### ATTENDANCE

503 Under this heading, we comment first on unauthorised absences, and second on authorised absences. Finally we comment on strategies adopted to improve student attendance. In this – and subsequent – section(s), we present the quantitative data first and then discuss the key themes from the qualitative material.

#### ***Unauthorised absences***

##### *Quantitative data*

504 Data on unauthorised absences was collected via the management information returns from projects (see the Technical Annex for further details). The information set out here is based on all data available to us at the time of preparing this report.

505 Whilst data is primarily presented as averages – either of all projects or of individual projects – it should be borne in mind that these are calculated from data supplied at *individual student level*. Thus, any figure quoted as the average of all projects is based on the average of the individual data relating to all the relevant students (ie. project group or comparator group).

506 Data on rates of unauthorised absences (defined as the percentage of available time missed due to unauthorised absence) has been collected as follows:-

- for academic year 1997/98 (ie. when project/comparator students were in Year 9, the year before most projects started);
- for academic year 1998/99 (ie. the first year of projects when students were in Year 10);
- for academic year 1999/2000 (ie. the second year of projects, when students were in Year 11).

507 For the first and second year of projects, the data was collected separately in respect of:-

- time spent at school (referred to as “on-site”);
- (for project students only) time spent away from school on project enhancements, such as an employer placement (referred to as “off-site”).

508 The unauthorised absence rates have been collected for:-

- project group students only;
- comparator group students only;
- year cohorts.

509 Before presenting the available data, we would note that a number of schools had significant difficulties in supplying this data, either at all, or in the format required. This was due to a number of stated reasons, including:-

- lack of administrative support to collate data;
- the loss of historical records;
- the lack of data distinguishing authorised from unauthorised absence.

For these reasons, the data presented here (and in the next section) is based on smaller sample sizes than much of the other data in this report and is therefore probably the least reliable of the reported data.

510 Table 5.1 below summarises the unauthorised absence rates for the project group and comparator group students across the three years from 1997/98 to 1999/2000. The data presented here includes only that for students for whom usable data was supplied for all three years; changes in the average rates between years therefore relate to changes for the same groups of students. For project group students, data relates solely to their on-site absence rates (see paragraph 507 above).

**Table 5.1: Rates of unauthorised absence, 1997/98 to 1999/2000**

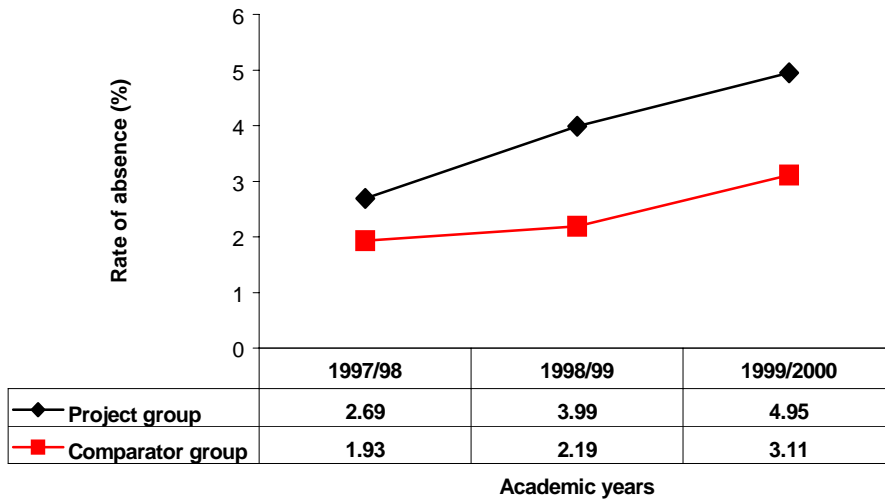
|                              | Project group | Comparator group |
|------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1997/98                      | 2.69%         | 1.93%            |
| 1998/99                      | 3.99%         | 2.19%            |
| 1999/2000                    | 4.95%         | 3.11%            |
| Number of valid entries      | 243           | 223              |
| Maximum value for a student: | 37.43         | 52.00            |
| - 1997/98:                   | 60.20         | 37.04            |
| - 1998/99:                   | 60.30         | 87.50            |
| - 1999/2000:                 |               |                  |

Note: Number of valid entries refers to the number of students for which data is included.

511 The data from Table 5.1 is presented graphically in Figure 5.1 overleaf. The two lines represent the rate of unauthorised absence of the same groups of students over three academic years, as they progress from Year 9 (in 1997/98) to Year 11 (in 1999/2000). This shows that the rate for the project group started and remained above that of the comparator group across the three years, with the rate for both groups on an upward trend across the three years.

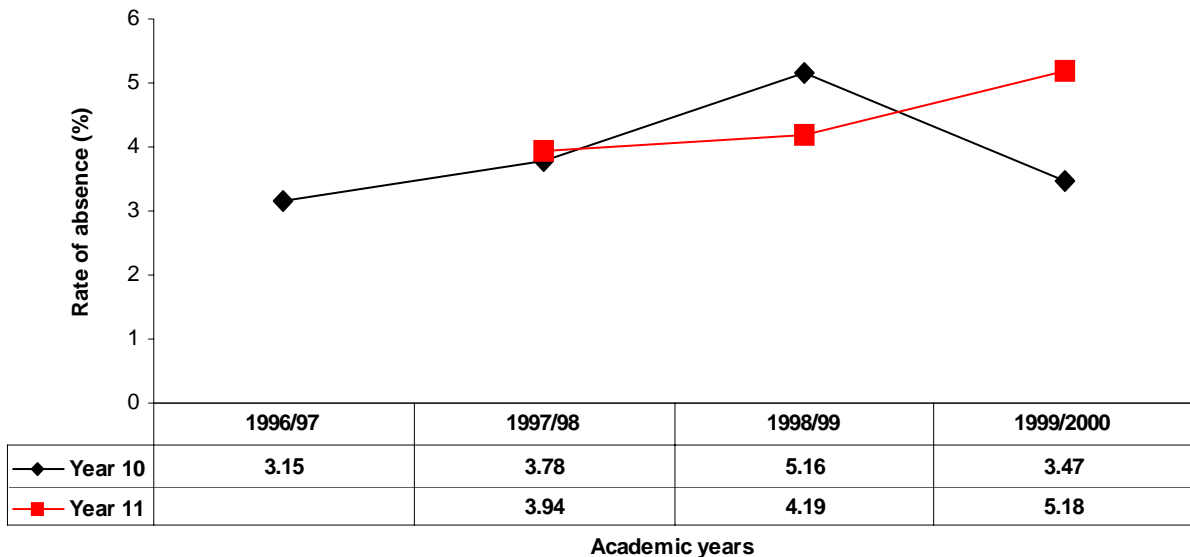


**FIGURE 5.1: UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE RATES, 1997/98 TO 1999/2000**



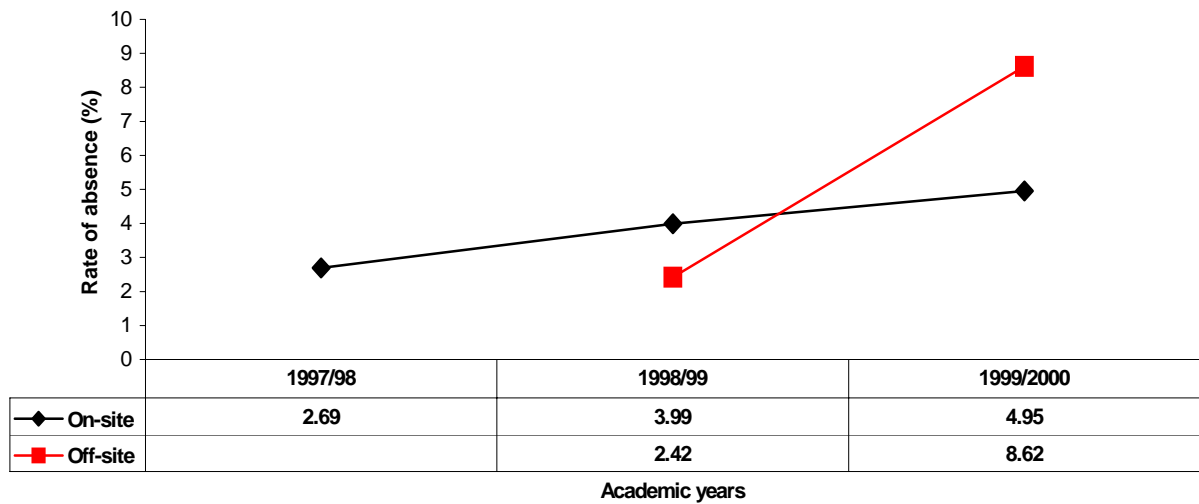
512 Figure 5.2 below shows the trend in unauthorised absence rates at school level for Year 10 and Year 11 cohorts. The average figure here represents the simple arithmetical mean of the data supplied by schools, using all the available data for each year; the data has not been weighted to reflect the number of students in each cohort in each school. The lines represent the rates of unauthorised absence of different year cohorts of students as they pass through Year 10 or Year 11. This shows a generally upward trend in the rate of unauthorised absence for both year cohorts.

**FIGURE 5.2: TRENDS IN YEAR COHORT UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE RATES**



513 As noted in paragraph 507 above, for project group students, we collected absence data separately in respect of on-site and off-site provision. The rationale here was to see if there were any different patterns of attendance at the enhancement, as opposed to the 'mainstream' school provision. The resulting data – for the project group only – is shown in Figure 5.3 below.

**FIGURE 5.3: UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE RATES - ON AND OFF SITE**



514 As can be seen from this graph (which includes the Year 9 “on-site” rate for comparison), unauthorised absence at off-site provision was lower in the first year of projects compared to on-site provision, but this situation reversed significantly during the second year of projects.

Qualitative material

515 Much of the qualitative material from projects is not differentiated between authorised and unauthorised. It is, therefore, presented as a composite section below, after the quantitative data on authorised absence.

**Authorised absences**

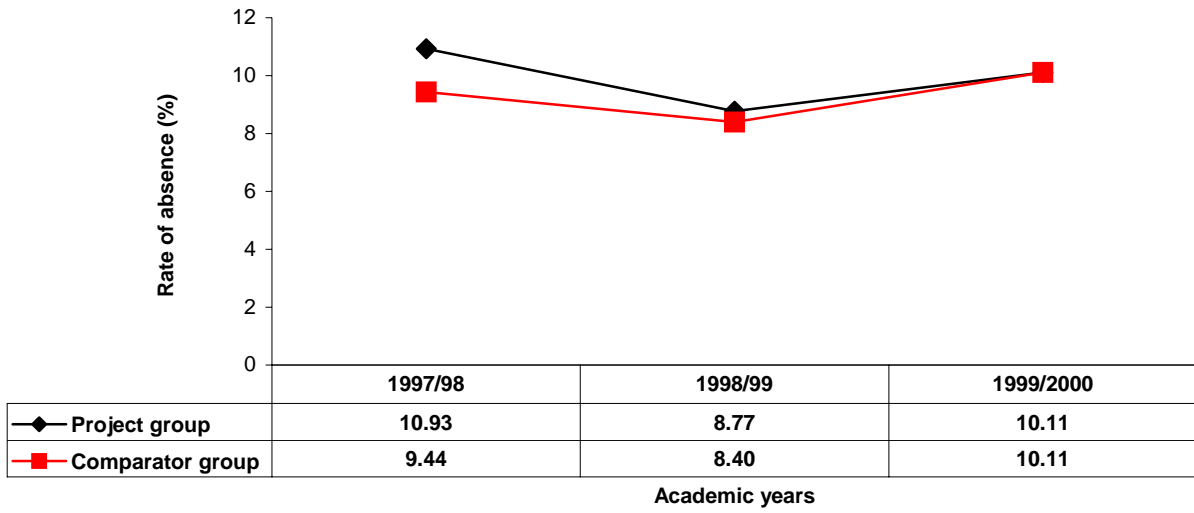
Quantitative data

516 Similar data has been collected on authorised absence rates to that on unauthorised absence. However, we believe that this data does not provide as useful a picture of student attitudes towards attendance, since authorised absence should, by definition, include valid absences for matters such as illness or medical appointments. In that sense, some level of authorised absence is unavoidable.

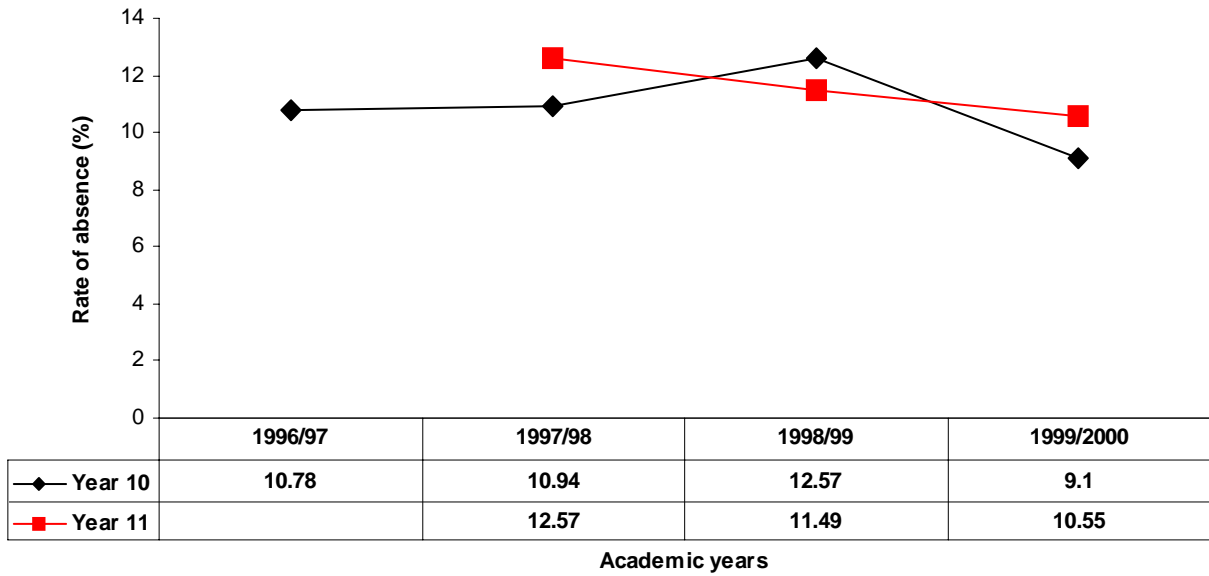
517 It should also be noted that some of the data on authorised absence rates includes unauthorised absence. This has occurred where schools have been unable to supply data split between the two requested categories. In these cases, we recorded the supplied data as authorised absence only.

518 Figures 5.4 to 5.6 replicate the data presented in, respectively, Figures 5.1 to 5.3 above, but using data for authorised absence rates. The same principles regarding the use and inclusion of data have also been used.

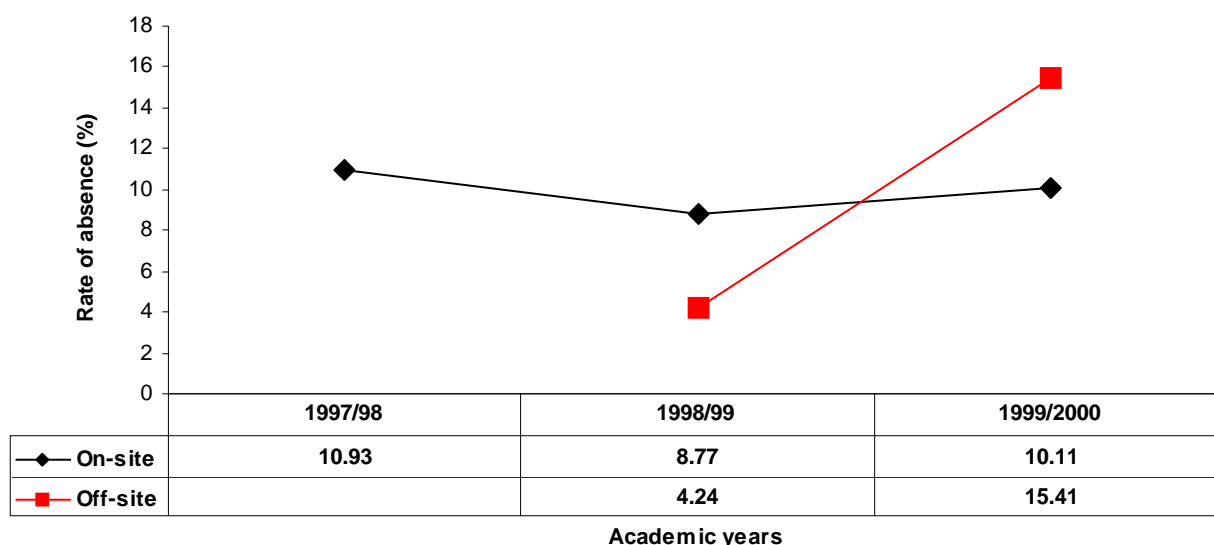
**FIGURE 5.4: AUTHORISED ABSENCE RATES, 1997/98 TO 1999/2000**



**FIGURE 5.5: TRENDS IN YEAR COHORT AUTHORISED ABSENCE RATES**



**FIGURE 5.6: AUTHORISED ABSENCE RATES - ON AND OFF SITE**



519 Key points from these three figures are as follows:-

- levels of authorised absence are similar between project and comparator groups throughout the three years;
- the levels of such absence for both groups is similar to that for year cohorts. Against a minor reduction in the year cohort data over time, this implies a “background level” of between 10 and 12%;
- the variation between on-site and off-site authorised absence for the project group follows a very similar pattern to that for unauthorised absence, but at a higher overall rate.

520 Looking at the project group data across both authorised and unauthorised absences, there does not appear to be any significant change for the better in average absence rates. The rates of unauthorised absence have increased across the three years, with that for off-site increasing more than threefold between the first and second years of the projects. Against a small downward trend in authorised absence rates across the three years, a similar threefold increase is evident in the rate of authorised absence from off-site provision.

521 It must be recognised that these conclusions can only be based on the data available. In this case, that is the data that covers the necessary categories across the three years. As with many other aspects of the data in this report, this results in a considerably smaller sample than would ideally be the case.

**Qualitative material on both authorised and unauthorised absences**

522 Turning to the material on absences from individual projects, the following provides a selection of detailed comments:-

- Brighton SF described a 5% increase in attendance for those with an otherwise poor attendance record;

- in Stoke-on-Trent SF, one school was able to demonstrate a 2% better attendance rate for those taking part in their link programme, compared with the Year 10 cohort;
- Swindon SF reported that the average attendance for the project group was 84%, compared with a similar group of non-project students whose attendance was 81%;
- in the first year of the Salford and Trafford EAZ, one of the schools involved tracked each student through and showed an average attendance of the project group of 75% compared to the average for the whole cohort of 73%;
- attendance rates dropped in one school from the Leicester ARP group by an average of 5% over the two years but, in the comparator group, that figure was 7%. However, girls in the project group improved their attendance figures;
- in the Manchester LEA ARP, the project group's average non-authorized absence dropped from 7% in year one to 2% in year two. However, the comparator group improved still more – from 10% to 2%.

523 These differences are marginal – but usually on the right side. The schools were also keen to point out that, for some individual students, the new opportunities provided appeared to make a highly significant difference to the decline in attendance that, sadly, would otherwise have been expected for those individuals in Year 10.

524 Leicester ARP noted that poor attendance, when it began to set in, was 'contagious' in those situations where students were grouped together. Those students who were placed on an individual basis were steadier in their individual attendance patterns.

525 Other points of interest raised in the project reports included the following:-

- the authorised/non-authorized distinction can be deceptive because parents sometimes condone authorised absence (eg. with 'sick notes' which have no justification);
- some projects noticed a surge of improvement in Year 10, only for this to fall back again in Year 11. This appeared to be especially the case where there was a change of activity in the second year. However, other projects noticed the opposite effect. In Wakefield ARP for example, all attendance data (authorised and non-authorized, on-site and off-site) for the project group improved considerably in Year 11 compared to Year 10;
- some projects reported comparator groups doing better than project groups on attendance, in absolute terms. However, they pointed out that their project students often began from a worse Year 9 start point (thereby raising further questions over the validity of the comparator group, of course).

526 As with other measures of progress towards achieving the national objectives, what comes through very strongly from ARPs is the *highly differentiated* impact of projects on attendance (and other measures) from one student to another. Thus, Warwickshire point out:-

*"What emerges is a very variable picture: some students' attendance is so bad that they virtually disappear from school; others have good attendance but poor behaviour, and others show marked improvement or marked deterioration in attendance in the second year of their Key Stage 4 education. Despite all these variables, it is,*

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*however, possible to detect **more** improvement in attendance in the project students compared with the comparator group.”*

- 527 Rochdale and Leeds ARPs, among several others, made the point that excessive absence from just one or two students can seriously affect the average rate of absence for the whole project (or comparator) group. Similarly, in York ARP – where the number of ‘off-site’ sessions were few (typically between 7 and 9 per student in the first year) - absence from just a couple of sessions could provide a misleading picture (ie. translating to absence rates in the range 22% to 29%).
- 528 Leeds ARP reported higher absence rates off-site than on-site, and indicated that this was possibly because going off-site gave those with a predilection to truant greater opportunities to do so. On the other hand (and in keeping with the evidence above about highly differentiated impacts), as many as one third of their students had no unauthorised absence at all during the first year of the project.
- 529 Such was the dramatic reversal of previous attendance patterns in Stockport within their SF project that all 13 young people opted to continue their placements during the summer holidays! These included students who, previously, were virtually perpetual absentees from school.
- 530 There were similar ‘good news’ stories from the Manchester LEA ARP where several members of the project, who were working on a planned dance event but needed extra practice, enthusiastically attended extra sessions at the weekend, at half term and during the Easter holidays. Similarly, in Coventry ARP, several students gave a great deal of their time in order to make sure that the project’s drama production was ready in time for the planned performance.

### ***Encouragement for good attendance***

- 531 Several projects gave a particular priority to improving attendance. For example, in the Portsmouth ARP, poor attendance (in some cases appallingly so) was the main criterion for selecting the project group. A number of approaches were tried, including group work support (with group meetings being arranged at various venues and times). These proved largely unsuccessful. The only approach that really seemed to have an impact was intense one-to-one support, often involving staff with a youth work background. Sometimes this uncovered very serious family problems – with consequent Social Services involvement in several cases.
- 532 Once a degree of improved attendance at the training places had been established, peer group/friendship group support seemed to help maintain momentum. This stands in some contrast to the Leicester experience described above; the explanation may be that in Portsmouth the students concerned were highly anxious and prone to instability rather than poorly behaved – so that group dynamics could be a positive factor. Twice a day faxes of attendance sheets between the FE College and the school also, no doubt, played a helpful part!
- 533 The potential for a positive outcome from a particular group dynamic was exemplified in an interesting way by one school in the Manchester LEA ARP. Here a project group which was originally all female displayed some very challenging behaviour in year one. In year two the mood changed somewhat for the better when some girls left, with one of the replacements being a boy with a previously very poor record of attendance and several changes of school – a pattern which was reversed significantly by his enthusiastic involvement with the project.

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- 534 A controversial but successful device to improve attendance was used by the training provider which organised and supported the work placement arrangements in the Tower Hamlets ARP. Here, to counter a trend towards placement breakdown and poor attendance, an incentive scheme was introduced which rewarded good attendance and punctuality with a gift voucher of the student's choice to the value of £20 per month.
- 535 The final report of this project confirmed that:-  
*"...clients improved their punctuality and their attendance at planned sessions; they were more likely to phone in when they were sick or unable to be present. All participating clients praised the idea of the voucher scheme. Many stated that this was the main reason they had good attendance."*
- 536 Warwickshire ARP adopted a similar approach:-  
*"A system was initiated of rewarding students with good attendance and punctuality with £10 tokens; well over 10 of these have been awarded."*
- 537 As with the 'get your work done and go home early' incentive mentioned in Chapter III, this is an approach which will be found controversial in some quarters. It also raises a number of difficult questions (eg. what about those good attenders who are not in the project group?). Nevertheless, it does appear to have an impact among the target groups and will be worth further investigation.
- 538 An interesting contrast with mainstream students was identified in the Solihull ARP where project students were not allowed the usual KS4 study leave in the build up to GCSEs. The sense of being different but special seemed to have a beneficial effect:-  
*".....the fact that these students attended SNIP [Solihull North Inclusion Project] while their friends were at home on study leave clearly demonstrated a sense of commitment and responsibility that was not evident previously amongst this particular group."*

## **NON-COMPLETERS**

### ***Quantitative data***

- 539 As discussed in Section III of the Technical Annex, we sought to collect information on those members of the project groups that permanently left the group before receiving all the possible enhancements, but after the end of February 1999<sup>6</sup>. We refer to such students as 'non-completers'.
- 540 For all non-completers, we requested project managers to supply us with a "reason for leaving", by reference to a set of pre-defined codes. There were four main codes, plus some sub-codes, as follows:-
- Code 1: left project in "a positive spirit" in order to re-engage with mainstream school activity. (There were 4 sub-codes for this, reflecting different influencers behind the decision – see below);
  - Code 2: left project in a "negative spirit" (plus two sub-codes – see below);

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<sup>6</sup> The reasons for this choice of date are explained in paragraph 313 of the Technical Annex.

- Code 3: left due to significant personal, family or other non-project-related reasons;
- Code 4: don't know or other reason (to be specified).

541 We have been advised of a total of 218 non-completers (25% of those who started the projects); however, of these, no code was supplied for 78 students. The following data is, therefore, based on the information supplied for 140 students only.

542 For those 140 students, neither code 3 nor 4 was given as the reason for leaving for any student. The proportion of students to whom the other codes applied is shown in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Reasons given for non-completion**

|    |  | <b>% of non-completers</b> |
|----|--|----------------------------|
| 1. | Left in "a positive spirit" to re-engage with school:-   |                            |
|    | A: entirely the student's decision   | 30%                        |
|    | B: decision influenced mainly by project staff   | 8%                         |
|    | C: decision influenced principally by other teachers (ie. from outside of the project team)          | 4%                         |
|    | D: decision influenced principally by other adults (eg. parent, mentor, employer, training provider) | 7%                         |
|    |  | -----<br>49%               |
| 2. | Left in "a negative spirit":-  |                            |
|    | A: directed to leave, following unacceptable behaviour, poor attendance, etc.                        | 14%                        |
|    | B: student opted out, or did not turn up any more, but not directed to leave                         | 37%                        |
|    |  | -----<br>51%               |

543 As can be seen from the previous table, the total non-completers were split equally between those that left in "a positive spirit" and those that left in "a negative spirit". Where students left in a positive spirit, this was usually entirely the student's own decision (over 60% of such non-completers); where students left in a negative spirit, this was usually as a result of the student opting out (over 70% of such non-completers). Non-completion was thus primarily the decision of the individual students in two-thirds of all instances.

544 The equal split (of all non-completers) between positive and negative reasons masks contrasting pictures at the individual projects. For example, where codes were supplied:-

- in the Derbyshire and Manchester LEA projects, 100% and 78% respectively of non-completers left in a positive spirit;
- conversely, in the Leicester, Manchester TEC, Sheffield, Wigan and York projects, respectively 100%, 63%, 91%, 100% and 100% of non-completers left in a negative spirit;
- in Dudley, Islington, Portsmouth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Warwickshire, there was a near 50:50 split in the reasons for leaving.



545 As Table 5.2 indicates, around a third of non-completers either left in a positive spirit as a result primarily of the influence of a third party (19% of all non-completers), or left in a negative spirit having been directed to leave (14% of all non-completers). Projects where there were large variations from these figures (at the project level) were as follows:-

- Dudley (2-year project): 64% of all non-completers left in a positive spirit influenced by project staff, 36% were directed to leave;
- Islington: 43% left positively under the influence of others, 43% were directed to leave;
- Southwark: 50% left positively under the influence of others;
- Warwickshire: 3% were directed to leave;
- Wigan: 40% were directed to leave.

546 From the above data, it is possible to draw the following general conclusions:-

- overall, 25% of starters were identified as non-completers;
- overall, the majority of non-completers left as a result of their own decision, although there were some projects where this was not the case;
- overall, the reasons for leaving were split equally between positive and negative reasons, although again there were some projects where this was clearly not the case.

547 The results of our main data analysis are set out in Chapter IX. However, we summarise briefly here the data that relates specifically to non-completers.

548 In addition to the usual management information data for each non-completer – which naturally tends to be less comprehensive than that available for completers – we also have data on the reason for leaving (as discussed above) and, by reference to the leaving date, data on the length of stay on the project. Because this latter data cannot be relied upon to be wholly accurate, we have categorised this length of stay into various groupings (see Table 5.3 overleaf). The available data we have – for 157 project group non-completers – indicates that nearly 70% left the projects by the end of the first year, with most of these occurring towards the end of the year.

**Table 5.3: Length of stay on the project for non-completers**

| <b>Duration</b> | <b>% of non-completers</b> |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 1 to 3 months   | 8%                         |
| 4 to 6 months   | 11%                        |
| 7 to 12 months  | 49%                        |
| 13 to 18 months | 29%                        |
| 18+ months      | 3%                         |

Note: Percentages are based on valid data (157 cases).

549 Table 5.4 below provides the average data for non-completers on a number of items (again, this data is based only on that available, and relates only to project group students). We also show the comparable data for project group completers, who represent the main sample for our data analysis in Chapter IX.

**Table 5.4: Management information for non-completers versus completers**

| <b>Data item<br/>(average unless stated<sup>1</sup>)</b>       | <b>Non-completers</b> | <b>Completers</b>  |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| KS3 results  | 3.54                  | 3.74               |
| KS4 points score   | 7.84                  | 20.76 <sup>2</sup> |
| 'Actual' less 'expected' KS4 points score                      | -12.4                 | -3.44              |
| Value added in rates of unauthorised absence (see note below): |                       |                    |
| - Year 9 to Year 10  | 6.29                  | 2.85               |
| - Year 10 to Year 11   | -2.17                 | +3.68              |
| - Year 9 to Year 11  | 4.61                  | 5.69               |
| Post-16 destinations – % entering:                             |                       |                    |
| - full time education  | 28%                   | 43%                |
| - Government-supported training                                | 9%                    | 18%                |
| - Employment   | 17%                   | 18%                |
| - other  | 21%                   | 11%                |
| - not settled  | 25%                   | 10%                |

- Notes 1. Further details on the calculation of these measures are set out in the Technical Annex.  
 2. The average KS4 points score for completers shown here is calculated from data from the 289 students for whom both questionnaires (baseline and follow up) are held. A different average is shown in Table 6.2 where the calculation uses all 460 students for whom KS4 data is held.

550 As can be seen from the above, the averages for virtually all the above items tend to be worse for non-completers than completers. The only exception relates to the value added on unauthorised absence rates between Years 9 and 10.

551 We have also tested the data listed in the previous table for correlation<sup>7</sup> with both the reason for leaving and the length of stay. The latter (length of stay) is not significantly correlated with any of the variables; this suggests that the length of stay on the project has no significant impact on the outcomes achieved.

552 However, the reason for leaving code (for which we have had to use just the main leaving code [paragraph 540 above], ignoring the sub-codes) is correlated with a number of the outcomes:-

- there are negative correlations with the actual KS4 results achieved and the two measures used for value added at KS4 (described further in Chapter IX). This means that those who left in a positive spirit – and had the lower codes – were likely to achieve better KS4 results and achieve more added value at KS4;
- there are positive correlations with the post-16 destinations data. The relative codings for the variables here mean that those who left the projects in a

<sup>7</sup> Further details of this test are given in Chapter IX and the Technical Annex.

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positive spirit were more likely to enter full time education or Government-supported training than other destinations or be not settled.

- 553 From the above, it therefore appears that projects can make a difference for those students who do not complete the project, as long as the reason for non-completion is a positive one. Where this is the case, it appears that projects can help to motivate (or re-motivate) students, and engage them in the importance of the learning process, such that they achieve positive outcomes at KS4 and move on to 'positive' post-16 destinations.

### ***Qualitative material***

- 554 The quantitative data masks many individual human stories. In our field visits, project managers, teachers and other staff involved were often keen to explain the various particular circumstances that had combined to persuade an individual not to complete the project.
- 555 Some of these stories were sad - occasionally tragic - examples of highly disturbed family life and/or serious incidents involving the youth justice system, for example. Others were more mundane and included moving house or just a straightforward return to the mainstream school curriculum because the opportunities offered by the project failed to make a positive impact. Sometimes the timetable changes and other logistical complications required by the project were felt by the students involved to be 'not worth the bother'.
- 556 In several cases it seems that the students decided, for largely positive reasons, that they preferred to return to a full programme of GCSE work; this supports the data on non-completers in Table 5.2. Such decisions seemed to be taken especially when there was a natural break or proposed change of activity in the ARP programme (eg. at the end of Year 10). In one such case, as many as 11 out of the 17 ARP students made this switch back into full-time study for GCSEs. Similarly, Barnsley ARP noted that a significant change in the programme, or a gap between planned events, seemed to be the reason why students stopped attending (see also the section above on unauthorised absence).
- 557 However, we were also told of examples where subject teachers and/or year tutors allegedly put considerable pressure on students to return in Year 11 to the full mainstream timetable; this was said to be in order to secure better GCSE scores for the school than might otherwise have been the case. We have some concerns about these circumstances, which appear to have more to do with 'league table points' and internal school targets, than a considered view of what might be best for the young people concerned. Subjectively, our impression is that this may have been a more frequent scenario than the 4% of instances reported in Table 5.2 would suggest.
- 558 Southwark ARP investigated in some detail the reasons for their students completing or not completing their particular project programme. These reasons were as follows:-

*"Factors causing students to continue:-*

- *the FE College environment*
- *sports provision*
- *practical aspects of Electronics*
- *chance of accreditation*
- *personal determination;*

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*“Factors causing students **not** to complete:-*

- *difficulties in meeting course-work deadlines*
- *clashes with school timetable*
- *a belief that dropping out was always an option*
- *issues around travel*
- *influence of some other teachers.”*

559 In Leeds ARP, the reasons given in the final report for a loss rate of 50% over the course of the project were:-

*“moving to other schools, pregnancy, bullying in the project group, and as part of a wider pattern of irregular attendance.”*

560 At the Manchester TEC ARP, the local evaluators investigated the reasons for students dropping out of the MPower scheme in some detail. The reasons given by students were:-

- bored - 18%
- distance - 21%
- schoolwork - 21%
- staff - 15%
- didn't like it - 10%
- illness - 5%
- others - 10%

561 However – and importantly – the local evaluators went on to say:-

*“As with so much data in this particular field of enquiry, there is a need to exercise caution when interpreting these figures. In particular, caution must be exercised in terms of the ‘generalisability’ of the data. This might best be explained as follows: for every student that said that travelling to work was a problem; missing too much work was a problem; not being treated fairly at work was a problem; and being given too many boring tasks, there were similar students with the same experiences that stayed on the programme, gained NVQs and wanted to continue with their provider.”*

562 Interestingly, the local evaluation of MPower also reported that a large proportion of those students who dropped out in year one felt that the original decision to join MPower had been ‘strongly guided’ by their teachers.

563 Often, the reasons for non-completion seemed to be associated most regularly with the very circumstances that prompted their selection for the project in the first case. Warwickshire ARP put it like this:-

*“The high drop-out rate for the whole group has been attributed by school co-ordinators as being a consequence of the original criteria (previous poor attendance; underachievement; poor motivation and behaviour). The chronically poor attenders found it difficult to mend their ways and some of those with severe behavioural problems had such difficult home circumstances that, even though the students wanted to do well in the project, other priorities in their lives dominated.”*

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## BEHAVIOUR

564 This section considers progress against the objective for improved behaviour. Exclusions are discussed first, followed by comment on other behaviour sanctions applied across the participating schools.

### **Exclusions**

#### Quantitative data

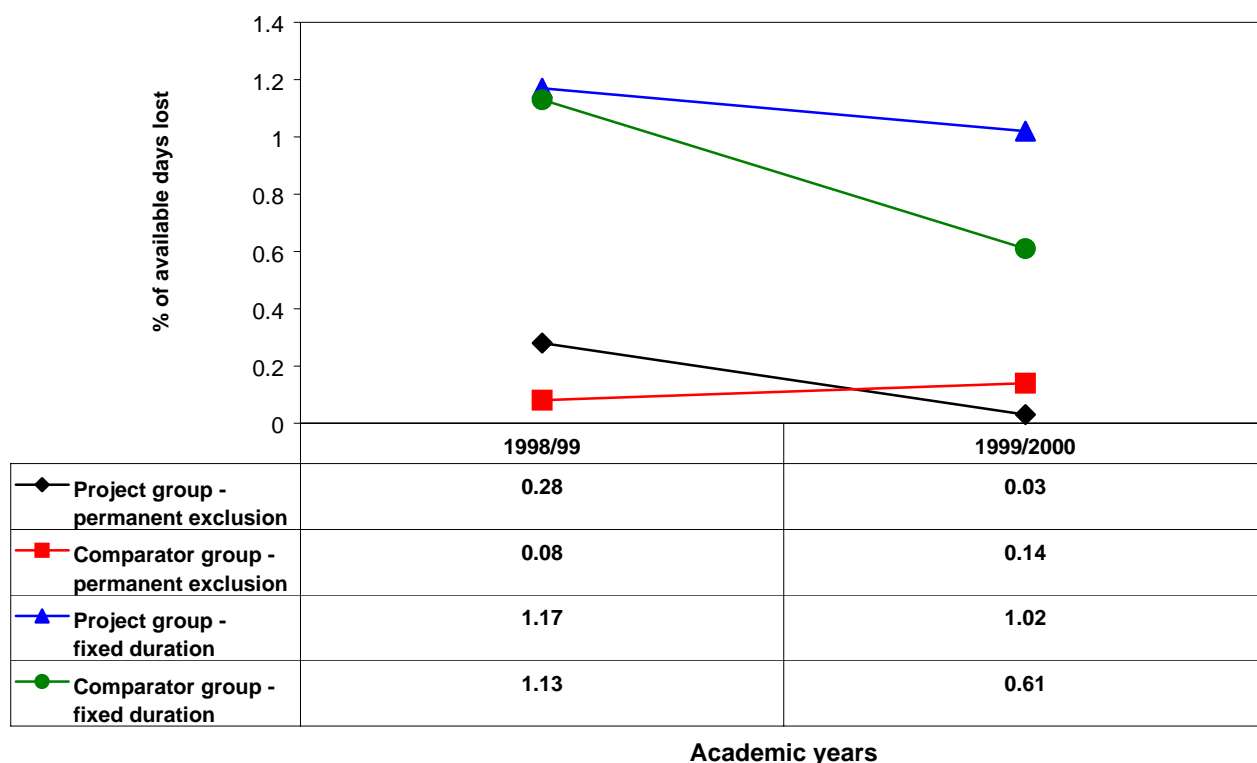
565 Projects were asked to supply data – in the form of percentage of available days lost – on the level of permanent or fixed duration exclusions. This data was only requested in respect of individual students in the project and comparator groups, during the two years of projects; year cohort data and historical data was not required.

566 Before presenting the available data, the following points should be noted:-

- data was requested separately on the proportion of days lost as a result of permanent exclusions and as a result of fixed duration exclusions;
- as with data on attendance, several schools were unable to supply either any data at all (ie. the requested data was apparently not available) or data in the requested format. The volume of available data is therefore relatively low for this item;
- a number of schools and/or projects commented – validly in our view – that the resulting data can be distorted by the exclusion of just one or two students, especially in a project group comprising only a few students. Whilst this is obviously true at the level of an individual project, any such distortion is likely to be reduced when considering all project (or comparator) group students in aggregate.

567 Figure 5.7 presents the available data, with separate lines for permanent and fixed duration exclusions for the project and comparator groups. The table following the graph summarises the underlying data represented here.

**FIGURE 5.7: PROPORTION OF DAYS LOST THROUGH EXCLUSIONS**



**Underlying data for Figure 5.7**

|   | 1998/99 | 1999/2000 |
|---|---------|-----------|
| <b><u>Project group – permanent exclusion</u></b>         |         |           |
| - number of valid entries                                 | 193     | 193       |
| - maximum   | 13.0%   | 1.6%      |
| - minimum   | 0.0%    | 0.0%      |
| <b><u>Comparator group – permanent exclusion</u></b>      |         |           |
| - number of valid entries                                 | 182     | 182       |
| - maximum   | 8.9%    | 25.0%     |
| - minimum   | 0.0%    | 0.0%      |
| <b><u>Project group – fixed duration exclusion</u></b>    |         |           |
| - number of valid entries                                 | 198     | 198       |
| - maximum   | 34.0%   | 19.7%     |
| - minimum   | 0.0%    | 0.0%      |
| <b><u>Comparator group – fixed duration exclusion</u></b> |         |           |
| - number of valid entries                                 | 176     | 176       |
| - maximum   | 41.0%   | 17.0%     |
| - minimum   | 0.0%    | 0.0%      |

- Notes: 1. Number of valid entries refers to number of students.  
 2. Maximum and minimum are values for individual students.

- 
- 568 The available data indicates a decline in fixed duration exclusions over the two years for both groups (and especially for the comparator group), with a decrease in permanent exclusions for the project group but an increase for the comparator group. The total percentage of days lost through either form of exclusion has decreased for both groups – from 1.45% to 1.05% for the project group, and from 1.21% to 0.75% for the comparator group.
- 569 Of course, the above data cannot on its own identify whether the change in rates between the different forms of exclusion are as a result of a change in student behaviour (leading, for example, to more permanent exclusions amongst the comparator group), or a change in policy – or application of that policy – by individual schools. Nevertheless, the downward trend in the rates for the project group – especially in permanent exclusions – seems encouraging.

#### Qualitative material

- 570 As with unauthorised absence, many teachers saw the positive impact of their programmes on exclusion in terms of what, in their judgement, 'might otherwise have been the case'. This can only be inferred from the quantitative data, of course.
- 571 There was relatively little material on behaviour sanctions in the project reports. However, the Leeds ARP reported one permanent exclusion from the project group during the project, compared to six in the comparator group. In West Lancashire (part of the Lancashire ARP), there were small increases (about 15%) of fixed duration exclusions among the project group, but this was against a backcloth of significant increases in permanent exclusions among the comparator group.
- 572 Leeds SF reported that the total number of days of fixed term exclusions for their 25 Year 11 students was 129, compared with 174 for that same group of students in Year 10; the Leeds SF model featured personally supported, one day a week placements at the local FE College
- 573 In the Southwark ARP, there were no Year 10 exclusions in the project group at all, compared with a total of 28 days lost in the comparator group. Similarly, in Year 11, twice as many days were lost through exclusions in the comparator group, compared to the project group (with a similar pattern, in both years, for other disciplinary sanctions.)

#### **Other behaviour sanctions**

- 574 Few projects had any detailed findings to report on the rise or effectiveness of orthodox school sanctions. This seemed to be because:-
- full records were not available over the whole of the project period;
  - different schools used different systems;
  - sanctions were applied in different ways by different teachers in the same school;
  - schools were often in the process of changing their sanction arrangements.
- 575 Swindon SF was one of a small number of exceptions. This project reported that there had been a total of 5 detentions for their project group of 14 students in Year 11, whereas a similar group of students in the same year group had accumulated a total of 17 detentions.

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576 An even more dramatic improvement was reported by Wakefield ARP. In that project there were a total of 5 days fixed term exclusions (1 student) in Year 11 compared with 116 days (9 students) in Year 10.

### ***Encouragement for good behaviour***

577 Reading across all the final ARP and other reports, the dominant conclusion is that there is no quick or instant way to 'fix' poor behaviour. The only answer appears to be constant support and constant vigilance - extended over a considerable period.

578 Solihull ARP described their approach as follows:-

*"Effort grades are not formally issued to students. Instead we operated a system of immediate feedback and daily review. The daily review is a written record of what the student has performed that day. The student's monitoring file is available to them at any time. They are free to add their own comments and observations to the file and in fact are actively encouraged to do so. The files have been enormously useful when feeding back to parents on their child's progress."*

579 In Islington, where the ARP faced the same kind of challenge from some very difficult students, the training provider put an enormous emphasis on thorough induction of the students, including a residential week. This was captured in a formal contract between the students (as a group) and the staff of the project. This training provider had considerable experience, as a Prince's Trust provider, of related work with 16-25 year olds and drew heavily on what they call the 3 R's.

580 These are:-

- *"RELATE to the individuals;*
- *RAPPORT with the group;*
- *RESPECT of boundaries - to help build up trust and co-operation."*

This approach had undoubted and significant success with *some* students but it has to be acknowledged that more than half, for one reason or another, did not complete the whole project.

581 We were informed that, in some projects, schools used participation in the ARP opportunity as an internal sanction (ie. "you will not be able to attend the project again unless your behaviour in school improves"). This tended to be used by subject teachers outside of the project and betrayed a less than coherent policy towards participation that needed to be challenged by senior managers (see Chapter VII).

## **SUMMARY**

582 Chapters V and VI are able to draw on both quantitative and qualitative data in order to assess student progress. In general terms, the management information shows a mixed picture in terms of impact on the project and comparator groups and in comparisons with the full year cohorts. However, many teachers argued convincingly that the projects' main achievement was in 'retaining' these students at all. In this interpretation, even minor *decreases* in attendance or *increases* in behaviour sanctions can be seen in a cautiously positive light. The qualitative material also shows major differences in impact across students even in the same project, but has several examples of major progress.



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- 583 The data on both attendance and behaviour is hugely complex and does not show a single consistent pattern. The use of incentives (e.g. cash or permission to leave early) seems to have a positive effect, although it was only used in a minority of projects and is not without controversy. The two projects which featured theatre, music and dance seemed especially effective in generating enthusiasm, translated into optional attendance during school holidays.
- 584 The majority of students who opted out during the two years did so as a result of their own decision, whether positively (e.g. to return to the mainstream curriculum) or negatively. There was, however, evidence of pressure from some teachers for students to resume GCSE studies, giving rise to mixed messages as to whether work-related learning was a valid alternative in its own right or a “treatment” for those unable or unwilling to engage effectively in a more traditional KS4 environment.

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## VI: IMPACT ON STUDENTS' ATTAINMENT

### INTRODUCTION

- 601 The final national objective was “to raise attainment”. In contrast with the discussion in Chapter IV on skills and knowledge, this chapter focuses primarily on accredited attainments.
- 602 We also add a section on destinations post-16. Whilst there was no specific national objective on improved destinations, most projects saw it as a key indicator; indeed, some projects featured progression at post-16 among their local objectives. It seemed most logical to comment on it in a context of achievement at KS4.
- 603 This chapter is therefore set out as follows:-
- overall KS4 results;
  - GNVQs and NVQs;
  - Key Skills;
  - other certificated outcomes;
  - zero attainment;
  - distance travelled;
  - post-16 destinations.

### OVERALL KS4 RESULTS

#### *Quantitative data*

- 604 Student achievement at the KS4 exams is, of course, a nationally important measure of student attainment. This first section examines the available data on KS4 results.
- 605 Two points are noted from the outset:-
- KS4 results have consistently been recorded on our database using Average total Point Scores (APS) – these are the average of the total KS4 points achieved by each student in the relevant group (all project group students, for example). The points applied were those set out in the DfEE Consultation Paper on Performance Tables, issued March 1998. Projects and schools were asked to apply these point scores to all KS4 results, whether those results occurred before or after March 1998;
  - as with other data aspects, several schools had difficulty supplying the KS4 data in the requested format. This was usually due to a reported lack of resource to convert KS4 grades into points and thus APS. For these schools, we have added school-level data from published sources, so as to maximise the available data.

606 In order to set the KS4 results in context, we first summarise the KS4 results of school year cohorts; this provides the background trend against which the results achieved by the project and comparator groups can be considered.

607 Table 6.1 summarises the KS4 results at the end of each of the four academic years 1996/97 to 1999/2000; the first two of these represent the two years prior to the start of the ARPs. As with other school data, the overall average here is the arithmetical mean of the available data for individual schools; this is not weighted according to the number of students in each school.

**Table 6.1: Average point scores at KS4 for full year cohorts (trend data)**

|                         | Data for academic years |                    |                    |                    |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                         | 1996/97                 | 1997/98            | 1998/99            | 1999/2000          |
| APS                     | 27.08                   | 27.95              | 27.81              | 27.60              |
| Maximum APS             | 38.00                   | 39.34              | 35.44              | 38.50              |
| Minimum APS             | 14.30                   | 15.88 <sup>3</sup> | 16.62 <sup>3</sup> | 15.27 <sup>3</sup> |
| Number of valid entries | 91                      | 95                 | 103                | 92                 |

Notes: 1. Maximum and minimum relate to individual project averages.  
 2. Number of valid entries relates to number of schools supplying data.  
 3. Minimum APS figures in the three years from 1997/98 to 1999/2000 ignore one project with consistently low results from a PRU.

608 Against this background, the APS in summer 2000 of the students in the project and comparator groups are shown below.

**Table 6.2: Average point scores at KS4 of project and comparator groups (summer 2000)**

|                         | Project group | Comparator group |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| APS                     | 15.56         | 18.86            |
| Maximum APS             | 53.05         | 40.79            |
| Minimum APS             | 1.64          | 1.28             |
| Number of valid entries | 460           | 489              |

Notes: 1. Number of valid entries refers to number of students.  
 2. Maximum and minimum refer to individual project averages.  
 3. Minimum APS figure for the project group excludes a figure of 0.0 for a project involving just one PRU.

609 Within the project group results, we note that the two highest project group average figures were obtained at York and Rochdale, the two projects following subject-specific enhancements (and see also the next section). The average APS at these projects were respectively 53.05 and 41.16; the next highest figure was 28.62 (Manchester LEA project).

610 In view of the probable starting point of most of the project group students, it is perhaps not surprising that the absolute APS of the project group is less than that of the comparator group – and that both are below the figure for year cohorts as a whole. Subsequent sections of this chapter will discuss other achievements of both groups, and consider the ‘distance travelled’ by the two groups of students.

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## Qualitative material

611 Several ARPs analysed their students' KS4 results with some care. York ARP, for example, noted that the project groups in both their schools did considerably better in their GCSE results than their comparator groups – but that the boys in both groups did better than the girls in one school, while the reverse was true in the other school. One of the York schools also pointed out that their project students did better than their comparator students in relation to the targets which the school had originally set for individual students.

612 Rochdale ARP was able to demonstrate some impressive gains for their set of Food Technology GCSE students from their link to the NVQ programme at the local FE College. In the previous four years, the percentage A\* to C GCSE grades achieved in Food Technology had ranged from 14% to 20% – one of the lowest performing areas in the school. In 2000, 68% of the project group achieved a grade A\* to C in the subject, thereby moving Food Technology to the third best subject area in the school.

613 The comparator group here was another set of students with a very similar KS3 profile in a parallel technology subject. Local analysis was summarised as follows:-

*“The average points score for the project group in Food Technology was 5.0 whereas the average points score for the comparator group in their technology subject was 4.4 – almost two thirds of a grade lower. When the points scores for technology are compared to the average for all subjects except technology, the project group scored on average half a grade better in Food Technology than the average of their other subjects, whereas the comparator group scored a quarter of a grade less in their technology subject than the average of their other subjects.”*

In addition, all the Rochdale Food Technology students each gained at least 3 NVQ Units and a credit in the Food Hygiene Certificate (see also the comments on ‘distance travelled’ below).

614 Warwickshire ARP commented that:-

- many of their project students started from a considerably lower KS3 score than those in the comparator group;
- the project did not have a significant impact on their students' academic attainment. The major impact was to give them work skills and a much more mature attitude.

615 This last point was echoed by several other ARPs, including Southwark and Leicester. The latter argued strongly that, given that most of their students were highly disenchanted with ‘academic’ work, the main purpose of the project was to find new ways to encourage them in a much more vocational context.

616 The external evaluator to the Wigan ARP argued:-

*“From the evidence of the young people and their parents it is possible to adduce that without this project these young people would have no attainment at all at 16+. The evidence strongly suggests that these students would not have continued to attend school for a significant amount of time and would not be in a position to attempt GCSE and may not have been entered for any subjects.”*

- 617 One of the schools in the Salford and Trafford EAZ project reported that they moved from bottom of the local LEA 'added value' league table for KS4 results in 1998 to third from top in 1999. They attributed this partly to the main EAZ programme – but particularly to the work-related component. [At KS3, the same school reported a rise in the average level of achievement of 3.9 for Technology in 1998 to an average level of 5.2 in 2000. They attribute that to the whole school approach to work-related learning made possible by the EAZ and especially to the 'Scantec' programme for IT and technology – see paragraph 329.]
- 618 Given the doubt referred to above by Warwickshire about whether some project and comparator groups really started from the same point, what was really needed for this analysis was a 'distance travelled' from KS3 to KS4 comparison analysis. We return to this point later in this chapter.

## GNVQS AND NVQS

### *Quantitative data*

- 619 Schools and projects were requested to supply data on the number of part GNVQs (ie. those that do not count towards the APS in KS4 results) and NVQs (whole or part) obtained by students. The available data on this is summarised here.
- 620 The data requested was as follows:-
- for year cohort data, the number of students in the cohort who achieved any such qualifications (ie. the whole or part awards defined in paragraph 619 above);
  - for students in project or comparator groups, the number of qualifications achieved by each student, with units towards NVQs or GNVQs recorded as appropriate decimal fractions.
- 621 The background data for school year cohorts is summarised in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3: GNVQ/NVQ achievements – year cohorts**

|                                    | Academic years |         |         |           |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|-----------|
|                                    | 1996/97        | 1997/98 | 1998/99 | 1999/2000 |
| <b>GNVQs</b>                       |                |         |         |           |
| - number of students obtaining     | 0              | 146     | 446     | 226       |
| - number of schools providing data | 73             | 73      | 59      | 61        |
| <b>NVQs</b>                        |                |         |         |           |
| - number of students obtaining     | 9              | 22      | 3       | 60        |
| - number of schools providing data | 74             | 74      | 57      | 60        |

- 622 In practice, of course, the majority of schools supplied data with nil returns, because no students at the school followed, say, an NVQ course. For example, in 1999/2000, the 60 students that achieved some NVQ award attended just 13 of the schools; the other 47 schools supplying data submitted nil returns.
- 623 Against this background, the achievement of GNVQs and NVQs by the project and comparator groups at summer 2000 is shown in Table 6.4.

**Table 6.4: GNVQ/NVQ achievements – project and comparator groups**

|  | Project group | Comparator group |
|--|---------------|------------------|
| <b>GNVQs</b>                                 |               |                  |
| - number of students for whom data held      | 361           | 484              |
| - number of awards achieved among this group | 113           | 8                |
| <b>NVQs</b>                                  |               |                  |
| - number of students for whom data held      | 397           | 455              |
| - number of awards achieved among this group | 41.1          | 0                |

624 Again, the data for the project group hides a large number of nil returns. For example, the GNVQ units were achieved in just 2 of the 21 projects, and the NVQ units/awards in 5 projects only.

### ***Qualitative material***

625 Many ARPs and SFs reported success by students in gaining units from G/NVQ courses. These were typically organised on a link arrangement with local FE Colleges. These successes ranged from one or two NVQ Units at Level 1 to, for example, 12 students in the Wrekin SF project gaining 3 Units at Level 2. The principal determinant here was often simply the amount of time allocated to NVQ work.

626 Warwickshire ARP made the interesting observation that, in their project, boys gained significantly more - and better – NVQ accreditation than girls.

627 It is not easy to draw many general conclusions from the overall picture of vocational accreditation because the circumstances varied enormously from project to project. Many, for example, deliberately focused on short-term ‘taster’ experiences for their students. Also, in most cases, these opportunities had not been offered to previous year groups and/or were not available to the comparator groups. However, many of the reports refer to teachers noticing perceived gains in self-esteem by the project students involved, as well as greater insight into future training routes.

628 However, some projects did experience particular problems with the management and organisation of NVQ opportunities in relation to KS4 students. These are discussed in Chapter VIII.

## **KEY SKILLS**

### ***Quantitative data***

629 Data available on Key Skills is similar to that on GNVQ/NVQs (see previous section). School level data recorded the number of students achieving one or more Key Skill(s) (from the three then available within schools, namely IT; Working with Others; and Improving own Learning and Performance). Data for individual students in the project or comparator group recorded the number of Key Skills obtained by each student. Projects were also asked to supply supplementary information on the achievements (ie. which Key Skill(s) specifically, or what level obtained).

- 
- 630 At the year cohort level, no Key Skills were reported by any schools for 1996/97 or 1997/98. In subsequent years:-
- in 1998/99, 143 students from just 3 schools were recorded as achieving one or more Key Skill(s), with 57 schools supplying data;
  - in 1999/2000, 57 students from 8 schools achieved one or more Key Skill(s), with 57 schools supplying data.
- 631 In the project group at summer 2000, 67 Key Skill awards were achieved by students, from just 5 projects. Data returns for 376 students were obtained on this item. Just 4 awards were obtained by comparator group students – in 1 project – with data returns for 454 students received.
- 632 The supplementary details supplied provide further information on the project group achievements. For example:-
- in Coventry, 22 students achieved Working with Others;
  - in Wigan, 6 students each achieved two Key Skills at Level 1;
  - in Warwickshire, 13 students each achieved Working with Others and Improving Own Learning and Performance.

### ***Qualitative material***

- 633 As with G/NVQ Units, some projects reported the detail of accumulated Key Skill qualifications by their students in their local reports.
- 634 In Gloucestershire SF, full qualifications were obtained in the Key Skills of Communication, IT, Working with Others and Improving Own Learning and Performance. Gloucestershire was one of a number of projects where the initiative was linked to a local credit framework, allowing progression to post-16 courses at local FE Colleges (Leicester has a similar, long-standing local arrangement).
- 635 A number of projects (for example, Wrekin SF) commented that Working with Others was more popular and easier to manage than Improving Own Learning and Performance – a finding echoed in the recent evaluation of the Key Stage 4 Demonstration Projects. This seems also to be confirmed in Southwark, which has a well-established framework for accrediting Key Skills: their SF report recorded that 288 students gained accreditation in Working with Others, compared to 48 in Improving Own Learning and Performance.
- 636 Some projects adapted national approaches to their own specific circumstances. West Sussex SF, for example, achieved remarkable success with their own accreditation for key skills within the framework of their Challenge 21 local scheme. As reported in Chapter IV, over 3000 students (as well as many local businesses and other partners) took part in this SF project in 1998/99.
- 637 As a result of their experience with their 1998/2000 ARP, Leicester plan to introduce local differentiated certification (gold, silver, bronze) for achievement on taster courses. The main criterion for achieving certificates will be based on attendance and attitudes to the course.

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## OTHER CERTIFICATED OUTCOMES

638 A number of ARP and SF projects chose to use other kinds of certification. These are important to record, although it is not possible to present them in a summary format.

639 Examples included:-

- students from Tower Hamlets ARP gaining the Certificate of Competence in Work Experience;
- the majority of project students from Solihull North Inclusion Project (ARP) achieving gold standard Certificates of Achievement in English, Mathematics and Science;
- some students from Southwark ARP gaining Junior Sports Leadership Awards – also Cambridge IT modules in Electronics and Sound Engineering;
- similar gains by Brent SF students with Certificates of Competence in First Aid, Youth and Community Work, Childminding, Photography, Music Mixing and Fashion and Design;
- considerable success by Gloucestershire SF students with the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme;
- 37 students from Coventry ARP gaining BTEC First Diploma or BTEC First Certificate in Performing Arts;
- considerable success by Derbyshire ARP students with certificates in Health and Safety, IT, Basic Food Hygiene, Fire Safety and First Aid (all gained at least two and several gained all five);
- Warwickshire ARP students achieving Food Hygiene, and Basic Health and Safety Certificates.

640 The various courses were evidently selected by teachers and others because of their particular suitability (both in terms of content and process) for the students involved. For example, Solihull ARP made the point that:-

*“The success of Certificates of Achievement lies in the way that the courses are structured as much as in their content. For students who have difficulty applying themselves, shorter self-contained units of work are non-threatening. The testing system allows them to know how well they have done almost immediately and their success in one unit is the best motivator for them to start on the next.”*

641 There was positive feedback from several projects, including Barnsley, for the ASDAN schemes.

642 In general, it was noticeable that teachers looked for qualifications which were not over-demanding in terms of assessment processes and collection of detailed evidence. In the limited time available, teachers often preferred that they and their students should focus on the learning opportunity involved, rather than administration for later accreditation.

643 However, if there could be accreditation as well, then the general view was that this was desirable, especially if it could be seen to be relevant to the world outside school.



This was, after all, the world to which many of the young people involved were beginning to relate during the course of the projects.

644 Derbyshire ARP put this as follows:-

*“The project pupils felt more valued and that they were achieving something which linked to the real world of work. None were doing very well in school and they were aware that obtaining future employment would not be easy, particularly in an area which is economically depressed. In schools, inevitably as pupils reach Years 10 and 11, teachers tell them that if they do not work hard and pass their GCSE exams they will have difficulty finding permanent employment. Going on a project where they were told that they were doing things which would make them employable and that they were gaining things which their peers at school were not, does seem to have been important to many of the youngsters. When they talked about gaining their certificates they would mention what they had been told about them being ‘real certificates’ which were not specifically designed for youngsters at school but were taken by adults at work (for instance ‘basic food hygiene’).”*

## ZERO ATTAINMENT

### Quantitative data

645 One of the key aims of the ARPs was to reduce the number of students leaving school with no accredited achievement at KS4; accredited achievements include GNVQs, NVQs and Key Skills, of course, as well as GCSEs. Data on this item was, therefore, collected as part of the management information returns from projects.

646 The background data from schools asked for the percentage of the year cohort leaving school with no accredited achievement at KS4. The available data is summarised in Table 6.5. As with similar data, the overall average quoted here is the arithmetical mean of the data supplied by individual schools; the maximum and minimum figures relate to project averages, not individual schools.

**Table 6.5: Percentage of year cohorts with no nationally accredited award at KS4**

|  | Academic year |         |         |           |
|--|---------------|---------|---------|-----------|
|  | 1996/97       | 1997/98 | 1998/99 | 1999/2000 |
| Average of projects                    | 10.76%        | 9.32%   | 10.57%  | 11.32%    |
| Maximum                                | 24.55%        | 26.85%  | 30.00%  | 31.7%     |
| Minimum                                | 4.1%          | 1.60%   | 2.00%   | 2.10%     |
| Number of valid data entries (schools) | 93            | 95      | 83      | 64        |

Notes: 1. The minimum figure excludes that of 0.0% for a project involving just one PRU.  
2. Nationally, in 1998, 6% of students obtained no GCSE or equivalent passes.

647 Against this background, the data for individual project and comparator group students shows that, in summer 2000 KS4 exams:-

- 12.2% of 575 project group students achieved no accredited award;
- 15.8% of 571 comparator group students achieved no accredited award.

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648 Again, these overall averages mask wide variations across projects, ranging from 0% in several project groups (Derbyshire, Wakefield and York, for example), to 53% in Wigan and 59% in Leeds. Nevertheless, given the starting point of the students, the fact that a smaller percentage of project group students than the comparator group achieved no accredited award is clearly a positive finding.

### **Qualitative material**

649 Several projects helpfully reported on their local position, as regards zero attainment, although the figures are, of course, included in the summary data reported above. For example:-

- in Manchester LEA, 25% of the project students gained zero GCSE qualifications – in contrast to a figure of 33% for the comparator group;
- In one school in Wigan ARP, all the students gained some GCSE points, whereas 6% of the year group had zero attainment.

650 As noted earlier, many projects saw the major benefit of work-related learning not so much in terms of improved attainment, but in terms of improved behaviour and self-confidence. However, Barnsley teachers made the point that *a reduction in zero attainment* was one extremely positive aspect of the project:-

*“Lots of them made it to exams who might not otherwise have done. There are fewer coming out with zero attainment...it is not just due to the project ...but they would have done much worse without the extra help [of the project].”*

### **DISTANCE TRAVELLED**

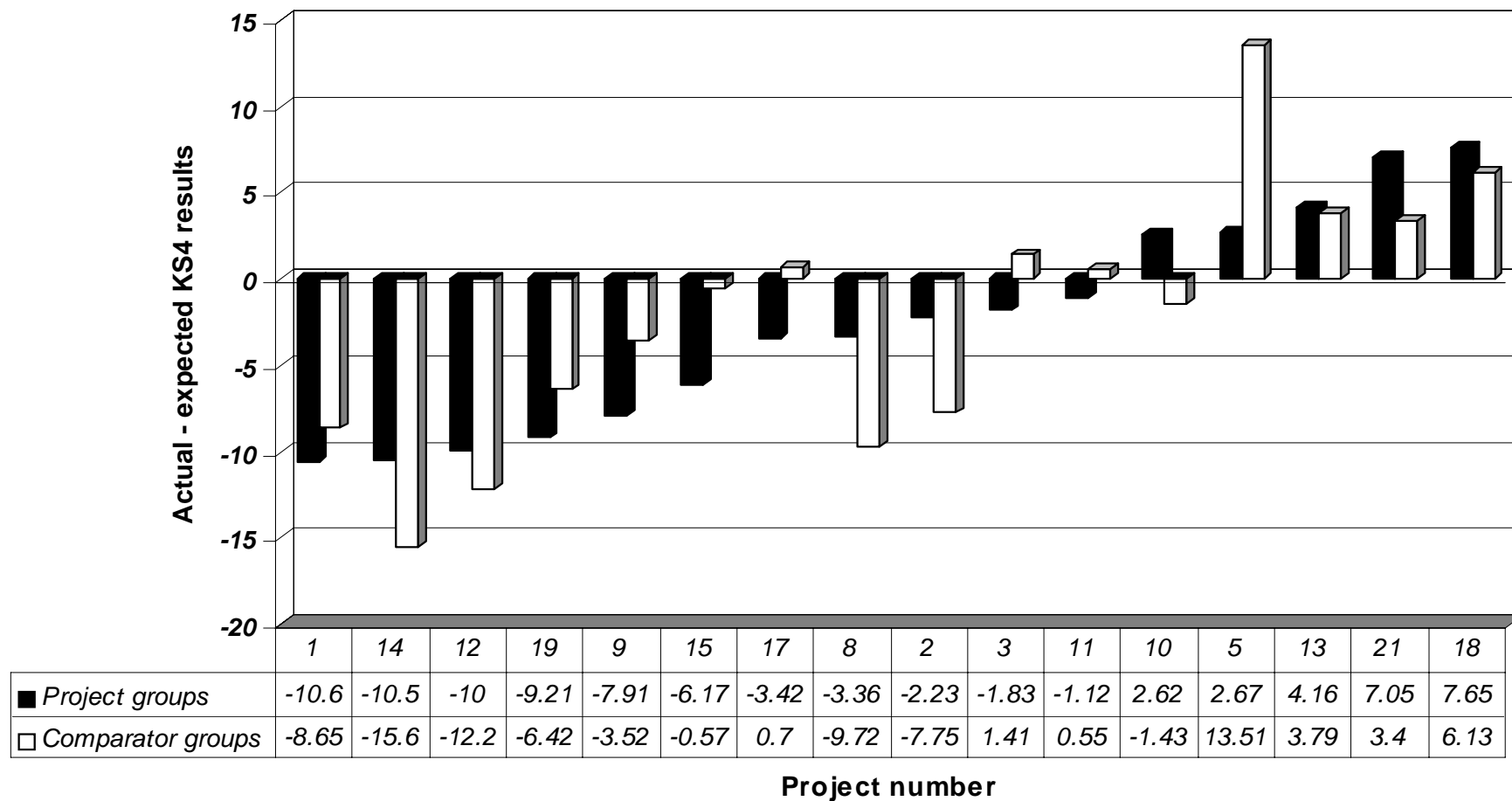
651 So far in this chapter, we have considered absolute levels of attainment, such as actual KS4 results. However, a key objective for the ARPs was to secure levels of attainment for project students that were higher *than they might otherwise have been*, without the project enhancements. One way of considering this is in relation to the ‘distance travelled’ by the students during the two years of KS4.

652 Previous chapters of this report have already discussed the significant improvements that students have made in a number of qualitative ways. In this section, we examine the evidence of improvement in terms of one quantitative measure – the distance travelled between KS3 results and KS4 results. This is, of course, only one of a series of possible measures of distance travelled; other possible measures are considered later in this report (Chapter IX). Furthermore, it is not necessarily the most important of such measures. But it is one for which other comparable evidence is available, and thus it is possible to place the achievements of the project group into context.

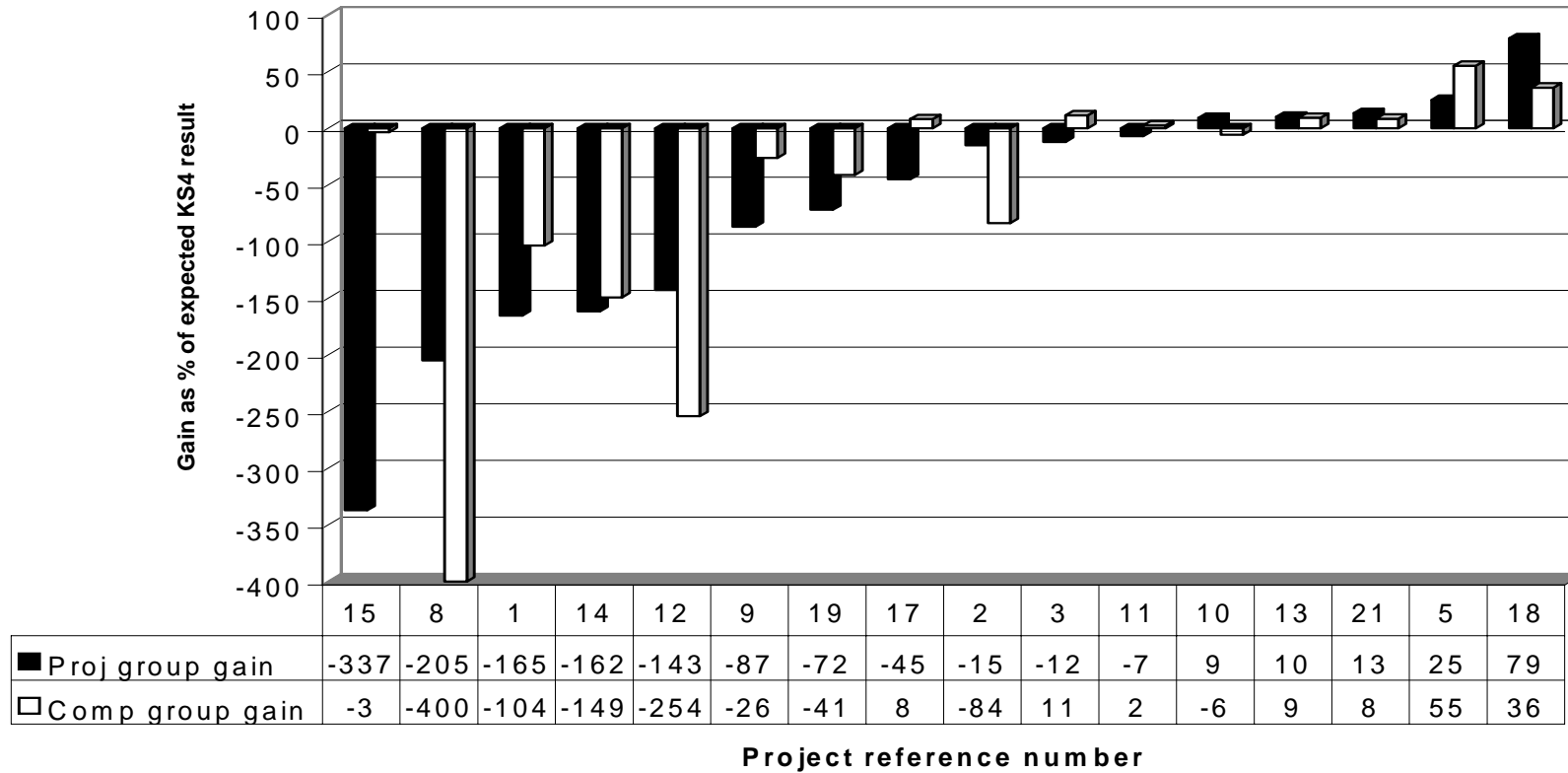
653 Following previous research by Professor David Jesson of York University, DfES have been recording information for schools of their average KS3 and KS4 results. By plotting this data on a graph, a “median line” can be produced, showing - for any given KS3 score - what the subsequent median value of KS4 scores is likely to be two years later. The graph thus provides a predictive tool, based on the results of a large number of schools. The actual results of any individual project, school, or group of students can then be plotted on this graph; the position of this individual point relative to the median line can then be considered.

- 
- 654 An alternative approach – and the one we have adopted here – is to use the DfES “median line” data for summer 2000 (KS3 results in summer 1998, KS4 results in summer 2000) as a ‘look-up’ table. Under this approach, for a given KS3 score, the table provides a predicted or expected KS4 result (the related median line point). By considering the difference between the actual KS4 result and that expected from the median line data, it is possible to ascertain whether any particular group has actually done better than expected (actual minus expected KS4 result being a positive figure) or worse than expected (a negative figure).
- 655 We have used this approach for those projects where we have the necessary data – that is, KS3 scores and KS4 results for both the project and comparator groups. Figure 6.1 overleaf shows the available data in graphical form; all the bars above the zero line on the Y-axis have ‘positive’ KS4 results, that is, their actual KS4 results are higher than the results expected for their KS3 scores. The average value added scores for all students were:-
- for the project group: -3.4 (ie. the actual was 3.4 points lower than the expected score);
  - for the comparator group: -1.0 (the actual was again lower than the expected score).
- 656 From this diagram, it is possible to consider three groups of projects:-
- those where the project group bar is positive **and** above the bar of the comparator group (projects 10 [Manchester LEA], 13 [Rochdale], 18 [Wakefield] and 21 [York]);
  - those where the project group bar is negative, but less negative than the comparator group bar (projects 2 [Coventry], 8 [Leeds], 12 [Portsmouth], and 14 [Sheffield]);
  - the remainder, where the project group bar illustrates a worse ‘result’ than the comparator group bar, irrespective of whether this is above or below the zero line (only in project 5 [Dudley] is the project group bar above the zero line).
- 657 What this diagram does not show is how significant the difference between the actual and expected KS4 results might be. Figure 6.2 attempts to show this, by expressing the difference as a percentage of the expected results. In this diagram, the height of the bar above (or below) the zero line provides an indication of the scale of the better (or worse) actual results compared to the expected. From this diagram, it can be seen that the greatest percentage gain – which takes account of the starting point of the students in terms of their KS3 scores – was actually achieved by students in projects 18 (Wakefield) and 5 (Dudley). The percentage gain of the students in projects 21 (York) and 13 (Rochdale) was less than in either of the other two projects. The small positive gain achieved by the students in project 10 (Manchester LEA) can also be seen on the graph.
- 658 Figure 6.3 provides a further way of looking at the same data. This shows, for each project for which we have the data, the expected KS4 score (based on the KS3 results) and the actual KS4 score for the project group, and the actual KS4 score for the comparator group. This shows those projects where the actual score is greater than the expected score (projects 5, 10, 13, 18, and 21) and those where the project group score was higher than that of the comparator group (projects 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 21).
-

**FIGURE 6.1: VALUE ADDED AT KS4 FOR CERTAIN PROJECT AND COMPARATOR GROUPS**

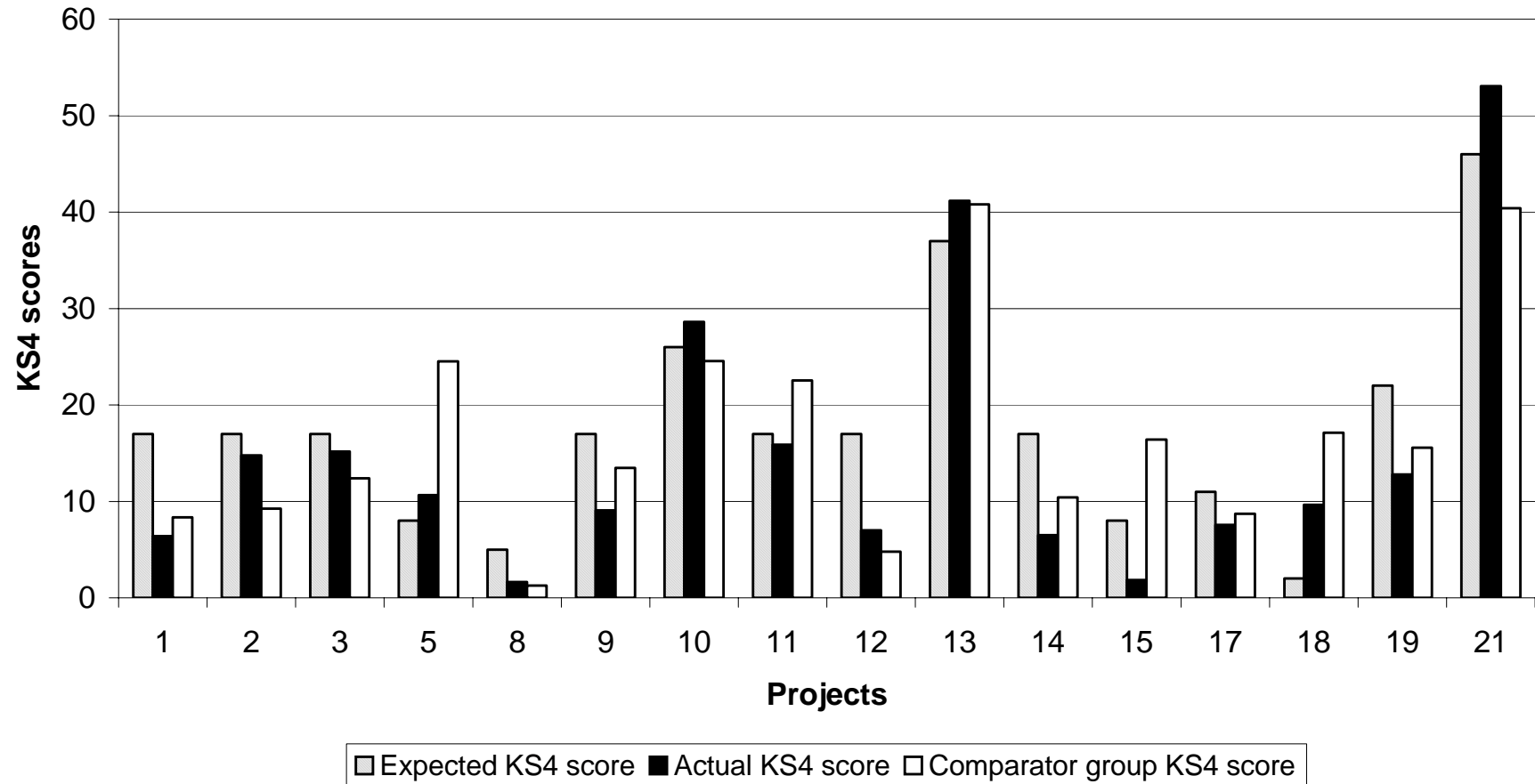


**FIGURE 6.2: VALUE ADDED AT KS4 AS A PERCENTAGE OF EXPECTED KS4 RESULTS**



Note: The percentage gain for the comparator group in project 8 was in fact -760%, but has been reduced to -400% solely for the purpose of producing a meaningful scale for the graph overall.

**FIGURE 6.3: EXPECTED AND ACTUAL PROJECT GROUP KS4 SCORES, AND COMPARATOR GROUP KS4 SCORES**



- 659 The above approach provides one method of exploring the value added by the projects, focused specifically on academic achievements between the student starting points (as measured by KS3 scores) and finishing points (as measured by KS4 results). As this report has already demonstrated, there are examples of added value by the projects in other ways, although some of these cannot be measured using such hard data as is possible with academic achievements.
- 660 We have also examined the value added measure (essentially, actual less expected KS4 point score) to identify any significant differences by gender. The results of this are as follows:-
- for males only, there is a significant difference between the value added score of the comparator group and the project group students – comparator group males had, on average, a higher value added score than those in the project group. There is no such difference for females;
  - within the project group students, the significant difference is that females achieved a higher value added score on average than males. There is no such significant difference within the comparator group students.
- 661 This analysis suggests that, whilst the projects did not lead to greater added value at KS4 for project group males (relative to the comparator group), they did make a positive impact on females.

## STUDENT DESTINATIONS POST-16

### *Quantitative data*

- 662 Data on student destinations at the end of Year 11 was collected in three ways:-
- students' own intentions, as at Easter 2000, were collected in the final questionnaire;
  - at the end of the summer term, schools were asked to identify where they believed students were going and include this on the standard SWA data collection forms;
  - projects were asked to supply data from the annual careers service destination survey for their area as soon as it became available in autumn 2000.
- 663 Collection of this data at these three times would, it was hoped, provide some interesting trend data. In addition, the earlier data would provide "fall-back" information if the more comprehensive careers service survey data was not available in time.
- 664 Table 6.6 overleaf shows the trends in post-16 destinations at *school level* over the three years summer 1998 to summer 2000. As with other school data, the figures represent the arithmetical mean of available data.

**Table 6.6: Trends in post-16 destinations, summer 1998 to summer 2000**

| Destination | Summer |      |      |
|-------------|--------|------|------|
|             | 1998   | 1999 | 2000 |
|             |        |      |      |

|                                  |     |     |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Full-time education              | 56% | 57% | 60% |
| Government-supported training    | 14% | 13% | 12% |
| Employment                       | 11% | 11% | 11% |
| Other (not settled)              | 19% | 19% | 17% |
| Number of data entries (schools) | 92  | 73  | 44  |

Note: Nationally, 70% of leavers stayed on in full-time education in summer 1998.

665 Information from students themselves was only collected via the final questionnaires. Students who said they were 'definitely decided' or 'almost decided' as to what post-16 route they would follow, were asked to identify what route that was most likely to be. In summary, the results here were that:-

- 31% of the project group identified a job with training, against 23% of the comparator group;
- 20% of the project group identified A Levels at school or college, and a further 20% identified GNVQ or NVQ at school or college. The respective figures for the comparator group were 24% and 29%;
- 13% of the project group and 12% of the comparator group were planning to enter a Modern Apprenticeship or National Traineeship;
- 7% of the project group, but only 2% of the comparator group, identified a job without training as their likely route;
- the balance of both groups either planned to take GCSE re-sits or some other route.

666 There was a statistically significant difference in these responses. Responses of students from the comparator group indicated that they were more likely to stay on at school or college, whereas project group students stated that they were more likely to look for a job with or without training or enter a Modern Apprenticeship or National Traineeship.

667 Table 6.7 overleaf shows the trends in replies across the three sets of responses for the project and comparator group students. Data included here *only* relates to those students for which we have the data at *all three* points in time; this totals 204 students.

**Table 6.7: Trends in destinations for project and comparator group students**

|  | March 2000<br>(questionnaire) | Summer 2000<br>(school data) | Autumn 2000<br>(careers<br>service data) |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
|  |                               |                              |  |

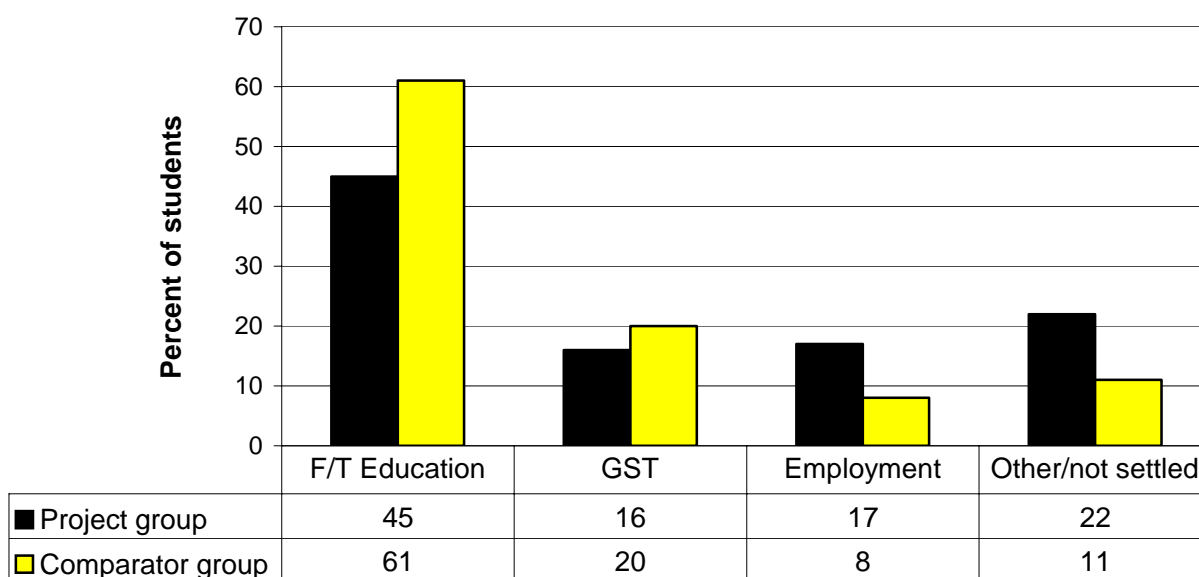


|   |                         |                          |                          |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Project group:</b><br>- F/T education<br>- Government-supported training<br>- Employment<br>- Other/not settled    | 51%<br>7%<br>37%<br>5%  | 47%<br>19%<br>19%<br>15% | 45%<br>16%<br>17%<br>22% |
| <b>Comparator group:</b><br>- F/T education<br>- Government-supported training<br>- Employment<br>- Other/not settled | 63%<br>17%<br>17%<br>3% | 69%<br>9%<br>13%<br>9%   | 61%<br>20%<br>8%<br>11%  |

Note: Figures represent the % of each group that entered each of the stated destinations. The number of cases included here are 139 project group students and 65 comparator group students.

668 The data included above for the actual destinations (summer 2000) is shown graphically in Figure 6.4 below.

**FIGURE 6.4: ACTUAL POST-16 DESTINATIONS AS AT NOVEMBER 2000**



669 The headline points from Tables 6.6 and 6.7 and Figure 6.4 are these:-

- the actual destinations of project group students at November 2000 are very similar to those projected at summer 2000. However, there have been some marked changes for comparator group students, with a decrease in the percentage entering full-time education or employment, and an increase in those entering Government-supported training (particularly) or those not settled or in other destinations;
- for the project group, there has been a significant change between March and the autumn in respect of the percentage wishing to enter employment. This has fallen from a figure of 37% in March to 17% in the autumn, with 'not settled'

being the category that has increased as a result. A similar pattern emerges in the comparator group, but with smaller percentages overall involved;

- nevertheless, for both groups, the percentage entering positive destinations overall is high. Relative to the year cohorts, more project and comparator group students entered Government-supported training or employment, while less project group students entered full-time education;
- more students from the project group were in employment, or were not settled or in other destinations, in November 2000 than from either the comparator group or year cohorts.

670 We have also analysed the destinations data – based on actual destination (November 2000) or, if not available, projected destination (summer 2000) – for any differences by gender. Table 6.8 shows the raw data, by gender and project or comparator group. This table is based on all available data, and therefore represents a bigger sample in total than that presented in the previous tables and figures on trends in destinations.

**Table 6.8: Post-16 destinations by gender**

| Destination                   | Project group |        | Comparator group |        |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------|------------------|--------|
|                               | Male          | Female | Male             | Female |
| Full-time education           | 37%           | 53%    | 48%              | 60%    |
| Government-supported training | 17%           | 19%    | 26%              | 17%    |
| Employment                    | 26%           | 7%     | 16%              | 11%    |
| Other                         | 11%           | 11%    | 7%               | 8%     |
| Not settled                   | 9%            | 10%    | 3%               | 4%     |
| Total                         | 100%          | 100%   | 100%             | 100%   |

Note: Percentages relate to individual columns, ie. percentage of each gender within the stated groups entering each destination.

671 Examination of the above data for significant differences reveals the following:

- there is no significant difference in the destinations within the comparator group between males and females, whereas there is in the project group. In the latter, females are more likely to enter full-time education or Government-supported training than their male counterparts;
- within both gender groups (ie. looking at all males together or all females), the significant difference was that those in the comparator group were more likely to enter full-time education or Government-supported training than those in the project group.

672 This analysis also indicates that, overall, project group students were less likely to enter positive destinations than those in the comparator group. However, within the project group alone, females were more likely than males to enter positive destinations.

### **Qualitative material**

673 We turn finally to material from individual projects. We have already made clear that it is crucially important to interpret statistical outcomes with an understanding of the

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nature of the students involved and what their starting points were at the beginning of Year 10.

674 The Tower Hamlets ARP experience was that, out of the 10 students who attended for most of the opportunities provided (10 others dropped out very quickly for a variety of different reasons), one gained an apprenticeship, two stayed on at FE College for further computing qualifications and another two went directly into employment (two more returned to school). This does not look particularly impressive when reported neutrally, but for the individuals concerned – and taking into account where they started from – there is a strong argument that this represents outstanding success.

675 This conclusion is reinforced by the Warwickshire ARP. The evaluation report noted:-  
*“if only one young person has been saved from a life of unemployment or crime, the whole project will have been cost-effective.”*

676 A similar breakdown was provided by Portsmouth ARP where the bare detail was that, of the 20 project students, 10 went on full-time to college, 4 to employment, 1 to a training provider, and 5 were unknown. However, this has to be understood against a starting point where all of these young people had poor, or even chronic, attendance patterns at the end of Year 9.

677 The Brent SF reported, as follows:-

*“The programme began in March 1998 with eighteen Year 11 pupils taken from across the six forms of the year group. Working to motivate disaffected students in their final months of statutory education was difficult. Some of the pupils felt that it was too late for them to improve their achievement. The programme was successful with half the pupils, and this is a success given the client group. Nine pupils successfully completed the course, all receiving a Stage 1 Youth and Community Certificate. In addition, four received a Photography Certificate and three a Music Mixing Certificate. Of the original group, four are now following GNVQ courses at Wembley High School, three started Network Training Courses in Retail, Electrical Installation and Information Technology and five started College courses in Health and Social Care, Business, and Sports and Leisure. One has a job as a sales assistant, and two are currently unemployed. The destinations of the remaining three are not known at this time.”*

678 Stockport was another SF which provided a detailed breakdown of the post-16 destinations of their project group, this time helpfully analysed by gender:-

*Destinations of the 14 females referred to Project Nexus:*

*4 have been employed by their placement employer on reaching school leaving age  
1 is attending College in September  
1 is pregnant, but has a college place and a prospective job after the birth of her child  
1 chose to return to school  
1 emigrated with her family  
3 left the project at various stages, their destinations are unknown  
2 have left home – whereabouts unknown  
1 young woman refused two placements and has now left school.*

*Destinations of the 44 males referred to Project Nexus:*

*2 have obtained Modern Apprenticeships*

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*18 have been offered jobs, with training, with their placement employers*

*1 has applied for a place at the local college*

*1 returned to school*

*20 left the project at various stages, their whereabouts are unknown. Several left because they found it difficult to accept authority, one to live in Portsmouth with his mother*

*1 broke his arm and did not return*

*1 is serving a custodial sentence.*

- 679 Leicester ARP also tracked through their project and comparator students to post-16 destinations in some detail. Significantly, more of their project than their comparator students entered employment at post-16 (16 students compared to 4). The number of students in both groups together going on to Government-supported training was very small – only 5 in total and just slightly more than 5% of the two groups together – although this may be a reflection of local labour market factors as much as evidence of the impact of the project.
- 680 The outcome of the York ARP deserves particular mention. One of their local objectives was to improve student attitudes to careers in the subject areas of Science, Technology and Maths. Although significantly more project than comparator students ended the project looking for A Level courses post-16, one superficially disconcerting outcome was that, in one of the two schools involved, more than one third of the project group actually changed away from Science/Technology/Mathematics based careers during the course of the ARP. A more considered reflection would be that the project enabled students to assess their aptitude for these subjects more accurately, leading almost certainly to reduced drop-out during the post-16 course. It should also be recorded that both project groups in both schools did significantly better in GCSEs grades A\* to C in these subjects than the comparator groups.
- 681 In the Rochdale ARP, which also focussed on boosting work-related learning in support of a GCSE qualification (Food Technology), there were positive gains reported, not just in performance (see earlier sections), but also in the students' intentions to go on to FE courses post-16 – and in their confidence about doing so.

## **SUMMARY**

- 682 The general comments made at the end of Chapter V apply also in relation to the discussion in this chapter on student attainment. In brief, the major achievement of the projects should be seen in terms of their 'retaining' students within a learning environment rather than 'losing' them completely. Among the project groups, the highest average point scores in Key Stage 4 were achieved by projects where disaffection was not the principal criterion for selection.
- 683 However, when exploring distance travelled, rather than raw scores, it was apparent that in eight projects the distance travelled by the project group was further than that travelled by the respective local comparator groups. Indeed, in half of these eight projects, the distance travelled by the project group was also further than that predicted by modelling based on national data of KS3 scores and KS4 results.
- 684 Looking at the broader picture as KS4, the most promising findings were around:-

- 
- zero attainment, where the percentage of the project group leaving school with no accredited awards (12.2%) was lower than for the comparator group (15.8%);
  - post-16 destinations, where data as at November 2000 showed more than three quarters of the project group in full-time education, employment, or Government-supported training.

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## VII: SUCCESS FACTORS – PEOPLE

### INTRODUCTION

701 It became clear during our work that a number of factors appear to have an influence on the “success” of projects. Some of these factors are clearly dependent on the influence of different *people* within project structures; others relate to the *processes* adopted. The former are discussed in this chapter; the latter are considered in Chapter VIII.

702 The people considered here are:-

- lead teachers/school co-ordinators;
- senior management teams;
- project managers/co-ordinators;
- steering/management groups;
- employers;
- FE College staff;
- training providers;
- mentors;
- parents;
- students themselves.

### LEAD TEACHERS/SCHOOL CO-ORDINATORS

703 There was considerable evidence from many of the reports – especially from those provided by external evaluators – that the role of the lead teacher (often called the school co-ordinator) could be crucial to the success or failure of the project, especially when viewed from the perspective of individual students.

704 One key determinant appeared to be the ability of the teacher concerned not only to relate well to the students but also to *command their respect*. Several projects also made the point that the school co-ordinator needs time and opportunity to meet with the project students on a group and individual basis – something which needs the direct support of the senior management in the school.

705 Another vital factor for success is the way in which appropriate leadership from the school co-ordinator is linked to the whole school pastoral support system. This was well illustrated in the report from the Warwickshire ARP:-

*“The level of support and the quality of pastoral care within the schools appear to have had a considerable impact on the way in which students coped with the challenges of their Key Stage 4 programme, including their work placement. The role of the school co-ordinator has been crucial in some cases, providing a point of contact for students who were experiencing difficulties at home, at school and at placement.*”

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*Retention rates and successful completion of the project reflected the combined effect of good support by the co-ordinator, backed up by effective school systems.”*

706 This degree of co-ordination also extended, in some cases, to the teaching arrangements. Gloucestershire SF project provided a good example of this. At one school their students were offered, over the course of the year, fifteen short ‘Challenges’ of various kinds. The school saw the dangers of what might happen if each one of the six teachers involved approached their part of the programme independently:-

*“If each member of staff ‘went it alone’, there would be confusion, pressure and lack of continuity for pupils and difficulties of quality assurance across the whole of the teaching team.”*

Their answer was to give each member of the team responsibility for devising and managing a small number of specific Challenges, but to require a team delivery of each Challenge.

707 The example just given also illustrates the point that support is also required from the whole staff, as well as the SMT, if the project is to succeed. Often this was the case but instances were also noted of:

- frustration from some subject teachers about students missing their lessons. Whilst this is understandable on one level, it sometimes led to students picking up mixed messages about the value of work-related learning;
- ignorance about the project among other teachers;
- resentment from other teachers on the grounds that project students ‘appear to be rewarded for poor behaviour or attendance’.

708 There was some evidence that it was helpful for the school co-ordinator to have had some experience outside teaching. The advantage of this seemed to be not so much a greater knowledge of employment possibilities or of opportunities for college or work-based training – but of the way in which an employer relates to young employees. One school co-ordinator in an EAZ described her (clearly successful) teaching style as akin to that which she had used in industry, when inducting new members of staff.

709 It is important to record that the impact on students of one or two particular school co-ordinators (and one or two project managers – see below) was quite outstanding. Students in one ARP described their co-ordinator like this:-

*“I think I cope better now because if it gets too much I go and see Mr. M.... He makes you think about it and sometimes you stop feeling angry just by telling him even though he can’t go and belt the teacher for you and you wish he could. He doesn’t tell the other teachers off and he doesn’t tell us off, so it’s hard to say why talking to him is special. I think it is because he sort of calms you down by listening. And if he can, he helps you too but he usually tells you how you can help yourself..... Every school should have a Mr. M... – someone you can go and talk to when you are fed up and don’t know how to do the work or when things are real bad at home.”*

710 The school co-ordinators in the Wigan ARP offered a number of ‘lessons learned for the future’ in relation to their own roles. These included the following:-

- 
- *“the school co-ordinator should be involved from the beginning in discussions about funding, personnel, planning, school support;*
  - *let the students lead as much as is reasonable;*
  - *identify project students by the end of Year 9;*
  - *involve parents throughout ;*
  - *create a special group ‘learning in a different way’;*
  - *the school co-ordinator should have total responsibility for students on the project;*
  - *guidance should include counselling as well as careers.”*

## **SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAMS**

- 711 We have already made the point that one of the key roles of senior management is to support the lead teacher in practical ways (for example, ensuring sufficient time with the project students), as well as making clear to all concerned that the project has whole school commitment. That was made much easier where the project outline had been discussed with all staff at an early stage and where it could be shown that the scheme being promoted was compatible with/supportive of the whole school curriculum policy (see also Chapter VIII).
- 712 It was particularly important that this integration and leadership from the SMT was seen to be ‘real’ and meaningful by classroom teachers. This seems to have happened in the Barnsley ARP where teachers were quoted as follows:-
- “If you are going to have a work-related philosophy, it can’t be ‘bolted on’. It has to involve the SMT and to be seen as just another strand of the work of the school. Being in the school [development] plans helps with that.”*
- 713 In the Lancashire SF project, senior staff were directly engaged with students - and on the basis that the students concerned should be regarded as special, without any fear of ‘labelling’:-
- “One school made a virtue of the fact that the pupils on the project were, to a degree, separate from their peers and the rest of the school, by requiring each pupil to explain formally to a senior member of staff what they had accomplished at the [FE] College.”*
- 714 Perhaps the most important lead that SMTs have been able to give is to make it unmistakably clear to staff (eg. in the school development plan, the curriculum, the timetable and in many other ways) that work-related learning is to be regarded as on a par with traditional academic learning – despite the pressures arising from ‘league tables’. This has needed to extend to challenging head-on comments from some teachers, such as those quoted above about work-related learning projects being ‘rewards for poor behaviour’.

## **PROJECT MANAGERS/CO-ORDINATORS**

- 715 Although not always spelt out in the project reports, it was clear from our fieldwork that the role requirements of an ARP project manager were often extremely



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demanding – sometimes almost impossibly so. Sometimes the role was (sensibly) split, with one person acting as an overall ‘director’ - dealing with the bid, the steering group, resources, staffing, public relations and so on. This left the project manager (proper) to take direct day-to-day responsibility for the education/training and support of the young people concerned. Whilst some projects took direct responsibility for the students’ learning, placement and welfare, others brought in another agency to do this. Sometimes the role was less one of direct delivery and more one of co-ordination across the various school, college and work-place locations where direct engagement with the students was taking place.

716 In broad terms, project management in the ARP context included the need for:-

- generic management skills relating to personnel, finance, IT, planning, communication, monitoring and evaluation;
- a strong and up-to-date working knowledge of the various strands of the work-related curriculum at KS4, *and* of related student assessment and accreditation arrangements, *and* of other contemporary and related local and national initiatives;
- data collection, data analysis and report-writing;
- a sensitive but imaginative and entrepreneurial knowledge of the ‘local scene’ and, in particular, the potential contribution of obvious (and not so obvious!) project partners, including local employers;
- the ability to relate effectively with key players such as headteachers, principals, teachers, lecturers, employers and LEA staff, as well as the ability to work diplomatically but effectively with schools whose commitment to the project in all kinds of ways could be very different indeed;
- the skills, ability and experience to work effectively with the young people themselves and their parents.

717 Having said that, most project managers came to know and support many of the students involved in a fairly direct way and many of those clearly made a significant difference to the nature of the outcome of the project in relation to particular students. Particularly glowing testimony about one such project manager (clearly very much like the school co-ordinator – Mr. M – referred to above) was submitted by the external evaluator to the Stockport SF. She described the attitude of the parents to this project co-ordinator as follows:-

*“Their gratitude to the project manager is without equal. They recognise what he has done to turn around a very difficult and potentially explosive situation. He is without doubt the central link in the relationship between the opportunity for choice and motivation and re engagement. Many parents talked of his high standards.*

*‘He expects them to be polite, tells them they will become bored in the first week, but they have to stick it out and then it will get better’.*

*‘He understands them, he really cares about them, but he’s not a soft touch.’*

718 It was often important to distinguish clearly between the respective responsibilities and duties of school co-ordinators and project managers. York ARP addressed this aspect early on through consulting with the individuals principally involved and setting out written statements of the two roles.

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719 As indicated above, it was almost impossible for most projects to find just one person capable and willing to do all of those things. Most of the more successful projects implicitly or explicitly anticipated this right from the start and made appropriate arrangements to share responsibilities across a number of key players. One example of this was Manchester ARP where an experienced administrator was brought in for the second year of the project to ensure that all the required student data and related information from schools was properly collected and organised.

## STEERING/MANAGEMENT GROUPS

720 The original expectation was that each ARP would have a steering group, which would involve representatives of all the major partners or potential partners for the local project. In practice, some had a steering group which met regularly; some started with one but did not continue with it all the way through; while some never even started with such a group.

721 However, most projects had – or had in addition – some kind of internal management group, consisting of all the main players in the project. Sometimes this *management* group was described as ‘the *steering* group’.

722 Overall, the evidence appears to be that:-

- while it is not crucial to have a steering group, such a group can be very helpful, especially in relation to communication, dissemination and (importantly) securing commitment and funding for continuation of the programme beyond the end of the DfES-sponsored project;
- some projects (eg. Leeds and Leicester) found it helpful to have a management group of the major players and a separate *practitioners’* or *operational* group consisting of school co-ordinators and others with lead responsibility ‘on the ground’. On occasions, it was helpful for the management and practitioners’ group to meet together, or even (late into the project) to merge;
- a few projects found it valuable to run the steering group on an informal basis – not as a decision making group but simply as a way for the main players to keep in touch;
- although it varied very much with the individual project and the individual person concerned, ‘external’ players, such as representatives of the local careers service, the regional Government Office, or National Training Organisations (eg. the Construction Industry Training Board) were often particularly helpful members of a local steering group.

723 Where the steering group worked well and purposefully together, the benefits were often considerable – and much more than the sum of the contributions of individual partners. One example was in the Derbyshire ARP where the steering committee focused its meetings on high level issues and the broader implications for future project groups, as well as the immediate students in the ARP. One particular interest was in devising a sustainable funding model which schools could use in the future, without the need for additional external resources.

724 Looking somewhat wider than the steering groups or committees, there was considerable evidence to suggest that some kind of existing, permanent infrastructure

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of the major partners concerned was beneficial, not just for the project itself but for its later dissemination and replication. The particular arrangements in Leicester, for example, certainly helped in this regard.

- 725 In summary, the Leicester City Cluster provides a standing focus for all curriculum and staff development work 14-19. It has a physical location and permanent staff with considerable expertise on work-related learning and associated student assessment. It is funded partly by local schools, both by grant and their purchase of specific services. Integration of all local responses to national work-related learning initiatives is organised through the Cluster. There are also economies of scale and an extension of opportunity, in that the Cluster acts as a clearing house to open up a permanent and much wider menu of off-site opportunities for all local students than any single school could possibly arrange.

## EMPLOYERS

- 726 What comes through very strongly in the reports from many of the projects involving work placement is the generosity of many employers and their interest in trying to help.

- 727 Warwickshire ARP reported on this as follows:-

*“Some employers have been very generous of their time and energy in supporting these students. The quality of this support has been amazing in some cases; students have been given second (and third!) chances; an employer has attended a student’s case conference relating to a proposed exclusion; they have provided exactly the right mix of discipline and encouragement, and jobs with training have been offered and taken.”*

- 728 However, it is important to note that this willingness and interest usually focused on the individual student assigned to them and *not* to the generality of the project or its direction and management. Sometimes this may have been because of the way the project was designed. Thus the Derbyshire ARP report commented:-

*“The involvement of the employers was different to the other groups involved in the project. Whereas the other groups (Chamber, LEA, schools) made a choice to become involved with the project, the design of the 39 Steps meant that inevitably the employers became involved almost by chance. This was because the 39 Steps programme was specifically designed so that the youngsters themselves would decide what type of employment they would like to undertake. The youngsters were also given some scope within this to decide which particular employer they thought would suit them. Inevitably, therefore, as the youngsters decided on their employment, the employers were approached on an individual ad hoc basis. It became apparent during the employer interviews that they had only a limited understanding of the project. Nor did they want to know more – they were more interested in their individual youngster than in the 39 Steps concept.”*

- 729 Sometimes the design of the project was such that amendments could be made to assist individual employers to understand the scheme and direct their part in it. In Tower Hamlets ARP, for example, it was explained that:-

*“During the lifetime of the project, employer views have been sought. Working with the LEA and involving the Steering Group, Rathbone CI has developed an employer placement pack to give information about the participant and provide a template for*

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*target setting and delivery of the programme in the workplace for the first 12 weeks. It is anticipated this pack will be developed to provide material and support for the employer and young person for an additional period of time.”*

- 730 The authentic and obviously committed view of an employer comes through in this quotation reported by the external evaluator of the Stockport SF:-
- “That’s where we are different from what has happened to them before. We can give them closer supervision and help them. That’s what they really need. I can see why these kids don’t do well in classes of over 30. They need help. I’m upset every time when I see how little they know about basic things like reading, writing and just simple additions. They can’t do it. But they can now, they are so keen to learn and quick too when you get them in a different situation. I’ve got good supervisors and they are on a ratio of 1:6 so the kids know they always have someone to turn to. They know that they can make mistakes and not get bawled out. We all make mistakes. Not too often, mind you. They are working with very expensive raw materials and they have to understand that accurate measurement is important and get it checked until they are confident. That’s the hardest thing to give them, confidence. They don’t believe in themselves at all, even the cockier ones. It’s just an act because they are scared stiff really.”*
- 731 Staff linked to the Belgrade Theatre which supported the Coventry ARP project made similar points:-
- “Without exception, the experts from the Belgrade who were called in to work with the youngsters, expressed feelings of respect for the commitment and skills shown by the students. Some of the experts, who had not worked with the young people prior to this project, stated that they were initially fearful of the prospect and assumed that the students would misbehave. Their fears were unfounded and they all said that they had gained a great deal from the experience and would be keen to help again.”*
- 732 In some projects, real work and real science/technology were taught in a particular industrial context. A good example of this was in the Wigan ARP where North West Water was not just a major industrial partner in the project but commissioned a specific task from the students ie. re-furbishing the engine house.
- 733 Despite best efforts by many employers, as illustrated above, a few ARPs sometimes found it difficult to find sufficient work placements of the right kind at the right time. Occasionally it was necessary for some students to switch from a preferred work placement to a FE placement. However, early planning, local knowledge and an established framework for schools/industry links usually seemed to secure the placements that were needed.

## **FE COLLEGE STAFF**

- 734 In general, projects reported favourably in terms of the positive impact of FE lecturers and other staff on project students. This is well exemplified by the Sheffield ARP report:-
- “Students appreciated the different, more adult, way they were treated by the tutors at college. Students felt that this, in turn, influenced their attendance and behaviour both at college and at home, as well as their ability to learn. Parents also mentioned their child’s improved performance in core subjects... and felt that the attention and extra help they were getting from the college tutors played a strong part in this. Students*

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*felt they benefited from the support tutors offered them in areas of life other than academic work, eg. some aspects of their personal lives or support and encouragement in their work placements.”*

735 Two of the students from Wigan ARP put it like this:-

*“This placement is different from school, as you get more attention and they understand you more.”*

*“We get treated with respect and get a chance to discuss the tasks that we are asked to do.”*

Another Wigan student, when asked where he would be had he not gone on his FE placement, said:-

*“IN BED, because I would be expelled from school.”*

736 In the Rochdale ARP, when the students were asked what it was about the college which made it feel ‘more adult’ than school, the most common responses were:-

- older people 37%;
- the way they speak to you/use of first names 26%;
- more responsibility/freedom 42%;
- the tutor 16%.

737 Another example was provided in the Wirral SF evaluation report:-

*“The industrial background of tutors was seen as contributing to the respect tutors earned from the pupils. A stronger contributory factor in earning the respect of pupils was the fact that tutors treated the pupils with respect. Pupils responded to being treated ‘more like adults’ and liked being on first name terms with their tutors. They felt they could talk to their tutors and that their tutors listened to them.”*

738 In contrast, there were occasional examples in the reports of FE staff being unprepared for some of the poor behaviour and lack of apparent motivation demonstrated by some students. In some instances, it was clear that poor communication and briefing in the college was the reason. Elsewhere, additional training was introduced during the course of the project (see Chapter VIII).

739 The cross-institutional benefits of such projects was illustrated in the external evaluator’s report on Gloucestershire SF:-

*“Lecturers and teachers alike have spent much time in planning and review of the courses. They have skilfully identified the needs of individual students and constructed programmes which positively build on their strengths. The close collaboration between the school and college has a number of highly positive effects. The placement of pupils into college on a regular basis has raised the awareness of pupils about what the college has to offer them. The visit of lecturers from the college into school provides effective professional development of teachers (for the introduction of GNVQ Part 1 Intermediate courses).”*

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## TRAINING PROVIDERS

- 740 Comments made by projects on the contribution of training providers were similar in tone and content to those made about FE staff summarised above. While it would be wrong to generalise, it was apparent that many staff who came from a vocational training background were able to strike particularly constructive and (positively) challenging relationships with project students; similar observations were also made about staff with youth work experience.
- 741 Providers who normally worked with 16 to 25 year olds often brought not only their relevant skills, but also vitality and enthusiasm to the projects with which they were involved. It was common to hear from these staff comments to the effect that having the opportunity to work with 14-16 year olds gave them a chance 'to make a difference before it is too late'. Seeing disaffected 14 year olds in this light ('those we most want to work with') stands by way of contrast with at least some secondary school teachers who tended to see this group in a negative light.
- 742 The training providers at Wigan ARP helpfully listed the following ways of improving joint working in future projects of this kind:-
- a single designated teacher at each school to work with;
  - more time to organise the placements and to deal with subsequent problems;
  - better information sharing;
  - better de-briefing of students after the placement;
  - more engagement with the selection of students (avoiding those that just want to opt out of lessons).
- 743 There were a few references to what some projects regarded as expensive prices for the places and support offered by training providers. Sometimes it appeared possible to secure helpful flexibility and cost savings if the relevant training provider was also carrying out other similar projects in the same LEA (thus enabling sharing of some administrative functions – and costs).

## MENTORS

- 744 One of the most important features of the ARPs, as reported in their local evaluations, was the importance of direct support to students. This support split broadly into two kinds. One was *academic monitoring*; this took the form of regular discussion with, and encouragement to, students on a one-to-one basis, with the aim of improving GCSE performance (often at the vital margins of achievement). The other was *personal and social support*, concerned more with boosting self-confidence, improving behaviour and trying to help the student deal with family issues and possible problems. These are distinct forms of support for individuals but, self-evidently, they can overlap and connect.
- 745 Data reported in the Technical Annex suggests that, across all participating schools:-
- about a quarter used academic mentors (similar numbers in both years);

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- about 10% used personal and social mentors ( slightly more in year two than year one).

In both cases, the numbers reflect percentages of mentors *provided through the project enhancements*. Involvement by mentors across participating schools would be higher than this if existing arrangements were also taken into account.

- 746 Warwickshire ARP was among those projects which used *academic mentors* in a significant way; mentors were also recruited from industry and commerce. Training and accreditation were important features:-

*“The role of mentors was also significant for some: interviews with them revealed how seriously they had taken the role. Some had been disappointed when students failed to turn up for appointments; others had been able to provide a sympathetic and confidential ear to young people with very little adult support. The role of Warwickshire Education Business Partnership in supporting and training the mentors has been valued, although it has been noted that there needs to be specific, rather than generic training for them, so that they fully understand the objectives of the project. Some mentors have undertaken training leading to accreditation to NVQ Level 3 with East Birmingham College.”*

- 747 It was pointed out in the report from one ARP that teachers were not always effective in the mentoring role as a result of either or both of:-

- lack of time;
- the ‘baggage’ around their existing relationship with students.

- 748 Turning to *personal and social support*, most ARPs would claim to have given such support to their students to a greater or lesser extent. However, the projects at Portsmouth, Tower Hamlets and Sheffield stand out in this respect, because of the organised and regular nature of this support and the resource and importance attached to it as part of the project design.

- 749 Significant out-of hours personal support was often provided by staff. Here is how one external evaluator described the informal mentoring role of the manager of a Chamber of Commerce who was assigned a lead role with students in her local ARP:-

*“She would pick up on their worries and concerns and developed a very close supportive relationship with them. Her previous work as a youth worker would seem to have developed particular skills. She gave the youngsters her telephone number so that they could contact her if they had problems when they were not at the project. The greatest strength of this ‘mentoring’ was her real understanding and genuine liking for the youngsters and her recognition that for some of these youngsters it was important that they had an adult in their lives on whom they could rely.”*

- 750 Those projects which put strong emphasis on personal and social support also tended to be among those which put a similar emphasis on regular monitoring and review. Thus the organisation which co-ordinated the Tower Hamlets ARP organised progress reviews between each young person and his or her ‘Vocational Adviser’ every 4 weeks. Approximately 300 of these review meetings were carried out, with invitations going to teachers, employers and parents. Notes were kept of each meeting, especially of progress against each student’s agreed short term and long term action plan; copies were sent to all concerned, whether or not they attended the meeting. In support of this main system, a further 250 school visits and 450 home

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visits were carried out (the latter much appreciated by working parents and those with young children).

751 Whilst most mentors worked very hard, to the clear benefit of several students, the experience could also be frustrating for those involved because, as the evaluator of Leeds ARP put it:

*“... of the logistics required to arrange appointments with young people whose lives were sometimes rather chaotic”.*

752 Some projects adopted innovative approaches to mentoring, which straddled instruction/tutoring as well as personal support. For example:-

- Barnsley involved student teachers from the Sheffield Hallam University course to provide specific inputs at school and to host activity days at the university;
- Manchester LEA used older students from the local college to act both as instructors (eg. in music technology) and role models for project students. This resulted in virtual one-to-one tuition at some sessions;
- Manchester TEC used a system whereby each student had a “tutor” assigned to them from the training provider and a “buddy” at the work placement. It was explicitly stated in the programme that the workplace “buddy” should not also be the line manager of the relevant young person.

## **PARENTS**

753 The involvement of parents/carers with their sons or daughters, and with the project, varied to absolute extremes. At one end was complete indifference or even hostility. At the other was tremendous commitment to try to help their children through troubled times – often associated with gratitude to the project for making what was clearly perceived as a potentially life-changing intervention.

754 The latter is well illustrated by the following extended extract from an SF project termly report (names changed):-

*First interview report: Mark Potter/Mrs Moss (Mother)*

*“It was obvious that Mrs Moss the mother is a very supportive parent, but is at her wits’ end as regards what she can do for her son. Mark was late for the interview and was sloppily dressed. He had a black eye which he explained was the result of a fight. Mark yawned, stretched and sighed repeatedly during the interview. Mark refused to look at me whilst I was talking to him and preferred to look out of the window. Mark was totally bored with the situation and did not attempt to hide the fact. I terminated the interview telling Mark that I would not accept him on the project until he changed his attitude. I invited him to telephone me in the next few days if he wanted to co-operate.”*

*Second interview report*

*“Mark was pleasant if a little cocky. His mother said that she felt that the project was Mark’s last chance. Interview successfully arranged with Bradbury Building. Mark commenced his placement at Bradbury Building Services on 8 7 1998. On all my monitoring visits to the Company the employer spoke very highly of Mark’s timekeeping, effort and adult attitude. Mark’s mother said that when he came home from work he was too exhausted to behave like a ‘little swine’ any more! If Mark*



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*maintains his current standard in the work place he will certainly be offered an apprenticeship when he leaves school.”*

*I enclose a letter from Mark’s mother.*

*“I would just like to say how pleased I am that my son Mark is changing very much for the better, being with the project has really benefited Mark. He is much better at home and towards me. We still have our moments, and Mark is still a teenager, but nevertheless I am still very pleased with him. He gets up at 6.30am Monday to Friday, and there is never a problem getting him up for work. I would just like to say thanks for giving him this chance which he really needed. I am still taking one day at a time, but right now I am very happy with him. Thank you.”*

- 755 In contrast, some parents appeared to be part of the problem, not the solution. This is illustrated – in a bitter sweet fashion – by the following anecdote described in one project’s termly report:-

*“Many of the young people involved in the project have a tough background, exemplified by a recent incident. A lad had caused difficulties in the workplace, and the firm refused to keep him on. The Project Director asked mother and son to meet him for a discussion. During the course of the discussion, the lad said ‘If I’d had a father I would be OK’. Mother (completely serious) replied, ‘I can’t understand him, he’s had five and can’t get on with any of them’.”*

- 756 Solihull ARP described the cultural context which was characteristic of many of their families as follows:-

*“By 14 these youngsters hold the status of adults in the family. They are too big to be told what to do. Even supportive parents tell us that their children are old enough to make their own choices and to live with the consequences. The youngsters come and go as they please; when we visit homes, parents rarely know exactly where the youngsters are, sometimes not knowing if they are in or out. These are not uncaring parents; this behaviour is regarded as normal and is not seen as a problem. Parents know that the law is that their children must attend school. They also know in theory the benefits of educational qualifications. They see these facts as completely divorced from their relationship with their own offspring, who to a greater or lesser extent organise and run their own lives. Parents demand to know, from us and from the EWOs [Education Welfare Officers], how they are to make their children come to school if they don’t want to. 14 is beyond the age where you can make them do as they are told.”*

- 757 An even bleaker analysis is set out in the following account from one ARP based in London:-

*“The progress made in the classroom was sometimes completely undone by the outside influences. Non-attendance was condoned. Pupils were prevented from attending by being forced into taking family obligations. The lack of concern or feelings of responsibility from some of the families was awesome. Alcohol and drug abuse was openly tolerated and supported within some families.”*

- 758 Yet there are other references, in the same report, to different parents who were supportive but just found life incredibly difficult. Families in such circumstances sometimes expressed considerable appreciation for the evening visits which some project staff were able and willing to provide.

- 759 Southwark ARP was able to report, very positively:-

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*“All parents of students who began the course signed agreements for the young people to participate and most attended a parents’ evening to explain about the course. This was followed by another parents’ evening... which had the unintended outcome of raising awareness of adult opportunities for parents themselves...”*

760 An even more positive description of successful engagement with parents was provided by the Coventry ARP which focused on theatre-based activity:-

*“The production element of the project has had the unexpected benefit of including parents in the whole process. They are able to attend an event at which they can feel proud of their child. Parents of children who are disaffected by the education system may not have other opportunities to witness their offspring in an education situation where they are not only achieving, but also shining! One parent commented that he had ....‘watched with amazement.....’. One student, who said he had a difficult relationship with his father, commented that he was surprised how pleased he was when his father showed signs of being proud of him!”*

761 This kind of account is clearly very encouraging. But so much seems to depend on the nature of the home circumstance to start with. When it has been possible to have some positive engagement with parents, projects have shown that dedicated staff can help to bridge the gap between student, home, school and work/FE/training placement; however, in others, the sad truth appears to be that it has been too late and that the problems have been too intractable for projects to make a difference.

762 Relatively few of the ARPs attempted structured interviews with the parents of project students. Barnsley was an exception, although they focussed on parents’ general perceptions rather than the impact of the project in depth. The findings (from an admittedly small sample of 35) included the following. Parents:-

- saw school-based learning as more important for girls than boys;
- perceived girls as better motivated and more self-confident than boys;
- thought their children attached more importance to good attendance than to good behaviour.

## **STUDENTS THEMSELVES**

763 There was an interesting mixture of evidence about whether other students are ‘part of the problem’ or ‘part of the solution’. There were certainly some cases where being enabled to get away from certain influential and dominant troublemakers in the original school ‘friendship’ group seemed to be the essential first step in supporting some individuals towards gaining a stronger sense of self-worth and personal ambition. Simply allowing those students time, in an adult and different environment, provided relief from some of the more pernicious aspects of group expectations. These students privately made it clear to project staff that they were glad of the chance not to be expected to adopt the behaviour pattern of the worst members of their immediate peer group.

764 When students were brought together specifically for the ARP enhancement, a new peer group was, of course, established. There were then examples of this new group becoming a disastrous mixture; putting the worst behaved students from several schools (especially if they were rival schools) together did not, on the whole, yield positive dividends! However, what sometimes happened was that the ‘disastrous’ mix

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very quickly became unstable with the defection of many of the (usually worst behaving) students; this left the others with some kind of common and mutually supportive bond, having weathered the initial storm and chosen to carry on. By the end of two years – especially if the opportunity involved considerable time together, plus some residential or other team activity – the group loyalty of the ‘survivors’ sometimes developed into a powerful and positive force for good.

765 There were also occasional local examples where particular students with similar problems gained a great deal from friendships developed on the project. The emergence of that kind of group loyalty was particularly noticeable when there were external pressures in play – such as in the Coventry theatre project. Here, the students were obliged to attend, be punctual, and work as a team, if their programme of performances (eg. to local primary schools) was to have any chance of success.

## **FINAL COMMENT**

766 This chapter, although lengthy, is itself a précis of a vast quantity of mainly qualitative material from project reports, local evaluations and SWA fieldwork. Three general themes which can be distilled, however, are around:-

- the importance of prior planning, insightful management and preparation of students and adult participants;
- the diversity of student backgrounds, attitudes, experiences and responses to project enhancements;
- the major contributions to be made by adults other than teachers in a variety of contexts.

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## VIII: SUCCESS FACTORS – PROCESSES

### INTRODUCTION

801 This chapter is similar to the previous chapter, but deals with the *processes* that appear to be influential, rather than focusing on the key players themselves. A large number of processes are covered, and so for ease of reporting they are split into three main groups, namely those with an impact more at *project* level, those operating more at *school* level, and those concerned with the *end of project* phase. In practice, these are not absolute distinctions and so there is an inevitable degree of overlap between the three groups

802 In brief the processes discussed are as follows:-

- project processes:
  - clarity of project purpose/objectives
  - logistics and communications
  - integration with other initiatives
  - relationships with careers services and other agencies
  - staff development
  - staff changes
  - equal opportunities
  - quality of learning environment;
- school processes:
  - school curriculum philosophy
  - preparation/induction of students and staff
  - timetabling
  - accreditation and certification
  - disapplication from the National Curriculum
  - involvement of schools in difficult circumstances;
- end of project processes:
  - celebrating success
  - dissemination
  - embedding and replication.

### PROCESSES MORE AT PROJECT LEVEL

#### ***Clarity of project purpose/objectives***

803 Most of the *ARPs* were quite tightly focused. They concentrated, for example, on:-

- a specific *target group* (mainly students with poor motivation, aspiration or attendance), although there were some associated problems about selection of students in some schools;
- just one main *type of intervention* – about two thirds of the *ARPs* concentrated on a single approach (eg. link courses or work placements) over the whole of the two year period.

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It may be the case that the early requirement for each ARP to agree a Local Evaluation Strategy had the effect of focusing attention on smaller numbers of variables.

804 Within the *SFs*, on the other hand, there was a very marked contrast between some projects which had a single and relatively tight focus, and others where the objectives and methods were cast very widely indeed. Examples of the former included:-

- Barking and Dagenham. This was an LEA-managed project which concentrated on the promotion and development of Printing GCSE as part of that LEA's well-established drive to promote 'vocational' GCSEs;
- Tower Hamlets. This was another LEA-managed initiative which focused on supporting the 16+ progression process for all local students in the Borough.

805 Examples of the latter included:-

- Brighton, where all the activity across 12 schools was developmental in nature and different in each school;
- Warrington, where although the different schools each had link courses with the FE College, these courses were significantly different in purpose, duration and target group, according to the needs of each school.

806 The *EAZs* (still ongoing) are also broadly based with mostly multiple approaches to work-related learning.

807 Some of those ARPs which had different activities in Years 10 and 11 afterwards expressed a degree of doubt as to whether that had been a wise decision. There was the suspicion that starting something new at the beginning of Year 11 did not help with securing good attendance, and even risked losing some students.

808 Derbyshire, for example, felt that some of their students were reluctant, and perhaps insufficiently prepared, to start a fresh phase of activity (work placements) in year two. Leicester also learned some lessons about when and how to organise changes of activities or placements – recognising these times as points of high risk.

809 Some projects concluded in retrospect that a 'keep it simple and keep it the same' approach was most likely to bring success (but see also the analysis in Chapter IX). However, other projects made the equally valid point that preparing young people for working life requires giving them experience of at least some changes in location and activity.

### ***Logistics and communications***

810 Link courses of various kinds between schools and FE Colleges have, of course, featured in several educational developments over many years. It seems curious, therefore, that some of the predictable logistical problems often seemed to come as a surprise to staff in the schools and colleges involved.

811 For example, many projects spent considerable time and effort resolving issues around:-

- timetables that did not correspond easily;
- holidays that did not always match completely;

- 
- student uniform;
  - travel arrangements. There were sometimes hidden costs here, especially where circumstances required use of a mini-bus and/or supervision from a teacher;
  - costs of consumables;
  - different approaches to homework and course work;
  - safe but also accessible storage of student work;
  - liaison between key staff and the time and costs of that liaison;
  - occasional rivalry between two or more schools.
- 812 Critically, the actual costs of the link did not appear always to have been identified in advance, especially when the student group concerned was a not a taught group, as far as the school was concerned. This was because one or two fewer students in KS4 subject classes on a link session did not release any school staff resource at all for deployment elsewhere. So, in effect, many link students required two allocations of funding. In that situation, some schools took the view that, without permanent additional funding, the link course could not continue beyond the duration of the ARP.
- 813 Most of these problems and issues did not occur with extended work placements on employers' premises. One reason is that most employers were prepared to provide their time spent on the project (and often other costs, too, such as travel or consumables) free of charge (see also Chapter VII on the contribution of employers).
- 814 Effective communication between project managers, teachers, students and FE Colleges/work placements often turned out to be a major issue. Very often the problem started within school, especially when students were chosen from different form or tutor groups. One ARP reported that in this situation, where the students were not a distinct and identifiable group, some teaching staff were constantly asking to be reminded exactly who these students were!
- 815 School co-ordinators caught in this kind of situation often revealed a degree of frustration that they were unable to arrange sufficient opportunities for necessary planning, assessment, review and communication on an individual student or group basis.
- 816 All projects involving links between schools and FE College(s) had to identify and resolve their own set of communication issues, especially in relation to student attendance. Daily – sometimes twice daily – faxes of attendance registers were commonplace. Even with such regular exchange of information, getting that information to and from the right person at either end was often problematic. It is often overlooked that schools and colleges are large institutions and that their internal systems for communications are sometimes complex - and not always reliable. It was obviously easier if the link involved just one school and one college (eg. as in Rochdale and Southwark).
- 817 One example of effective (if expensive) practice in this context was provided by the Enfield SF. Here:-

*“A designated college tutor monitored the progress of the groups on a day to day basis. He met the students each morning with the class teacher for registration and*

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*any announcements which had to be made, and again at the end of the day for a review of the day's activities. Registers showing students' attendance were faxed on the day, or the day after, to the schools from which they came. Links were maintained between the college and the members of staff at the feeder schools so that messages could be transmitted quickly. College staff had been anticipating considerable behaviour difficulties but these did not materialise. The few minor problems which did occur were dealt with quickly without having to call on any additional support."*

- 818 In theory a similar set of logistical difficulties (ie. as set out in paragraph 811 for links with FE Colleges) had to be resolved within projects which linked students to employer placements. However, in practice these seemed easier to solve. Perhaps this was because, in many cases, students were obliged to follow the same systems as normal employees; and those systems were fairly efficient at picking up lateness and non-attendance. Also, most work placements were located in smaller premises than FE Colleges.
- 819 There was evidence of frustration on the part of project managers with some schools over communications, especially with respect to problems over individual students. Fundamentally, the frustration seemed to focus on who exactly was 'responsible' for individual students within the school system – a question which was evidently not always easy to answer. In one ARP, schools that were deemed not to have performed well enough in this respect have been excluded from the project extension work.

### ***Integration with other initiatives***

- 820 It was noticeable that several of those LEAs which had secured funding for work-related learning under two or more DfES schemes (eg. ARPs, EAZs, SFs, Key Stage 4 Demonstration Projects) seemed to have made good connections between these schemes. Examples include Gloucestershire, Leicester, Southwark and Tower Hamlets. In each of these authorities, the overview and co-ordination provided by a key individual (typically a LEA adviser) was clearly helpful. In some cases, local dissemination arrangements usefully brought all this experience together for the benefit of other schools. Gloucestershire's conference in November 1999, which attracted local and national speakers, as well as representatives from nearly every local secondary school, was a good example of such dissemination which identified important links between connected local initiatives.
- 821 Some ARPs were able to establish useful balance and connections with other Government schemes focussed on troubled young people. Portsmouth, for example, directed its Project 90 (ARP) scheme for poor attenders to fit alongside its Project Warrior (New Start) scheme for students with behavioural problems.
- 822 In some parts of the country, such as Manchester, London and other major conurbations, the role of the local authority and other bodies was vital in co-ordinating and making connections between not just work-related learning initiatives, but across other initiatives such as community projects (funded by the Single Regeneration Budget), and Excellence in Cities. Overall, no major evidence of duplication, or lack of communication, or failure to see the whole picture, was evident at *project* level.
- 823 At *school* level, however, there were some examples of too many initiatives being undertaken simultaneously. In one ARP, one of the project schools firstly

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amalgamated with another school and was then chosen to discharge a major role in the local Excellence in Cities initiative. The external evaluator commented:-

*“[The school involvement in the project] had to compete for managerial attention alongside a range of other issues. This manifested itself in the school co-ordinators not being allocated time for the [project] work and thus having to accommodate it alongside their other responsibilities. One effect of this was that the school co-ordinators were never able to visit the students during their college work.”*

### **Relationships with careers services and other agencies**

824 Several ARPs developed close working connections with their local careers services. A good example, showing some of the detailed arrangements, was provided by Tower Hamlets ARP:-

*“An important development that has been implemented over the past term is that of enhanced partnership work with the Careers Service in Tower Hamlets. A Vocational Adviser presented the project to all Careers Advisers, including those who are not involved with schools-based initiatives. The aim of these meetings is two fold: firstly, to ensure that Careers Advisers and Vocational Advisers are not duplicating each other’s work; secondly, to ensure that the Careers Advisers’ and Vocational Advisers’ expertise is effectively utilised. Effectively, the Vocational Adviser can put hard to reach clients in touch with the Careers Service through out-reach work. In addition, cross training has allowed the Vocational Adviser to take on the Careers Adviser role in cases of extreme disaffection.”*

825 Another example was provided at the Wigan ARP where the careers service not only provided considerable support to the individual students but played a full part in the overall management of the project. This included use of their ‘at risk’ criteria to help make a more objective selection of the students from one high school in the first place.

826 A third example was at the Portsmouth ARP where particular efforts were made to offer careers guidance to students who had been very poor attenders; most came from extremely troubled backgrounds. Sessions were offered either at the school or at the careers centre, decisions being made to suit the needs and preferences of the young people concerned.

827 While most projects maintained good relationships with careers services, it was noted in one EAZ that a degree of tension had developed. This was because some careers advisers were said to be doubtful about the merits of disapplication from the National Curriculum and feared the narrowing of opportunity, if students focussed down on particular work-related routes at too early an age.

828 Elsewhere, a few projects admitted that they should have made more effective – and earlier - contacts with the careers service, not least because it became clear that their students needed more support in making choices about work experience, taster courses and related aspects.

829 The Government initiative on Connexions came after the start of all the projects. Clearly, however, several of the features of the work-related learning projects discussed in this report have a relevance to the development of Connexions. In particular, the approach to personal/social mentoring described in Chapter VII has a clear resonance with the concept of one-to-one personal advisers as espoused by Connexions. Another important link is the objective for relevant and flexible



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curriculum design, included in the Connexions Strategy (ie. alongside the ‘youth support service’).

- 830 It was clear from several of the final reports that some projects developed productive and important relationships with other agencies, too. Portsmouth ARP is one example where, partly because of the individual student problems which were identified at a fairly early stage, the ARP found it helpful to work closely with Social Services, the Education Welfare Service and the local Drugs Advice Service - precisely the sort of ‘joined up’ delivery envisaged by Connexions.
- 831 Other key contributors to the local planning and implementation of work-related learning projects included the education business partnerships (EBPs). In two areas (Manchester TEC and Lancashire), they were the principal ‘drivers’, behind the formal contract holders. The Lancashire example was particularly interesting, since there were two EBPs involved, covering the east and west of the county. This resulted in the steering group being able to draw interesting comparisons behind the impact of the different approaches adopted.

### **Staff development**

- 832 Staff training and teacher development were not included as elements in the national objectives for the ARPs, but several projects included these aims within their local objectives. These were usually in relation to later dissemination to those teachers in the schools concerned who had not been directly involved with the project and/or teachers from other schools.
- 833 Several projects (eg. Dudley and Devon) organised INSET programmes for school staff which ran across the two year period. These often included sessions on the mechanics of different approaches to accreditation (eg. recording of witness statements) – sometimes assisted by direct input from the relevant examination boards.
- 834 It was interesting that a number of projects identified the need for additional training for some of those involved *during* the course of the project. Leicester, for example, arranged for all FE lecturers involved in the programme to have an INSET session on ‘dealing with challenging students’. The following year (as the project continued) this training was extended to all training providers, on the theme of ‘motivating challenging young people’. More emphasis was also given within the overall training programme to help staff provide students with the opportunity to develop their ‘employability skills’ in general – and not just to focus on vocational skills.
- 835 In several SFs, the main objectives related to staff and curriculum development. While much useful activity clearly took place, there was some evidence from external evaluation reports that the lack of connection with specific student learning programmes and outcomes did not assist the overall coherence and effectiveness of the projects.
- 836 In two ARPs, it was reported that some subject teachers were not making any connection between their ‘ordinary’ teaching approaches and the subject-related inputs which were being made available through the work-related enhancements. The lesson here would appear to be that INSET is needed on a fairly wide scale if there is to be a significant and genuine integration of work-related learning into mainstream pedagogy.

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- 837 A more positive account of INSET gain was provided by the Rochdale ARP which involved joint working between the Food Technology departments of the school and the local FE College:-

*“The staff need to learn more about the context within which each was working and this was achieved through a series of meetings. This led to revisions of the schemes of work with the intention of achieving better integration between school and college based work... Both staff feel that the work became better integrated and supportive of the requirements of the GCSE as well as facilitating the achievement of NVQ Units.”*

Also, and importantly, the Food Technology teacher *“felt that the experience of the project had made a big difference to her own teaching style.”*

### **Staff changes**

- 838 Two years is a long time, in terms of staff stability, if the hope is to keep all the major players together over the lifetime of projects. It was the norm, rather than the exception, for at least one - and often several - key player(s) from the project/LEA, the schools, or the opportunity providers to leave. Since their contributions were often as much associated with personal interest rather than part of their strict job description, the departure of these staff was frequently quite damaging.

- 839 A typical account of this feature of staff change was provided in the Dudley ARP final report:-

*“The project was somewhat hampered by a change in staff at several schools and the departure from the LEA at the end of the first year of the project evaluator, who was also the curriculum adviser responsible for work experience.”*

- 840 The potentially damaging impact on students of a sudden staff change is well illustrated by this extract from the Coventry ARP report:-

*“ The process of appointing a co-ordinator was thorough and the appointment was made from a very strong field. Unfortunately, the first co-ordinator left, due to unforeseen personal problems, before the end of the first term. The students expressed the feeling of being “let down” by the sudden departure of the co-ordinator and these feelings could have had a crucial impact on the success or otherwise of future work. Fortunately, the new co-ordinator had the skills and experience required of the post and quickly regained the flagging confidence of the groups.”*

- 841 Another unfortunate feature was that, in several instances, the staff changes resulted in those involved with the design of the bid not being the same as those involved with the eventual implementation.

- 842 Staff sickness, sometimes on an extended basis, was another problem mentioned by some projects, eg. Rochdale – although here the ‘teaming’ of the Food Technology teacher at the school and the chef tutor at the FE College provided a degree of flexibility to deal with unexpected problems.

- 843 Some projects made considerable efforts to anticipate potential difficulties and make appropriate arrangements well in advance. York ARP, for example, identified a temporary replacement project manager to cover during the absence on maternity leave of the substantive post-holder. A handover period, during which both individuals were in post, ensured a smooth transition. Key players in York commented on the effectiveness of these arrangements.

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## **Equal opportunities**

- 844 Given that most of the ARPs were directed towards students who showed evidence of disaffection, lack of motivation and poor attendance, it is not surprising that a majority of the project students (and hence of the comparator students) were boys. This reflects the well-established evidence from elsewhere that such disaffection is strongly gender biased towards boys.
- 845 No particular efforts appear to have been made by projects to counteract *gender stereotyping*. Perhaps this was because it was felt to be more important to engage commitment and interest in *some* career path – even if that was in a stereotypical sector such as bricklaying (boys) or care of young children (girls). Thus, in Wigan ARP:-
- “The evidence that the students were choosing stereotypical placements was clear from the earliest point of the project. The steering group was aware of this but felt that the pupils’ first choices should be accepted. In discussion with the students and their parents it was clear from them that they made choices based on parental influence or on ‘what their mates thought’.”*
- 846 One or two points of encouragement were provided by the Manchester TEC project evaluators. Their data showed nearly equal gender balances for their placements in IT and painting/decorating (but little movement in other occupational areas with traditional gender imbalances).
- 847 The SF project at Luton was interesting in that the FE taster course scheme was open to *all* 16-19 students in the Borough. This was organised over the summer holiday. Out of a total of 240 students who attended, 197 (82%) were girls.
- 848 In relation to *special needs*, it is self evident that the broad thrust of the ARP initiative would fit the needs of many students at schools for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and/or PRUs; indeed, 4 of the 21 ARPs included one or more such institutions. Not only were no major difficulties reported, but also it appeared that the greater flexibility available to such students, in terms of timetable and curriculum, made it easier to address logistical problems; a similar observation was made in the national evaluation of the earlier Key Stage 4 Demonstration Projects. So, for EBD schools - in particular - and PRUs, the opportunities provided by many of the ARPs often added one more, particularly valuable, option to what was already a varied and customised curriculum.
- 849 There was a particular difficulty, however, associated with the participation of PRUs ie. the brief length of stay of many students; indeed, often the objective is to return the students concerned to mainstream education as quickly as possible. PRU students were, therefore, only able to complete their ARP opportunity if they stayed for the entire KS4 period; or if their ‘new’ school was able to make appropriate arrangements for them to complete the course/placement opportunity that had been started at the PRU. It will also be recalled that many PRUs cater only for Year 11 students; for these students, therefore, the ARP could only be a one year project (as, for example, in Dudley).
- 850 There was a different challenge with respect to students from schools targeted at those with moderate or severe learning difficulties (MLD and SLD). Here the courses, learning materials and assessment arrangements for mainstream students were not necessarily suitable for students with learning difficulties. There was evidence of some projects tackling this problem through the design of local courses or careful

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selection of materials which were more suitable. In Lambeth, for example, the SF (which focused on enhanced work experience) included extra help and amended arrangements for the associated student diary through which achievement was recorded and assessed.

- 851 An extremely encouraging account of a positive approach to inclusion of SLD students was provided in the final report from Coventry's theatre-based ARP project:-

*"There were initial anxieties about the inclusion of two students with special education needs onto the course, particularly from the co-ordinator. Her concerns were about tokenism and how she would measure the progress of the two students. It is clear that within their abilities, the students made progress and this progress was monitored by continual close contact with parents and teachers in school. The two students required extra support from the co-ordinator, but it was noticeable how the other students took on some of the responsibility. The co-ordinator came to reject her initial reservations as it became clear that inclusion of the two students was not only good for the students, but had a positive impact on the groups as a whole. Other students talked of benefits to themselves as a result of being responsible for the inclusion of the SLD students."*

- 852 Relatively few projects made any comments about problems (or solutions) in relation to the inclusion of students with physical and/or sensory disabilities. It is not clear whether the conclusion to be drawn is that such students tended not to be included in project groups, or whether (they were but) their experiences have not been well recorded.

### **Quality of the learning environment**

- 853 It was frequently pointed out that a particularly important factor for success – perhaps second only to the quality of the adult/student relationships – was the quality of the learning environment. Clean, well equipped classrooms (or equivalent) with up to date equipment and IT were important in their own right, of course, as being conducive to good teaching and learning. However, they also provided an important visible signal to the young people concerned that *they mattered* and that they were being prepared appropriately for the modern world.

- 854 A potent example of how well this could work was provided by the Wirral SF. Here students from several schools were enabled to attend the Laird Foundation; this has recently been established at Monks Ferry (adjacent to the River Mersey) on the site where John Laird first established his shipbuilding business. It is an innovative engineering training centre, formed through a unique partnership between Wirral Borough Council and other agencies in the public, private and voluntary/community sectors. With £7.5 million investment, it offers state-of-the-art engineering, manufacturing, construction and heritage skills training. When complete, it will offer such training to 600 apprentices, employees, school students and New Deal clients.

- 855 Not every project or every part of the country will be able to offer this kind of learning environment, but the impact on young people and the associated messages were made plain by the external evaluator:-

*"The ambitious vision for the future and the money and energy being put into it had a positive and inspiring effect ...."*

*"The machines, tools and other equipment were present in greater quantity and of better quality than schools could offer..."*

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*“One group was amazed that if something was broken a new one could be obtained with the permission of the storekeeper...”*

*“Pupils were greatly taken with being given the use of overalls, goggles and hard hats and by their schools buying them the boots required by Health and Safety regulations...it was also a way in which their sense of being respected and taken seriously was manifested.”*

## **PROCESSES MORE AT SCHOOL LEVEL**

### ***School curriculum philosophy***

856 Overall, there was little discussion of schools' curriculum philosophies and how the projects either fitted into those philosophies or enabled them to be extended. In several instances, it seemed as if the schools were grafting the ARP onto their existing arrangements, with little apparent thought as to how this would fit with their overall vision of the curriculum or student entitlement. It may be, of course, that such discussions did go on, but were not recorded in project papers.

857 One impressive exception was provided by the City of Westminster SF, a section of which is reproduced below (to give important context, the location and names of the schools have been retained):-

*“The Standards Fund (1998-1999) enabled two Key Stage 4 work related projects to be established in Westminster.*

*These were:*

*Arts and Media Technology at Pimlico School  
and*

*Theatre Technology at North Westminster Community School*

*These two work-related programmes have not been designed to meet the needs of ‘disaffected’ students; both courses have drawn students from the full range of abilities and have not been skewed in any particular way towards catering for the ‘low fliers’ or ‘disaffected’. They have grown out of a strong belief that work related programmes, which have been rigorously constructed can be appropriate courses of study for both academically able and less able students.*

*The choice of vocational areas: Arts and Media Graphics at Pimlico School and Theatre Technology at North Westminster Community School has arisen because of particular strengths in these areas at both schools and the potential for employment within the ‘creative industries’ in the Greater London area.”*

858 A second example showing a strong connection between a school's curriculum philosophy favouring work-related learning and linked to local economic circumstances was provided by Rochdale ARP. Their single, subject-specific focus (Food Technology) project, based on a strong school/FE link, was closely tied to known features of the local labour market – with imaginative forward thinking to the Manchester Commonwealth Games in 2002.

859 It was somewhat surprising to find relatively few references to school development plans, other school planning documents or explicit statements of student entitlement

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in relation to work-related learning. Barnsley was one project to provide an exception - as illustrated by the comments from some of the teachers involved:-

*“The project was mentioned in the school development plans for all schools, usually in the context of work-related learning initiatives, but also related to disaffection, careers guidance and, in one case, special educational needs.”*

860 Another example of clear overall curriculum thinking and planning was provided by the Leicester ARP. Here, the *extra* opportunity involved for the project group of disaffected students was explicitly seen to be on top of a work-related learning entitlement for all students – practically delivered, at least in part, through co-ordinated inter-school arrangements (pre-dating and extending well beyond the project).

861 Some interesting insights into the curriculum, management and resource implications of expanding beyond pilot ARP schemes for disaffected students was provided by the external evaluator to the Lancashire SF project:-

*“The success in setting up the Project was due in part to its innovatory nature and the fact that it was seen as beneficial for a small number of potentially disaffected Year 11 pupils. If a similar project were to become a permanent feature of provision, possibly involving more pupils, then it would have a number of important implications – for the school’s guidance system, for example, with the need for early counselling and parental contact; for Key Stage 4 curriculum planning, with possibly more modular and one year courses to link with vocational education for staff development, so that expertise in vocational education, particularly the teaching, assessment and verification of Key Skills, is strengthened and deployed effectively”.*

862 Another SF – run by Dorset LEA – was interesting in a different way, in that a dominant element was to try to secure *coherence* in the planning of work-related learning initiatives and *continuity* over time. Each of the four schools involved carried out an initial curriculum audit to try to map out what was being done, to what depth, and what gaps existed. This was felt to be necessary because:-

*“Over time, some schools had built up initiatives and expertise that had been lodged with a particular member of staff or department. Whilst there had been some advantage in that, in respect of a single point of reference, there had also been a real danger that the expertise/initiative could become isolated and opportunities to maximise on the development were not exploited fully for the benefit of pupils.”*

863 Such a curriculum audit in relation to work-related learning seems highly beneficial - and an exercise which many other schools might fruitfully follow.

864 Dudley ARP identified another important learning point about school curricula and the management of the kind of opportunities offered by projects such as the ARPs; this was that some school staff may still be significantly short of relevant knowledge/guidance. One of their conclusions was:-

*“Schools need more information in order to shape and manage the Key Stage 4 curriculum to enable them to better meet the needs of all their pupils.”*

865 Another, equally important, conclusion from Dudley was that schools should plan their KS4 curriculum on the basis of a thorough understanding of the capabilities of the students concerned. In their words:-

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*“It is important that schools are able properly to assess each individual pupil’s readiness to pursue a work-related curriculum at Key Stage 4.”*

### **Preparation/induction of students and staff**

866 Tower Hamlets was one project which put considerable stress on well-structured induction for students at the beginning of their ARP programme. They piloted an induction pack which was described as follows:-

*“Its aim is to help the client engage with the programme as quickly and as effectively as possible. To do this the client is encouraged to think of the skills they already have and the skills they need to develop and apply these to the jobs that they are interested in. This has helped the Vocational Advisers to identify placements that are most appropriate and has reduced, in some cases, the frequency of placement breakdown. Feedback from teachers and clients has been very positive: teachers feel that it focuses pupils at an early stage; pupils feel that they are introduced to both the project and the Vocational Adviser in a stimulating and engaging way.”*

867 Several other projects also invested significantly in the ‘front end’. Islington ARP, for example, started with a weeklong residential experience where part of the purpose was to discuss and agree appropriate rules and ‘boundaries’.

868 Others, such as Leicester, used the experience of the first year to make significant changes to their ‘Future Pathways’ programme for future repeat runs. In particular Leicester has determined:-

- to extend the school-based induction to ensure students understand the purpose of the taster courses;
- to give more time for guidance over choice of options;
- to allow more time and support to develop student confidence in going off-site.

869 Solihull ARP made the interesting point that induction is important, not just to help the students understand what opportunities there will be available to them, but also to make them feel good about themselves and what they might achieve:-

*“A comprehensive induction programme is essential in allowing the students to value their place on the course.”*

870 Because of the timing of the ARPs, those projects which needed a prompt start in September 1998 – notably those involving GCSE courses – were not able to organise the induction which, with hindsight, might have been helpful. Rochdale ARP, for example, commented as follows in the conclusions of their final report:-

*“The project would have benefited from an initial phase that allowed the staff involved to understand and experience each others’ working situation. To this end it is recommended that an initial period of at least half a term be allocated as a ‘pre-planning’ stage to include consideration of the subjects and courses involved, differences in teaching and learning styles and in assessment processes, the different working environments and the general ethos of the establishments involved. It is important that this includes some observation of practices in the school and college settings that the students will experience.*

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*It is also recommended that students are prepared for the experience – some of the project students were apprehensive about going to college at first although this does not appear to have been anything other than a very short-term problem. Nevertheless the total amount of time that students had in college was relatively short and better preparation might make this time more productive. Preparation/induction should include a wider view of the college and its provision and also the implications of the increased level of ‘responsibility for own work’ in the college. Students were, through representatives, involved in the on-going planning of the course and this is a feature that should be developed.”*

- 871 Several other reports commented to the effect that projects would have been more effective with a longer lead-in period, better preparation and briefing for all concerned ,and specific induction for out-of-school activity.

### **Timetabling**

- 872 Nearly all of the ARP and SF projects highlighted the difficulties that their schools faced over timetabling.
- 873 The first issue was that the students chosen for the relevant additional opportunity were often already locked into a whole range of different tutor and teaching groups and could only rarely be brought together, other than for the particular link course, work placement, or whatever. Therefore, all the necessary and desirable administration, group discussion, planning and so on could only be achieved in a piecemeal manner. It is of interest in this context that, in the York ARP, the school that chose as their project group a discrete teaching ‘set’ obtained much better GCSE results for these students – relative to their comparators – than the other school, where students were spread and could not be easily brought together.
- 874 However, even where discrete groups of project students could be brought together for some lessons in common beyond the particular link/work placements involved, schools found it difficult to deal satisfactorily with the fact that work-related learning nearly always requires full or half day attendance out of school. Thus, other lessons were inevitably missed, with the onus usually falling on the student to take personal responsibility for ‘catching up’. It is important to note that some schools and some teachers did their very best to assist students in this situation through a variety of ad hoc arrangements. However, given the level of maturity and motivation of many of the students involved, a strategy based on expecting them to organise their own ‘catching up’ was, in general, unrealistic and likely to fail.
- 875 The evaluator to the Lancashire SF project picked this problem up at an early stage:-  
*“For some pupils the loss of one day a week of their school curriculum could have been better managed if their Key Stage 4 learning had been organised as a whole. Each school dealt with the problem of ensuring minimum loss to school studies in a different way. Where it was not possible to prevent pupils missing work in the core curriculum or other essential elements, efforts were made to ensure that pupils caught up with the work at some stage of the week. The weaknesses in this arrangement, particularly apparent where pupils have difficulties with concentration and attendance, were already being mentioned by the schools concerned.”*
- 876 In another SF project the problems were well described from the students’ point of view as follows:-



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*“A minority of pupils, from one school in particular, highlighted that they had fallen behind with schoolwork while on the project. They expressed the view that teachers had not always been supportive to pupils who had to catch up on work missed.*

[For example:-]

- *‘Work was difficult to keep up with. I had to catch up with lessons missed and I didn’t always know what had been done.’*
- *‘I didn’t really get anything out of it. I just fell behind with schoolwork.’*
- *Two students decided to withdraw from the project in order that they should continue with their schoolwork.”*

877 The same story – but with a more positive outcome – was described in the Tower Hamlets ARP final report:-

*“Difficulties of timetabling a day a week external provision and the curriculum consequence for the young person did not result in making use of Section 363 and disapplication. It remained a thorny issue throughout. When placements clashed with school commitments or when course-work deadlines were competing with attendance at placement, Year 11 participants found it particularly stressful and put additional pressure on staff. In many cases informal support mechanisms assisted participants to catch up on work missed through attending placement.*

*From the autumn term 2000 there is a commitment by schools to manage the placement provision as part of curriculum planning. Several models are being explored, including timetabling the vocational option along with other options in a block with no core subjects. The use of the recently introduced Learning Support Centres to provide individual support to those in need, in all secondary schools as part of a successful Excellence in Cities bid, is seen as another way of supporting project participants. Referrals will only be accepted if the school can satisfactorily show how it intends to provide customised support for project participants.”*

However, not many schools or LEAs will be able to make use of the kind of additional resources that Tower Hamlets hope to call upon.

878 Many projects pointed out that, if the overall ARP national programme had started earlier, with subsequent earlier decisions on which bids were to be accepted, schools would have been able to have made better timetabling and staffing arrangements. Manchester LEA, Leeds and Dudley were among the ARPs which made this point particularly strongly.

879 Several projects were moving to the conclusion that, at the very least, the work-related learning opportunity should be timetabled against two GCSEs in the KS4 option system; and that the whole school timetable should then be constrained (despite all the other difficulties) to create genuinely clash-free half days for the work-related enhancements. More radically, some concluded that, for some students (typically the most disaffected), the only answer was to create a separate and different, five-day a week curriculum and timetable for the whole of their KS4 ‘school life’.

880 In this respect, the ARPs at Solihull, Islington and Sheffield are of particular interest in that these all consisted of an entire five day a week alternative curriculum on non-school premises. In overall terms, the reports from these projects demonstrate some remarkable successes with some extremely troubled young people, not so much in

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terms of KS4 academic success but certainly in terms of increased self esteem and post-16 progression to training and/or employment.

881 Interestingly, Sheffield used a specially recruited teacher (employed by the LEA) to deliver most of the core elements of the National Curriculum. Solihull did something similar – with a small number of part-time teachers – but significantly reducing the total number of ‘different teachers’.

882 The experience of Leicester ARP is also relevant here. The arrangement at one school was that the students spent 40% of their time on the project and were taught for those lessons by just two members of staff. In another project school, a much smaller amount of time was allocated to the project which was then delivered in a modular format, which resulted in a large number of different members of staff working with the project group. In the first school, the student evaluation returns reflected very positively on the programme and showed gains in student motivation. The same was not the case in the second school, where the project group actually did worse than the comparator group in terms of relative shifts in attitudes and motivation.

### **Accreditation and certification**

883 Chapter IV provided a description of the many different kinds of ‘vocational qualifications’ used by some projects. These had the twin aims of:-

- trying to boost students’ sense of self worth and achievement;
- trying to assist the transition to work or further training.

884 Some schools and projects found the whole process of organising accreditation outside the normal GCSE and GNVQ routes somewhat problematic and often unrewarding. The kind of logistical and resource problems involved were summarised by Tower Hamlets ARP as follows:-

*“NVQ assessment was attempted although this did not meet with any success for a number of reasons. Firstly, project participants moved regularly from employer to employer, often changing vocational area as they went along. NVQ qualifications, in the main, are limited to assessment of one vocational route. Secondly, assessment of the NVQ is costly and was not accurately budgeted for in the original proposal.”*

885 Lancashire SF made similar points, emphasising some of the difficulties with NVQ accreditation for employers, students and teachers:-

*“Because of the speed necessary to ensure all participating pupils were placed in work experience, it was not possible to ensure that all employers had appropriate experience of NVQ provision. At the time of this evaluation, some employers were unclear about what was expected. For some this was their first NVQ placement. Another issue for the two schools deciding on the workplace route to NVQ, was that pupils were given choice as to which units to attempt. All of these students may therefore be doing any unit from one of six possible vocational areas. This makes it more difficult for school staff to become familiar with NVQ requirements and may lead to these students being cut off from informed school support.”*

886 Along the same lines, Leicester ARP explained:-

*“We found the NVQ Unit approach too restricting for our students. Students being out of school for only one day a week meant that only individual units could be tackled and these were seen to have little value for progression. In addition, we found that*

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*most students required employability skills more than specific vocational skills. The vocational context provided the students with the motivation to improve these skills – particularly getting students to work and co-operate with each other. Consequently, we stuck with local certification for students completing their Year 11 training placement.”*

- 887 Sometimes local initiatives were taken to try to simplify procedures. Even then, problems remained, as can be seen from this extract from the Warwickshire ARP report – which also repeats the concern about ‘lack of league table recognition’ made by many school and project representatives:-

*“One of the school co-ordinators with considerable experience of the NVQ accreditation framework developed student-friendly booklets for recording and reflecting on their acquisition of skills. Most were reasonably conscientious about keeping these up to date, and this was helpful in supplying evidence for the training provider commissioned to arrange accreditation. There were considerable problems in arranging for this accreditation, the costs too were very high – far higher than those associated with GCSE or GNVQ. Any future development of NVQ accreditation at Key Stage 4 will need to address this problem, as well as the lack of recognition for NVQ in the publication of school achievements (‘league tables’).”*

- 888 Leicester ARP, in arguing broadly the same case, put the situation even more starkly and made an explicit link to future funding policy:-

*“Many of our disaffected/underachieving students respond better to smaller units of learning - this means that even GNVQ and NVQ Units are not appropriate. We need to look for a unit-based credit system to both motivate students and recognise their achievements. Such accreditation will need to be recognised in league tables if schools are to value it. There are some headteachers that already believe that schemes like Future Pathways are too expensive, especially when they do not contribute to league tables. Continued targeted funding is a priority if schemes such as Future Pathways are to continue.”*

- 889 A contrasting view on the ‘league table’ issue was developed by Rochdale ARP. Their main conclusion was expressed in their final report as follows:-

*“The message for others considering such projects in the future is that cross-phase subject links...can produce improved attainment for the students at GCSE as well as providing a number of other key benefits. In this context, work related learning did not take place at the expense of GCSE performance but can actually lead to improved performance.”*

- 890 Rochdale’s conclusions on this point were atypical. However, it should be stressed that this project included a *mix* of students, including some who would have been already positively motivated towards achieving success at GCSE.

- 891 Dudley attempted to use entry level qualifications with their students but, although some students obtained these awards, others still experienced problems. Not all schools, for example, had staff with relevant knowledge and experience. Staff in some schools in this project concluded that the award did not challenge their students enough and also came to believe that: *“these qualifications are not generally understood.”* The net effect was that this element of the ARP dwindled in importance as the project progressed.

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- 892 More generally, it was apparent from our fieldwork that many teachers were not well-acquainted with the range of qualifications approved under Section 400 of the Education Act 1996 for school students up to Key Stage 4. Some appeared to come across these almost by chance. In a minority of cases, some of the qualifications appeared to be used inappropriately – most often in offering entry level courses and qualifications for students who were capable of attempting more demanding courses.
- 893 Warwickshire ARP expressed some disappointment that the two generic Key Skill qualifications of ‘Working with Others’ and ‘Improving Own Learning and Performance’ could not continue to be offered beyond the pilot period:-

*“Consortium members have been very disappointed at the QCA withdrawal of accreditation in the future of the two Key Skills recognised above. It is felt that they have been particularly important to these youngsters who have had to work hard at developing these skills, and have appreciated their recognition. These skills have been important in contributing to the students’ work-readiness. There were also concerns about the limitations of the Section 400 list of acceptable vocational areas for use in Key Stage 4; a number of students were disappointed not to be able to pursue their chosen vocational interest.”*

### ***Disapplication from the National Curriculum***

- 894 Details about student disapplications from the National Curriculum did not feature strongly in the termly or final reports from projects. Where they were mentioned, it was usually simply to state that some or all of the students had been disappplied according to DfES guidance.
- 895 Views varied between those who regarded disapplication as a sign of failure and those who saw it as a positive opportunity. The schools in Salford and Trafford EAZ were in the latter group, judging disapplication to be helpful in setting the right tone and encouraging innovation in work-related options. Generally, however, views were somewhat muted.

### ***Involvement of schools in difficult circumstances***

- 896 The dilemma of whether or not to include schools in special measures or with serious weaknesses within projects of this kind was raised in the national evaluation of Key Stage 4 Demonstration Projects for work-related learning. The arguments appear finely balanced.
- 897 On the one hand, schools trying to improve their performance and move on from critical inspection findings can often benefit from the kind of encouragement and new opportunities provided by a Government-funded, curriculum-related, specific project. On the other hand, schools in these circumstances often need to concentrate all their resources on crucial priorities such as improving standards in the core subjects, tackling poor student behaviour and addressing issues related to ineffective teaching and learning. Indeed, if there are general management failings in a school, it can be argued that it is illogical to introduce an additional management task.
- 898 A school in the Herefordshire EAZ offers positive evidence for the former view. Here the work-related enhancements were playing a part in moving the school forward. Subjectively, however, our fieldwork suggested that this was attributable in part to a particularly positive lead from senior managers, two of whom had been external appointments.

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899 On balance, our evaluation casts doubt on the wisdom of including such schools in initiatives such as ARPs – where the requirement for close management attention and considerable supporting data is substantial. There were certainly examples where poor data quality or missing data in relation to the ARP seemed to coincide with general school failings in relation to leadership, monitoring and data management.

8100 The following extract from the external evaluator's report on one ARP puts the situation very clearly:-

*“Shortly after the start of the project both schools were placed under ‘special measures’, and shortly after this both had new heads. Being in special measures possibly helped to maintain the project profile within the schools as it could be seen as the schools taking steps to change. However, the detrimental effect on the project was the enormous pressure under which staff in both schools were placed. Interviews with staff in both schools revealed the pressure of extra work and sometimes low morale. For instance, because of increased pressure on his time, the deputy head in [one of the schools] handed over responsibility for the project in the second year to another member of staff, who unfortunately then went on sick leave. It eventually became clear that this was long term and the deputy head then took back the responsibility for the project but he too had periods of sick leave. Inevitably this had some effect on the project.”*

8101 In another ARP, the external evaluator commented that when a particular project school went into special measures, the project had to compete for attention from senior managers who were, understandably, preoccupied with other issues.

8102 Other schools in the ARPs were also subject to disturbance during the lifetime of the initiative through reorganisation proposals of various kinds (eg. merger with other local schools). Such factors nearly always had a negative effect on schools' ability to secure maximum benefit for their students from the external funding.

## **END OF PROJECT PROCESSES**

### ***Celebrating success***

8103 It is sometimes thought that disaffected and demotivated students (who formed the majority of the project groups) have little time for events that celebrate any success they might achieve. However, the evidence from the project and evaluation reports demonstrates that the opposite is true. Qualifications and certificates are highly valued, provided that:-

- they mean something to the outside world to which these young people are now beginning to relate ;
- the context for the celebration of success is also adult and ‘different’.

8104 Thus, for example, in the Portsmouth ARP, there were several presentation ceremonies in the Town Hall – with appropriate civic ceremony – and attended by both the Principal of the FE College involved with the project and the Chief Education Officer.

8105 Derbyshire ARP reported as follows:-

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*“A specific part of the programme was to celebrate the achievement of the young people and during the project three celebration evenings were held. The young people were encouraged to invite their parents (in reality only some brought parents but they brought siblings, grandparents, friends and even one his twin who was in the comparator group). The event was made friendly and informal but it was also made as something of which the young people should feel proud. Senior staff from the schools, LEA and the Chamber would always come and the heads, the Chief Executive of the Chamber and the LEA Chair of Education all attended at least one of the celebration evenings. There would always be a formal presentation of certificates to the individual young people, speeches emphasising the importance of the project and photographs. Because these were evenings only for the project young people they were all seen as the stars – at any events in school they would be likely to be overshadowed by higher achieving young people.”*

8106 In the Manchester LEA ARP, the nature of the actual project (an entertainment event planned and produced by the students themselves) lent itself well to a simultaneous celebration of the project. The event took place at a major local venue, was attended by over 300 people and was covered by Granada TV, Radio 1 and the Manchester Evening News. This was to be followed-up at a further celebration/dissemination event for all those involved, with photographs, videos and a CD of the project.

8107 Coventry ARP's theatre-based project offered the same opportunities and benefits. One of their major events was described as follows:-

*“The production took place at the Belgrade. The seats were sold out for both of the performances, with the audience being made up of parents, friends, teachers and arts/education professionals. It was extremely impressive to see the way in which the young people conducted themselves. They approached the performances in a committed and professional manner. Practical skills and standards were what you would expect from a group of youngsters performing, in some cases, for the first time. However, what was evident was the manner of the young people, which was confident and dignified. Many of these students, whose behaviour is often difficult, are not given the opportunity that this production offered and they rose to the challenge and were proud and pleased with their achievement.*

8108 Yet another example was provided at the Leicester project where those students who had attended training placements with the Fire Service attached considerable value to – and benefited from – the formal “passing out parade” at the end of their project.

### **Dissemination**

8109 Many dissemination events have already been held (eg. the Gloucestershire conference mentioned earlier in this chapter). The best of these brought together the outcomes and lessons learned, not only from single projects, but also from the cumulative experience of Key Stage 4 Demonstration Projects, SFs, ARPs, pilot GNVQ work, Key Skills activity and other national and local initiatives connected with work-related learning across the whole 14-19 age range.

8110 These events were often organised by LEA advisers at local authority level but it is also noticeable that several conferences were organised by regional standing groups of enthusiastic practitioners. These seem to be growing in strength and popularity – to the extent that they should now be regarded as one of the principal means by which good practice is effectively spread around the country. For example, the East

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Midlands Curriculum Conference was held over three days and attracted more than 200 participants and nearly 40 'briefing providers'.

8111 At a more local level, many of the projects refer in their final reports to planned dissemination activities. These are designed for either or both of:-

- the schools that took part in the project, especially for the benefit of those teachers not directly involved;
- teachers in other local schools and others with an interest.

However, the situation is somewhat complicated because the ARP extension funding has often been used, in part, to bring in some of these other schools into the extended programme, thus linking dissemination to embedding.

8112 It is encouraging that some of the planned future events, such as the one in Tower Hamlets in 2001, anticipate contributions from some of the students who have benefited from the ARP. Warwickshire have already involved one such student in their LEA Curriculum 2000 event.

8113 Another example of the use of students to help disseminate the outcomes from a successful ARP can be seen in this extract from the final report of Coventry ARP:-

*"The project organised a presentation for Heads and teachers of schools interested in sending students onto the scheme next year. At this event, one of the students addressed those gathered with confidence and talked about his perceptions of what the project had done for him. During his short presentation, he pointed out that without the project, he would not have been able to stand up and speak to such a group!"*

### ***Embedding and replication***

8114 Several ARPs are already embedding work-related learning approaches and lessons learned. The following elements from Lancashire ARP, for example, have been incorporated into subsequent planning:-

- taster days;
- additional work experience supporting G/NVQ programmes;
- new models of extended work experience;
- using Modern Apprentices as mentors.

8115 Warwickshire is another ARP which has made considerable progress in embedding and extending its approach to other schools:-

*"Throughout the period of the project, the LEA officers responsible for the work have worked with schools in other areas of the county to replicate and extend the initiative, building on the experience of the REWEC [the Rugby Enhanced Work Experience Consortium] schools. Three other consortia have been set up, often with inputs from REWEC co-ordinators as part of the preparation for their initiatives. Interim evaluation from the REWEC project has also informed the planning for these new consortia, so that they have been able to avoid some of the early difficulties experienced in REWEC.*

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*“The NVQ Work Skills booklets developed by one of the co-ordinators have proved invaluable to employers inexperienced in NVQ accreditation, and these are being made available to employers in other consortia. The student logbooks have also been used as a model for other similar projects, involving both enhanced work experience and college courses for Key Stage 4 students. The style of both of these documents is student-friendly and this has been reflected in the ways in which they have been used by students. The documents have helped students understand the importance of recording evidence of practical skills.”*

8116 Other examples include:-

- Leicester, whose ‘Future Pathways’ programme is being offered to 200 students from 12 schools in 2000/2001 (the ARP was for 50 students from 3 schools);
- Barnsley, where the third cohort of students is now on its way through, involving a total of 9 schools from the start point of 4 schools;
- Rochdale, where more schools are taking up the model, developed by the ARP, of linking with the FE College in Food Technology and other specific subject areas to offer relevant vocational qualifications (in addition to GCSEs).

## **FINAL COMMENT**

8117 As with Chapter VII, this chapter, despite being lengthy, is itself a précis of a vast quantity of mainly qualitative material. Three general themes which can be distilled are around:-

- the essential pre-requisite of sorting out timetabling issues and generally managing logistics effectively;
- the importance of continuity of staff – or well-planned transitions where change is unavoidable. This helps to engender a sense of security, stability and confidence among students;
- the motivating effects of providing a fresh start in a new environment, providing positive feedback after each small step, and celebrating success in a relevant, adult context.



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## IX: CONCLUSIONS FROM DATA ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

- 901 The preceding chapters have presented the findings and evidence under a number of clearly defined headings. In this chapter, we step back from the detail and return to one of the original objectives set for this evaluation. This concerned the different models of work-related learning. In brief, the question was which *models*, or *components of models* have the biggest impact?
- 902 In order to provide as objective an assessment as possible, we have gone back to the database and undertaken a more sophisticated analysis of the various data items. This assessment is wholly derived from *quantitative* material, therefore; commentary on critical success factors from the *qualitative* material has already been provided in Chapters VII and VIII.
- 903 The outcomes from this analysis are presented primarily by reference to whether there are components that, *taken together*, might constitute the most effective work-related learning model. For those components that appear most influential in those models, we also present the results of some further analysis of the underlying data.

### TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE MODEL

- 904 The first stage of our analysis begins to assess whether there were any elements of a model which, when combined together, appeared to have a beneficial impact on the target variables. In this context, the target variables are the main outcomes of:-
- KS4 attainment;
  - post-16 destinations;
  - unauthorised absences.
- 905 Wherever possible, outcomes were assessed using ‘distance travelled’ measures, rather than simple snapshots. These chosen outcomes were selected primarily on the grounds of:-
- giving reasonable coverage of the objectives as defined;
  - likelihood of generating reasonable data.
- 906 Further information is given on the outcomes, the basis for their selection, and approaches adopted in their measurement, in the Technical Annex.
- 907 To carry out this analysis, we have used a decision tree model, based on the CHAID algorithm<sup>8</sup>. We have prepared separate models for each of the target variables (paragraph 904 above). The full range of variables included in the tests, together with their definitions, is set out in the Technical Annex (Section II).
- 908 In brief, they are as follows:-
- contextual:

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<sup>8</sup> Further details on the techniques used here are provided in section 5 of the Technical Annex.

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- gender
  - KS3 result
  - type of catchment area for school
  - school circumstances (eg. whether in special measures)
  - basis of student selection
  - size of project group;
- project enhancement:
    - differences between first year and second year
    - location of enhancement
    - number of days per week allocated to enhancement
    - whether single or multiple enhancement
    - key role for mentors
    - how timetabling handled
    - use of residential experiences
    - whether financial incentives used.

909 The following paragraphs discuss each outcome in turn, and then briefly consider the robustness of the conclusions that can be drawn from this exercise.

910 The results presented here, unless otherwise stated, refer only to project group students (excluding any non-completers) who completed both of the student questionnaires. The maximum sample size here is thus 409 students (see Section V of the Technical Annex for further information on the data sample used here).

#### **Value added at KS4**

911 The value added measure used with regard to KS4 results is the difference between students' *actual* KS4 results and *predicted* results, where the latter is predicted from their KS3 result and the DfES median line data for summer 2000. As set out in paragraph 655, the mean value for the project group on this measure is -3.4. Typically, this places the students in the second quartile of the national data.

912 Using the data for individual students, we sought to establish the key predictors of higher value added from the full range of contextual and enhancement variables listed above. The results are as follows:-

- the first branch of the tree was determined by the *principal method of selection* of students. There were three sub-groups: those selected for a subject-specific enhancement; those selected on low attendance or streaming; or those selected on poor behaviour or disaffection. The first two sub-groups both achieved a mean value added at KS4 above that of the total group: the subject-specific sub-group achieved a positive value added result (mean 4.6), the low attendance or streaming group achieved a small negative result (-1.6);
- under the subject-specific group branch, there was a further split determined by the *number of students from each school in the project group*. The value added result was higher where this was 16-25 students (mean = 6.75) and lower where this was 26-30 students (mean 0.43);
- there were two further points where the mean value added result was above the average of all the students:

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- within the low attendance or streaming group, where the project enhancement had *multiple components in year 1* (mean added value of 1.92);
  - within the poor behaviour or disaffection group, where the *KS3 result was between 1.3 and 3* (mean added value of -1.05). It is interesting to note that the other split of this branch – with higher KS3 results – achieved a lower added value at KS4.
- 913 This evidence therefore suggests that a subject-specific enhancement can lead to the most value added, as measured by KS4 points score. More particularly, because the total KS4 points score has improved for these students, this suggests that a focus on one or more specific subjects can lead to improvements in those subjects, without any detrimental effect on the results achieved in the other National Curriculum subjects (ie. those that are not the focus of the project enhancement).
- 914 The other variables in the branches that lead to above average added value, in terms of KS4 points score, suggest that:-
- for those with a history of low attendance, or those selected on the basis of streaming, providing a range of different elements to the enhancement in year 1 can be helpful;
  - for those with a history of poor behaviour or general disaffection, focusing the enhancement on those with lower KS3 results can be beneficial.
- 915 We also calculated a simplified measure of the value added at KS4. This assessed whether the difference between the actual results achieved and the expected results (as defined above) was positive (ie. actual better than expected), zero, or negative (ie. actual worse than expected), but with no account taken of the magnitude of any differences.
- 916 The initial split of the tree here was again based on the *principal method of selection*, with the same groupings as before. Again, there was a sub-split of the subject-specific group determined by the *number of students from each school in the project group*, with the smaller student groups achieving more added value than the larger sized groups – but the mean of both groups was still above the overall average.
- 917 However, there were also two further points where the sub-group average added value was greater than the overall average (and both were also greater than the subject-specific and larger student group point). These were:-
- for those selected on the basis of low attendance or streaming, where *the number of students from each school in a project was 16-25* (larger than the other split of this branch);
  - for those selected on the basis of poor behaviour or motivation, where the *enhancement was broadly the same for the two years* (or was only a one-year programme) and where *the number of students from each school in a project was 11-15* (larger than the other split of this branch).
- 918 This additional analysis, therefore, suggests that, where selection is not made on the basis of a subject-specific enhancement, more added value arises when the number of students involved from each school is larger, and certainly more than 10 students.
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### **Post-16 destinations**

- 919 For this item, the value-added measure is taken simply as the actual post-16 destination, from the local careers service school leavers destination survey. Where this data was not available for any student, we have used the planned destination, as recorded by the school at the end of the summer term 2000. On this basis, data for 288 students within our sample is available. It should be noted that this is a larger sample size than that used earlier in Chapter VI (e.g. around Table 6.4), primarily because the criteria for inclusion are slightly less stringent here.
- 920 Our data used five categories of possible destinations. These categories, together with the percentage of the 288 students entering each, are: full-time education (43%); Government-supported training (18%); employment, with or without training (18%); other (11%); not settled (10%). In the analysis, the resulting tree had only one significant split, based on the level of KS3 results. Where these were over 4.67, 77% of the sub-group went into full-time education, with smaller than the average percentage entering the other four categories. Where the KS3 results were between 3 and 4.67, 28% of this sub-group entered Government-supported training, and 19% employment; the other three categories were all slightly lower than the average. Where the KS3 results were less than 3, employment was the destination of 27%, other destinations were chosen by 22%, and 15% were not settled. The percentages of students in the other two destinations were well below the average.
- 921 We also used a simplified system for coding the destinations, by means of a variable defined as either positive/desirable (education, Government-supported training or employment) or negative/undesirable (other or not settled). The analysis here is even clearer, and was again based on KS3 results: a higher than average proportion entered positive destinations where the KS3 result was over 3, but a lower than average proportion entered such destinations where the KS3 result was below 3.
- 922 The main implication from the above analysis is that there is no discernible difference in post-16 destinations attributable to the different types of work-related activity. The differences in routes are explained primarily by KS3 results (i.e. what has happened to students before Key Stage 4).

### **Unauthorised absences**

- 923 We have used three different measures of value added under this heading. The three measures were based on the change in rates of unauthorised absence:-

- between Years 9 and 10;
- between Years 10 and 11;
- between Years 9 and 11.

In all cases, the value added for an individual student was calculated as the difference between the change in the relevant rate for him/her and the change in the same rate for the average of that student's comparator group.

- 924 The analysis indicated that the key variables were different for each of the three value added measures. With regard to the results for the Year 9 to 10 measure (usable data for 291 students, average value added 2.9), the key variables were:

- the *total number of students in the project group*. Students in the smallest project groups (10-20 students) did worse than the average of the group as a

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whole, with all other students doing better, on average. Project groups with 21-40 students achieved the highest added value, with groups of over 40 students achieving just above the average;

- for the middle project group size (21-40 students), a second split, based on the *curriculum adjustment in year 2*, provided a large difference. Where this was on a withdrawal/removal basis, the value added was 16.0, but where it was on an integrated basis, the value added was only 0.3 (less than the average for the group as a whole);
- there were two sub-groups from the larger project groups (41+ students) where the value added was greater than the overall average:-
  - where the *number of pupils from each school on the project was small* (up to 5), the value added was 11.8;
  - where the *number of pupils from each school was between 6 and 25* (this applies to most of the students) and *1 day per week was spent on the enhancement in year 2*, the value added was 3.5.

925 With regard to the analysis for the year 1 to year 2 measure (usable data for 220 students, average value added of 3.7), the key variable is *the days per week on the enhancement in year 2*. Here, those who spent 5 days per week achieved a high value added of 18.6, with other students achieving below the average of all students. However, within this group, students in *projects with a total number of students of between 31 and 60 that also were on a project with only a single enhancement in year 1* achieved an added value of 6.2.

926 For the analysis for the year 0 to year 2 measure (ie. covering the two years of projects), usable data for 219 students is available, with an average added value of 5.7. The key variables here are different from those for the two previous analyses, with the first split determined by the *location of the principal enhancement in year 1*. Added value greater than the overall average was only obtained when this was an FE College; for all other locations (employer, training provider or school, grouped together), the added value was below average.

927 There were two further splits of interest here:-

- for those at an FE College, the added value was even higher when *the days spent on the enhancement was 1 or more* (added value of 17.1). Where it was less than 1, the added value was actually negative;
- for students at the other locations in year 1, *females* did better (added value of 3.3) than males (0.4), although both were still below the average added value for the group as a whole.

928 For the added value measures in terms of unauthorised absence, therefore, the variables that seem to have an effect appear to be some combination of:-

- the total number of students on the project;
- the days per week spent on the enhancement in the second year of the project;
- the location of the main enhancement in the first year of the project;
- the way any curriculum adjustment is handled in the second year of the project;

- 
- the use of a single enhancement in the first year of the project.

### **Commentary**

- 929 The decision tree model used includes an estimate of the risk in predicting accurately the target outcomes using the identified variables. In fact, the figure calculated represents the percentage likelihood of an inaccurate prediction, so a low percentage is desirable. It should therefore be noted that, in general, this figure for all the models is greater than 50%. In other words, the identified models fail to predict the correct outcome in more than half the cases. The only exception to this relates to the models for the target outcome of re-coded post-16 destinations (positive or negative), where the risk of misclassification is only about 20%. Accordingly, we do not believe that significant reliance should be placed on the models, although they do provide some preliminary indication of what seems to make a difference.
- 930 This is disappointing. It might be explained, in part at least, by the relative lack of complete data that we have. In some of the above analyses, usable data is only available for less than half of the students that completed the projects – and it is typically the same projects from which we have the data for each calculation. This may well skew the overall results.

### **EXPLORATION OF KEY VARIABLES**

- 931 Having considered the overall models that might make a difference, we then explored the underlying data of the individual variables that are the most important in each of the resulting models. This section sets out the results of this further analysis, by reference to the variables in the order in which they occurred in paragraphs 911 to 928.
- 932 All correlations reported in this section are taken from a bivariate correlation<sup>9</sup> test. Items are only reported where the p-value associated with the correlation is 0.05 or less (ie. the probability of the correlation occurring by chance is only 5% or less).
- 933 The variables considered here are those that appeared at the first – or occasionally second – branch of the decision trees that were discussed above. The variables are thus:-
- the principal method of student selection;
  - the number of students in each project group;
  - KS3 results;
  - the days per week on the enhancement in year 2;
  - the location of the enhancement in year 1.
- 934 Before exploring these variables individually, we first considered whether there were any correlations *between* the above variables. Any strong correlations would indicate that the variables concerned might be measuring similar, or even the same, attributes of students. We also included a number of the other variables in this examination.
- 935 This analysis indicated that KS3 results are strongly correlated with:-

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<sup>9</sup> See section 5 of the Technical Annex for a description of this test.

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- the total number of students in a project group (p-value of 0.006). The relationship was such that KS3 results were higher in larger groups;
  - the principal method of selection (p-value of 0.000). The relationship was such that those selected mainly on the grounds of 'disaffection' had lower KS3 results than those students following a subject-specific enhancement;
  - the school catchment area and school circumstances (p-values of 0.000 and 0.002 respectively). The relationships were such that:-
    - KS3 results were lower in those schools with an inner-city type catchment area, and higher in those with a rural type catchment area;
    - KS3 results were higher when schools were not experiencing any of the special circumstances recorded under that variable (such as experiencing re-organisation or being placed in special measures).

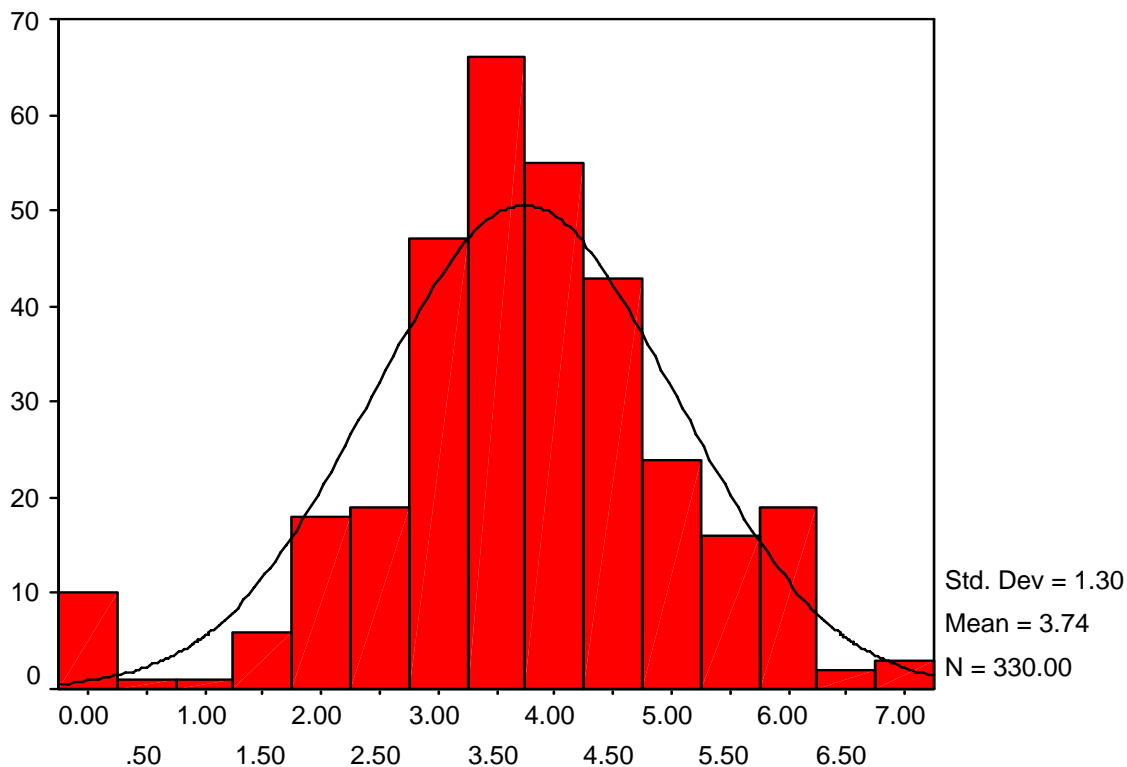
936 The last of these correlations is not unexpected. The other correlations, however, are interesting, and less predictable; there is no obvious reason, for example, why KS3 results should be correlated with the total number of students in a project group. However, that fact that these strong correlations exist suggests that, amongst this small group of variables, KS3 results are the dominant item. From the preceding CHAID analysis, it was also the component most directly related to positive post-16 destinations, and is also indirectly related – through the correlations with number of students in a group and principal method of selection – with the value added at KS4 and unauthorised absence rates.

937 We have therefore initially concentrated our subsequent exploratory analysis on the KS3 data.

### ***Exploration of the KS3 results data***

938 The project students have an average KS3 score of 3.74. Figure 9.1 overleaf shows the distribution of the scores, together with the mean and standard deviation of the data from the 330 students for whom this data was supplied.

**Figure 9.1: Distribution of project group KS3 results**



### KS3 results

939 The quartile points for the above data are up to 3.0 for the lowest 25%, up to 3.7 for the next 25%, up to 4.5 for the next 25% and over that for the top 25%. We allocated each student's actual KS3 score to the appropriate quartile and gave it a code of 1 to 4. We then tested these codes for correlations with the value added measures.

940 The results were the same as using the raw data. Thus, KS3 results are:

- negatively correlated (p-value = 0.000) with the value added on unauthorised absence between Year 9 and Year 11 (but not between just Year 9 and 10, or Year 10 and 11). Thus those students with lower KS3 results showed a greater change in the rate of unauthorised absence (compared to the average change in their comparator group) than did the students with higher KS3 results;
- negatively correlated (p-value = 0.000) with post-16 destinations. Here, those with higher KS3 results were more likely to enter full-time education, whilst those with lower results were more likely to be not settled or have entered 'other' destinations. On the re-coded destinations measure, students with higher KS3 results were more likely to enter a positive destination.

941 It is interesting to note that there is NOT a significant correlation between KS3 results and the value added at KS4 scores. This lack of correlation is indicated by the fact that students from across the range of KS3 results have achieved both better and worse at KS4 than would have been predicted from their KS3 results.



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### **Size of the project group**

942 The *number of students in total in a project group* was positively correlated with the value added in unauthorised absence rates between Years 9 and 10 (p-value = 0.007) but negatively correlated with the value added in the rates between Years 10 and 11 (p-value = 0.009). So larger project groups had a positive impact on unauthorised absence in the first year of a project, but a negative impact in the second year of a project.

### **Principal method of selection**

943 The main selection criterion was positively correlated with the value added at KS4 results (p-value = 0.000). Thus, students selected for subject-specific enhancements achieved better value added at KS4 than those selected on the basis of disaffection.

944 The variable was negatively correlated with the value added in unauthorised absence between Years 9 and 10 only (p-value = 0.000) and between Years 9 and 11 (p-value = 0.001). Thus students selected because of disaffection – who probably had more distance to make up – did achieve better value added on this measure than those selected for subject-specific enhancements.

### **Days per week in Year 2**

945 This variable measured the typical number of days per week spent on the project enhancements, recorded as a simple figure without the use of codes. The main correlations identified are as follows:-

- a negative correlation with the value added in KS4 results (p-value = 0.000). So, the greater the number of days spent on the project enhancement, the lower the value added in terms of KS4 results;
- a positive correlation with the value added in unauthorised absence rates between Years 10 and 11 and between Years 9 and 11. Here, therefore, the greater the number of enhancement days, the better the value added to unauthorised absence rates.

### **Location of the enhancement in year 1**

946 The allocation of codes to the location of the enhancement was arbitrary (in that there was no sense of an 'order' in which the locations could be placed); accordingly, it is not obvious that there should necessarily be correlations between the target outcomes and this variable. However, this variable was negatively correlated with the value added in unauthorised absence rates between Years 10 and 11 and between Years 9 and 11 (p-values = 0.000). So location codes represented by a lower value (FE Colleges and employers) had a greater impact on changes in unauthorised absence rates.

### **Correlations with gender**

947 Although not one of the key variables identified in the earlier models, we also explored for any correlations between gender and the main value added outcomes. The showed that gender was positively correlated with the value added at KS4 results (p-value = 0.004). The difference between actual and expected KS4 results for *females* was more positive than it was for males.

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948 There was a negative correlation between gender and post-16 destinations (p-value = 0.05). *Females* were more likely to enter full-time education, whereas *males* were more likely to be not settled or enter 'other' destinations. It should be noted that there was no such correlation between these variables for the comparator group students.

## OVERALL CONCLUSIONS FROM DATA ANALYSIS

949 The preceding paragraphs have provided a summary – even if somewhat lengthy – of a wealth of data and analysis. Overall, it is difficult to reach any definitive conclusions. This is due, in part at least, to the perhaps inevitable attrition in the volume of usable data over the life of the project. It is certainly disappointing that some of the individual analyses have had to be based on data for around 250 students, when over 870 started the projects.

950 Nevertheless, it is apparent that, whilst the analysis indicates that certain aspects of some projects made a difference, there is no clear pattern emerging. Indeed, it is possible that there was too great a variety between the projects for any such patterns to be discernible. The one item that does emerge is that KS3 results seem to have the most impact on students' attainments and achievements during the projects. This is perhaps not surprising and would be consistent with other research in this area.

951 Having said that, it is clear that the work-related learning projects can make a difference in certain instances. For example, a consistent finding in this (and other) chapters is that the subject-specific focus of the enhancements in the Rochdale and York projects has led to increased added value for the students in terms of their KS4 results. In particular, those projects have demonstrated that it is possible to provide an increased focus on a small number of subject areas and improve the results in those areas, *without* any detrimental effect on the results achieved in other National Curriculum subjects.

952 The analysis in this chapter also suggests that work-related learning projects need to be developed on a 'fit for purpose' basis. What we mean by this is that the content of the project needs to be more closely linked to the target outcome. The evidence points to certain aspects of the projects achieving more in terms of *only some* of the three main outcomes – KS4 achievements, reduced levels of unauthorised absence or post-16 destinations. So, future projects need to consider carefully what they are hoping to achieve for the participating students and then tailor the content of the project to best meet these objectives. In so doing, projects need to be aware that, on the basis of the evidence presented here, the same content can have different and opposite effects on the outcomes.

953 The above point is also consistent with another finding that has run through this report. Whilst improvement in the three harder measures of outcome are undoubtedly important, they are not the only outcomes from the projects. There is a wealth of evidence that projects have had a significant impact, in a large number of individual cases, on 'softer' measures of achievement. These include:-

- raising the self-confidence of students who often have a significant number of personal (and family-related) difficulties;
- creating – or maintaining – in the students a sense of the importance of a commitment to lifelong learning, even at the most basic level. There was a strong sense from many projects that they had helped to instil this in many

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students. Whilst the students may not have progressed at 16 to a 'positive' destination, there was a firm belief that, as a result of the project, many would return to learning at some future point;

- retaining students 'in the system' till age 16 (and ensuring that some students, who might not have even attended for any KS4 exams, did in fact sit – and often succeed at – at least a few exams). A number of projects reported how the retention of some students that might otherwise have been lost to the system was, in itself, a significant success.

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## X: RECOMMENDATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

- 1001 This final chapter presents the recommendations that flow from the study. These are presented in three sections, segmented by whether they are directed principally towards:-
- DfES;
  - LEAs, partnerships and projects;
  - schools.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO DFES

- 1002 This first section addresses recommendations to DfES. Since the discussion in earlier chapters has focused more on the implications for projects and schools (ie. rather than DfES), most recommendations in this section are provided with a brief note of context or supporting argument. For ease of reference, the *recommendations* in this section are presented *in italics*.
- 1003 A recurrent plea from projects in this – and other recent – initiatives is that a *longer lead time is required*. Whilst it is possible to prepare bids in haste, or implement changes at short notice, this inevitably results in the initiative appearing top down to those who are eventually given the responsibility for delivery. This undoubtedly impacts negatively, not only on ownership but also on practical arrangements (eg. timetabling). In short, therefore, more time should be built in at the front end.
- 1004 The piecemeal funding of work-related learning has been understandable in the context of pilots. Nevertheless, if plans are to be made with any confidence for future developments, *a more secure financial footing is required*. This should embrace work-related learning ‘in the round’, rather than specific components (eg. vocational GCSEs alone). It will be apparent that much good practice was achieved in the ARPs precisely because of the flexibility enjoyed and the breadth of interpretation as to how work-related learning objectives can be realised.
- 1005 Recent changes in the local and sub-regional infrastructure (eg. Learning and Skills Councils, Education and Business Link Organisations, Connexions Partnerships) will take time to bed down. *Clear statements are needed as to the primary source of external (ie. beyond LEAs) local professional support for work-related learning*.
- 1006 *DfES should issue some guidance on the inclusion of schools with serious weaknesses or in special measures in initiatives of this type*. The arguments are finely balanced in theory, but the practical experience of the projects reviewed would suggest that their inclusion seldom reaps the dividends anticipated.
- 1007 This study has been able to draw on a stronger pool of data (eg. on individual students, project and comparator groups, and school averages) than other recent evaluations in this policy arena. This reflects in part a much clearer specification of data requirements from the outset and a sensible balance between responsibilities at national and local levels. Nevertheless, there are still significant gaps in the data supplied; moreover, several school staff expressed a degree of resentment even over

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providing material that was clearly specified in the contract. There is no easy answer here but *DfES should make ever more explicit the contractual expectations arising from participation in externally funded projects* and stand willing, if need be, to make further payments of grant conditional on receipt of the specified management information.

- 1008 *There is a good case for a national training initiative to support the further roll-out of work-related learning.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO LEAs, PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS**

- 1009 The next group of recommendations is targeted at LEAs and their local partners as the principal contractors for externally funded projects. Much of the detailed discussion in earlier chapters has drawn out the learning points, if only by inference. Here the headline points only are set out.
- 1010 Be clear over the objectives for the project (eg. work-related learning as an entitlement for all, or a discrete package targeted at specific students).
- 1011 Decide on the balance to be struck between flexibility for schools to develop their own approaches (resulting in, say, five ‘mini projects’) and a coherent single project (resulting in, say, five schools contributing to a single initiative, albeit with minor local variations).
- 1012 Define the precise roles for project groups (eg. high level steering group, operational group of practitioners, looser advisory/consultative forum). Not all will be required for all projects, but maximum effectiveness will only be achieved when their purpose and membership have been carefully thought through.
- 1013 Similarly, define the precise roles of, and relationships between, project co-ordinators/managers, school co-ordinators, and local evaluators. Good practice from the projects featured job and person specifications for the key roles, and clear terms of reference for evaluators, reflected in formal contracts.
- 1014 Build in some contingency arrangements, not least to preserve a degree of continuity in the event of one or more key players moving on during the life of the project.
- 1015 When designing the details of the approach and curriculum content, avoid complexity and constant change. A smaller number of carefully planned and well-resourced enhancements seem to have greater impact than multiple interventions (with the greater potential for confusion).
- 1016 Be careful not to overload a small number of schools. Work-related learning needs to be planned in the context of all other national and local initiatives impacting on local teachers and students.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS**

- 1017 Similarly, much of the detailed discussion in earlier chapters has drawn out learning points for schools. Here the headline points only are set out. A longer version of the action points for senior managers in school to consider (ie. when planning – or evaluating – work-related learning) is to be prepared and published separately as a Management Guide for Secondary Schools. This will incorporate the learning points from other related studies, too (eg. the national evaluation of Key Stage 4

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Demonstration Projects, and the Ofsted report on work-related aspects of the curriculum in secondary schools).

1018 However, building on the material in this report, the recommendations for schools are:-

1. Be clear about where work-related learning fits within the school's curriculum philosophy.
2. Prepare early and involve both parents and students in briefings and decision making during Year 9.
3. Be sensitive to equal opportunities issues.
4. Review data collection systems .
5. Think through at an early stage the implications for timetabling and student groupings.
6. Identify the school co-ordinator as early as possible. Make clear the role and its resource implications.
7. Be clear how linked school processes (eg. pastoral care, careers education, mentoring) will support, and be supported by, work-related learning.
8. Plan training on work-related learning for all staff with a link to the project group (ie. not just those with responsibility for the enhancements).
9. Establish the school policy on behaviour sanctions as related to the project enhancements (eg. is it legitimate to use withdrawal of work-related learning as a sanction for unacceptable behaviour in other lessons?).
10. Make early arrangements for mentoring. Establish what the precise role is and therefore who might be approached and what commitment will be required.
11. Consider any proposed accreditation arrangements at an early stage. Be wary of qualifications that are not 'stretching' for the individual students concerned.
12. Break longer term targets for students down into 'bite sized' chunks (eg. a unit at a time). Give regular feedback.
13. Secure active support from the SMT. This should be visible inter alia from:-
  - designing equal value pathways;
  - featuring work-related learning in School Development Plans and other curriculum/planning documents;
  - providing sufficient resources for the school co-ordinator;
  - tackling negative attitudes and unhelpful actions from other teachers;
  - taking a lead role in assessing distance travelled for students and value for money.
14. Do not assume that poorly motivated students will catch up on work missed through participating in off-site activities.

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15. Plan and manage the logistics of student placements with great care (eg. transport arrangements).
  16. Apply the same high standards to the learning environment and teaching/learning materials as would be expected for other subjects/teaching groups.
  17. Celebrate success in an appropriate environment (eg. on premises with a work-related learning relevance).

**PEN PORTRAITS OF THE TWENTY-ONE  
ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS**

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**Area of ARP Project:** Barnsley

**Brandname:** Learning to Work

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 4        | 4           | 60       | 60          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 3        | 3           | 45       | 41          |

### **Local objective**

- To provide support for effective management of work-related education in Barnsley schools.

### **Key design features**

- Menu-driven approach – each student with own programme.
- Based on multiple enhancements throughout the two years.
- Main components were enterprise activities (via EBP), student teacher mentoring (SHU), business mentoring (via EBP), vocational tasters (FE), activity day (SHU), psychometric testing (Careers Service), and residentials.

### **Project management structure**

- Project co-ordinator appointed in January 1999 – a key appointment on a fixed-term contract.
- Project co-ordinator reported to LEA adviser.
- A strong multi-agency Steering Group, involving participating schools, FE, Careers Service, EBP, Project Trident, SHU and LEA.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- Sheffield Hallam University appointed as local evaluators in October 1998.
  - Appointment of SHU had positive spin-offs (eg. visits to university campus by project group, involvement of SHU undergraduates as tutors/mentors to project group pupils).
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**Area of ARP Project:** Coventry

**Brandname:** Work-related Learning in the Performing Arts

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 17       | 14          | 48       | 35          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 17       | 16          | 45       | 42          |

### **Local objectives**

- To evaluate the contribution of the performing arts in providing a positive and motivating experience.
- To evaluate the impact of the student mentoring scheme on students' attitudes and attainment.
- To measure the attainment and progress of pupils of different groups – gender, ethnicity, special educational needs.

### **Key design features**

- The project featured a large number of schools, but with relatively few students from each (on average, 3). The project co-ordinator had a Youth Service background and worked hard on team building.
- The clear focus was on work-related learning in a performing arts environment. The Belgrade Theatre played a key role throughout.
- Students learned a variety of skills around the unifying theme of theatre (including management and technical aspects, as well as performance). They were supported by professionals (eg. a script writer brought in to develop student ideas into a play).

### **Project management structure**

- Project manager on behalf of the LEA was an Advisory Teacher. Project co-ordinator was based at the Belgrade.
- Project Management Group comprised the manager, co-ordinator, LEA, Belgrade, an awarding body and schools.
- Also half termly meetings with all participating schools.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- An independent local evaluator was appointed by LEA, namely Alison Haynes Associates, with a specialism in Arts Education.
  - Local evaluator complemented expertise held in-house by LEA. Data collection and analysis shared.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Derbyshire (North)

**Brandname:** 39 Steps

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 2        | 2           | 18       | 6           |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 2        | 2           | 17       | 17          |

### **Local objectives**

- To ensure that the project provides opportunities to strengthen basic skills and develop the key skills of application of number, communication and information technology.
- To equip pupils with the skills, attitude, personal qualities and attributes that local employers feel are appropriate, to ensure their progression into the world of work or onto FE courses.

### **Key design features**

- 39 Steps is a development of a one-year programme developed by the North Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- In year 1, participants spent one day a week at the Chamber for 39 weeks (hence 39 Steps).
- In year 2, participants attended employer placements for one or two days a week, depending on availability, suitability and personal wishes.

### **Project management structure**

- The active Steering Group was chaired by the LEA 14-19 Advisor up to the end of summer term 2000, at which point another Advisor took on the role.
- Other Steering Group members included the school project co-ordinators, the 39 Steps manager for the Chamber, EBP, Careers Service and local evaluator.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- Local evaluation was carried out by University of Sheffield Education Department, who also undertook data collection.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Devon

**Brandname:** Bridging Project

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 5        | 5           | 65       | 63          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 2        | 2           | Unknown  | 50          |

### **Local objectives**

- To improve staff understanding of key skills and improve awareness of training needs and opportunities.

### **Key design features**

- Fifty students from five Exeter schools (unevenly spread) attended one day a week work placements over the two year period, supported by assigned training providers who recorded achievement for NVQ accreditation. Each school had different arrangements for student selection, timetabling and student support.

### **Project management structure**

- Co-ordination by LEA adviser.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- Independent evaluator appointed from local FE College – main focus on data collection.
  - Comparator schools in Barnstaple.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Dudley

**Brandname:** (none)

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 5        | 4           | 66       | 48          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 5        | 4           | 56       | 41          |

### **Local objectives**

- (none)

### **Key design features**

- Initially 5 schools involved: 4 mainstream (the 2 year project) and 1 PRU (1 year project: the PRU only has Y11 pupils). One mainstream school dropped out at end of Y10.
- During Year 10, pupils attended taster courses at FE (except one school, where work was done in-house).
- In Year 11, pupils attended placements at FE, employers or training providers, depending on availability and suitability.

### **Project management structure**

- Contract held by LEA (Education Development Centre).
- Steering Group included project manager (LEA), school co-ordinators, Careers Service, FE representatives and local evaluator.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- Evaluation carried out by independent consultant. (Note: The first evaluator left at end of first year of project, when a former member of the project team took over the role).
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**Area of ARP Project:** Islington

**Brandname:** Pathways to Working Life

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 2        | 2           | Unknown  | 9           |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 2        | 2           | Unknown  | 33          |

### **Local objectives**

- To offer alternative accreditation.
- To increase pool of part-qualified employees in two key areas (IT repair and electrical installation).

### **Key design features**

- The original group of 20 students from each of two schools quickly reduced, through a series of unforeseen circumstances, to a project group of 16. These students were supported by a training organisation through a full time alternative curriculum during Year 10 followed (for some of them) by a variety of individual placements (school/FE/work) in Year 11. The alternative curriculum in Year 10 concentrated on basic skills, but with access to some courses at the local College of FE, including a Junior Sports Leader course. There was a strong emphasis on individually focused programmes of personal support.

### **Project management structure**

- LEA contracted with an established training organisation to run the project.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- LEA adviser.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Lancashire

**Brandname:** Workstart

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 10       | 10          | 66       | 65          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 10       | 10          | 68       | 66          |

### **Local objectives**

- To identify key factors determining effectiveness of the two selected Lancashire work-related learning programmes through action research.
- To evaluate the impact of the work-related programmes on individual young people in terms of their attitudes to work and learning.
- To disseminate the learning from the Action Research Project to all local partners in order to influence future planning.

### **Key design features**

- There were two linked projects, one in West Lancashire and one in East Lancashire with a single overarching Steering Group.
- The West Lancashire project was targeted at Year 11 pupils and focused on Extended Work Experience. It ran twice.
- The East Lancashire project had one cohort (Yr 10 in 98/99 becoming Yr 11 in 99/00) and provided a Vocational Partnership Programme involving several training providers and FE Colleges.
- The evaluation was a major feature of the ARP. Both programmes predated the ARP and the key players wanted to measure their impact. Feedback to partners and other stakeholders was a key feature.

### **Project management structure**

- The contract holder was LAWTEC for the project as a whole.
- Steering Group met 6 times each year. Chaired by LAWTEC. Also involved ELTEC, both EBPs and local evaluator.
- Key players in terms of delivery were the EBPs.
- Each school had a designated Workstart Project Co-ordinator.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- In year 1, external local evaluators were from University College of St Martin. In year 2, the role was taken over by QCAT Limited.
  - But throughout both years, much of the detailed work (especially data collection) has been undertaken by the 2 EBPs.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Leeds

**Brandname:** Building Bridges to Employment

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 2        | 2           | 33       | 29          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 2        | 2           | 32       | 20          |

### Local objectives

- To provide a coherent work-related curriculum of KS4 in partnership between schools, FE Colleges and employers.
- To offer students opportunities to experience a wide-range of work-related college-based courses and industry standard work experience placements.
- To provide support for the students in the acquisition of work-related key skills and attributes which enhance employability through school development workshops.
- To investigate the effect of work-related curriculum on the students' levels of achievement, motivation, attitudes, self-esteem and aspirations.
- To investigate how best to integrate the work-related programme into the schools' mainstream curriculum.

### Key design features

- 16 pupils from each of two schools, selected on the basis of under-achievement at KS3 and/or poor behaviour and attendance. In Year 10, pupils attended FE College for taster days, plus Key Skills workshops at college. In Year 11, they pursued a more vocationally specific placement at FE College. The ARP occupied one day per week for pupils in both years.

### Project management structure

- Steering Group chaired by LEA representative, with Project Leader (TEC), Project Manager (contracted to TEC), representatives of schools and colleges, Careers Service, Leeds Mentoring Service and local evaluator.

### Evaluation arrangements

- Evaluation carried out by University of Leeds, Education Department. Data collection was managed by the Project Manager.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Leicester

**Brandname:** Future Pathways

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 3        | 3           | 53       | 46          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 3        | 3           | 50       | 47          |

### **Local objectives**

- To disseminate the project's outcomes in order to inform local development planning and networking.

### **Key design features**

- In Year 10, 52 students from 3 schools each attended 3 (one each term) half day a week taster courses at local FE colleges.
- In Year 11, each student attended 1 (24 week) or 2 (12 week) extended bridging placements – each of which had its own scheme of work and was certificated.

### **Project management structure**

- Through existing local arrangements to support WRL (the Leicester City Cluster) plus Project Steering Group.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- External evaluator appointed to advise and check on use of data – also to help prepare the project evaluation report. In addition, all participating schools involved in local scheme of peer-moderation.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Manchester LEA

**Brandname:** Entertainment Project

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 4        | 3           | 39       | 17          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 4        | 3           | 37       | 30          |

### **Local objectives**

- To determine the impact of the work-related curriculum on schools and pupils.
- To raise participation in post-16 education and training.
- To disseminate good practice.
- To disseminate project findings.

### **Key design features**

- Theme of the project was organising an entertainment event. This involved aspects of planning, marketing and technical support, as well as performance.
- Originally four schools were involved and linked with two FE Colleges each. But one school dropped out and the remaining three linked with a single college.
- Key themes were targeting underachievement, enrichment of the KS4 curriculum and building seamless links post-16.
- The project mounted a successful entertainment event in May 2000.

### **Project management structure**

- The project manager was an LEA adviser (school improvement officer). A project administrator was appointed for the second year.
- Project co-ordinators were designated in each participating institution.
- A Steering Group met about twice per term. This included school/college co-ordinators, evaluators and project staff.
- A small management group met as required. This comprised the Head of School Improvement Service, Project Co-ordinator and local evaluator.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- The original evaluation contract was with the North West Education Partnership (between Manchester Metropolitan University and neighbouring LEAs).
  - In practice, one lead evaluator emerged and she became a key player in the local arrangements.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Manchester TEC

**Brandname:** MPower Plus Programme

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 18       | 18          | 117      | 79          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 18       | 18          | 118      | 115         |

### **Local objectives**

- To increase personal effectiveness of participating students.
- To increase understanding of the relevance of the National Curriculum within the world of work.

### **Key design features**

- MPower is a two-year pre-16 NVQ programme, developed originally by Manchester TEC.
- Students spend one day per week at a work placement, with periodic sessions at training providers to carry out underpinning work for the NVQ.
- The project group selected for the ARP evaluation is a sample only (about one quarter) of the total pupils participating in MPower.

### **Project management structure**

- ARP contract held by Manchester TEC, with delivery delegated to EBPs (mainly under previously existing funding arrangements) and evaluation contracted to Manchester University.
- Each school has a designated MPower co-ordinator.
- Co-ordinators' meetings held in each of the four participating LEA areas, convened by the EBP.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- The evaluation itself was the main thrust of this project. A major exercise undertaken by the School of Education at the University of Manchester.
  - Substantial qualitative work undertaken (eg. in-depth shadowing of students) in addition to national requirements.
  - Evaluation Steering Group comprised TEC, the evaluation team and other specialists from UM.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Portsmouth

**Brandname:** Project 90

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 2        | 2           | 20       | 9           |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 2        | 2           | 20       | 20          |

### **Local objectives**

- To determine the particular impact on participants of semi-therapeutic one-to-one work alongside a vocationally enhanced curriculum.
- To disseminate information and results to local schools.

### **Key design features**

- Students on this project were chosen principally on the criterion of very poor attendance in Year 9. Participants were given intensive personal support (youth work style) alongside opportunities for NVQ accreditation through one day a week attendance at local FE Colleges.

### **Project management structure**

- Managed by the Special Projects division of the LEA.
- No steering committee but strong professional connections with other agencies – especially Careers and Social Services.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- Monitoring and evaluation provided by an officer from the Portsmouth Community Safety Partnership.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Rochdale

**Brandname:** Catering for Employment

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 1        | 1           | 20       | 13          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 1        | 1           | 20       | 19          |

### **Local objectives**

- To increase the knowledge of the hospitality/food industry by the Careers Adviser attached to the school and college.
- To provide a model of good practice for cross-phase planning.
- To provide a framework for including pre-16 students in a range of taster courses.

### **Key design features**

- The project group consisted of 20 pupils from one school who had elected to study Food Technology as one of their KS4 option subjects.
- In year 1, they attended a local FE college for 0.5 day per fortnight, on a catering course, to supplement the Food Technology curriculum at school.
- In year 2, more time was spent at school, but with inputs provided jointly by school and college teaching staff.

### **Project management structure**

- Small Steering Group, including LEA (Chair), College representative, lead teacher at school and local evaluator. (Extended in year 2 as two other schools joined the project with a second Y10 cohort).

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- Evaluation carried out by an independent local consultant, who also managed data collection process.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Sheffield

**Brandname:** Workstart

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 5        | 5           | 30       | 22          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 5        | 5           | 30       | 30          |

### **Local objectives**

- To increase the number of compact opportunities available in partnership with local employers.
- To increase the number of 16 year olds seeking opportunities for further education and training.
- To connect with growth areas of the labour market to increase the effectiveness of progression opportunities.

### **Key design features**

- 5 pupils selected from each of 5 schools, primarily on the basis of poor attendance or behaviour.
- Throughout Years 10 and 11, pupils attended one of two sites of The Sheffield College for 3 days a week, where they received a reduced National Curriculum input from a specifically recruited teacher.
- For the remaining two days a week, pupils attended an employer work placement.

### **Project management structure**

- Steering group comprised the project manager (LEA), FE College, Head teachers of the schools, Project Trident and project co-ordinator (who was also the lead teacher for the inputs on the college days).

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- Pupil, parent and teacher questionnaires were carried out by Priority Focus, an arms-length consultancy of Sheffield City Council. Other evaluation work, including the management of data collection, was carried out by the project co-ordinator (lead teacher).
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**Area of ARP Project:** Solihull

**Brandname:** Solihull North Inclusion Project (SNIP)

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 4        | 4           | 13       | 13          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 4        | 4           | 13       | 12          |

### **Local objectives**

- To improve motivation and attitudes towards education and training amongst a discrete group of disaffected Year 10 pupils.
- To increase key skills and knowledge amongst the target group by encouraging problem-solving, goal-setting, stress management and quality control.

### **Key design features**

- Four schools selected a group of 16 (later reducing to 7) pupils at risk of exclusion to take part in a full time project with its own staff and base on the site of an FE College. Curriculum programmes, including attendances on relevant on-site FE courses, were designed to meet the needs of individual students, but all students were encouraged to achieve certificated outcomes. The project had a strong emphasis on personal and social support. Individual progress was monitored and recorded on a daily basis.

### **Project management structure**

- Management group, with representatives from each school, appointed a project manager (resigned December 1999) and then a student adviser (from Jan 2000).

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- LEA adviser.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Southwark

**Brandname:** Bridging

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 1        | 1           | 16       | 7           |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 1        | 1           | 17       | 17          |

### **Local objectives**

- There were 8 local objectives – mostly closely related to the national objectives, but also including one focused on improving parental involvement.

### **Key design features**

- A group of (originally) 20 students from one school followed certificated bridging courses in electronics, sound engineering and junior sports leadership at a local FE College on two afternoons a week throughout Y10 and Y11. There was also a programme of personal and social support for the project students, including residential, team-building events.

### **Project management structure**

- Oversight from regular meetings of LEA adviser, school head and college principal; also close liaison between lead teacher from the school and the lead tutor from the FE College.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- LEA adviser (became external consultant); also externally organised student interviews.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Tower Hamlets

**Brandname:** Choices Project

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 5        | 5           | 25       | 18          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 5        | 5           | 25       | 25          |

### **Local objectives**

- Improved understanding of pathways to a more informed career choice.
- Improved understanding of the impact of a vocational element in the curriculum for motivation, attainment, behaviour and attendance, by teachers and other key players.

### **Key design features**

- The project students (25 in total, from 4 schools and 1 PRU) were each supported at a series of work placements for one day a week over the whole two year project. Each student benefited from regular review meetings. A support “pack” for employers was developed during the course of the project.

### **Project management structure**

- The project was managed by an independent agency – Rathbone C.I. – who assigned a personal vocational adviser to each student. Guidance was provided by a Steering Group of all relevant partners – including Careers.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- LEA adviser.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Wakefield

**Brandname:** Bridge to Success

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 1        | 1           | 18       | 17          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 1        | 1           | n/a      | 15          |

### **Local objectives**

- To raise post-16 participation levels.
- To build self-esteem and confidence.
- To develop direct links with FE, local businesses and training providers.
- To improve the attainment/achievement of boys.

### **Key design features**

- The project centred on one 11-16 school and links with a large local FE College and local employers (via the Chamber of Commerce).
- Year one focused more on the FE links and included enterprise activities and vocational tasters. There was a residential in summer 99.
- Year two focused more on extended work experience, with support from the Chamber and enhanced careers education and guidance.

### **Project management structure**

- There was a school co-ordinator (key post), project manager on behalf of the LEA (the senior secondary adviser) and - for year two - support from a consultant (with experience as a headteacher).
- The Steering Group met once or twice per term and comprised the LEA, Chamber, FE, school, careers service and consultant.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- The LEA contracted with the School of Education at the University of Leeds to lead on qualitative aspects and administration of questionnaires.
  - Data collection and drafting of reports were carried out by the LEA.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Warwickshire

**Brandname:** Rugby Enhanced Work Experience Consortium (REWEC)

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 5        | 5           | 47       | 19          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 5        | 5           | 48       | 40          |

### **Local objectives**

- To develop modules of practice for future use by schools and employers.
- To enhance students' NRA.
- To track student progress during and after the project.
- To fulfil schools' aims to raise standards, especially for boys.
- To disseminate good practice identified from the project.

### **Key design features**

- 8-10 pupils selected from each of 5 schools in Rugby, primarily on the basis of low aspirations and/or under achievement.
- Pupils attended employer-based work placements for one day a week throughout KS4.
- All pupils had individual mentors, from industry, the local community, or non-teaching staff from schools.

### **Project management structure**

- Steering Group of Project Manager and Project Co-ordinator (LEA), school headteachers and some school co-ordinators, Mentoring service, EBP and local evaluator.
- All school co-ordinators also met monthly with the project co-ordinator.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- Evaluation carried out by an independent education consultant, who also managed all data collection.
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**Area of ARP Project:** Wigan

**Brandname:** Moving On

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 3        | 3           | 43       | 37          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 3        | 3           | 26       | 2           |

### **Local objectives**

- To determine the impact of work-related curriculum on schools and pupils.
- To disseminate good practice.
- To disseminate project findings.

### **Key design features**

- Approximately 10 students from each of a mainstream school, a special school and the PRU, primarily selected on the basis of low motivation and aspirations, at risk of exclusion or self-exclusion.
- Pupils attended a one day per week work placement at either a large local employer, a voluntary sector training provider or a public sector training provider, depending on suitability, availability or pupil wishes.

### **Project management structure**

- Contract held by Wigan Borough Partnership, a local regeneration partnership which includes the TEC, Careers Service, EBP and parts of the LEA.
- Steering Group led by LEA 14-19 adviser, with representatives of the 3 schools, the three placement providers, Education Business Partnership, and the local evaluator.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- Evaluation carried out by independent consultant from the North West Post-16 Network based at Manchester Metropolitan University, who also managed all data collection.
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**Area of ARP Project:** York

**Brandname:** YSTAMP

**Participants:**

|                         | Schools  |             | Pupils   |             |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
|                         | Baseline | Project end | Baseline | Project End |
| <b>Project group</b>    | 2        | 2           | 49       | 44          |
| <b>Comparator group</b> | 2        | 2           | 49       | 45          |

### **Local objectives**

- To improve students' attitudes to, and understanding of, Science, Technology and Maths-related careers.
- To encourage teachers of Science, Technology and Maths to make explicit links to the work-related applications of their subjects.
- To identify positive and negative influences that shape students' attitudes to Science, Technology and Maths-related careers.

### **Key design features**

- Project designed to enhance specific areas of the curriculum relevant to the emerging development of York as a Science City.
- There were two schools in the project with pupils of mixed ability. The criterion for selection was potentially able students in high sets for Science, Technology and Maths who were at risk of not realising their potential in these specific curriculum areas.
- The content featured work experience in related sectors and a menu of "opportunities" negotiated with businesses which provided curriculum enhancements both within school and off-site.

### **Project management structure**

- Contract was with York City LEA (on behalf of partnership with N. Yorks. TEC) but delegated operationally to N. Yorks. Business Education Partnership.
- Project manager was a NYBEP Partnership Adviser. Job descriptions drawn up both for the manager and the two school co-ordinators.
- An active Steering Group which included NYBEP, TEC, LEA, Careers Service, FE and participating schools.

### **Evaluation arrangements**

- External evaluator was College of York and Ripon St. John. Local evaluator carried out qualitative research and helped to administer the questionnaires.
  - Project manager collated data and drafted project reports.
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# STUDENT CASE STUDIES

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Appendix B contains a number of individual case studies which were provided by some projects in their termly or final reports. These were not a formal requirement of the evaluation strategies, but were usually supplied to support various points made at local level.

In some cases, the information is provided in a summarised form. The slightly longer case studies provided by the external evaluators to the Manchester TEC ARP reflect the in-depth interviewing which characterised that particular project.

In all cases, the names of the students, the schools/colleges, the teachers/tutors and the employers have been changed, in order to preserve anonymity. The names of the projects are, however, retained.

| <b>'Name'</b> | <b>Project</b>                                |
|---------------|---|
| Joe           | Tower Hamlets ARP                             |
| Julie         | Tower Hamlets ARP                             |
| Jane          | Tower Hamlets ARP                             |
| Jill          | Solihull North Social Inclusion Project - ARP |
| Jack          | Solihull North Social Inclusion Project - ARP |
| Ben           | Warwickshire ARP                              |
| Brian         | Warwickshire ARP                              |
| Barbara       | Warwickshire ARP                              |
| Barry         | Warwickshire ARP                              |
| Bernadette    | Warwickshire ARP                              |
| Anthony       | Manchester TEC ARP                            |
| Samira        | Manchester TEC ARP                            |
| Angela        | Manchester TEC ARP                            |
| Melanie       | Manchester TEC ARP                            |
| Martin        | Enfield SF                                    |
| Mary          | Enfield SF                                    |
| Noreen        | Salford and Trafford EAZ                      |
| Neil          | Salford and Trafford EAZ                      |

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## **JOE – CHOICES PROJECT - TOWER HAMLETS ARP**

Joe was referred because of his behaviour. He had a statement of special educational needs. He was often loud and disruptive and had been known to react aggressively when challenged by teachers. He was viewed as an able pupil who consistently failed to complete classroom based activities. His teachers felt that an extended work experience placement might contribute to his maturity and give him an improved perspective on his school career.

The pupil was keen to work with motorbikes and his Vocational Adviser (VA) arranged a placement with a firm with a national reputation for their repair and maintenance. The effect on the pupil was very positive. His employer consistently commented on his enthusiasm and ability. After a month in the placement, he was given a Saturday job. His VA continued to support him in his placement and offered advice about extra curricular activities.

Since then, his attendance has fluctuated, with periods of enthusiasm and long periods of disinterest and lethargy. He stopped attending school altogether and began working on a casual basis with a family member, learning painting and decorating. Sadly, he did not return to school to sit his GCSEs, although he is an intelligent boy who could have done well. In the end, he could not overcome his intense dislike of school.

Since gaining experience in painting and decorating, he has decided that he would like to pursue this as a career. He has recently been accepted on the Canary Wharf Construction Apprenticeship Programme where he will be employed for four days per week and attend college for one day. He will stay on the programme for three years and be trained to NVQ level 3.

## **JULIE – CHOICES PROJECT – TOWER HAMLETS ARP**

Julie was referred because she was experiencing some problems learning in school. Whilst having no diagnosed special educational needs, her attainment was always well below the standard her teachers felt she could achieve. Her Vocational Adviser (VA) was immediately struck by her eloquence and maturity and was quick to highlight her excellent communication abilities as a plus point in discussing her strengths and weaknesses and her future career interests.

Whilst Julie had no real idea of what type of job she wanted to try out, she had a number of different realistic careers in mind. Her greatest hope was to become a successful businesswoman. A placement was secured in a thriving local letting agent. Although a little shy as first, she took to her new environment like a duck to water. Her supervisor wrote “[Her] communication skills are excellent and she interacts well with the rest of our staff. She ... is comfortable working with our team that comprises staff of varying ages ... She has been able to provide assistance when we are extremely busy....” Her teacher has also noticed an improvement in her confidence, as has her mother.

Julie has achieved a distinction in the Certificate of Competence in Work Experience (NDETEF). She was considering an NVQ unit in Retail and was keen to move on to a new

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placement and a new challenge. Since then, her attainment at school improved dramatically and she was integrated fully back into the mainstream curriculum.

She stopped attending placement, as she wanted to concentrate on school. She has received careers advice and support from her VA and has sat six GCSEs. She has been accepted onto a course at College for NVQ2 Business Administration or AS Level, depending on her GCSE grades.

### **JANE – CHOICES PROJECT – TOWER HAMLETS ARP**

Jane succeeded through the programme to take four GCSEs and is expecting good grades in all of them. Through her perseverance, she has obtained a place on a course at College to study Business Administration Level 2.

Jane was referred to the project with aggressive behaviour. She was often in trouble at school and had fixed-term exclusions on many occasions before she was permanently excluded before the summer term in 1999. Her Vocational Adviser (VA) supported her in securing a place at an off-site unit in Tower Hamlets. The VA liaised with Support for Learning Services and the family on a regular basis, to ensure a place was found for her as soon as possible. In the meantime, a home tutor was arranged, in conjunction with the school, to help her keep up with her studies. The VA contacted the off-site unit to get work for her to complete in preparation for her attendance. Once placed at the unit, her behaviour was still disruptive when in a group and she was put into individual tuition for some time.

Near to the end of her time in school, she was integrated into some group activities and also participated in group training sessions with the training provider, where she behaved well and contributed significantly. She attended various work placements, mainly office based placements, where she completed tasks such as filing, faxing, photocopying, typing and general junior office duties. Her confidence grew and her aspirations to do well in her exams were developed through her desire to get a good job when she left school. Jane was encouraged and assisted by her VA to apply for college and was successfully accepted onto NVQ2 Business Administration at College.

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## **JILL – SOLIHULL NORTH INCLUSION PROJECT (SNIP) - ARP**

Jill is the student in whom the most noticeable change can be seen. Recently, I took her back to school where staff genuinely did not recognise her – this is not something I experienced with any other child. Jill was very aggressive and confrontational when she first came to SNIP. She openly admitted that she enjoyed making people angry and upset. The buzz she got from this was well the trouble she got herself into. Now she is pleasant, she smiles frequently and it is possible to have a reasonable conversation with her.

Although she is still prone to use a certain amount of inappropriate language, the difference now is that it is not being used deliberately with the sole intention of causing offence. Jill finds settling into work difficult. For this reason, she had been undertaking Work Experience four days a week and coming to SNIP to work towards a Key Skills award one day per week. Shortly into this term, it came to light that her placement could not continue, as she was not insured. I expected this to be a major setback to her but she accepted the change calmly. However, she could not contemplate attending SNIP full-time. We agreed a part-time timetable for her and I am hopeful that she will achieve at least two qualifications.

Jill has surprised herself with the work she has produced, even with spending such short spells in the classroom. When she finds a piece of work challenging, she does struggle to maintain her motivation and needs a lot of encouragement and attention to support her through the completion of the piece. Jill has found out that she likes being nice to people. She likes herself better too.

## **JACK – SOLIHULL NORTH INCLUSION PROJECT (SNIP) – ARP**

At the outset of SNIP, Jack played the naughty boy to perfection. He was uncommunicative, uncooperative and either instigated or participated in disruptive behaviour at any opportunity. He has certainly improved in all of those areas, although he can still be truculent and difficult to manage.

Jack is popular with his peers and enjoys participating in group activities.

Jack has difficulty retaining and processing information. Working with him on a one-to-one basis highlighted this very clearly as with his full attention and no distractions, he struggled with relatively simple concepts. He has difficulty perceiving the wider world around him and as his short retention span prevents him from assimilating information, his reasoning and decision-making processes are flawed. His lack of comprehension can make him appear to be winding people (teachers) up. However, he has also perfected ways of doing exactly that. He does not understand his own values – he cannot explain why he does things or where his ideas of what is OK or not OK stem from. He feeds off what is going on around him and tries to fit in by copying what others are doing, but like an impressionist, his behaviour and language is exaggerated and therefore often more extreme than those used by others. He is determined to make his own mind up and, presently, is rejecting advice being offered by his parents and tutors.

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## **BEN – REWEC SCHEME – WARWICKSHIRE ARP**

Ben had a poor school attendance record, particularly in Year 9, combined with poor self-esteem and poor communication skills. He was identified as being a student with 'the potential to become disaffected with school'. Other family members had shown similar problems while at the school, and support from home was 'tenuous, and in some cases obstructive'.

Ben began his work experience placement with a small woodworking company making a range of wooden furniture. He was, from the beginning, part of a small team of employees, and 16 months later he was offered a job at the same firm, which included one day a week at the local college. His work experience report mentions his ability to work unsupervised, his reliability and punctuality, and his initiative and perseverance in spite of being 'a very reserved character'. 'Ben is honest and trustworthy. He adapts well to new ideas and enjoys his responsibilities'.

His mentor on the REWEC scheme noticed a significant change in Ben, who, although he never became a regular school attender, *never* missed a day's work experience, became 'more confident and more articulate, and now realises the importance of basic skills and makes an effort in those subjects'. Parental support towards the scheme was 'sure but quiet'.

His Head of Year commented that Ben never really allowed any adult at the school to establish a relationship with him, and that by the end of Year 11 'he was certainly of the opinion that he had outgrown school and needed to move on'. The benefits he derived from the REWEC scheme were considerable, developing his abilities and self confidence so that he was, at the end, in a position to make the most of opportunities in Further Education and the world of work.

## **BRIAN – REWEC SCHEME – WARWICKSHIRE ARP**

Brian had long running problems of concentration, lateness and disruption before beginning his work experience on the REWEC scheme at a company selling materials for the painting and decorating industry, in which Brian had expressed an interest.

In addition to gaining a basic Health and Safety certificate, Brian obtained four units of NVQ Retail and two Key Skills units. His employer's testimonial mentions his 'outstanding' attendance, his 'excellent' punctuality and good appearance. 'Brian is enthusiastic, willing, helpful, able to work on his own initiative.' His mentor under the REWEC scheme writes of his efforts to 'push himself and take on further responsibility.' He worked under a range of managers and has now been taken on in full-time employment by the company involved.

The REWEC co-ordinator writes in his concluding report of Brian's maturity, his positive attitude and increased confidence. His attitude to school improved, as did his personal organisation and relationships with teachers, he 'even started to enjoy some lessons'. His parents are, understandably, delighted with the improvements in his self-confidence and attitude. He is to attend College to work towards a City and Guilds painting and decorating qualification.

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## **BARBARA – REWEC SCHEME – WARWICKSHIRE ARP**

Before starting work under the REWEC scheme Barbara had had considerable difficulty with obeying rules in school. Her complaints led to her being sent out of lessons, thus removing the need for her to follow the rules. Working at her assigned company over a two-year period led to improvement in many areas of both work and social skills.

Her attendance and punctuality were consistently excellent. In particular she was able to develop the ability to appreciate the discipline necessary in a work environment. Her Technical Training Officer in the company wrote that 'Barbara has taken full advantage of the opportunities offered to acquire and apply the skills and learning provided and has not only been a pleasure to work with but an asset to the Department.'

Barbara completed the two-year period of work experience in spite of some domestic difficulties and a period of living away from her family. She learnt, during that time, that to ask for help with difficulties, rather than to walk away from them and ignore them. Her school writes that 'Barbara would not have still been at school if she had not had REWEC to support her, and her enthusiasm for the scheme and for gaining additional vocational qualifications has been very evident.'

## **BARRY – REWEC SCHEME – WARWICKSHIRE ARP**

During Years 8 and 9, Barry's increasingly poor attitude was causing concern, 'behaviour was becoming worse, and while it was never malicious, he was not concentrating on his studies, and was affecting the progress of others.' In spite of being predicted good GCSE results, he was not doing as well as he could, 'he was becoming bored with, and switched off from mainstream education'....'a clever boy who is underachieving'.

With parental support, Barry was referred to the REWEC scheme, and was given a placement at a local engineering factory. From the beginning, he settled in well, with good attendance and punctuality; his colleagues 'recognised a mature and hard-working approach'. In addition, during this time, he achieved units towards NVQ Engineering and NVQ Key Skills. An Ofsted inspector was impressed at his maturity when Barry gave him a guided tour of the factory, explaining the workings of each section and its purpose.

His behaviour at school improved, he made considerable efforts to deep up with work missed and to complete coursework to a high standard. The REWEC Co-ordinator writes of him 'he leaves school clearly equipped with the tools with which to make a success of himself in life after school'.

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## **BERNADETTE – REWEC SCHEME – WARWICKSHIRE ARP**

Bernadette had difficulties in several areas during Year 10. She was hostile to school, had low self-esteem, was not expected to complete her GCSE coursework or take the examinations, and often found it impossible to get to school because of family problems.

She had shown some interest in cookery and was offered a placement in the local College refectory. She started shakily but soon enjoyed her time there. Her Catering Manager writes, 'When Bernadette started with us she had a lot of enthusiasm and never minded what was asked of her.' Unfortunately, her interest waned, and her health problems increased, and she ceased attending the placement in February 2000, and rarely came to school. She obtained her basic Health and Safety Certificate, but failed to attend the assessment for two units of Food Preparation and Cookery, in spite of being offered several chances to do this.

All those who worked with Bernadette found that she began her work well, but soon seemed to lose her initial enthusiasm. Her mentor under the REWEC Scheme writes 'she became lethargic, missed days and was late on most days without a valid reason'. Her father said that he made sure she was up and ready to attend her work placement before he had to leave for work.

The REWEC co-ordinator felt that in spite of all these difficulties and disappointments, REWEC had been beneficial for Bernadette. It 'kept her more on track than was otherwise expected, and has enabled her to gain more social skills as well as give her a taste of a job which she would like to do in the future.'

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## ANTHONY – MPOWER PLUS PROGRAMME – MANCHESTER TEC

Anthony attended a school in the 'T' area. Anthony's attendance at school was very good and he achieved 4 Cs, 3 Ds and 1 E in his GCSEs in summer 2000.

The school policy is to offer MPower as an option that is timetabled and is not seen as something for disaffected young people or for poor attenders. The MPower group included students who were due to get over 5 grade C GCSEs. Students and parents were provided with information about MPower at options evening in Year 9. If students demonstrated interest they would subsequently receive careers advice and then be asked to choose a particular vocational area. Anthony chose motor vehicle maintenance and was placed with a local provider and employer.

At the start of the MPower programme in Year 10, interviews with him and significant others, including parents and teachers, suggested a rather passive approach to school, MPower, career and future transition decisions. He appeared to be quite heavily influenced by other male peers in the school who also had a rather disinterested approach to education. The evidence collected suggested that school and life would *happen to* Anthony, that his life was experienced one day at a time with a tendency to respond to the forces around him in a somewhat mechanical way. His teachers appeared to see him as being relative capable but without drive. His teachers viewed him as being at the top end of middle sets with the capability of achieving grade Cs. However, it was generally agreed between his teachers that he would be more likely to achieve grade Ds. Despite such judgements, his attendance at school was very good and he received much parental support. This view was formed from interviews with Anthony's mother and with Head of Year and MPower co-ordinator.

It was Anthony's experiences of the MPower programme and particularly the relationship he developed with his garage supervisor, which had the clearest impact on his changing values and norms in relation to school and MPower. He enjoyed the working culture of the garage and endorsed it with the language he used about work and the way he interacted with his work colleagues. There was a clear sense of him moving from the periphery to centre stage in his training and this was endorsed by fellow workers who clearly respected his efforts and supported his development both technically and socially. He was 'fitting in' and was clearly demonstrating that he had developed the type of rapport, trust and obligation relationships with his work placement colleagues that resulted in significant levels of workplace success and an ensuing desire to continue in motor vehicle maintenance post school. His levels of social capital were therefore well advanced by the end of the programme and there was every indication that a Modern Apprenticeship was about to be offered to him, further indication that the particular garage network and Anthony's contribution to that network had met with company wide support. Since school success was something that his garage supervisor had told him was important, Anthony was also provided with a rationale for attempting to achieve more fully at school, and for him to distance himself from a peer network that had previously furnished him with a set of values and orientations that had distracted him from mainstream school provision. His success in achieving this was testified by the growing levels of positive comments from teachers who a year previous had been less than enthusiastic about his progress. In addition, his parent/relatives continued to support Anthony both at school and on his placement.

After leaving school, Anthony moved to College to complete a BTEC National Diploma in motor vehicle maintenance. This was not his first option but there were only two modern

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apprenticeships at his chosen garage and well over 100 applicants. Although a modern apprenticeship was not available at this garage, his contacts derived from his work placement provided inside information into an apprenticeship with another company which he is about to start after Christmas.

## **SAMIRA – MPOWER PLUS PROGRAMME – MANCHESTER TEC**

Samira's placement was in nursery nursing for which she made a positive choice. She was invited to apply for the MPower programme towards the end of her Year 9. The school selected those who were invited to apply for the programme.

Samira had been excluded from her first secondary school, and was regarded as shy and withdrawn by teachers at her subsequent secondary school at which she registered for the MPower programme. Samira had an attendance record which was described as poor, both by her subject teachers and MPower co-ordinator. Most of Samira's teachers believed that a grade E at GCSE would represent a good level of achievement for her. Samira's teachers referred to her as a second language speaker and associated this with literacy based weaknesses.

Samira indicated on some occasions that she wanted to be a nursery nurse when she left school. Her desire to work with children was based, in part, upon her own experiences of caring for her own brothers and sisters when they were growing up. Family circumstances meant that she had played a significant role in caring for her younger siblings and for others in her extended family network. She had enjoyed playing with, and caring for, a number of younger members of her family and had enjoyed a close emotional attachment to them.

Samira sometimes felt excluded from her peers at the training providers, mainly - she indicated - on account of her ethnicity. Samira enjoyed what she regarded as the adult relationships at her workplace, and the trust which had been accorded to her, although she did not seek to contrast this with her experiences at school. She did, however, express concern about the relationship she had developed with one of her teachers and regularly referred to shortcomings on the teacher's part in this respect.

Samira's supervisors at her work placement commented upon her lack of independence in terms of initiating and carrying out tasks and intermittent attendance and punctuality problems. Samira had experienced some difficulties in completing her NVQ level 1 units because of her periods of absence.

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## ANGELA – MPOWER PLUS PROGRAMME – MANCHESTER TEC

Angela is the middle child of three. The eldest attended the same school some two years ago, and her younger sister also attends the school. The eldest and Angela both have poor attendance and there was a fear from the MPower co-ordinator at the school and Angela's mother that the youngest would also turn out to be the same. Angela's attendance averaged 44% in her Year 10.

The school policy is to use MPower as a way of attempting to re-motivate targeted, at-risk/disaffected young people. Young people are selected to the programme, based on detailed briefings given by Head of Lower School on pupils that are categorised as being 'of concern'. The young people are then interviewed by the MPower co-ordinator, where they are asked to choose a vocational area that they appear to have a real interest in. If they express a strong interest, then parents are invited into the school in order that they can have the scheme explained to them. Angela chose construction because it was different from what other girls were pursuing, and was based on her experience of building a wall some years ago with the father of a friend. Angela was placed with a training provider in the locality. Other trainees on various other programmes attended the training provider, but there were no other pupils from her school.

Although Angela had chosen construction, it soon became clear in interviews with her early in the programme and into Year 11 that her real vocational interest was working in a holiday camp as a 'redcoat'/holiday representative, and that this had come about through enjoyable experiences over many years at Butlins.

Although Angela did not have any clear convictions about MPower, she did express her enjoyment of the programme as an alternative to schooling which she disliked intensely, and which had resulted in very poor attendance and visits by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). She enjoyed the social and adult atmosphere where she could have a cigarette and a chat with fellow trainees without being 'told off' and 'nagged'. She described learning at the training providers as being practical and fun, and contrasted this with academic learning that she described as 'boring' and 'useless' and where she felt that teachers did not treat her with respect. However, she did not always attend and there was clear indication from both the providers and the MPower co-ordinator that Angela was not making very much progress and did not seem overly motivated by the experience.

Although the evidence from discussion with teachers and observations of classes was one of 'strategic compliance' with little engagement when in school, she did have a strong relationship with her English teacher and enjoyed her lessons. As well as being out of school one day a week with MPower, Angela also attended the local FE college where she was working on a NVQ Level 1 in Catering. There was clear evidence that Angela wanted to find work and earn money as soon as possible. Although she appears to dislike much of what school has to offer, she did want to succeed for her mother's sake and so that might get a "good job". "First in the family to get GCSEs". When Angela misses school, she goes to the local park and spends time with a network of peers that are both from her school and a neighbouring school. They pretend to go to school and then meet up at each other's houses where they watch videos, smoke and have a chat. In addition, she often goes to a local leisure complex during the week, where she meets up with other friends and tends to stay out late. On such evenings, she often stays up late and struggles to wake up and is subsequently tired in the mornings.

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Angela's mother was interviewed towards the end of her first year on the programme. There appears to be a close relationship between her and Angela. She appears to condone much of what Angela does and is antagonistic to the school and EWO visits and letters from school in particular. She appears very much on the defensive because of a history of non-attendance by Angela's elder sister. Both Angela and her mother seem to have a clear notion that Angela can leave school in December because she is then 16. There is also a clear notion from her mother that not much school work goes on between December and when exams are taken and these views are strongly reflected in how Angela views her schooling.

Although Angela suggests that she would like to achieve certain GCSEs because she would be the first in the family to do so, and that it would make her mother proud, she did not attend school much in Year 11 and scored 15 points (2 Fs and 2Gs) in her GCSE scores.

Angela has had a number of part-time jobs, for example as a shop assistant and working in café at weekends and at times during school days. Towards the end of first term in Year 11 she left school to take up a job as a chambermaid in a city hotel working alongside her mother. It was through her mother that she got the job. Angela, in essence, left school and hence the MPower programme. She is still employed as a chambermaid in the local city hotel.

## **MELANIE – MPOWER PLUS PROGRAMME – MANCHESTER TEC**

Melanie undertook a childcare placement as part of the MPower programme. She attended a local college which acted as her training provider for one day a month and she attended her employer for the other days of the month (one day per week) when she was on the programme.

Melanie was selected for the MPower programme at the end of Year 9 by the school MPower co-ordinator working in co-operation with other members of staff. Although Melanie was not regarded as 'disaffected' at the end of her Year 9, there were some concerns about her behaviour in some of her classes and her general levels of motivation. Melanie was highly enthusiastic about gaining a childcare placement on the scheme, as this was an occupational area she was seriously considering progressing into after she had left school.

In terms of her academic achievements, it was anticipated at both the end of Year 9 and in the early stages of Year 10 that Melanie would be entered for GCSEs in at least six subjects and that she would gain predominantly grade D's and E's. This was in the context of a school where the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grade A-C at GCSE varied between 34 and 53 percent over the three years prior to the year in which Melanie received her results.

Melanie's employer had not previously participated in the MPower programme and she joined as a result of approach from Melanie herself who knew her as a consequence of a family-based social network. Melanie's employer found her to be enthusiastic and committed to her work from an early stage and was very pleased with her workplace performance. At all stages in the programme when Melanie's employer or co-workers were

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questioned, they were highly positive about Melanie's achievements, her social integration in the workplace, and her work with the children in her care.

For Melanie, her enjoyment of, and commitment to, her placement, did vary in line with changes in the nature of her experiences at the workplace. During interviews with her at both the start and end of the programme, she spoke very positively of her experiences. In particular, she had enjoyed what she regarded as the greater freedoms available to her as a consequence of participating in MPower. Of particular note in this respect was the ability to leave the college/employer's premises at lunchtime and the college starting time of half an hour later than school. Melanie also attached a great deal of importance to the 'trust' placed with her when working with young children and strongly valued this aspect of her work on placement. Melanie was far less positive mid-way through the programme, after spending two continuous weeks (as part of her school's work experience programme) at her placement. This continuous experience meant that she was involved in undertaking a wider range of tasks, some of which she found objectionable. These experiences during her two-week continuous placement caused her to reconsider her intention to continue with the MPower programme. Melanie's unhappiness during her two-week placement did not go unnoticed by her teachers and Melanie referred to the positive impact of discussions relating to this matter between the MPower co-ordinator and herself.

There was some disagreement between Melanie's teachers about the impact of the MPower programme on her attitude towards school and the subjects and teachers she came into contact with. Some thought that there had been noticeable improvements and others continued to bemoan what was labelled as 'silly behaviour'. Most of Melanie's teachers that were interviewed, Melanie herself, and Melanie's mother, believed that she had grown in confidence during the MPower programme. In terms of Melanie's performance, behaviour and attitude at work, there was nothing but praise from her employer and colleagues. Indeed, there was a widely expressed view that in terms of a core essential demand of the work, the ability to relate effectively to young children, she was very skilled and well-equipped to meet the demands of the job.

It is clear from interviews with both Melanie and her teachers that there were other significant factors in Melanie's life, other than MPower, which might have been impacting upon Melanie's attitudes towards school, her behaviour in school, and her performance in her subjects. In particular, Melanie's participation in a local scout group which involved her attendance at residential and involvement in taking responsibility for particular tasks, was referred to regularly by a range of interviewees, including Melanie herself. In addition, Melanie noted that her life had been significantly disrupted by her father's departure from the family home when she was younger and that greater stability had returned.

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## MARTIN – ENFIELD SF

Martin:-

- had been permanently excluded from another school;
- showed rudeness to teachers in and out of lessons;
- was constantly breaking school rules;
- was a poor attender;
- was behind with school work.

Strategies tried:

- close liaison with parent;
- counselling by form tutor;
- reports;
- exclusion;
- meetings with the EWO.

Little or no improvement was shown. Martin was in danger of not being entered for any GCSE exams and 'disappearing' from school. Martin then engaged with the SF project which involved an extended work placement. He eventually gained three GCSE passes. He was then taken on full-time at his work placement. However, after a few months he decided to go back to full-time education and is now at college. He has assisted us with our present cohort of students acting as a mentor.

## MARY – ENFIELD SF

Mary:-

- was near to permanent exclusion at a previous school;
- joined us in Year 10;
- displayed extreme behaviour problems;
- was a regular truant;
- refused to co-operate with her parents.

Strategies tried:

- close liaison with parents;
- reports;
- reduced timetable;
- exclusions.

Mary was on the verge of permanent exclusion. Nothing worked, even for a short period of time. Mary eventually engaged with the work placement scheme, she gained two GCSE passes. She then went to work at her 'Shoestring' work placement full-time. She decided to return to full-time education, however, and was accepted back into the sixth form. She is studying GNVQ Business Studies and works part-time at her former work placement.

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## **NOREEN – SALFORD & TRAFFORD EAZ**

Noreen has enjoyed attending her training and work placement at a nursery in a local primary school. She has thoroughly enjoyed working with young children and has an empathy with them. In lower school, she was a school refuser and her attendance, although not good, has improved considerably.

Her punctuality, conduct, attitude to work, and supervision and appearance, have been rated as excellent by the supervisor at the nursery, and the standard of her work and her ability to communicate are very good.

Noreen had great difficulty in communicating with adults and her peer group, but this seems to have improved considerably because she has been engaged in small group work. Her self esteem and confidence have grown as the course has progressed.

Although Noreen is not continuing with childcare after leaving school, she has found the experience worthwhile and would recommend NVQ to other pupils and it has helped her in so many ways.

## **NEIL – SALFORD & TRAFFORD EAZ**

Neil thrived at his work placement studying his NVQ Level 1 in Motor Vehicle studies. He worked at a local garage and attended every day over the programme completing the qualification by March 2000, which then enabled him to concentrate on his GCSE revision for other subjects.

His attendance improved considerably and reached 99% in the final year because he wants to realise his ambition to become a motor vehicle mechanic. Neil has applied to the garage to continue with his work-based training after school and is still waiting to hear from them.

Neil's self esteem and confidence have grown over this period. He has learnt the appropriate verbal communication skills to use in the workplace and has been praised on his conduct, attitude to work, initiative and attitude to supervision. In school, Neil became an active member of a group of pupils who organised a series of successful activities for Year 11 pupils.

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