

Excellence in Cities

The National Evaluation of a Policy to Raise Standards in Urban Schools 2000-2003

Lesley Kendall, Lisa O'Donnell, Sarah Golden, Kate Ridley
Stephen Machin, Simon Rutt, Sandra McNally,
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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education and Skills.

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Executive summary

Background

Excellence in Cities (EiC) is a major government policy designed to raise standards in urban schools. It aims to offer diversity of provision so that the needs of all pupils are met within a framework of cooperation and partnership between schools. EiC is organised through Partnerships, and each Partnership includes a local education authority (LEA) and all its secondary schools. Funding is allocated to each Partnership, which is responsible for deciding how the resources should be used.

During the period of the evaluation, EiC had seven key Strands:

- support for gifted and talented pupils
- the provision of Learning Mentors to support young people facing barriers to learning
- Learning Support Units (LSUs) for pupils who would benefit from time away from the normal classroom
- City Learning Centres (CLCs) providing state-of-the-art ICT resources for a small number of schools
- EIC Action Zones enabling small groups of primary and secondary schools to work together to provide local solutions to local problems
- extensions of the existing Specialist and Beacon School programmes.

Key findings

This evaluation was carried out at a stage when schools and LEAs were developing a shared approach focussed on local needs within the flexible framework of EiC. Developing such shared approaches, particularly in areas without a history of cooperative and collaborative working, needed time and resources and it was only after these preliminary stages had been completed that EiC could be expected to begin to have an impact on pupils. The evaluation showed that there was such a ‘partnership dividend’: pupil attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 was greater in those areas where there was evidence that schools were demonstrating a high level of engagement with the EiC Partnership.

EiC provided, on average, about £120 per pupil per year, which represents only a small percentage of overall expenditure. A simple cost-benefit analysis suggested that EiC was potentially cost-effective (in terms of the long-term wage return to individuals) at Key Stage 3.

The qualitative data analyses have suggested that EiC has promoted a positive ethos towards learning and improved pupils' motivation and behaviour. The quantitative analysis has shown the ameliorating effect of EiC on attendance, especially for Phase 1 schools, and evidence of some small but important changes in the attitudes of mentored pupils. Such developments are known from earlier studies to be important precursors to improved pupil performance.

The quantitative findings of the impact of EiC differed depending on the Key Stage considered, as well as by pupil and school characteristics. The greatest impact of EiC was in relation to attainment in Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 for pupils in the most disadvantaged schools. Overall, pupils attending EiC schools had higher levels of attainment in Mathematics than otherwise similar pupils attending schools that were not part of EiC, after taking into account a range of school and pupil factors including attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. This was equivalent to increasing the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above by between 1.1 and 1.9 percentage points, with the higher value being observed in Phase 1 schools, many of which were also in receipt of funding from the Pupil Learning Credits (PLC) pilot.¹ For each Phase of EiC, the impact was greater in more disadvantaged schools. There was no evidence at this stage to show that EiC had an impact on levels of attainment in English or Science at the end of Key Stage 3, or on attainment at the end of Key Stage 4.

There was a more marked improvement in attendance in EiC schools than in non-EiC schools. Using the overall percentage of half-days missed, calculated for a complete academic year on a whole-school basis (the only measure available nationally), there was an overall improvement in attendance for both EiC and non-EiC schools between 1998/1999 (before EiC was introduced) and 2002/2003. The improvement was greater in EiC areas, and was equivalent to slightly more than one day per pupil per year.

Pupils designated as gifted and talented had higher levels of attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 than those of otherwise similar pupils not designated. There was evidence to suggest that early mentoring (in Year 7) had enabled some pupils to overcome barriers to learning by the end of Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, there were positive associations between mentoring and achievement for some groups of pupils and some measures of attainment. Teachers, school senior managers and Partnership Coordinators felt that Learning Mentors were improving pupils' self-esteem and confidence and helping some pupils to re-engage with education.

The evaluation also examined the attitudes and behaviour of pupils attending EiC schools. The evidence did not suggest that pupils' attitudes at the end of

¹ The PLC pilot scheme provided additional resources to schools in some EiC areas with high levels of entitlement to Free School Meals. The pilot, which operated from September 2001 to March 2003, enabled secondary schools to provide additional learning opportunities to pupils whose social circumstances were particularly difficult.

Key Stage 3 were affected by their involvement in the Strands of EiC. However, among Year 11 pupils in EiC schools, those designated as gifted and talented had more positive attitudes to learning and education, and better (self-reported) behaviour than otherwise similar pupils in terms of their general behaviour at school and completing homework. The analysis suggested that pupils were more likely to be designated as gifted and talented if they already demonstrated these positive attitudes, rather than these attitudes being developed as a result of being in the gifted and talented group.

Partnership Coordinators, school senior managers and teachers were generally very positive about EiC. Although only a minority reported a direct impact on attainment, many noted the ways in which EiC was creating a more positive climate for teaching and learning and improving pupils' motivation.

EiC was seen by stakeholders as:

- **widening diversity and extending opportunity** by offering extension and learning support opportunities and through enhancements to the mainstream curriculum
- **promoting inclusion and equality of opportunity**, although there were also concerns that EiC did not directly impact on the majority of young people in inner city schools
- **creating a greater sense of partnership between schools and their LEAs.**

There was less evidence that EiC was improving pupils' transition from primary to secondary school or was generating and sustaining partnerships with parents, or with employers and training providers.

The majority of teachers were positive about the forms of pupil support offered by EiC through the LSU, Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented Strands. For many of the teachers who commented on the impact of EiC, the Learning Mentor Strand was one of the most effective elements of the programme, with Learning Mentors seen as having a significant impact on pupils supported by them, as a result of which teachers' relationships and engagement with those pupils improved. A sizeable minority of teachers reported that, if they were to apply for a new post, EiC in general and the Gifted and Talented and LSU Strands in particular would positively influence their decision to apply to a school, although there was some concern that EiC focused on the more able pupils and those facing barriers to learning, which could leave others feeling excluded and demotivated.

Introduction

The launch of EiC was one of the outcomes of the 1997 White Paper Excellence in Schools (Great Britain, 1997) which indicated an intention to create *'inclusive schooling ... that recognises the different talents of all*

children and delivers excellence for everyone'. One of the issues for such an inclusive system has been the ongoing difficulties presented by problems of socio-economic disadvantage in major urban areas of England. However, the history of a number of policies which have attempted to address the effects of social disadvantage, such as Educational Priority Areas, Urban Compacts and Education Action Zones, shows that these have faced a variety of challenges. Mortimore and Whitty (1997) went so far as to say that *'The lessons of history are not hopeful...most formal education systems have failed pupils whose families are disadvantaged'*. EiC offered schools and LEAs an opportunity to work together to make a difference for young people attending urban schools.

Following the launch of EiC in spring 1999, the secondary schools in 25 local education authorities (LEAs) in the major conurbations of England worked with their LEAs to draw up a Partnership plan. Following agreement with DfES, money was released to Partnerships from September 1999. The programme was subsequently extended in 2000 (Phase 2) and 2001 (Phase 3), and now includes 57 Partnerships and about a third of England's secondary schools.

Since 1999, the EiC programme has been extended in a number of ways, including provision for primary pupils, and Excellence Clusters – small groups of primary schools in areas of deprivation outside the main EiC areas. Total DfES expenditure on the whole EiC programme rose from about £24 million in 1999/2000 to £139 million in 2000/2001 (the first full year) and to about £386 million in 2005/2006.² The programme therefore represents a significant use of resources but should be seen in the context of overall local authority current expenditure on secondary schools of over £9,000 million in 2000/2001.³

Methodology

An evaluation of EiC covering the period up to the end of the 2002/2003 academic year was carried out by a consortium of the National Foundation for Educational Research, the Centre for Educational Research and the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics, and the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

The evaluation had three main research objectives, which can be summarised as assessing the impact of EiC on:

- **pupils** in terms of improved achievement and inclusion
- **schools** in terms of improvements to teaching and learning, establishing a culture of professional development, greater use of ICT, better transition, more positive public perceptions of the schools

² These figures exclude spending on Specialist and Beacon Schools.

³ See <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo040301/text/40301w10.htm>.

- **LEAs and Partnerships**, with greater collaboration and partnership working.

Additionally, the evaluation explored the use of resources within EiC and its cost-effectiveness.

The evaluation drew on national data relating to the attainments of all pupils completing Year 9 and Year 11 in each year from 1999 to 2003. From 2001, detailed pupil level information was also available. The Database of Teacher Records was used to examine the characteristics of teachers in EiC and non-EiC areas.

Primary data collected by the evaluation consortium had the following four main elements:

- surveys of pupils, form tutors and headteachers in EiC schools and in a number of schools in similar circumstances but not in receipt of EiC funding
- interviews with Partnership Coordinators
- surveys of employers
- Strand Studies: each of the seven key policy Strands was the subject of a more detailed study using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The size of the datasets available, the range of methods used, and the sophisticated research design that provides for both cross-sectional and longitudinal perspectives, ensure that we can be reasonably confident that the findings presented are valid and reliable. Where it has been possible to carry out difference-in-differences analyses which compare pre- and post-EiC outcomes, these provide robust findings in relation to the impact of EiC. The cohort comparison and single comparison approaches allow us to establish relationships between, for example, participation in the Gifted and Talented Strand and academic outcomes, with considerably certainty, but do not provide unequivocal evidence of impact.

However, it is important to recognise the limitations, as well as the strengths, of the data. Some of these relate to the nature of EiC as an evolving policy, embedded in a wider educational system which was itself undergoing change, and some to the fact that some of the Strands, for example LSUs, directly affect only a minority of pupils. EiC's potential for impact may, therefore, be relatively small when averaged out across pupils and schools.

Participation in the evaluation was on a voluntary basis, and therefore information provided by schools, pupils and others may not capture the full range of experiences and attitudes. Furthermore, schools and Partnerships vary in the extent to which they have been able to use EiC as a lever for

change, and ‘average’ levels of impact may under-estimate the potential impact of EiC when it is delivered most effectively.

Messages for future policy developments

- While EiC was envisaged as a unified overarching strategy of support for pupils and schools, many stakeholders saw the Strands as inter-related but essentially separate initiatives. Future initiatives that adopt a strand-based approach should consider how to ensure that overall coherence is not lost, particularly if funding is essentially ‘ring-fenced’ to specific strands.
- The impact of EiC was greatest in schools in more challenging circumstances, and the question must then be asked about whether the inclusion of all schools in an LEA in an EiC Partnership was the most effective way of allocating resources. There was also evidence that smaller groups of schools, such as EiC Action Zones and the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG)⁴ collaboratives, were able to develop effective partnerships more easily than larger groups. At the same time, there were benefits from the more inclusive approach, with some evidence of a ‘partnership dividend’. The Education Improvement Partnerships now being created may provide a means of achieving a balance between the benefits of a wide-ranging partnership and the cost-effective targeting of resources.
- The different Strands operated at very different levels, and targeted different schools and different pupil groups within schools. They therefore had varying potentials to effect change. Measurable change was often marginal when overall populations were examined. Partnerships had considerable freedom to implement EiC and its individual Strands as determined by local needs. This evaluation has demonstrated the complexity of strand- and area-based programmes. This complexity needs to be understood and accounted for in the design and evaluation of multifaceted initiatives.
- There should be realistic expectations about the timescale needed in order for any new initiative to bring about substantial and measurable change. In the case of EiC, pupils who were in Year 7 in Phase 1 schools in the academic year 1999/2000 completed Key Stage 4 in summer 2004. These pupils were the first to experience the whole of their secondary education in an EiC school, although many Phase 1 Partnerships were not able to implement the full EiC programme from September 1999. The progress of this group will be an important measure of the overall impact of EiC, but it may be only with subsequent cohorts of pupils that the full impact of EiC will become evident.
- While a policy such as EiC in secondary schools can contribute to improved educational outcomes, it will have maximum impact only if pupils enter secondary school with the appropriate skills and attitudes.

⁴ LIG was introduced in April 2003 and provides increased funding to schools in EiC areas (and to some schools outside these areas) to ensure that the leadership teams in those schools are able to meet the needs of schools in challenging circumstances.

EiC needs to be able to build on policies and strategies aimed at improving skills and attitudes at an earlier stage in young people's development.

- Identifying the unique impact of a particular policy or initiative in a complex and changing policy context creates considerable difficulties for evaluators. The expansion of EiC to new areas during the course of this evaluation meant that many of the comparison schools identified at the outset became part of EiC. For future evaluations, greater consideration could be given to establishing and maintaining a control group, unaffected by the initiative under scrutiny, in order to ensure that the impact and cost-effectiveness of the initiative can be established as accurately as possible.

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GREAT BRITAIN. PARLIAMENT. HOUSE OF COMMONS (1997). *Excellence in Schools* (Cm. 3681). London: The Stationery Office.

MORTIMORE, P. and WHITTY, G. (1997). *Can School Improvement Overcome the Effects of Disadvantage?* London: University of London, Institute of Education.

Additional information

A series of working papers produced in the course of the evaluation is available at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/>.

1. EiC and the changing policy context

1.1 The background to EiC

Excellence in Cities (EiC) is a major government policy designed to raise standards in urban schools. It aims to offer diversity of provision so that the needs of all pupils are met within a framework of cooperation and partnership between schools.

The launch of EiC was one of the outcomes of the 1997 White Paper Excellence in Schools (GB. Parliament. HoC, 1997), which indicated an intention to create *'inclusive schooling which provides a broad, flexible and motivating education that recognises the different talents of all children and delivers excellence for everyone'*. One of the challenges facing such an inclusive system has been the ongoing difficulties presented by problems of socio-economic disadvantage in major urban areas of England.

Some of these problems were noted in the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (Ofsted, 1999) which highlighted a number of key concerns about secondary education including the achievement of pupils attending inner city schools and of those from some minority ethnic groups (a high proportion of whom live in urban areas). This report also commented on the wide variations in levels of attainment between schools facing similar levels of disadvantage. Although standards of attainment are generally lower in more disadvantaged areas, the Ofsted report commented that *'over one-third of these schools have results at GCSE level that are well above average in comparison with other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds'*. However, the history of a number of policies which have attempted to address the effects of social disadvantage, such as Educational Priority Areas, Urban Compacts and Education Action Zones, shows that these have faced a variety of challenges and Mortimore and Whitty (1997) went so far as to say that *'The lessons of history are not hopeful...most formal education systems have failed pupils whose families are disadvantaged'*.

When EiC was launched in March 1999 by David Blunkett and Tony Blair, they acknowledged this legacy and said:

Successive Governments have failed to resolve the educational problems of the major cities. Standards have been too low for too long. Raising standards in order to lift opportunities for our children is the key priority for the Government. It is clear that schools in our inner cities demand urgent attention. (DfEE, 1999a)

The overall vision of EiC was:

.... to drive up standards in our schools in the major cities higher and faster; to match the standards of excellence found in our best schools. The output must be that city parents and city children expect and gain as much from their schools as their counterparts anywhere else in the country. A vision of what city education can become is what Excellence in Cities is all about. Excellence must be the norm. (DfEE, 1999b)

To do this, EiC set out the core beliefs that formed the basis of the policy.

- *High expectations of every individual:* schools should have high expectations of every pupil, and young people should have high expectations of themselves.
- *Diversity:* there should be diversity of provision in secondary education in the major conurbations so that the needs of all pupils can be met.
- *Networks:* schools working together can achieve more for pupils, parents and communities than schools working in isolation.
- *Extending opportunity:* the EiC programme should enhance quality in all schools rather than reinforce existing inequalities, and should make excellence the norm.

The initial six key objectives for EiC were challenging:

1. to raise overall achievement in secondary schools in the major cities, to levels that compare favourably with those of England's international competitors
2. to promote inclusion through tackling individuals' barriers to learning and creating new opportunities for individual pupils, whatever their skills and aptitudes
3. to reduce levels of youth crime⁵
4. to improve the quality of teaching in inner city schools and to strengthen the recruitment and training of teachers and headteachers
5. to promote worthwhile innovations in teaching and learning through the use of information and communication technology (ICT)
6. to improve the quality and continuity of learning as pupils go through the transition from primary to secondary schooling.

EiC adopted an innovative mode of delivery and no overall bidding process was involved. The Government identified the areas to be included and the strategies that should be employed, and the only condition was that there should be an approved delivery plan. Schools themselves, in partnership with

⁵ As EiC developed, the emphasis of EiC was increasingly on raising standards and promoting inclusion, and this evaluation does not seek to assess the impact of EiC on levels of crime.

their local authorities and each other, were responsible for the delivery and local targeting of the programme in their areas.

At the outset, EiC included 25 local education authorities (LEAs) in six major conurbations of England: Sheffield/Rotherham; Manchester/Salford; Leeds/Bradford; inner London; Liverpool/Knowsley; and Birmingham (the Phase 1 areas). In the period following the announcement of EiC in spring 1999, the secondary schools in these areas, working with their LEAs, drew up Partnership plans and, following agreement with DfES, money was released to Partnerships from September of that year. The programme was subsequently extended in 2000 (Phase 2) and 2001 (Phase 3), and now includes 57 Partnerships and about a third of England's secondary schools. Table 1.1 lists the Partnerships.

Table 1.1 EiC Areas

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
City of London	Barking and Dagenham	Enfield
Camden	Brent	Hounslow
Greenwich	Ealing	Sandwell
Hackney	Solihull (3 schools)**	Sefton (remaining schools)
Hammersmith and Fulham	St Helens	Wolverhampton
Islington	Sefton (7 schools)	Oldham
Kensington and Chelsea*	Wirral	Barnsley
Lambeth	Rochdale	Doncaster
Lewisham	Gateshead	Luton
Southwark	Newcastle upon Tyne	Blackburn with Darwen
Tower Hamlets	North Tyneside	Blackpool
Wandsworth	South Tyneside	
City of Westminster*	Sunderland	
Haringey	City of Bristol	
Newham	Hartlepool	
Waltham Forest	Middlesbrough	
Birmingham	Redcar and Cleveland	
Knowsley	Stockton-on-Tees	
Liverpool	City of Kingston upon Hull	
Manchester	Leicester City	
Salford	Stoke on Trent	
Rotherham	Halton	
Sheffield	City of Nottingham	
Bradford		
Leeds		

* These two LEAs formed a single EiC Partnership.

** Ceased to be an EiC Partnership in September 2003.

There were seven key Strands to EiC, as well as a number of cross-cutting themes. The seven Strands were:

- programmes to support gifted and talented children, defined as the top five to ten per cent of each school's student cohort (the Gifted and Talented Strand)
- the provision of Learning Mentors (LMs) to provide advice, access to services and support to students with barriers to learning
- the establishment of Learning Support Units (LSUs), to provide specific support for pupils with barriers to learning and who would benefit from time away from the normal classroom, to aid them in a return to normal schooling as quickly as possible
- a new network of City Learning Centres (CLCs), with a strong emphasis on using ICT and innovative teaching strategies, especially for gifted and talented students
- EiC Action Zones providing local solutions to local problems for small groups of primary and secondary schools
- an expansion of the existing Specialist Schools programme
- an expansion of the existing Beacon Schools programme.

Some of the Strands were more innovative than others. Beacon and Specialist School programmes were already in existence, but EiC extended these in areas where the programmes had been relatively slow to become established, and sought to ensure that these programmes were more closely linked to LEA-wide developments. EiC Action Zones⁶ were a development of the statutory Education Action Zones (EAZs) already in place, but smaller and less formal in structure. Each EiC Action Zone consisted of one or two secondary schools with their associated primary schools and had its own priorities and targets, frequently related to improved transition from primary to secondary school. Prior to EiC, there was a developing emphasis on policies and programmes to meet the needs of the most able young people, but the Gifted and Talented Strand was the first wide-scale systematic approach to this issue in England. Similarly, some schools and LEAs had been developing systems for supporting disengaged and disaffected young people and those facing a range of social and personal difficulties, with the aim of keeping them within mainstream schooling. These support systems were developed and extended in the Learning Mentor and LSU Strands. Finally, CLCs were innovative state-of-the-art ICT-based learning opportunities for pupils at a network of schools and for the wider community. Most CLCs are based in a secondary school. An important aspect of EiC was that the Strands were seen, not as stand-alone initiatives, but inter-related and providing a comprehensive and coherent overall strategy for improving urban schools:

⁶ Initially known as small EiC Action Zones.

Funding was allocated to Partnerships to support five of these Strands, the exceptions being the Beacon and Specialist Strands which were funded through the relevant national programmes. Each Partnership decided how the money for each Strand should be allocated between schools.

The cross-cutting themes within the overall EiC policy included improving the public perception of schools in urban areas, increasing cooperation and partnership between schools, improving ICT provision within schools, and improving pupils' transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.

1.2 The development of EiC

Since its inception in 1999, EiC has evolved and developed, both to learn from the early experience of the first EiC Partnerships and to address emerging issues within education more generally.

1.2.1 Changes in coverage

At the outset, EiC created LEA-wide Partnerships of secondary schools. Over time, the EiC programme was extended to include:

- Excellence Clusters – smaller groups of schools in pockets of deprivation, in both urban and rural areas, which benefit from three of the EiC Strands (Learning Mentors, LSUs and the Gifted and Talented Strand) and a Strand tailored to their own requirements⁷
- the former statutory EAZs, which are being included in EiC as either Excellence Clusters or EiC Action Zones
- an EiC Primary Pilot programme (sometimes known as the Primary Extension Project) offering Learning Mentors, LSUs and provision for gifted and talented pupils⁸
- Aimhigher: Excellence Challenge for young people aged 13 to 19. Initially named Excellence Challenge and subsequently renamed Aimhigher this programme built on widening participation activities funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and by individual universities and focused on increasing aspiration and widening participation in higher education.⁹
- pilot programmes to sustain and develop good practice in disadvantaged areas in relation to minority ethnic pupils and children in their early years.¹⁰

⁷ See Schagen *et al.* (2003).

⁸ This has developed into a broader EiC support programme, introduced from September 2004, which is designed to underpin the National Primary Strategy and which extends EiC resources and strategies to all primary schools serving disadvantaged pupils irrespective of their location. For an evaluation of the Primary Pilot, see Ridley and Kendall (2005, forthcoming).

⁹ See <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities> for relevant evaluation papers.

¹⁰ See Cunningham *et al.* (2004) for an evaluation of the pilot projects for minority ethnic pupils.

Total DfES expenditure on the EiC programme rose from about £24 million in 1999/2000 to £139 million in 2000/2001 (the first full year) and to about £386 million in 2005/2006.¹¹ The programme therefore represents a significant use of resources but should be seen in the context of overall local authority current expenditure on secondary schools of over £9,000 million in 2000/2001.¹²

The work reported here is an evaluation of EiC in secondary schools in Phases 1, 2 and 3, up to July 2003.

1.2.2 Changes in the EiC programme

Alongside the extension of coverage to more and more schools, there have been changes in the support that the EiC programme has provided. Some of the original EiC Strands are less specific to EiC now than they were when the programme was introduced. For instance, as the balance between Specialist Schools within and outside EiC areas has changed, and as the Specialist Schools Programme has broadened in scope and inclusiveness, the identification of priority application for Specialist status for EiC schools came to an end, although the emphasis on their strategic use across Partnerships remains. The particular role of Beacon Schools in EiC areas has changed as Beacon Schools have themselves been phased out to be replaced by Leading Edge partnerships. Other elements of EiC have become mainstreamed: gifted and talented policy now has a national presence within personalised learning, and Learning Mentors and LSUs are increasingly found outside the geographical boundaries of EiC, and an increasing number of schools now have ICT resources of a similar standard to those offered by CLCs.

At the same time, the programme has developed beyond the original key Strands to include the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG),¹³ which has subsumed earlier leadership pilots in EiC areas, and the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP).¹⁴ LIG provides increased funding to schools in EiC areas (and to some schools outside these areas) to ensure that their leadership teams in those schools are able to transform the delivery of education so that pupils are not disadvantaged by any challenging circumstances that their schools face. BIP was introduced in July 2002, with aims that were complementary to EiC's initial introduction of Learning Mentors and LSUs. BIP is delivered through small groups of schools – primary and secondary – within EiC Partnerships and aims to reduce problems associated with behaviour and attendance.

¹¹ These figures exclude spending on Specialist and Beacon schools.

¹² See <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo040301/text/40301w10.htm>

¹³ LIG was launched in April 2003 and included all EiC secondary schools, as well as other schools with high levels of entitlement to Free Schools Meals or low levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4.

¹⁴ BIP was launched in July 2002 in 34 areas (almost all of which were already involved in EiC), and was subsequently extend to a further 26 EiC areas. It is aimed at improving poor behaviour and attendance in schools where these issues form significant barriers to learning and pupil progress.

As a result of these changes, EiC now focuses on three main themes: learning and teaching, behaviour and attendance, and leadership.

1.2.3 London Challenge

London Challenge was launched in May 2003 and aims to address the particular challenges faced by secondary schools in London. The programme is committed to improving the opportunities for its young people and to making London a world class centre for learning and creativity. In particular, it is working with five inner London LEAs (all part of EiC) to transform secondary education in these areas. London Challenge anticipates the creation of new schools and new types of schools in London, greater rewards for teachers and enhanced professional development opportunities, a focus on school leadership, and the creation of a Gifted and Talented Centre for London. There is clearly considerable overlap between London Challenge and EiC, in terms of common objectives and approaches, as well as schools and LEAs.

1.3 Changes in national educational policy

Further changes in national policy are now being developed by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). According to the DfES, these changes will have a greater impact on EiC than the changes within the EiC programme itself. The findings of the evaluation described in this report will, therefore, be considered in a very different context from that anticipated when the programme and its evaluation began. These national policy changes were set in motion in January 2004, at the North of England Education Conference. There David Miliband, Minister of State, announced a 'New Relationship' with schools:

I want to forge a new relationship with schools in which DfES and LEAs' support for secondary schools is more closely integrated, draws on the proven expertise of those in the field, including serving heads and leading schools, and offers a substantial reduction in burdensome bidding and reporting requirements. This new relationship would have the following characteristics:

- *Every school is able to have a single conversation about its development priorities, its targets and its support needs*
- *The school's targets are set against a clear picture of national priorities, and are based on rigorous self-evaluation and local needs*
- *There is a continuing simplification and rationalisation of funding support for school improvement*
- *A single plan, based on a school's self evaluation, will satisfy all monitoring requirements.*

Schools are held accountable for pupil outcomes, not process measures or filling in the correct form. (Miliband, 2004)

The development of this New Relationship is still being worked through and is being trialled in selected authorities, but DfES has already published its Five Year Strategy, which fleshes out some of the thinking behind the North of England speech. In the Five Year Strategy document the Department promises:

... to halve the existing inspection burden on schools, without scrapping the expectation that schools must constantly improve. We will replace the existing system of local authority 'link advisers' with a single annual review carried out by a 'school improvement partner', usually a serving headteacher from a successful school. In cases of failure, intervention will follow as necessary. High-performing schools will only undergo the formal review once every three years. (DfES, 2004)

Part of the thinking behind the New Relationship is about simplifying funding and delivering it to individual schools so that they can take control of their own development. These changes will clearly have an impact on EiC. It is anticipated that schools will continue to receive, overall, the levels of funding currently available for EiC purposes, but it will be for schools themselves (subject only to their discussions with the School Improvement Partner) to decide how far they will work collaboratively and how much funding to contribute to wider partnerships.¹⁵

The Government is also proposing the development of Education Improvement Partnerships, which will provide a new framework to enable schools to group together to raise standards and to work together to take on wider responsibilities in areas such as provision for special educational needs or hard-to-place pupils. EiC Partnerships and Clusters may see this kind of partnership as a natural successor to the more uniform EiC Partnership model. DfES is working with EiC Partnerships to help them make the transition from a 'dependency model' of EiC Partnership to the more autonomous 'partnership model' which Education Improvement Partnerships offer. The challenge is to preserve the best of EiC Partnership working and strategies in a freer context where schools develop collaborative working from the ground up and take ownership of their own partnership goals and priorities.

1.4 The evaluation report

In 2000, a consortium consisting of the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), the Centre for Educational Research (CER) and the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) at the London School of Economics (LSE), and the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of Excellence in Cities, to cover the period up to the end of the

¹⁵ A consultation on the proposed new arrangements was announced in February 2005.

academic year 2002/2003. This report summarises the findings from this evaluation. Chapter 2 introduces the evaluation, and sets out the evaluation approach, summarises the methodological approach, and discusses some of the challenges posed by the evaluation of a complex and developing policy initiative. Chapter 3 discusses the impact of EiC on pupils' attainment, while Chapter 4 examines pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Chapter 5 focuses on other key players, including teachers, headteachers, employers and training providers. Chapter 6 considers in more detail the role of EiC Partnerships, and Chapter 7 looks at the delivery, successes and challenges, and sustainability of the seven main Strands. Finally, Chapter 8 offers some conclusions and implications for policy and practice. A number of technical appendices provide more details of specific aspects of the evaluation.

A series of working papers produced during the course of the evaluation are also available at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities>: a full list of these is given in the Annex to this report.

2. Monitoring and evaluating EiC

As noted in Chapter 1, in summer 2000 a consortium consisting of NFER, LSE and IFS was commissioned to evaluate EiC in Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas to cover the academic years 2000/2001 to 2002/2003. A year later, the evaluation was extended to include Phase 3 areas.¹⁶ The overall structure of this evaluation, following this extension, is described in the information bulletin ‘The Evaluation of the Excellence in Cities Policy’ (NFER *et al.*, 2003).

2.1 The framework of research questions that guided the evaluation

As a result of changes within the programme and within the policy context, the final objectives of the evaluation were to address the research questions set out in Tables 2.1 to 2.4 below.

Table 2.1 Pupil outcomes

Key aims	Research questions
Improved achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the evidence of impact of the EiC programme and its Strands? • To what extent does this impact vary in relation to different groups (e.g. gifted and talented pupils, pupils from different social backgrounds, those with English as an additional language, pupils for different ethnic backgrounds etc.) and the different Strands of EiC? • What new strategies or provision for raising attainment have been set in place as a result of EiC?
Increased inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the evidence of impact of the EiC programme and its Strands on inclusion? • To what extent does this impact vary in relation to different groups and the different Strands of EiC? • What new strategies or provision have been set in place as a result of EiC?

¹⁶ At the same time, the consortium was commissioned to evaluate the Primary Pilot and the first seven Excellence Clusters. As part of separate but related contracts, the consortium also undertook evaluations of Excellence Challenge (later Aimhigher) from October 2001 and of the Pupil Learning Credits (PLC) pilot: the evaluation of the PLC pilot was led by the Centre for Educational Research at LSE.

Table 2.2 School outcomes

Key aims	Research questions
Improved quality of teaching and the teaching experience	<p>Teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the evidence of impact of the EiC programme? • Has there been any change in the range of teaching and learning strategies since the introduction of EiC? • What has been the role of the different Strands and/or other supporting policy strands? • What has been the impact of any changes in teaching and learning strategies on student outcomes? <p>Establishing a culture of continuing professional development (CPD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the pattern of training provision within EiC areas? Is there any evidence of change in this? • What opportunities have arisen for shared training as a result of EiC? What has been the relative level of success?
Attendance at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has EiC improved pupils' attendance at school?¹⁷
Improved use of ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any indication that the use of ICT in teaching and learning strategies has changed since the introduction of EiC? • To what extent has change occurred, and can it be attributed to EiC? • What role has been played by City Learning Centres/Specialist Schools in supporting and disseminating the use of ICT? • What is the impact of any changes?
Improved transition	<p>In relation to the transition from primary to secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What impact has the implementation of EiC had upon local arrangements for primary/secondary transition? • What has been the role of EiC Action Zones in this?
Improved public perceptions and employers perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence of changes in how EiC schools are perceived by the public and by employers? • Is there evidence of any differences between how EiC and non-EiC schools are perceived?

¹⁷ Data was not available to conduct a similar analysis at pupil level.

Table 2.3 LEA and Partnership outcomes

Key aims	Research questions
Improved collaboration and partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence of changes in how schools collaborate? Is this related to EiC? • How have Partnerships developed? • How are Partnerships managed? • Is there evidence that EiC has led to changes in levels of shared responsibility and ownership for school improvement? • To what extent is it possible to identify and/or assess the relationship between Partnership working and student outcomes?

Table 2.4 Resources

Key aims	Research questions
Cost-effectiveness and use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have resources been used to introduce and manage changes in provision? • How cost-effective has the programme been?

2.2 The evidence base

The national evaluation needed to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of EiC, and had to ensure that the evaluation would:

- be capable of providing robust findings and yet be flexible enough to allow for the likelihood that the policy would evolve during the period of the evaluation
- capture both quantifiable changes, for example in pupils' attainment, and more qualitative changes, for example in stakeholders' perceptions
- lead to a greater understanding of the processes bringing about these changes and of the extent to which these changes were attributable to EiC.

2.2.1 Evidence collected as part of the evaluation

The data collected specifically for the evaluation had five main elements, further details of which are given in the Appendices.

Surveys of pupils, form tutors and headteachers in EiC schools

All EiC schools were invited to take part in these surveys, which took place in spring 2001, spring 2002 and spring 2003. Within each school, the headteacher (or other member of the senior management team) was invited to complete a questionnaire asking about the school context, issues such as teacher recruitment and retention and parental support, and about the way in

which EiC was being implemented in the school, as well as the benefits and challenges of EiC. The tutors of all the forms in one year group (identified by the research team so that each of Years 7 to 11 were represented in the sample) were asked to provide information about their teaching, the resources available to them, their professional development, and their experiences of and attitudes to EiC. All pupils in the selected year group were asked via questionnaires about their views on the school and the teaching they experienced, their attitudes to school, their plans and aspirations, and their behaviour. Schools were also asked to provide some background information about their pupils, such as which pupils were identified as gifted and talented, or had been referred to a Learning Mentor.¹⁸ The research design was such that schools in the Year 7 cohort in one year became the Year 8 cohort for the following year, and so on. Over the three year period, a comprehensive dataset was built up which allowed both the tracking of individual pupils over three years (for example Year 7 to Year 8 to Year 9, or Year 9 to Year 10 to Year 11) and comparisons of successive cohorts (for example Year 11 pupils in 2001, 2002 and 2003).

Parallel surveys in a comparison group of schools

In summer 2000, a group of about 150 schools operating in similar circumstance to those in Phase 1 and 2 areas was invited to take part in a similar set of surveys, using modified versions of the questionnaires, in this case selecting Year 9 pupils and their form tutors. The extension of EiC to Phase 3 areas, and the introduction of Excellence Clusters, in September 2001, reduced the size of this comparison group which, nevertheless, provides valuable information on non-EiC schools.

Interviews with Partnership Coordinators

In accordance with the original evaluation plan, three rounds of in-depth interviews with Partnership Coordinators took place, in autumn 2000, 2001 and 2002. It was subsequently decided to undertake a final round of interviews, focussing on evidence of partnership and collaboration, in autumn 2004.

Surveys of employers

Telephone surveys of employers and training providers in EiC areas who had experience of those leaving school at 16 took place in summer 2001 (selected Phase 1 and 2 areas) and summer 2002 (all Phase 3 areas), asking about employers' perception of local education and school leavers, and their awareness of and involvement in EiC. Follow-up interviews in summer 2003 explored the extent of change in these areas.

¹⁸ In the first year of the surveys (spring 2001), schools and LEAs were also asked to provide information such as date of birth, gender, ethnicity and special needs. For the 2002 and 2003 surveys, similar information was provided via the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

Strand Studies

Each of the seven key policy Strands was the subject of a more detailed study, which in most cases used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies including interviews with stakeholders and case studies of schools. Each Strand Study was designed, in consultation with DfES, to explore specific aspects of the implementation and impact of the Strand.

The first pupil surveys took place in 2000/2001 in schools in EiC Phase 1 and 2 areas and, for Cohort 3 only (see Table 2.5 below), non-EiC comparison schools. Follow-up surveys of the same pupils, their teachers and their schools, took place in 2002 and 2003. These surveys also included Phase 3 areas. The resulting datasets (particularly those marked in bold in Table 2.5) were used to explore the relationship between the Learning Mentor, Gifted and Talented, LSU and CLC Strands of EiC. These groups for whom end of Key Stage attainment data was available were the subject of cross-sectional analysis (Year 9 in 2000/2001 is compared with Year 9 in 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 while Year 11 in 2000/2001 is compared with Year 11 in 2001/2002 and 2002/2003) and longitudinal analysis (with changes between Year 7 and Year 9 being examined for Cohort 1 and between Year 9 and Year 11 being examined for Cohort 3).¹⁹ By drawing on information provided by pupils taking part in the surveys, these analyses can explore the relationships between attitudes, behaviour, attainment and participation in the Strands of EiC.

Table 2.5 The survey cohorts

Cohort	Academic year		
	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003
1	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
2	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
3	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
4	Year 10	Year 11	
5	Year 11		

Note: Bold text indicates the main datasets used in the analysis.

2.2.2 National datasets

National datasets relating to the attainments of all pupils completing Year 9 and Year 11 in each year from 1999 to 2003 were available to the evaluation consortium. From 2001, this information was provided from the National Pupil Database (NPD), which links attainment information to detailed pupil level information such as ethnicity and entitlement to Free School Meals collected as part of the DfES Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

¹⁹ It should be noted that Cohort 3 is larger than the other cohorts, as it includes pupils from the non-EiC comparison schools.

This was linked to information about individual schools, for example whether the school was mixed or single-sex, using information from NFER's Register of Schools (ROS) and from the LEA and School Information Service (LEASIS). These datasets were used for the analyses relating to the overall impact of EiC on attainment. For information about the characteristics of teachers in EiC and non-EiC areas, DfES made available extracts from the Database of Teacher Records (DTR).

2.3 The analytical approach

The previous section briefly describes the main sources of information on which this evaluation is based. Wherever possible, the evaluation has tried to triangulate information of different types and from different sources, in order to provide a comprehensive picture of EiC and its impact on pupils, teachers and schools. For example, in Chapter 3 we present statistical analysis of performance data exploring the relationship between pupils' performance and their involvement with EiC alongside information from interviews with Partnership Coordinators, teachers and, in some cases, pupils as well as data derived from the surveys.

The information has ranged from the purely qualitative, for example a pupil's description of the experience of attending a LSU, through more quantifiable characteristics, such as teachers' perception of the extent of parental support, to more directly measurable quantities such as the way in which resources have been used and pupils' end of Key Stage assessments. With all of these types of information, our approach has been to start from straightforward descriptions before proceeding to analyse and synthesise the information. The working papers, most of which focus on one aspect of the evaluation, such as the work of a specific Strand or on a particular aspect of the performance data, provide the initial descriptions and analysis, while this report takes a summative and over-arching perspective. These working papers are listed in the Annex.

2.3.1 The impact of EiC and its Strands

EiC is targeted at schools in urban areas which face, to a greater or lesser extent, the challenges of social deprivation, a mobile pupil population, pupils from varied ethnic backgrounds – and with varying levels of fluency in English – and high levels of special educational needs associated with large urban conurbations in England. It is not surprising that direct comparisons of pupils in schools in EiC and non-EiC areas show differences in levels of attainment, but the challenge for the evaluation is to establish the extent to which EiC has brought about change in the areas covered by the policy, over and above changes occurring for other reasons. In particular, if standards of attainment in EiC secondary schools were rising faster than in non-EiC areas, was this as a result of EiC or because of changes elsewhere in the system, for

example in the primary schools that provide the ‘inputs’ to secondary schools, or through other concurrent initiatives, many of which focused on schools in challenging circumstances, a group in which EiC schools would be disproportionately represented?

EiC is a complex initiative. The original funding structure of EiC was centred on the separate Strands, which may have made it difficult for schools and Partnerships to view it more holistically and, in some cases, for them to integrate it with other school improvement approaches. The seven Strands were themselves interlinked, with some targeted at particular groups of pupils within a school and with some focusing on the whole school. This intricate structure led the consortium to adopt a variety of approaches to explore the impact of EiC, including quantitative methods from both the statistical and econometric traditions, as well as more qualitative approaches, in order to triangulate data of different types from different sources to build up a picture of what works, for whom, and how.

Let us consider what can be regarded as evidence suggesting that EiC has had an impact on pupils’ performance. EiC aims to address under-performance by pupils in urban areas as seen, for example, in lower proportions of pupils achieving at least five GCSEs at grade C or better. One approach is to look at whether the rate of increase, year on year, in this proportion is associated with the introduction of EiC. While this may be indicative, it does not provide a complete answer.²⁰ Perhaps the intakes of urban secondary schools have changed more rapidly – or in different ways – than those of schools in other areas. Pupils in urban schools are more likely not to be from White UK backgrounds, to have English as an additional language, to have identified special educational needs and to be entitled to Free School Meals (an indicator that the pupil is from a family which is relatively disadvantaged economically). Perhaps these factors are associated with pupils’ progress and levels of attainment. The comparison of the performance of pupils in EiC and non-EiC areas, therefore, needs to take account of pupils’ own starting points – their prior attainment and characteristics – and those of the schools they attend and the areas in which they live. The rich datasets available to the evaluation suggest that we can take account of a large proportion of these pre-existing differences between pupils, schools and areas.²¹ However, although this allows us to control for many school and pupil characteristics, they may

²⁰ There are also technical difficulties in comparing rates of increase in threshold indicators, particularly in relation to cases where the indicator is near the extremes of its range. For example, a school where most of the pupils achieve at least five good GCSEs cannot improve as much, year-on-year, as a school where a lower percentage of pupils achieves this threshold.

²¹ In statistical terms, our models account for about 80 per cent of the variation between LEAs, almost 90 per cent of that between schools and between 50 and 70 per cent of that between pupils (with higher values being associated with aggregate outcome measures and Mathematics, and lower values with English and Science). The additional information available for pupils taking part in the surveys means that models including this information account for up to 90 per cent of the variation between pupils.

not account fully for the pre-existing differences between EiC and non-EiC areas. Hence, some analyses control for systematic, time-constant differences between schools in EiC and non-EiC areas.

Having controlled for these pre-existing differences, what would we expect to find if EiC has had a significant impact on pupils' attainment? A very strong finding would be that, for a given cohort, for example all those pupils completing Key Stage 4 in 2003, pupils in EiC areas made greater progress than otherwise similar pupils in the same cohort in non-EiC areas:²² additional resources have been directed at these pupils and this should result in improved levels of attainment. But suppose that, before the introduction of EiC, pupils in these areas were doing less well – even after having allowed for all the measurable differences in prior attainment, social circumstances and other background and contextual factors – than otherwise similar pupils elsewhere. The impact of EiC might then be seen in a reduction in, or elimination of, these differences over time. In either case, we might expect to see greater change in Phase 1 areas, where EiC has been in place for longer, and less change in Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas.

One approach is to compare successive cohorts of pupils reaching particular milestones in their academic career, such as the end of Key Stage 3 or 4, and look at how the achievements of these successive cohorts of pupils in EiC and non-EiC areas are changing over time. As used in this evaluation, this approach takes account of both pupil- and school-level factors (particularly pupils' prior attainment), and uses two different analytical approaches. While these differ in their formal structure, each is attempting to answer the same underlying question. The first approach is commonly known as 'differences-in-differences' and the second approach uses multilevel modelling techniques with data relating to more than one cohort with suitable year-specific effects included, which allow an investigation of differences between successive cohorts of pupils: we will refer to this as the cohort comparison approach. The cohort comparison approaches uses data from several cohorts and allows us to identify effects for each Phase of EiC separately for each cohort, and to consider how these effects are changing over time. For example, using the combined 2001, 2002 and 2003 cohorts, we can consider the differences between pupils in EiC Phase 1 schools and those in non-EiC schools in each of the three years under consideration.

A different approach, again based on multilevel models, is to consider the pupils within a single cohort and to examine the attainment of pupils in EiC and non-EiC areas, again taking account of factors such as prior attainment as well as school and social factors. We refer to this as the single cohort approach.

²² Assuming that we could also control for all pre-existing differences between these types of area.

There are differences between the ‘difference-in-differences’ and multilevel modelling methodologies in terms of the estimation of standard errors around the coefficients, although both allow for clustering at the school level.²³ The ‘difference-in-differences’ methodology allows for the possibility that there are time-constant, systematic differences between schools in EiC and non-EiC areas which may not be fully captured in available control variables (e.g. measures of deprivation such as entitlement to Free School Meals). If such effects exist, then estimates of the EiC effect may differ using the two methodologies.

The impact of EiC on pupils’ attainment and progress has been examined using both these approaches, but the essential element of all these analyses is that they address the issue that pupils in EiC areas differ, in terms of important characteristics that may be associated with attainment and progress, from those in non-EiC areas. Further details of the methods used are given in Appendix 7.

The general approach outlined above in relation to comparisons between pupils in EiC and non-EiC schools encompasses the investigation of the relationship between school level factors such as type of school or overall level of entitlement to Free School Meals and attainment. In particular, this allows us to examine the attainment of pupils in Specialist and Beacon Schools, both within and outside EiC areas, and of schools in EiC Action Zones in comparison with schools not engaged in this type of Partnership activity. Hence, we can explore the role of the three key Strands of EiC that are operationalised at the whole-school level in raising levels of attainment. The approach can also be extended to investigating the impact of the Strands which have a pupil-level focus (the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor, LSU and CLC Strands).

2.4 The strength of the evidence base

The size of the datasets available, the range of methods used, and the sophisticated research design that provides for both cross-sectional and longitudinal perspectives, ensure that we can be reasonably confident that the findings presented are valid and reliable. Where it has been possible to carry out difference-in-differences analyses which compare pre- and post-EiC outcomes, these provide robust findings in relation to the impact of EiC. The cohort comparison and single comparison approaches allow us to establish relationships between, for example, participation in the Gifted and Talented Strand and academic outcomes, with considerably certainty, but do not provide unequivocal evidence of impact.

²³ The multilevel models used for this evaluation also allow for clustering at the LEA (Partnership) level.

The numbers of pupils involved means that the evidence is particularly strong in relation to EiC as a whole, the three whole-school Strands, and for the Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented Strands. The LSU Strand presents greater challenges in terms of quantitative data, partly as a result of the relatively small numbers of pupils involved, and because the large scale studies were not able to collect information related to pupils' reasons for referral.²⁴ Furthermore, the flexibility that allowed LSUs to address the needs of particular schools means that the outcome measures available to the evaluation in terms of pupils' attainment, attitudes and attendance may not be equally valid for all LSUs. Similar reservations apply to the evaluation of the impact of CLCs. The quantitative evidence is both strengthened and illuminated by the more qualitative evidence gathered from talking to Partnership Coordinators, school staff and pupils.

However, it is important to recognise the limitations, as well as the strengths, of the data.

- As described in Chapter 1, the period covered by the evaluation was one in which there was an increasing emphasis on raising attainment in secondary schools, particularly those in challenging circumstances, whether or not located in an EiC area. It may not always be possible to disaggregate the effects of these concurrent policies or initiatives.
- The basic evaluation design was set out in mid-2000 and, as we have seen from Chapter 1, considerable change took place within the programme over the subsequent few years. While the design offered a degree of flexibility, some of the changing priorities could not be reflected in the evaluation. For example, while improving pupils' behaviour had always been an important element of EiC, there was increasing emphasis on this area as the programme developed. While the evaluation provides evidence about perceptions about behaviour, it does not provide the more objective and quantitative information that might enable a more comprehensive evaluation of the Behaviour Improvement Programme.
- While the use of national data enables us to make robust conclusions for some aspects of the evaluation, other aspects, such as the impact of the Gifted and Talented Strand, and teachers' attitudes to EiC, require the more detailed and in-depth information gathered through the surveys, interview programmes and case studies. Participation in these was on a voluntary basis, and therefore may not capture the full range of experiences and attitudes.
- Schools in the most challenging circumstances were less likely than those facing fewer challenges to agree to participate in the evaluation.
- Some types of pupil will necessarily be under-represented in the surveys; for example those with high levels of absence, or those with low literacy

²⁴ An attempt to gather such information on a large scale would have imposed considerable burdens on schools.

levels or with low levels of fluency in English, who could not complete the questionnaires.

- The expansion of EiC to Phase 3 Partnerships, and the introduction of Excellence Clusters, reduced the size of the planned comparison group. Furthermore, as non-EiC schools have taken on elements of EiC, such as programmes for gifted and talented pupils, and Learning Mentors, the differences between EiC and non-EiC schools have become blurred. One consequence is that observed impacts of EiC may, in fact, be underestimated.
- Within schools, much of the direct impact of EiC will be through the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor and LSU Strands, each of which explicitly involves only a small proportion of pupils. The overall impact, averaged over all pupils in a school, may therefore be quite small even if the specific impact is relatively large.
- The Pupil Learning Credits pilot scheme provided additional resources to about 250 schools in Phase 1 areas (and some in Excellence Clusters) with high levels of entitlement to Free School Meals for the period September 2001 to March 2003. The programme enabled secondary schools to provide additional learning opportunities to pupils whose social circumstances were particularly difficult. The impact (if any) of this programme cannot, therefore be differentiated from that of EiC in Phase 1 schools with high levels of entitlement to Free School Meals.
- This evaluation focuses on EiC as a whole and may not always capture local strengths and weaknesses.

While EiC has been in existence for several years, many of the pupils in EiC areas whose attainments are considered in this report did not experience EiC for the whole of their secondary education, or indeed for the whole of a Key Stage. For example, EiC was launched in Phase 1 areas in autumn 1999, and therefore pupils who were in Year 11 in schools in these areas in the academic year 2000/2001 (the first year covered by this report) could have experienced EiC for the whole of their Key Stage 4 experience. In practice these pupils were unlikely to experience the full range of support offered by EiC as Partnerships and schools needed time to appoint appropriate staff and to implement new ways of working. In Phase 2 areas, pupils completing Key Stage 4 in 2001 would have experienced EiC for less than a full academic year. Pupils completing Key Stage 4 in summer 2003 would have experienced EiC for up to four years in Phase 1 areas, three years in Phase 2 areas and two years in Phase 3 areas. Similarly, pupils in Phase 1 areas completing Key Stage 3 in summer 2002 were the first who could have experience EiC during the whole of the Key Stage.

Of course, not all pupils in an EiC school will have the same EiC-related experience. While the national data allows us to identify those schools – and hence those pupils – involved in EiC at various times, the surveys carried out as part of the evaluation allow us to identify pupils who experienced particular

aspects of support as a result of the EiC programme, particularly those pupils identified as gifted and talented, those who had seen a Learning Mentor, those referred to an LSU, and those who had attended a CLC. Section 3.5 and Chapter 4 consider these pupils in more detail.

Table 2.6 shows the progress of successive cohorts of pupils through their secondary education, and notes the dates at which the three Phases of EiC were launched. The figures shown in bold indicate the cohorts of pupils that are the main focus of the analyses reported in Chapter 3.

Table 2.6 The pattern of introduction of EiC

Academic year	1996/ 1997	1997/ 1998	1998/ 1999	1999/ 2000	2000/ 2001	2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003
Launch of EiC in:				Phase 1 areas	Phase 2 areas	Phase 3 areas	
Year group	7	8 7	9 8 7	10 9 8 7	11 10 9 8 7	11 10 9 8	11 10 9

This national evaluation therefore considers the possible impact of EiC over a period when it was evolving and developing, but before it had become fully embedded in school processes and practices.

2.5 Local monitoring and evaluation

In addition to the national evaluation, Partnerships have been carrying out their own internal monitoring and evaluation. Partnerships were required, as part of the Partnership plan submitted to DfES for approval, to set out their internal monitoring and evaluation strategies. Formal monitoring developed from internal DfES annual reviews of Partnership progress, through annual reviews fully involving EiC Partnership Coordinators (and their teams and representative Partnership headteachers if they so wished), to the current system of Partnership self-review and peer-review. This latter approach is more developmental: it exposes Partnerships to good practice in other areas, emphasises evidence and outcomes, and encourages constructive challenge. The system was piloted across five Partnerships in the North East in 2003 and by 2004 involved all whole authority Partnerships and Excellence Clusters. Separate arrangements apply in relation to the monitoring of BIP.

2.6 Summary

This Chapter has set out the overall framework within which the evaluation was conducted, and has summarised the sources of data on which the evaluation is based. Some of the conceptual and methodological challenges of conducting an evaluation of a complex, multifaceted initiative within a changing policy context have been discussed, as have issues related to the relatively recent introduction of EiC itself. The comprehensive nature of the evaluation ensures that we can be reasonably confident that the findings presented are valid and reliable, although the some aspects of EiC and of the evaluation (for example the adoption of elements of EiC outside EiC areas and the fact that participation in the evaluation was voluntary) may lead to over- or under-estimates of the impact of EiC. The following Chapters consider the impact of EiC on pupils, teachers, schools, and the local area, before looking at the implementation of the Strands.

3. The impact of EiC on pupils' attainment

This Chapter considers the evidence relating to the impact of EiC on pupils' attainment. This evidence is drawn from a number of sources, including the statistical analysis of performance data at Key Stages 3 and 4 and the perceptions of pupils, teachers, school senior managers and Partnership Coordinators.

Key findings

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

The overall impact of EiC

The most positive finding of the evaluation was in relation to attainment in Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3, where EiC has led to an increase in average attainment. No evidence was found for an average impact of EiC on English or Science at the end of Key Stage 3, or for outcomes considered at Key Stage 4. However, there was evidence of a positive impact for some specific groups of students.

Attainment in English, Mathematics and Science

Overall, pupils attending EiC schools had higher levels of attainment in Mathematics than otherwise similar pupils attending schools that were not part of EiC, after taking into account a range of school and pupil factors including attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. This was equivalent to increasing the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above by between 1.1 and 1.9 percentage points with the higher value being observed in the most deprived schools in Phase 1 areas: these schools were also in receipt of funding from the PLC pilot.

There was no evidence to show that EiC had an impact on levels of attainment in English or Science at the end of Key Stage 3.

Gender differences

Overall (i.e. in both EiC and non-EiC schools), girls made more progress than boys in English. This differential between boys' and girls' progress was less in EiC Phase 1 and Phase 2 schools than in non-EiC schools for pupils with moderate levels of prior attainment. The difference was, however very small, being about 0.02 of a level. For Science, while girls generally made less progress than boys, the differential was slightly less in EiC schools (especially those in Phase 1 and Phase 3 areas) than in non-EiC schools although again the differences were very small and of the order of 0.02 of a level.

Ethnicity differences

Pupils from Chinese backgrounds attending EiC schools made more progress than otherwise similar pupils in non-EiC schools. For other minority ethnic groups, the picture was more mixed, with the impact (if any) of EiC depending on the gender of the pupil and the outcome measure used.

Impact of the Strands

The quantitative data showed that pupils designated as gifted and talented made greater progress than otherwise similar pupils not designated.

Pupils referred to a Learning Mentor made less progress than otherwise similar pupils, but there was evidence to suggest that early mentoring (in Year 7) had enabled some pupils to overcome barriers to learning.

The quantitative data did not find any association between attending an LSU or a CLC and attainment at Key Stage 3, once pupil and school factors had been taken into account.

There was no consistent pattern suggesting that the impact of Beacon and Specialist Schools in EiC areas differed between EiC and non-EiC areas, or that EiC Action Zones had an overall impact on performance

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

The overall impact of EiC

In 2003, there was little evidence to suggest that pupils in EiC areas were making more progress than similar pupils in non-EiC areas (again, taking account of prior attainment and a range of school and pupil factors) during Key Stage 4. Neither did the analysis indicate that there were differences in progress between EiC and non-EiC areas in 2001 and that these differences were narrowing over time. The pupils included in this analysis would potentially have had some exposure to EiC during Key Stage 3 and this may be serving to reduce the apparent impact during Key Stage 4.

Impact of the Strands of EiC

Pupils identified as gifted and talented generally had higher levels of attainment than otherwise similar pupils not so designated. The impact of being designated as gifted and talented was not uniform, and was associated with level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, attitudes to education, behaviour and ethnicity.

In relation to the Learning Mentor Strand, there were positive associations between mentoring and achievement for some groups of pupils and some outcome measures.

There was no quantitative evidence of EiC having an impact on pupils referred to an LSU, or attending a CLC.

As at Key Stage 3, the quantitative evidence did not suggest that EiC added value to existing Specialist and Beacon School programmes, or that EiC Action Zones had an impact on attainment.

The cost effectiveness of EiC

The per-pupil costs of the EiC policy were modest in relation to overall school expenditure. A simple cost-benefit analysis was carried out, under the following assumptions:

- an improvement of one level can be interpreted as equivalent to two years of education
- the wage return to an additional year of schooling is eight per cent
- future wages will have a similar age profile (with a real terms increase of two per cent per year) to current patterns of earnings.

This suggested that EiC was potentially cost-effective (in terms of the long-term wage return to individuals) at Key Stage 3, with a rate of return from four to seven per cent, depending on Phase and year.

The views of stakeholders

Partnership Coordinators, school senior managers and teachers were generally very positive about EiC. Although only a minority reported a direct impact on attainment, many noted the ways in which EiC was creating a more positive climate for teaching and learning and improving pupils' motivation.

Teachers and school managers were positive about the impact of the Gifted and Talented and Learning Mentor Strands of EiC, which they perceived to be reducing barriers to learning leading to improved attainment.

Partnership Coordinators also saw these Strands as two of the most effective in terms of raising attainment, but other Strands were also contributing. While there were many successful Specialist and Beacon Schools, Coordinators did not generally feel that this was associated with EiC.

For each of the Strands, teachers interviewed as part of the Strand study saw it as having a direct impact on, or creating the right conditions for, improved teaching and learning.

3.1 The characteristics of pupils in EiC areas

Not all disadvantaged pupils live in the inner city and urban areas targeted by EiC, and not every child in these areas comes from a disadvantaged family, but two thirds of poor children live in 24 per cent of wards in Britain (UK. Parliament. HoC. Work and Pensions Committee, 2004), and pupils living in the areas included in EiC are considerably more likely than those in other parts of the country to be:

- from non-White UK backgrounds
- not to be fully fluent in English
- to be entitled to Free School Meals

- to have identified special educational needs
- to have English as an additional language.

Many of these factors have been shown to be associated with lack of educational progress and with relatively low levels of academic attainment (see, for example, West and Pennell, 2003). As well as overall differences between EiC and non-EiC areas, there are some marked differences between the three Phases of EiC, as shown in Table 3.1. About 12 per cent of pupils in non-EiC areas are from non-White UK backgrounds, compared with 40 per cent of those in Phase 1 areas (which include inner London and major conurbations such as Leeds/Bradford and Sheffield/Rotherham), 18 per cent of those in Phase 2 areas, and 30 per cent in Phase 3 areas.

The highest proportions of pupils with English as an additional language, entitled to Free School Meals, and with identified special needs, are also found in Phase 1 areas. Phase 2 and 3 areas are similar in terms of the overall level of entitlement to Free School Meals and the proportion of pupils with identified special needs, but Phase 3 areas have greater proportions of pupils from non-White UK backgrounds and with English as an additional language.

Table 3.1 The characteristics of pupils completing Key Stage 4 in 2003

Percentage of pupils	Areas not in EiC %	Phase 1 areas %	Phase 2 areas %	Phase 3 areas %
From non-White UK backgrounds	12	40	18	30
With English as an additional language	5	25	10	19
Entitled to Free School Meals	8	25	18	16
With identified special educational needs	12	17	13	14

Source: NPD, 2003

3.2 The attainment levels of pupils in EiC areas

Overall, the levels of academic attainment of pupils in EiC areas have been lower than those of pupils in other areas, as would be expected of a policy targeting areas of disadvantage. Tables 3.2 to 3.4 show the percentages of pupils achieving at least level 5 in each of English, Mathematics and Science by the end of Key Stage 3 for schools in non-EiC areas and for each Phase of EiC, for the period 2001 to 2003. Using this measure, attainment was better in 2002 than it was in the year before or the year after (except for Mathematics and Science in non-EiC areas). In each year, the percentage of pupils achieving this threshold was lower in EiC areas than in non-EiC areas.

Table 3.2 Key Stage 3: Percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in English

Key Stage 3 cohort	Areas not in EiC %	Phase 1 areas %	Phase 2 areas %	Phase 3 areas %
2001	78.3	71.4	73.8	73.8
2002	79.2	73.0	73.9	74.2
2003	77.5	69.0	72.4	70.0
Difference between 2001 and 2003	-0.8	-2.4	-1.4	-3.8

Source: NPD, 2001 to 2003

Table 3.3 Key Stage 3: Percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in Mathematics

Key Stage 3 cohort	Areas not in EiC %	Phase 1 areas %	Phase 2 areas %	Phase 3 areas %
2001	80.4	69.5	73.3	73.4
2002	80.1	70.1	73.3	73.6
2003	78.9	68.6	73.0	70.6
Difference between 2001 and 2003	-1.5	-0.9	-0.3	-2.8

Source: NPD, 2001 to 2003

Table 3.4 Key Stage 3: Percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in Science

Key Stage 3 cohort	Areas not in EiC %	Phase 1 areas %	Phase 2 areas %	Phase 3 areas %
2001	80.5	67.6	71.9	71.3
2002	80.4	68.6	72.3	72.0
2003	77.3	64.5	69.5	67.0
Difference between 2001 and 2003	-3.2	-3.1	-2.4	-4.3

Source: NPD, 2001 to 2003

There was a similar pattern of findings at Key Stage 4: the percentage of pupils achieving at least five GCSEs at grade C was higher in 2002 than in 2001, but fell slightly (except in EiC Phase 2 areas) in 2003.

Table 3.5 Key Stage 4: Percentage of pupils achieving at least five GCSEs at grade C or better

Key Stage 4 cohort	Areas not in EiC %	Phase 1 areas %	Phase 2 areas %	Phase 3 areas %
2001	55.6	43.2	47.3	45.1
2002	57.8	46.9	48.1	48.3
2003	56.8	46.8	49.6	46.2
Difference between 2001 and 2003	1.2	3.6	2.3	1.1

Source: NPD, 2001 to 2003

This section has looked at pupils' attainment in relation to a number of threshold measures. We now examine in more detail not just the attainment of pupils at a given stage in their education but also the progress they have made. In doing so, we use a range of measures of performance, some based on thresholds and some on measures which capture a wider range of performance, such as average levels or scores based on GCSE grades.

3.2.1 Progress during Key Stage 3

Over the same period (2001 to 2003), there were year-on-year improvements in attainment, as measured by the average level achieved at the end of Key Stage 3, for non-EiC schools and for each Phase of EiC (see Table 3.6). The increase between 2001 and 2003 was 0.24 of a level in non-EiC areas, and slightly greater (0.27 of a level) in Phase 1 areas. The increase in Phase 2 areas was similar to that in non-EiC areas, while Phase 3 areas showed a slightly greater increase.

Table 3.6 Average levels achieved at the end of Key Stage 3

Key Stage 3 cohort	Areas not in EiC	Phase 1 areas	Phase 2 areas	Phase 3 areas
2001	5.14	4.74	4.86	4.79
2002	5.26	4.82	4.92	4.93
2003	5.38	5.01	5.10	5.10
Difference between 2001 and 2003	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.31

Source: NPD, 2001 to 2003

If we examine the end of Key Stage 2 attainments of these same groups of pupils (see Table 3.7), we find a similar pattern of improvement. Again, the greatest improvement was in Phase 3 areas, where average Key Stage 2 levels increased by 0.38 of level from 1998 to 2000, compared with about 0.33 of a level in other areas.

Table 3.7 Average levels achieved at the end of Key Stage 2

Key Stage 3 cohort (Year completed Key Stage 2 in brackets)	Areas not in EiC	Phase 1 areas	Phase 2 areas	Phase 3 areas
2001 (1998)	3.77	3.63	3.67	3.60
2002 (1999)	3.97	3.78	3.83	3.83
2003 (2000)	4.11	3.95	4.01	3.98
Difference between 2001 and 2003	0.34	0.32	0.34	0.38

Source: NPD, 2001 to 2003

There was clearly a substantial improvement in levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in the period 1998 to 2000, possibly associated with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. However, these changes mean that an examination of Key Stage 3 results in EiC and non-EiC areas does not provide a complete picture of how involvement in EiC might be related to changes in attainment.

Table 3.8 Pupils' progress (in levels) during Key Stage 3

Key Stage 3 cohort	Areas not in EiC	Phase 1 areas	Phase 2 areas	Phase 3 areas
2001	1.37	1.11	1.19	1.19
2002	1.29	1.04	1.09	1.10
2003	1.27	1.06	1.09	1.12

Source: NPD, 2001 to 2003

Table 3.8 shows the progress during Key Stage 3 of these pupils. It is evident that pupils in the 2002 and 2003 cohorts, in all areas, made less progress than those in the 2001 cohort. We also see that the progress of pupils in EiC areas was less than that of pupils in non-EiC areas. For example, pupils completing Key Stage 3 in non-EiC areas in 2001 made more progress during Key Stage 3 than those in EiC Phase 1 areas, by 1.37 levels compared with 1.11 levels – a net 'gain' of 0.26 levels. By 2003, the corresponding net 'gain' was slightly less at 0.21 of a level. This provides some evidence that EiC may have had an impact during this period, but this relies on the assumption that pupils in EiC and non-EiC areas are directly comparable in terms of characteristics associated with attainment levels and progress and, as we have seen in Section 3.1 above, this is not the case.

3.2.2 Performance at Key Stage 4

Similarly, we can consider pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4.

Table 3.9 Average capped²⁵ GCSE scores

	Areas not in EiC	Phase 1 areas	Phase 2 areas	Phase 3 areas
2001	36.3	31.5	32.9	32.7
2002	37.9	34.1	34.5	34.1
2003	37.0	33.2	33.9	33.1
Difference between 2001 to 2003	0.7	1.7	1.0	0.4

Source: NPD, 2001 to 2003

Table 3.9 demonstrates that, in 2002, capped GCSE scores were higher than those in 2001 in both non-EiC and EiC areas, with the greatest increase in absolute terms (2.6 points) being in Phase 1 areas, where EiC was launched in 1999. In non-EiC areas, and in Phase 2 and 3 areas, the increase was about 1.5 points. In 2003, however, average capped point scores were lower than those for 2002 (although still higher than in 2001) in all areas. Table 3.10 summarises the Key Stage 2 attainments of the same pupils and shows a similar pattern in that average levels were higher in 1997 than in 1996 or 1998. We cannot make direct comparison between attainment at Key Stages 2 and 4 (as we did for Key Stages 2 and 3) because we do not have a common scale of measurement.

Table 3.10 Average levels achieved at the end of Key Stage 2

Key Stage 4 cohort (Year completed Key Stage 2 in brackets)	Areas not in EiC	Phase 1 areas	Phase 2 areas	Phase 3 areas
2001 (1996)	3.73	3.52	3.60	3.54
2002 (1997)	3.92	3.78	3.80	3.80
2003 (1998)	3.83	3.64	3.69	3.68
Difference between 2001 to 2003	0.10	0.12	0.09	0.14

Source: NPD, 2001 to 2003

3.3 Measuring the impact of EiC on pupils' attainment

This section outlines the analyses conducted to examine pupils' attainment, and Section 3.4 explores the extent to which improvements in attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 were associated with improved attainment at earlier stages of pupils' academic careers and with other possible differences between the cohorts of pupils, and how much was related to involvement in EiC.

Chapter 2 discussed our analytical approach, and Table 3.11 below summarises the main analyses of the national data reported in this Chapter. All

²⁵ Score derived from each pupil's best eight GCSE grades.

the analysis of Key Stage 3 outcomes used pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 as a measure of prior attainment. For Key Stage 4, the analyses used Key Stage 3 assessments as the measure of prior attainment.

Table 3.11 Summary of main analyses of national performance data

Approach	Cohorts	Control variables	Outcome measures
Differences-in-differences*	<i>Key Stage 3</i> 1999 and 2003 <i>and</i> 1999 – 2003	Gender Prior attainment School level variables School fixed effects (equivalent to secondary school dummy variables that control for unobservable systematic differences between EiC and non-EiC schools)	<i>Key Stage 3</i> For each of English and Mathematics: achieving level 4, achieving level 5, level achieved
Cohort comparison**	<i>Key Stage 3</i> 2001 – 2003 <i>Key Stage 4</i> 2002 – 2003	Gender Prior attainment Ethnicity Known entitlement to Free School Meals English language status Special needs School level variables (Random school and Partnership effects)	<i>Key Stage 3</i> For each of English, Mathematics and Science: level achieved Average level for the three subjects <i>Key Stage 4</i> Capped, uncapped and average point score Point scores for English, Mathematics, Science Achieving at least five GCSEs at grade C or better
Single cohort**	<i>Key Stage 3</i> 2003 <i>Key Stage 4</i> 2003	Gender Prior attainment Ethnicity Known entitlement to Free School Meals English language status Special needs School level variables (Random school and Partnership effects)	<i>Key Stage 3</i> For each of English, Mathematics and Science: level achieved Average level for the three subjects <i>Key Stage 4</i> Capped, uncapped and average point score Point scores for English, Mathematics, Science Achieving at least five GCSEs at grade C or better

* 1999 is the pre-policy year for EiC Phase 1. Detailed pupil level data (other than prior attainment and gender) was not available for the 1999 Key Stage 3 cohort. For the 2000 and 2001 Key Stage 3 cohorts (i.e. the pre-policy years for Phases 2 and 3), detailed pupil level data was available and used in robustness checks.

** Using multilevel modelling approaches. Detailed pupil level information was available for these cohorts

In addition, a wide range of analyses were carried out that made use of information from the school, teacher and pupil surveys.²⁶ This rich dataset included pupils' attitudes and behaviour as well as detailed school contextual information, and information about pupils' involvement in the Strands of EiC. Using these datasets, very comprehensive analyses exploring the relationship between participation in EiC and its Strands, school and pupil background and contextual factors, including pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and attainment, have been carried out. As described in Chapter 2, these consist of cross-sectional analyses (for example comparing three successive Year 9 cohorts) and longitudinal analyses, for example pupils who were in Year 7 in 2001 and Year 9 in 2003. The results are reported in detail in Morris and Rutt (2005), and key findings from this report are incorporated here.

A level represents the expected progress of a pupil over two years. For some purposes, it is convenient to work in smaller units, and a commonly used conversion is given by multiplying the level by six and adding three. On this scale, level 4 equates to 27 points, level 5 to 33 points and level 6 to 39 points. When comparing the progress of different groups of pupils, it is sometimes useful to convert levels or point scores into months of progress. One level represents two years (24 months) of progress, so half a level or three points represents a year of progress, and one point represents the progress made in about one term or three to four months. While these conversions are approximate, they provide a means of expressing pupils' progress in relatively concrete terms.

Appendix 8 provides more detailed information relating to the findings of the statistical analysis.

3.4 Pupils' attainment and progress

The following sections consider whether there was evidence that EiC was related to improvements in pupils' performance at Key Stages 3 and 4 (Section 3.4.1) and the cost effectiveness of the policy (Section 3.4.2), and then examine the perceptions of key stakeholders in relation to the impact of EiC on pupils' attainment (Section 3.4.3). All the results reported in this section are based on national data.

3.4.1 The overall impact of EiC: analysis of performance data

Although a number of statistical techniques have been used to explore the impact of EiC on attainment, **all the results reported here take account of a range of pupil- and school-level factors, including pupils' prior attainment**, and should be interpreted in this context, and in the context of an evaluation taking place as the policy and its implementation were developing.

²⁶ These analyses all used the cohort comparison or single cohort approaches (see Chapter 2).

Key Stage 3

The most positive findings about the impact of EiC at Key Stage 3 identified by the evaluation (and indeed the most positive overall) related to pupils' attainment in Mathematics. These results are presented here, followed by findings relating to English and Science, and to the average level achieved over all three curriculum areas. Further details are given in Appendices 8 and 9.

Mathematics

Findings for Mathematics differed according to the methodology used.

Consider first the single cohort approach for the 2003 Year 9 cohort. We choose this cohort as it allows most time for the impact of EiC to become evident. There was no evidence that pupils in EiC areas had higher levels of attainment than those of similar pupils in non-EiC areas (that is, taking into account prior attainment and a range of school- and pupil-level factors). A possible interpretation of this is that, by 2003, the additional resources given to EiC schools had not resulted in the progress of these pupils being greater than that of similar pupils in non-EiC. It is possible however that, despite the range of school- and pupil-level variables considered in the analysis, EiC and non-EiC schools and pupils may differ systematically for reasons unrelated to EiC and only partially captured by the available data.

The cohort comparison approach for the 2001, 2002 and 2003 cohorts suggested that, at best, pupils in EiC schools performed similarly to those elsewhere. More specifically:

- in 2001, the attainment of pupils in EiC Phase 1, 2 and 3 areas was broadly similar to that of non-EiC pupils
- in 2002, pupils in PLC schools (mainly schools in Phase 1 areas with high levels of entitlement to Free Schools Meals) and in Phase 2 schools had levels of performance about 0.03 of a level below that of pupils in non-EiC schools
- in 2003, pupils in Phase 3 areas made less progress than those in non-EiC areas.

However, when we use the difference-in-differences approach and control for systematic differences between schools in EiC and non-EiC areas that are not fully captured by observable characteristics of pupils and schools, pupils in EiC schools were more likely to attain at least level 5 in Key Stage 3 Mathematics than those in non-EiC areas.²⁷ In the most recent year considered here (2003), the most detailed analysis suggested that EiC was associated with an increase in the probability of attaining level 5 or above by 1.1 to 1.9

²⁷ See Machin *et al.* (2005).

percentage points, depending on Phase and whether or not the school was part of the PLC Pilot.. This could also be interpreted as increasing the percentage of students achieving level 5 or above by between 1.1 and 1.9 percentage points. The higher estimate relates to Phase 1 schools, many of which were also involved in the PLC Pilot Scheme, while the lower estimate of about 1.1 percentage points relates to EiC schools in Phase 2 and 3 areas. Similar effects were found using other outcome measures such as the probability of attaining level 4 or above and the average level attained in Mathematics. (See Appendix 9, Table 9.1.)

Given this positive association between EiC and level of attainment in Mathematics, it is worth examining the extent to which this was consistent across years. This analysis showed that, when each Phase was compared with non-EiC areas, the differential progress in EiC areas generally increased year on year (see Table 3.12). For example, the difference between schools in EiC Phase 1 areas and those in non-EiC areas was the same in 2000, one year after the launch of EiC in Phase 1 areas, as it had been a year earlier. By 2001, schools in Phase 1 areas had ‘closed the gap’ by about 0.8 percentage points. Results were similar for 2002, but in 2003, as noted earlier, the difference between EiC Phase 1 schools and non-EiC schools had been reduced by 1.9 percentage points. There was a similar pattern for Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas, compared with the immediate pre-EiC year in each case (i.e. 2000 and 2001 respectively). It is not surprising that a policy like EiC takes time to have an effect on pupils’ performance, but it is notable that 2003 seemed to represent a step-change in EiC areas.

Table 3.12 Difference in probability of achieving level 5 in Mathematics by year and Phase (compared with pre-EiC year)

Year	Phase 1 areas	Phase 2 areas	Phase 3 areas
	compared with non-EiC areas		
2000	0.000 (0.003)		
2001	0.008 (0.004)	0.005 (0.003)	
2002	0.007 (0.003)	0.005 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.004)
2003	0.019 (0.004)	0.010 (0.004)	0.011 (0.005)

*Note: The pre-EiC years are: Phase 1 – 1999, Phase 2 – 2000, Phase 3 – 2001
Standard errors in brackets*

English

As for Mathematics, findings differ according to the methods used.

For English, the difference-in-differences approach for 1999 to 2003 did not suggest any relationship between attainment in English and EiC after including school and pupil factors. This is consistent with results from the single cohort analysis for 2003, which showed that pupils in EiC and non-EiC

areas achieved similar levels in English.²⁸ However, taking the 2001, 2002 and 2003 cohorts together (the combined cohort approach), there was a complex picture of changes in levels of attainment.

- In 2001 and 2002, pupils in Phase 1 and (to a lesser extent) Phase 2 areas had higher levels of attainment, by the equivalent of two months of progress,²⁹ in Phase 1 areas and slightly less in Phase 2 areas, than those of similar pupils in non-EiC areas and in Phase 3 areas (where EiC was launched in autumn 2001).
- In 2003, levels of attainment of pupils in Phase 1 areas were significantly greater than those of similar pupils in other areas, again by the equivalent of about two months of progress, but the performance of pupils in Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas was similar to that of pupils in non-EiC areas.
- The difference in attainment between Phase 1 areas and non-EiC areas was broadly constant across the period 2001 to 2003.

It thus appears that, in the period 2001 to 2003, there was a difference in levels of attainment in English between non-EiC and Phase 1 (and possibly Phase 2) areas but not between non-EiC and Phase 3 areas: these difference did not appear to be increasing over time. As noted earlier, such an association may not indicate a causal link. Indeed, were there such a link, we would expect the difference between Phase 1 and non-EiC schools to increase over time, as EiC became more established and embedded in school practice.

Science

The levels achieved in Science at the end of Key Stage 3 were not associated with involvement in EiC in any of the years 2001 to 2003, or in any of the Phases of EiC.

Average level achieved

The single cohort and cohort comparison approaches showed that the average Key Stage 3 level achieved (i.e. using each pupil's average level across English, Mathematics and Science) at the end of Key Stage 3 was not associated with involvement in EiC in any of the years 2001 to 2003, or in any of the Phases of EiC.

Variations in impact associated with school-level entitlement to Free School Meals

Although all schools within each Partnership were involved with EiC, resources were generally allocated so that the schools with the highest levels of disadvantage amongst their pupils received the greatest resources. While schools face a variety of challenges, the proportion of pupils known to be

²⁸ There were indications that attainment was higher in Phase 1 areas than in non-EiC areas, but this was not statistically significant.

²⁹ See Section 3.3 for further details on the relationship between levels and months of progress.

entitled to Free School Meals provides a widely accepted measure of the overall level of disadvantage faced by pupils within a school, and indeed was used by Partnerships as part of their allocation procedures to schools. We can therefore hypothesise that the greatest impact of EiC should be in those schools with high levels of entitlement to Free School Meals, and this is explored in this section.

The analysis of the national datasets for 2003 supported this hypothesis.³⁰ For all the measures considered (Mathematics, both when considering the probability of achieving at least level 5 and for the actual level achieved, as well as for the level achieved in English and Science, and for the average level), the impact of EiC was greater in schools with relatively high levels of entitlement to Free School Meals.³¹ The difference-in-differences analysis strongly supports this hypothesis for attainment in Mathematics, where the positive effect of EiC was shown to exist only within schools that were relatively disadvantaged. When the average impact of EiC on Mathematics attainment was disaggregated according to school characteristics, schools with high levels of entitlement to Free School Meals showed a strong positive effect of EiC, whereas the impact was zero in more advantaged schools (see Table 3.13).

Table 3.13 Effects of EiC by school level of disadvantage (2003 relative to pre-policy baseline)

School-level entitlement to Free School Meals	Phase 1 and non-EiC schools	Phase 2 and non-EiC schools	Phase 3 and non-EiC schools
Lowest 25% of schools	-0.018 (0.013)	-0.011 (0.005)	0.008 (0.008)
Second-lowest 25% of schools	-0.000 (0.006)	0.004 (0.008)	0.008 (0.009)
Second-highest 25% of schools	0.012 (0.007)	0.004 (0.006)	0.024 (0.007)
Highest 25% of schools	0.034 (0.006)	0.020 (0.006)	0.001 (0.008)

Note: Standard errors in brackets.

Variations in impact associated with pupil factors

Pupils entering a Key Stage with relatively low levels of attainment generally make less progress than those with higher levels. In other words, not only do they start the Key Stage behind their peers, but the gap widens with time. EiC seeks to address this, in particular through the Learning Mentor and LSU Strands but more generally by ensuring that teaching and learning is appropriate to all pupils. We now consider the extent to which EiC has achieved this at Key Stage 3.

³⁰ Using the single cohort approach. There were similar findings taking the 2001, 2002 and 2003 cohorts together.

³¹ This is over and above the relationship between attainment and individual-level entitlement to Free School Meals.

Prior attainment

The single cohort analysis for 2003 and the combined cohort analysis for 2001 to 2003 indicated that, in terms of levels achieved in English, pupils with high Key Stage 2 average levels (5 or above) made similar progress during Key Stage 3 whether or not they attended an EiC school. For lower levels of prior attainment, the progress of pupils in EiC Phase 1 schools was greater than that of otherwise similar pupils attending non-EiC schools, although the extent of this difference varied with the level of prior attainment, from about 0.2 of a level for pupils with an average Key Stage 2 level of 2 to less than 0.1 of a level for those with an average Key Stage 2 level of 4.³²

If we consider levels achieved in Mathematics at Key Stage 3 using the single cohort and cohort comparison approaches, pupils with Key Stage 2 average levels of 4 or above made similar progress during Key Stage 3 whether or not they attended an EiC school. For lower levels of prior attainment, the progress of pupils in EiC Phase 1 and (to a lesser extent) Phase 2 schools was slightly greater than that of otherwise similar pupils attending non-EiC schools. For pupils in Phase 1 areas, the difference was equivalent to about 0.15 of a level for pupils with an average Key Stage 2 level of 2, and about 0.1 of a level for those with an average Key Stage 2 level of 3.³³

The difference-in-differences analysis showed that, within disadvantaged schools, the effect of EiC on attainment in Mathematics was greatest for pupils of medium to high prior attainment, where there was a 2.4 to 4.8 per cent increase in the proportion of pupils achieving at least level 5 for pupils with high levels of attainment at Key Stage 2 in the most disadvantaged schools.

Taken together, these findings suggest complex relationships between pupils' own levels of prior attainment and entitlement to free schools, the overall levels of disadvantage (and attainment) within the school, and EiC.

Pupils in EiC Phase 1 schools achieved slightly higher levels for Science at Key Stage 3 than did similar pupils attending non-EiC schools, although the differences (which were again greater for lower levels of prior attainment) were very small, being about 0.05 of a level for those with an average level 2 at Key Stage 2 level and effectively zero for pupils with an average level of 4 or above at Key Stage 2.

Gender

Overall (i.e. in both EiC and non-EiC schools), girls made more progress than boys in English. This differential between boys' and girls' progress was less in

³² This is not inconsistent with the finding given earlier that there was no evidence of an overall impact of EiC on English at Key Stage 3, because only a small proportion of pupils have average Key Stage 2 levels substantially less than 4.

³³ Note that this analyses took account of both pupils' individual entitlement to free schools meals of school level entitlement.

EiC Phase 1 and Phase 2 schools than in non-EiC schools for pupils with moderate levels of prior attainment.³⁴ The difference was, however, very small, being about 0.02 of a level. For Science, while girls generally made less progress than boys, the differential was slightly less in EiC schools (especially those in Phase 1 and Phase 3 areas) than in non-EiC schools although again the differences were very small and of the order of 0.02 of a level.

Ethnicity

An analysis of the relationship between participation in EiC and ethnicity³⁵ was carried out for the 2002 and 2003 Year 9 cohorts, focussing on comparisons between Phase 1 areas, where EiC had been in place the longest, and non-EiC areas. Full results can be found in Kendall *et al.* (2005). As for other results reported here, the analysis took account of school and pupil factors, including prior attainment.

Overall, attending an EiC school was associated with higher levels of attainment only for pupils from Chinese backgrounds, a group which represents less than one per cent of all pupils, for whom attending a Phase 1 school was associated with significant additional progress. For pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, the messages were much more mixed, and there was no evidence of any systematic association between attending a Phase 1 school and higher levels of attainment. The extent and direction of differences varied with ethnic group, outcome measure and gender. Further details of the significant findings are given below. Except where noted, all the differences identified note below were equivalent to one or two months of progress.

Pupils from White UK backgrounds

Among pupils from White UK backgrounds, the level of attainment of those attending EiC Phase 1 schools was similar to that of those attending non-EiC schools.

Pupils from Chinese backgrounds

Pupils from Chinese backgrounds and attending non-EiC schools had higher levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 than otherwise similar White UK pupils with similar levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. This was equivalent to about eight months of progress in Mathematics, four months in English and four months in Science. For Mathematics and Science, pupils from Chinese backgrounds in Phase 1 schools had even higher levels of attainment (equivalent to an additional two to three months of progress in each case).

³⁴ Using the combined dataset of the 2001, 2002 and 2003 Key Stage 3 cohorts.

³⁵ Using the cohort comparison approach

Pupils from Black Caribbean backgrounds

The progress of Black Caribbean pupils attending EiC Phase 1 schools was similar to that of comparable pupils in non-EiC schools.

Pupils from Black African backgrounds

Pupils from Black African backgrounds attending Phase 1 schools made slightly less progress in English than did comparable pupils in non-EiC schools.

Pupils from Black Other backgrounds

For attainment in Mathematics, pupils from Black Other backgrounds attending Phase 1 schools had slightly lower levels of attainment than otherwise similar pupils attending non-EiC schools.

Pupils from Indian backgrounds

For Mathematics, pupils from Indian backgrounds in Phase 1 schools made slightly less progress than otherwise similar pupils (i.e. Indian pupils of the same gender) in non-EiC schools.

Girls from Indian backgrounds attending Phase 1 schools had slightly higher levels of attainment in English than otherwise similar Indian girls in non-EiC schools.

For Science, boys of Indian origin in Phase 1 schools achieved slightly lower levels than their peers in non-EiC schools.

Pupils from Pakistani backgrounds

Pupils from Pakistani backgrounds attending Phase 1 schools had lower levels of attainment than similar pupils attending non-EiC schools for Mathematics and English.

The levels achieved in Science by Pakistani girls attending Phase 1 schools were slightly lower than those of otherwise similar girls in non-EiC schools.

Key Stage 4

Various outcome measures at Key Stage 4 were considered as part of the evaluation, but there was less evidence of an association between participation in EiC and pupils' levels of achievement at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. In 2003, pupils in schools in the PLC Pilot Scheme had a higher probability of achieving at least five good GCSEs than otherwise similar pupils in other schools (both in and outside EiC areas). There was no other evidence suggesting a link between involvement in EiC and overall attainment at Key Stage 4. These findings are discussed in more detail below, and further information is provided in Appendix 8.

While there are various possible outcome measures which are appropriate at the end of Key Stage 3, using either single or combined subjects, and the use of actual levels achieved or thresholds, the number of options is relatively limited. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is more difficult to capture in a small number of outcome measures. We concentrate here on:

- whether or not the pupil achieved at least five GCSEs at grade C or better, or equivalent (five good GCSEs)
- ‘best 8’ GCSE point score (also referred to as the capped score)
- total GCSE point score (uncapped score)
- point score in each of Mathematics, Science and English.

While the percentage of pupils achieving at least five good GCSEs is important, as it is the measure in which Government targets for pupil achievement, both nationally and in relation to EiC, are expressed, the points-based measures merit attention as they have the potential to capture a wider range of impacts, both for pupils working well below and for those well above this threshold.

It was not possible to analyse GCSE outcomes using a difference-in-differences framework because prior attainment could not be controlled for properly in the pre-policy period. The results reported in this section use cohort comparison and single cohort analysis³⁶ to compare the progress of pupils in EiC and non-EiC areas completing Key Stage 4 in 2001, 2002 and 2003, and take account of pupils’ prior attainment. In this case, the question arises as to whether it is more appropriate to use attainment at the end on Key Stage 2 or at the end of Key Stage 3. None of the pupils considered here completed the whole of their secondary education within a school that was already implementing EiC when they entered Year 7. A difference in progress between EiC and non-EiC areas over the whole secondary phase could therefore be due, at least in part, to changes which pre-dated the introduction of EiC. Conversely, some of the pupils considered here will have had some experience of EiC during Key Stage 3, and this may be serving to reduce the apparent impact of EiC during Key Stage 4. A further complication is that using Key Stage 3 results as our measure of prior attainment may not tell the whole story. For example, one group of pupils might make relatively good progress during Key Stage 3 and progress less well at Key Stage 4, while for another group the pattern is reversed. The overall progress of the two groups might be similar, but their progress during Key Stage 4 would be markedly different. Acknowledging these limitations, we present findings using Key Stage 3 prior attainment measures.

³⁶ Using multilevel modelling approaches – see Chapter 2.

Five good GCSEs

Consider first the proportions of pupils achieving at least five good GCSEs.

In 2001, pupils in Phase 2 areas, where EiC had been launched in the previous autumn, were slightly more likely (with an odds ratio of 1.13)³⁷ than similar pupils in non-EiC or EiC Phase 1 areas, or in those areas which subsequently formed Phase 3, to achieve at least five good GCSEs. (For further information on the interpretation of odds ratios, see Appendix 7, section 4.) Note that detailed pupil level information, such as ethnicity and entitlement to Free School Meals, was not available for this cohort. Therefore, results are not directly comparable with those for subsequent cohorts. Given the short interval between the launch of EiC in Phase 2 areas and the time when these pupils were completing their GCSEs (and in the absence of a similar finding in relation to the more established Phase 1 Partnerships or in subsequent years), it is unlikely that this difference can be ascribed to EiC.

In 2002 and 2003, pupils in EiC Phase 1 schools (excluding those involved in the PLC Pilot Scheme) and in Phase 2 areas had the same probability of achieving five good GCSEs as did similar pupils in similar schools in non-EiC areas. However, pupils attending schools involved in the PLC pilot (most of which were also in EiC Phase 1 areas) and completing Key Stage 4 in summer 2003 were more likely to achieve five good GCSEs than otherwise similar pupils in non-PLC schools (with an odds ratio of about 1.2). The PLC Pilot Scheme was primarily targeted at pupils in Key Stage 3 but schools had considerable flexibility in how the funding was used. It is at least plausible that the current policy focus on measurable 'headline' indicators, and in particular on achieving at least five good GCSEs, may well have influenced spending decisions at school level, with headteachers and senior management teams deciding that 'flexible' funds, such as PLCs, might most usefully be deployed in areas likely to boost this particular outcome measure. There are, therefore, several possible interpretations of this enhanced performance at Key Stage 4 pupils attending these schools:

- a direct effect of the PLC Pilot Scheme
- an effect of EiC on Phase 1 schools with high levels of entitlement to Free School Meals
- a result of the increasing focus on school improvement more generally, and in particular on those schools with the lowest proportions of pupils achieving at least five good GCSEs (which in general are those with high levels of entitlement to Free School Meals).

For an evaluation of the PLC Pilot Scheme, see Braun *et al.* (forthcoming).

³⁷ The odds ratio is a way of comparing whether the probability of a certain event (in this, achieving at least five good GCSEs) is the same for two groups, e.g. pupils in non-EiC and EiC Phase 1 schools. An odds ratio of 1 indicates that the probability is the same in each group. In this case, the odds ratio was greater than 1, showing that Phase 2 pupils were more likely to reach this threshold.

Capped and uncapped point scores

For 2001, the capped and uncapped point scores, like the probability of achieving five good GCSEs, showed slightly higher levels of attainment in Phase 2 schools than in non-EiC schools (by about half a grade and one grade respectively). In 2002 and 2003, there was no evidence that the attainments of pupils in EiC areas were significantly different from those of similar non-EiC pupils, except for the uncapped point score for Phase 3 areas in 2003, where pupils had lower levels of attainment (by about one grade) than those in non-EiC areas.

It is worth noting that the increased probability of achieving at least five good GCSEs in PLC pilot schools in 2003 was not replicated for the points-based measures. This may reflect the particular emphasis in schools in the most challenging circumstances, such as those in the PLC Pilot Scheme, on reaching specific targets related to the proportion of pupils achieving this threshold. A small number of pupils within a school achieving one grade better can have a substantial impact on the percentage of pupils reaching the threshold but make little difference to overall point scores.

English, Mathematics and Science

We consider now English, Mathematics and Science. The following significant differences between EiC and non-EiC areas were identified.

- In 2001, pupils in Phase 2 areas had slightly higher levels of attainment in English and Mathematics than did similar pupils in non-EiC areas although the differences were small in absolute terms, being less than 0.1 of a grade.
- In both 2002 and 2003, pupils in Phase 1 EiC areas had higher levels of attainment in Mathematics than non-EiC pupils elsewhere, although the difference was again small (about 0.1 of a grade).
- In both 2002 and 2003, pupils in Phase 3 areas achieved slightly lower grades than their peers elsewhere (by about 0.07 of a grade) for English and Mathematics.
- There were no significant differences in relation to Science, or in relation to attending a school in the PLC pilot.

Variation in impact associated with school-level entitlement to Free School Meals

As at Key Stage 3, we compared the relationship between attainment and school-level entitlement to Free School Meals in EiC and non-EiC schools. Reducing differentials related to entitlement to Free School Meals can be seen as contributing to the aim of EiC to promote inclusion and equality of opportunity. This seems to have been more effective in Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas where EiC was, at best, reducing differentials and where there was no

evidence of increasing them. The picture in Phase 1 areas was more mixed, depending on the outcome measure considered.

Considering both EiC and non-EiC areas, pupils in schools with relatively low overall levels of entitlement to Free School Meals had higher attainments than those in schools with higher levels of entitlement. However, the relationship between level of attainment and level of entitlement was not the same for all schools. The following findings relate to the 2003 cohort.

Phase 1

For achieving at least five good GCSEs and for Mathematics, there were greater differences between schools with relatively low levels of entitlement to Free School Meals and those with high levels of entitlement in EiC Phase 1 areas than for those in non-EiC areas (when other school- and pupil-level factors were taken into account).

For example, for a group of 'typical' pupils (with average levels of prior attainment, no identified special needs, etc.), the probability of achieving at least five good GCSEs in a non-EiC school with ten per cent of its pupils entitled to Free School Meals was 0.45, i.e. 45 per cent of such pupils would achieve this threshold. In an otherwise similar non-EiC school with 40 per cent entitlement, the corresponding figure was 29 per cent, a difference of 16 percentage points (see Table 3.14). In similar Phase 1 schools, the corresponding difference was about 21 percentage points (the difference between 48 per cent in a school with relatively low entitlement and 27 per cent in a school with relatively high entitlement).

Table 3.14 Percentage of pupils achieving at least five good GCSEs by school-level entitlement to Free School Meals

Level of entitlement to Free School Meals	Non-EiC schools %	EiC Phase 1 schools %
10%	45	48
40%	29	27
Difference	16	21

For Science, the difference between schools with low and high levels of entitlements was less in Phase 1 areas than in non-EiC areas – see Table 3.15.

Table 3.15 Average GCSE science grade achieved by school-level entitlement to Free School Meals

Level of entitlement to Free School Meals	Non-EiC schools %	EiC Phase 1 schools %
10%	4.05	3.95
40%	3.53	3.65
Difference	0.52	0.30

Phase 2

When Phase 2 areas were compared with non-EiC areas, differentials associated with entitlement to Free School Meals in the levels achieved for English and Science were slightly less in Phase 2 areas than in non-EiC areas.

Phase 3

In Phase 3 areas, differentials associated with school-level entitlement to Free School Meals were less than in non-EiC areas for the uncapped GCSE score and for Science.

Variations in impact associated with pupil factors

As for Key Stage 3, we explored how the relationship between EiC and attainment varied in relation to pupils' prior attainment, gender and ethnicity at the end of Key Stage 4. Given the lack of any substantial over-arching relationships between EiC and attainment, it is not surprising that we found relatively few statistically significant differences in relation to prior attainment and gender, but there were some relatively substantial effects related to ethnicity. The findings are summarised below.

Prior attainment

In Phase 1 areas, EiC was associated with slightly reduced differentials in attainment related to prior attainment for the capped and uncapped point scores, and for the probability of achieving five or more good GCSEs. See, for example, Table 3.16. No differences were found in Phase 2 or 3 areas.

Table 3.16 Percentage of pupils achieving at least five good GCSEs by Key Stage 3 attainment

Average level achieved at Key Stage 3	Non-EiC schools %	EiC Phase 1 schools %
5	30	33
6	90	88
Difference	60	55

Gender

There was no evidence that the relationship between EiC and gender differed between EiC and non-EiC schools.

Ethnicity

As for Key Stage 3 outcomes, an analysis of the relationship between participation in EiC and ethnicity was carried out for Phase 1 and non-EiC pupils completing Year 11 in 2002 and 2003 (see Kendall *et al.* 2004, 2005).

Overall, pupils from all the minority ethnic backgrounds considered and attending EiC Phase 1 schools had higher capped and uncapped point scores than pupils from similar ethnic backgrounds and with similar characteristics, including attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, in non-EiC schools. The only exception was for Black Other girls, whose performance was slightly below that of otherwise similar Black Other girls in non-EiC schools. Black Other pupils in Phase 1 schools had a greater probability of achieving at least five good GCSEs than similar non-EiC pupils, while Pakistani pupils in Phase 1 areas had a slightly lower probability of achieving this benchmark than those in non-EiC areas.

The statistically significant findings are detailed below.

Among pupils from **White UK** backgrounds, the level of attainment of those attending EiC Phase 1 schools was similar to that of those attending non-EiC schools.

Pupils from **White non-UK** backgrounds attending Phase 1 and non-EiC schools were equally likely to achieve at least five good GCSEs. However, those attending Phase 1 schools made greater progress during Key Stage 4 than similar pupils in non-EiC areas in terms of both the capped and uncapped point scores (by about 1.1 points, slightly more than one grade, and 1.3 points respectively).

There was a similar pattern for pupils from both **Black Caribbean** and **Black African** backgrounds. Again, while there was no relationship between EiC and the probability of achieving five good GCSEs, Black Caribbean and Black African pupils in Phase 1 areas obtained higher point scores than those in non-EiC areas (by about 0.7 points or rather less than a grade for both the capped and uncapped scores in the case of Black Caribbean pupils and 0.8 points for Black African pupils).

Boys from **Black Other** backgrounds and attending Phase 1 schools were more likely than boys from similar backgrounds in non-EiC areas to achieve at least five good GCSEs, and they achieved slightly higher point scores (by about 0.75 points or three quarters of a grade) for both the capped and uncapped point scores. As noted above, girls from Black Other backgrounds

were slightly less likely to achieve five good GCSEs, and had lower levels of attainment (by about half a point) than otherwise similar girls in non-EiC areas in terms of capped point scores.

Pupils from Indian backgrounds in Phase 1 areas had higher capped point scores than those in non-EiC areas (by about 0.5 points) but similar uncapped scores and probabilities of achieving five good GCSEs.

For those from **Pakistani** backgrounds, attending an EiC school was associated with an additional 0.4 points in terms of uncapped point score, but a slightly lower probability of achieving at least five good GCSEs.

Pupils from **Bangladeshi** backgrounds and attending Phase 1 schools had slightly higher capped and uncapped point scores (by 0.8 and 1.3 points respectively) than those attending non-EiC schools, but the probability of achieving five good GCSEs was not related to attending an EiC school.

There was a similar pattern for pupils from **Chinese** backgrounds. In this case the additional score associated with EiC was about 1.3 points for the uncapped score and almost 1.8 points for the capped score.

3.4.2 Cost benefit

A key policy question is whether the benefits of EiC outweighed the costs. The costs were relatively easy to define. However it is much more difficult to estimate benefits. To conduct an accurate cost benefit analysis, we would need to know how effects of EiC translate to a range of later outcomes – for example, further education, wages, and crime rates. Ideally, we would want to follow the young people affected by EiC (and those in non-EiC schools) as they progressed through school and into the labour market. There are many difficulties. For example, due to the relatively recent introduction of end of Key Stage tests, there is no direct estimate of the impact these have on future wages. As a result of the limited information available at this time, it was possible to carry out only a very simple cost benefit analysis under strong assumptions. However, this gives a rough idea of whether we should think of this policy as potentially cost-effective. The cost benefit analysis was conducted using outcomes from the difference-in-differences analysis and hence uses outcomes at Key Stage 3 (see section 3.4.1).³⁸

The key assumptions of the cost benefit analysis were as follows.

- We assume that, for each subject, an improvement of one level can be interpreted as equivalent to two years of education, and that the effect of EiC on the probability of attaining at least level 5 can be interpreted as a one level improvement. This is based on the assumption in the National Curriculum that a one level improvement corresponds to two years of schooling.

³⁸ For a full discussion about the cost benefit analysis, see Machin *et al.* (2005).

- Following results from the earlier analysis, we estimate that the impact of EiC on the probability of achieving at least level 5 for English was zero.
- We assume that the wage return to an additional year of schooling is eight per cent (a typical estimate used in the relevant literature) and that future wages will have a similar age profile, with a real terms increase of two per cent per year, to current patterns of earnings.³⁹

Under these assumptions, we can estimate the total increase in wages that might result from the improved performance in EiC schools.

The costs of the policy correspond to the EiC-related spending per pupil for the appropriate time period. The average spending per pupil is £120 per year and represents a small percentage of overall expenditure per pupil.⁴⁰ The total discounted costs and benefits of the policy from its start up to retirement age can then be compared, and a rate of return from investment in the policy calculated for each group of pupils. The rate of return equalises the discounted total cost to the discounted total benefit. A positive rate of return indicates that per pupil benefits outweigh per pupil costs. In principle, the rates of return could be compared to the rate of return to other public sector projects or to a social discount rate (though the appropriate social discount rate to use is a very controversial issue).

In the early years of EiC within each Phase, the benefit of the policy was zero, and hence the rate of return was zero as the costs of EiC outweighed its benefits. However, after two years (in Phase 1 and 3 areas), and after three years (in Phase 2 areas), the policy was generating a positive return. The estimates of this return vary from four to seven per cent, depending on Phase and year. In 2003, the rate of return for pupils in Phase 1 areas and exposed to both EiC and the PLC pilot was about five per cent.

These estimates are, as noted, based on very strong assumptions, but indicate that EiC is potentially cost-effective, if the educational benefits identified here translate into higher educational attainment at later stages of young people's lives and into higher earnings.

These findings can be compared with those of Levacic *et al.* (2005). This study considered the relationship between schools' expenditure and Key Stage 3 outcomes. The findings were very similar to those of the evaluation of EiC, with an increase in expenditure of about £100 per pupil leading to a four per cent increase in the number of pupils moving up a level in Key Stage 3 Mathematics. However, neither study found an effect for English at Key Stage 3.

³⁹ Estimated from the Family Resources Survey.

⁴⁰ EiC expenditure represents about 4.4 per cent of per pupil expenditure in secondary schools, based on pupil expenditure as given in DfES (2003a).

3.4.3 Perceptions of impact on attainment

Although the quantitative data provides mixed messages about the impact of EiC on pupils' attainment, most of the teachers and school senior managers taking part in the surveys were very positive about the policy. Although only a minority directly linked EiC with raised attainment, many noted the ways in which EiC was creating a better environment for learning, by bringing a *'positive and creative atmosphere into both pastoral and academic aspects of school life'*, by improving pupils' motivation and raising their aspirations, and by contributing to improved teaching and learning, all of which would lead in the longer term to improved levels of attainment. The additional resources offered by schools were seen as enabling them to offer a greater range of activities to support learning.

Many Partnership Coordinators noted improvements in pupil performance since the implementation of EiC in their area, but they also noted that, with so many concurrent initiatives, and with multiple funding streams going into schools, it was not always easy, or even possible, to identify the impact on pupils' attainment of any one of them. Partnership Coordinators were, however, very positive about the ways in which EiC was creating the conditions under which learning could most effectively occur: this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. The partnership element of EiC was also important, and we return to the relationship between partnership ethos and attainment in section 6.3.

3.5 The Strands and pupils' attainment

This section considers pupils' attainment in relation to their participation in the Strands of EiC, considering national and survey data (Section 3.5.1) and the perceptions of stakeholders (Section 3.5.2).

3.5.1 Pupils' attainment in relation to the Strands of EiC

Section 3.4.1 looked at the impact of EiC on pupils in general. Some pupils experienced more support through EiC than others in the same schools, notably through the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor, LSU and CLC Strands. This Section discusses the impact on these pupils in more detail.⁴¹ It also considers the relationship between attainment and Specialist or Beacon status, and participation in an EiC Action Zone.

Results in this section are based on pupils taking part in the surveys (for the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor, Learning Support Unit and CLC

⁴¹ Further information is provided in Morris and Rutt (2005b).

Strands) and on national datasets for the other Strands, using cohort comparison and single cohort modelling techniques as described earlier.⁴²

Key Stage 3

Consider first the Year 9 pupils in three successive cohorts (2001, 2002 and 2003)⁴³ who were attending schools in EiC areas and for whom information about whether they were identified as gifted and talented, whether they had been referred to a Learning Mentor, and whether they had attended an LSU and/or a CLC was available. No relationship was found between pupils' attainment and attending a LSU, although this may be related to both the relatively small numbers of pupils attending such Units and the diverse reasons for referral. Similarly, there did not appear to be a link between attending a CLC and attainment: pupils can potentially benefit from CLC resources in many ways, both directly (by attending a Centre or by accessing its resources from their own school) and indirectly, for example where a CLC is providing professional development for teachers, and the simple fact of attending or not attending a CLC does not provide sufficient detail to explore the potential impacts of CLCs.

For these three Year 9 cohorts, pupils identified as gifted and talented generally made greater progress (in Mathematics, English and average level achieved) than otherwise similar pupils not so identified. The difference for boys was about a third of a level for English and for the average level achieved, and almost half a level for Mathematics. For girls, the additional progress was slightly less than that for boys for the overall Key Stage 3 average level and for Mathematics (about a fifth of a level in each case) but greater for English (over 0.6 of a level).

Longitudinal analysis of the cohort of pupils who were in Year 7 in 2001 and Year 9 in 2003 showed that pupils who were designated as gifted and talented in both these years had higher levels of attainment (using average Key Stage 3 level) than otherwise similar pupils designated in only one of these years. Designation in Year 7 was associated with an additional 0.27 of a level, and designation in Year 9 with 0.39 of a level. For those designated in both years, the figure was just under half a level, equivalent to almost an extra year of progress.

Some caution is needed in interpreting these findings. For example, even the most able pupils could not have achieved more than level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2:⁴⁴ any pupil whose Key Stage 2 assessments did not reflect their

⁴² Note that the 'difference-in-difference' analysis could not be used here because we do not have a good way of predicting the pupils who would have been exposed to these Strands in non-EiC schools or who would have participated in these Strands in the pre-policy period.

⁴³ This combined dataset included approximately 17,000 pupils.

⁴⁴ In principle, pupils could achieve level 6 at Key Stage 2 by reaching an appropriate standard on the extension tests for English, Mathematics and Science, but in practice very few pupils were entered for these tests, which were discontinued after 2002.

underlying ability at that stage may appear to make greater progress than expected by the end of Key Stage 3, where assessment covers a wider range of levels. Although the analysis was able to include and take account of a wide range of pupil-level attitudinal and behavioural measures, it may not have been able to capture the unique characteristics of a particular pupil that resulted in that pupil being designated gifted and talented: again, this may mean that we over-estimate the impact of the Strand.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the estimated effects are such that there can be considerable confidence that participation in the Gifted and Talented Strand was associated with higher levels of attainment than for otherwise similar pupils attending EiC schools but not part of the gifted and talented cohort.

This cross-sectional analysis for three successive Year 9 cohorts showed that, overall, pupils referred to a Learning Mentor had slightly lower levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (taking into account, among other factors, their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2) than those not mentored, although the difference was equivalent to less than a term of progress. The question we cannot answer is whether such pupils were already under-performing before being referred to a Mentor.

The picture from the longitudinal analysis of pupils who were in Year 9 in 2003 is more encouraging. Pupils who had been referred to a Learning Mentor in Year 7 achieved the same Key Stage 3 levels as those not mentored, whereas mentoring in Year 9 was associated with lower levels of attainment. This suggests that early mentoring may be more effective in enabling young people to overcome barriers to learning. Pupils whose attitudes improved between Year 7 and Year 9 and who had seen a Mentor had slightly better Key Stage 3 outcomes, particularly in Mathematics, than would be expected, but this should be treated with some caution as we do not know the relative timing of the mentoring and of the change in attitudes.

The national datasets allowed an exploration of the impact of the Beacon School, Specialist School and EiC Action Zone Strands. See Appendix 8 for further details.

Pupils completing Key Stage 3 in 2003 in Beacon Schools in EiC Phase 1 and non-EiC areas had significantly higher average Key Stage 3 levels than similar pupils in non-Beacon Schools in the same areas. There were similar differences when the 2001, 2002 and 2003 cohorts were considered together. In each case, the difference was about 0.06 of a level, i.e. about one or two months of additional progress. In Phase 2 areas, the additional progress associated with Beacon Schools was of the order of 0.1 of a level, and again the results for the 2003 cohort alone were similar to those for the combined

⁴⁵ See also Section 4.1.2.

cohorts. In Phase 3 areas, however, the additional progress associated with Beacon Schools was about 0.14 of a level (over three months of progress) for the 2003 cohort alone, but not significant using the combined 2001, 2002 and 2003 cohorts. This suggests that the additional effect associated with Beacon Schools in 2003 was greater in EiC Phase 3 areas than elsewhere, and had increased since earlier cohorts.

There was a similar pattern when each of English, Mathematics and Science were considered separately, although in these cases the differences associated with Beacon status were not statistically significant.

Pupils in Specialist Schools designated in September 1998 or earlier had higher levels of attainment than otherwise similar pupils in non-Specialist schools or Specialist Schools designated after this date, both when pupils completing Key Stage 3 in 2001, 2002 and 2003 were considered together, and when the 2003 cohort was considered on its own. The combined 2001/2002/2003 cohorts (but not the 2003 cohort alone) showed that:

- pupils in Phase 1 Specialist Schools had higher levels of attainment for Science and for the average Key Stage 3 level achieved, than did similar pupils in non-Specialist Schools in the same areas
- in non-EiC areas, and in EiC Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas, the performance of pupils in Specialist Schools was similar to that of pupils in non-Specialist Schools in the same areas.

No significant differences related to a school's involvement in an EiC Action Zone were identified, either for the 2003 cohort alone or for the 2001, 2002 and 2003 cohorts taken together. This may be partly because each EiC Action Zone had its own local targets, which were not necessarily related to either Key Stage 3 attainment measures.

Key Stage 4

As at Key Stage 3, detailed pupil level information allowed an examination of the possible impact of the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor, LSU and CLC Strands, for three consecutive Year 11 cohorts (2001 to 2003). The results reported here use Key Stage 3 test results as a measure of prior attainment. Again, no relationship was found between pupils' performance and their involvement in the LSU and CLC Strands.

There were a number of associations suggesting that the Gifted and Talented Strand was having an impact, particularly for some groups of pupils.

- Being designated as gifted and talented was associated with higher levels of performance, using capped and uncapped point score (by about 3.3 and 3.8 points respectively), average point score (an additional 0.4 points per GCSE), and with a greater probability of achieving at least three GCSEs at

grade A*. Pupils in the gifted and talented cohort were about one and three quarter times more likely to achieve such grades than otherwise similar young people not designated as gifted and talented. For the 2001 and 2002 cohorts, designation as gifted and talented was also associated with an increased probability of achieving at least five good GCSEs (with odds ratios of 2.4 and 3.4 respectively).⁴⁶

- The impact of the Strand appeared greater for pupils with lower levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. This may represent a ceiling effect – both the capped point score and the average grade have an upper bound, and the total point score may have a de facto limit depending on school entry policies – or it may represent a genuine reduction of the gap in performance between the highest and lowest attainers (at Key Stage 3) in the gifted and talented cohort.
- Gifted and talented pupils with the most positive attitudes to education⁴⁷ had higher capped scores (six additional points, compared with 3.3 points for the gifted and talented cohort as a whole) and a (marginally) greater probability of achieving at least three A* GCSEs (with an odds ratio of 1.06).
- The impact of being designated gifted and talented was less evident for pupils from Asian and Black⁴⁸ ethnic backgrounds in relation to the highest levels of attainment (i.e. achieving three A* grades at GCSE).

The findings in relation to the Learning Mentor Strand were rather more conclusive. Overall, pupils referred to a Mentor had lower levels of attainment (uncapped and average point score) although the difference was small – less than half a grade in the uncapped score, for example). However, their likelihood of achieving higher grade GCSEs was not significantly different from that of their peers with similar prior attainment and characteristics. There were some exceptions to this general pattern.

- Mentored girls were more likely to achieve at least three top grades at GCSE (an odds ratio of 1.5) than otherwise similar girls who had not been mentored. For girls in the 2003 Year 11 cohort, being mentored was not associated with any greater likelihood of reaching this threshold but these pupils had lower overall levels of attainment, in terms of point scores.
- Girls who were in Year 11 in 2003 and who had been mentored had lower levels of performance than similar girls in the two preceding cohorts. This may be a cohort effect, given the overall lower levels of performance in 2003 compared with earlier cohorts. Among pupils with a positive attitude

⁴⁶ Note that some of these differences may represent cohort effects.

⁴⁷ Based on composite measures derived from pupils' survey responses. These measures include pupils' views on the extent to which the school and its teachers provide support and an appropriate range of activities, attitudes to the benefits of education, both at school and beyond, independent learning, and parental support.

⁴⁸ For the 2001 cohort, detailed ethnicity information was not available and, for this analysis, pupils were categorised as White UK, White other, Black or Black British, Asian or British Asian, Chinese, mixed, or other.

to education, those mentored had similar levels of attainment to those not referred to a Mentor, although we cannot tell from this cross-sectional analysis whether or not this positive attitude existed prior to mentoring.⁴⁹

- Mentored Asian pupils were more likely than Asian pupils in general to achieve at least five good GCSEs (the odds ratio for mentored Asian pupils was 2.11 compared with 1.49 for all Asian pupils).
- Pupils being mentored in relatively high-performing schools were more than twice as likely to gain three A* grades as otherwise similar pupils who had not been mentored.

The cross-sectional analysis, comparing three successive Year 11 cohorts, found that those who had been mentored and who had a positive attitude towards education, were marginally more likely to obtain at least five good GCSEs than those with similar attitudes who had not seen a Mentor. The longitudinal analysis, tracking one group of pupils from Year 9 to Year 11, found that, although neither mentoring alone nor a positive attitude alone showed a relationship with attainment, those young people who had been mentored *and* who had a positive change in attitudes to learning were slightly more likely to achieve at least five GCSEs at grade C, but this finding needs to be treated with considerable caution, not least because we do not know the timing of the mentoring.

While the cross-sectional model showed that being mentored was associated with lower levels of attainment, the longitudinal models showed that those being mentored had attainment levels similar to those of pupils not receiving this form of support. This suggests that being mentored may have played a part in raising such pupils' attainment to at least the level that might have been expected, given their prior attainment and other background characteristics.

As was seen in relation to attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, results relating to Specialist and Beacon Schools, and to EiC Action Zones (all based on the national datasets), were generally very similar for the 2003 cohort alone and for the combined cohorts.⁵⁰

- In general, pupils in Beacon Schools in non-EiC areas made slightly more progress than those attending other schools in the same areas, taking into account attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. For example, in terms of the uncapped point score in 2003, attending a Beacon School in a non-EiC area was associated with an additional 1.4 points. Considering a range of outcome measures, the difference between Beacon and non-Beacon Schools was generally slightly less in EiC areas than in non-EiC schools.

⁴⁹ See also the longitudinal analysis (below) relating to pupils who were in Year 11 in 2003.

⁵⁰ In this case, we consider the combined 2002 and 2003 cohort, because detailed pupil level information (e.g. ethnicity, special educational needs) was not available for the 2001 Year 11 cohort.

- The pattern of findings in relation to Specialist Schools was rather similar, with attendance at a Specialist Schools associated with about one additional score point. Again, being in an EiC area was associated with slightly higher scores. One of the most consistent relationships was for Specialist Schools designated in September 1998 or earlier: pupils in these schools attained a capped score about half a point higher than similar pupils in other Specialist Schools, or in non-Specialist schools, and about 1.5 points higher on the uncapped score.
- Performance in EiC Action Zones in 2003 was similar to that in other similar schools in the same EiC areas, as it had been in earlier years. As at Key Stage 3, this may be at least partly because the EiC Action Zones' own local targets were not necessarily directly related to the Key Stage 4 performance measures considered.

3.5.2 Perceptions of the impact of the Strands on pupil performance

The analysis of performance data has shown some evidence of relationships between pupils' attainment and the Gifted and Talented and Learning Mentor Strands, at least for some pupils in some types of school. While this quantitative evidence about the impact of the Strands was mixed, teachers and school senior managers were positive about EiC as a whole, and saw the initiative as *'more than the sum its parts'*, with particular emphasis on the impact of the Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented Strands. Both these Strands were seen as breaking down barriers to learning and hence leading to, or at least creating an appropriate climate for, improved attainment.

Partnership Coordinators reported a range of evidence that the Strands of EiC were having an impact on pupils' performance.

- Partnership Coordinators generally reported improved standards at Key Stage 3 and 4 as a result of the Gifted and Talented Strand. In some schools, pupils were being entered for more GCSEs, or were taking some GCSEs early, but this was not always matched by enhanced results.
- The Learning Mentor Strand was reported to be having an impact on attainment although many of the more visible gains were in the areas of attitudes, behaviour and attendance.
- Partnership Coordinators held mixed views on the impact of LSUs, but again the main benefits were seen to be changes in pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- CLCs took longer to become established than the other Strands and many CLCs were still at a relatively early stage of development. While there was clearly considerable enthusiasm for CLCs, as well as an awareness of the challenges they faced, little evidence of improved performance was cited. The fact that pupils visit the CLC from a school (whether the host school or a different school) made effective monitoring and evaluation of longer term outcomes difficult.

- In many Partnerships, the relationship between the Specialist and Beacon Strands and EiC as a whole were not well-developed. While there were many examples of successful Specialist and Beacon Schools, Coordinators did not generally feel that this success was as a result of EiC.
- Many Partnership Coordinators reported good links between EiC Action Zones and that the Zones were impacting on pupil attainment.

The detailed Strand Studies each focussed on one of the seven Strands: although the design of each Strand Study was different,⁵¹ most of the Studies explored the perceptions of key participants through detailed case studies in small numbers of schools, including interviews with pupils, teachers, headteachers and/or Strand Coordinators (at school or Partnership level). The key findings of these studies in relation to impacts on pupil performance are summarised below.

The Gifted and Talented Strand

Teachers and headteachers perceived the Strand as impacting on attainment both by improving Key Stage 3 and 4 results, and by helping pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills, not necessarily only those needed for success in external examinations.

Interviews with pupils who had been identified by the school as being in the gifted and talented cohort suggested that these pupils were aware of increasing opportunities for them to achieve high levels of academic performance, for example through early entry to GCSE, opportunity to enter for higher tier papers and, in some cases, the chance to take a GCSE in a subject not usually offered in their school.

Learning Mentors

Learning Mentor support for pupils was provided for a wide variety of reasons, including academic, personal and behavioural issues. Teachers and Learning Mentors reported improved self-esteem, a more positive self-image and greater confidence (leading to raised aspirations) among mentored pupils. While it was anticipated that these changes could lead to improved attainment, few of those interviewed reported that Learning Mentors had so far brought about a measurable effect on academic outcomes. In those schools where Learning Mentors had worked with pupils completing GCSE coursework, a link was seen between this support and improved attainment.

Pupils who had been supported by a Learning Mentor were more willing to ascribe improved performance to this support, particularly through help with study skills and in managing their time.

⁵¹ For details, see Appendix 5. Reports on the Strand Studies are listed in the Annex.

LSUs

Strand Coordinators, LSU managers and staff, class teachers and pupils all reported impacts on academic achievement, albeit often from very low starting levels. For example, Unit managers cited pupils who would probably not have taken any GCSEs if they had not been attending the Unit. For these pupils, achieving any GCSEs, even at low grades, was a success. Unit managers emphasised that academic progress could be made only after the reasons for which pupils had been referred to the Unit had been addressed.

Beacon Schools

Case studies in Beacon schools in EiC areas provided substantial, albeit anecdotal, evidence of ways in which these schools were contributing to raising attainment, although there was little to suggest that EiC contributed to this. Teachers interviewed felt that pupils in partner schools benefited from improved resources, a greater range of curricular activities and, in some cases, the promotion of thinking skills, all factors likely to lead to improved attainment. Some teachers commented that Beacon status was driving up standards in their own school, but most were reluctant to comment or to ascribe improvements to Beacon status.

Specialist Schools

According to staff interviewed in Specialist Schools, one of the main reasons for seeking designation was because this was seen as a way of raising pupils' levels of attainment, and it was clear that these staff saw at least some elements of the Specialist Schools Programme – whether the bidding process itself, target setting, the additional resources, innovation and teaching and learning, and extending the curriculum – as effective means of raising standards. There was acknowledgement that the bid had to build on existing strengths, whether these were at whole-school level or more localised within one or two departments.

The links that Specialist Schools were creating with other local primary and secondary schools were seen as having an impact on the attainment of pupils in those schools, although it was not evident to what extent these networks were being created because of EiC, Specialist status, or for other reasons (e.g. Advanced Skills Teachers). Where there was element of competition between schools, this form of support could lead to tensions over the 'ownership' of results.

In some schools, EiC was seen as reinforcing rather than generating activity, or as an 'enabler'. More generally, however, the Specialist School Strand was seen as being peripheral, rather than central, to EiC.

EiC Action Zones

The Directors of EiC Action Zones felt that the Zones were having an effect on attainment, but that this was difficult to measure.

CLCs

Monitoring and evaluation systems that could link pupils' participation in CLC activities and their attainment were not well-established during the period of the evaluation.⁵² Centre managers provided anecdotal evidence of impact. In one case, pupils from the host school undertook the whole of one GCSE in the CLC, with a '*dramatic*' improvement in results.

3.6 EiC and attainment

This chapter has presented a range of findings relating to the relationship between pupils' attainment and their involvement in EiC, drawing on the analysis of large national datasets, more detailed information available in relation to pupils who took part in the three rounds of surveys, evidence gathered from case studies of schools and Partnerships, and interviews with Partnership Coordinators.

Those engaged in the delivery of EiC within Partnerships and schools were very positive about the impact of the policy on pupils' attainment, particularly the Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented Strands and, to a lesser extent, the LSU Strand. In some Partnerships, EiC Actions Zones were seen to be working well and contributing to improvements in performance.

The most positive finding from the quantitative analysis showed that EiC was having an impact on pupils' levels of attainment in Mathematics at Key Stage 3. This effect varied depending on school and pupil characteristics, and was strongest within disadvantaged schools. A simple cost benefit analysis showed that this improvement was cost-effective given the relatively low per pupil cost of EiC. There was less evidence of impact for other subject areas at Key Stage 3, or for attainment at Key Stage 4.

Using the more detailed information available for the samples of pupils involved in the surveys, involvement in specific Strands of EiC was seen to be associated with improved levels of attainment for some types of pupil in some types of school, in particular for those designated as gifted and talented, or being referred to a Learning Mentor. These associations were not always straightforward, and in some cases pose questions that we cannot yet answer such as which pupils can benefit most from these Strands and the most effective timing and duration of the support provided to pupils.

There is evidence, however, that EiC has helped schools to create the conditions in which effective teaching and learning can take place, and to reduce barriers to learning, and the following Chapter explores some of these changes in more detail by examining pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

⁵² In some of the case study CLCs, the monitoring of examination results in some subject areas was undertaken in conjunction with the host school.

4. The impact of EiC on pupils' attitudes and behaviour

This Chapter considers the evidence related to the impact of EiC on pupils' attitudes and behaviour, using both quantitative and qualitative data drawn from the surveys, interviews programmes and case studies.

Young people will not make the academic progress of which they are capable if they do not have positive attitudes towards learning, if their attendance at school is poor, or if their own behaviour, or that of their peers, create obstacles to learning. The aims of EiC included removing these barriers to learning, and encouraging schools to have high expectations of their pupils and young people to have high expectations of themselves. This chapter explores the evidence relating to pupil attitudes and behaviour; firstly by examining young people's response to the questionnaire surveys, and secondly by considering the perceptions of teachers, school managers and Partnership Coordinators.

Key findings

Attendance

There was an overall reduction in the percentage of half-days missed by pupils attending secondary schools in England between the 1998/1999 and 2002/2003 academic years. This reduction was greater in EiC areas than in non-EiC areas, by the equivalent of about one day per pupil per year. The difference was greatest in Phase 1 areas and least in Phase 3 areas.

Analysis of more detailed attendance data relating to pupils attending EiC schools showed that attendance was related to a number of factors including gender, identified special educational needs, and entitlement to free school meals.

LSU staff and teachers in the host schools saw the LSU Strand as contributing to improved attendance, by addressing issues such as bullying or family problems.

Attitudes and behaviour

A comparison of three successive cohorts of Year 11 pupils in EiC schools showed that pupils designated as gifted and talented showed more positive attitudes than those of similar pupils not designated. However, an analysis of one cohort of pupils from Year 9 to Year 11 showed no association between being designated as gifted and talented and changes in attitudes over this period, suggesting that it may be the pupils with more positive attitudes who are designated as gifted and talented.

Interviews with staff and pupils showed that all the Strands, but particularly the Gifted and Talented, LSU and Learning Mentor Strands, were seen as making a contribution to more positive attitudes among pupils.

4.1 Attendance and attitudinal data

4.1.1 Attendance

One of the aims of the evaluation was to look at changes in pupil attendance. The only measure of attendance that was available on a national basis was the overall percentage of half-days missed, calculated for a complete academic year on a whole-school basis. There was an overall reduction in the percentage of half-days missed between 1998/1999 (before EiC was introduced) and 2002/2003. Using a difference-in-differences analysis, and taking account of a range of school level variables, the reduction in half-days missed was greater in EiC areas, by slightly more than one day per pupil per year (see Machin *et al.*, 2005). The difference was greatest in Phase 1 areas and least (but not statistically significant) in Phase 3 areas. Because this analysis was based on whole-school data, it is not possible to establish whether this change in attendance rates affected some pupils more than others.

Some information about the relationship between attendance, school factors and pupil characteristics within EiC schools is available for pupils in the schools which took part in the surveys. These schools provided information about both authorised and unauthorised absences of pupils in Years 7 to 10, in terms of the number of half-day sessions per pupil in a complete academic year.⁵³ As elsewhere in this report, the analyses reported here control for a wide range of pupil and school factors, using multilevel modelling techniques. This information provides the basis of two reports (Morris and Rutt, 2004, 2005a), and the key findings from these studies are summarised below. It is important to note that this analysis relates only to pupils in EiC schools, and does allow any investigation of the impact of EiC on attendance.

About 65 per cent of the pupils in the study had no recorded periods of unauthorised absence. Just over five per cent of pupils had up to two weeks (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence per year, and just over one per cent of pupils were absent in this way for half a term or more. Indeed, nearly half the recorded sessions of unauthorised absence were attributable to just two per cent of the pupils in the study.

Fewer than one in ten pupils had no authorised absences in a complete year, and for just under a third of the pupils in the EiC schools authorised absences amounted to one week or less per year. Nearly five per cent of the pupils in the

⁵³ Information was available for 454 schools and over 100,000 pupils. Note that the information records the total number of sessions missed, not the number of periods of absence.

EiC schools, and more than six per cent of those in Year 10, had authorised absence periods of about half a term.

For pupils in Year 9 and Year 10:

- higher than average levels of authorised absence were seen amongst girls, pupils with special educational needs; and those in receipt of free school meals
- higher than average levels of unauthorised absence were seen amongst pupils with special educational needs and those in receipt of free school meals
- higher than average levels of unauthorised absence were also seen amongst Year 10 pupils in schools now participating in the BIP,⁵⁴ and in schools with low levels of overall attainment
- lower than average levels of authorised absence were seen amongst pupils with lower levels of fluency in English and those who were bilingual non-native speakers, those from relatively less deprived neighbourhoods (but also neighbourhoods where unemployment was relatively high) and, for pupils in Year 10, those from small schools or Specialist Schools. Where ethnicity data was available, lower levels of authorised absence were seen amongst Black African, Chinese, Indian, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black other minority ethnic groups
- lower than average levels of unauthorised absence were seen amongst pupils with lower levels of fluency in English or who were bilingual non-native speakers; those who were from relatively less deprived neighbourhoods; Year 9 and 10 Black African and Year 10 Pakistani pupils.

Once pupil and school background characteristics were taken into account, there appeared to be an association between absence rates and pupil attainment. Higher than average levels of both authorised and unauthorised absence were associated with reduced attainment at the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4, with a particular impact on boys.

4.1.2 Young people's attitudes and behaviour

The detailed data derived from the pupil surveys provides some information about the relationship between pupils' attitudes and behaviour and their experience of EiC, although significant findings were restricted to Key Stage 4 pupils. Longitudinal analysis of three successive Year 11 cohorts within EiC schools showed that pupils designated as gifted and talented had more positive attitudes to learning and education, and better (self-reported) behaviour than otherwise similar pupils in terms of their general behaviour at school and completing homework. They also had lower levels of authorised absence (but

⁵⁴ This is to be expected, as each LEA was asked to target BIP resources on a small number of schools with the greatest behaviour and attendance problems.

higher levels of unauthorised absence) than similar pupils not so designated. Girls in the gifted and talented cohort were also less likely to have been excluded at some point in the preceding academic year. This cross-sectional analysis does, however, raise the question as to whether young people were designated as gifted and talented because they already demonstrated positive attitudes and behaved well, or whether they developed such attitudes as a result of being in the gifted and talented group. The longitudinal study, which tracked one group of both EiC and non-EiC pupils from Year 9 to Year 11, suggests the former. This showed no association between changing attitudes and involvement in EiC, either overall or for specific Strands.

Comparing three successive Year 11 cohorts, pupils who had been mentored had, on average, a less positive attitude to education and were less likely than their peers to demonstrate good behaviour.⁵⁵ Although the qualitative data (see below) suggests that mentoring has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, an investigation of the relationship between being mentored and a positive change in attitudes over time using the survey data found no conclusive quantitative evidence that this was indeed the case.

For a more detailed discussion of these findings, and much wider discussion of the relationships between school and pupil characteristics and pupils' attitudes, see Morris and Rutt (2005b).

4.2 EiC, attitudes and behaviour: the perceptions of stakeholders

The data from the surveys of pupils have been able to demonstrate only limited associations between pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and their participation in EiC. However, many teachers, headteachers and Partnership Coordinators reported that the implementation of EiC had brought about positive changes in pupils' attitudes, motivation, behaviour and attendance, with the Gifted and Talented and Learning Mentor Strands being seen as particularly effective.

As EiC evolved, the Gifted and Talented Strand developed from offering mainly 'bolt-on' activities for a relatively small proportion of pupils to being much more embedded within all teaching and learning. These new approaches were seen to be improving pupils' attitudes to learning and, in some cases, changing the culture of schools from one in which pupils did not wish to be seen as 'clever' to one in which academic success was valued and celebrated.

⁵⁵ Self-reported punctuality, attendance, completion of homework and coursework, and attentiveness in class.

The Learning Mentor Strand was seen as a very effective way of addressing the needs of pupils who were, or were in danger of becoming, disaffected, as well as of those who faced a range of difficulties in school or at home. Interviews with teachers in a small number of schools with LSUs indicated that these teachers valued the work of the LSU, both in providing the level of one-to-one support which was not possible in the normal classroom and also in creating a better classroom environment by removing one or two disruptive or demanding pupils. There was a less positive side to these Strands, in that EiC was sometimes seen as focussing on the disaffected and on the most able, which could lead other pupils to feel excluded and to become demotivated.

With their broader view of the implementation of EiC across a whole Partnership, Partnership Coordinators were able to cite considerable evidence of the impact of EiC on pupils' attitudes, motivation, attendance and behaviour. They were particularly positive about the Strands focussing on individual pupils. The Gifted and Talented Strand had '*enthused*' pupils, while Learning Mentors were seen as reducing exclusions, improving attendance (the main benefit of the Strand for some Coordinators) and punctuality, and '*turning round*' troubled pupils. While Coordinators were all positive about the LSU Strand as a whole, some felt that far more development of this mode of support provision was required. The Units which were having the greatest impact were those which were properly integrated into school practices; in these cases, Coordinators spoke of '*totally transformed attitudes*', and raised awareness of the benefits of learning amongst referred pupils. Many Partnership Coordinators also noted the impact of EiC Action Zones on behaviour, attitudes and attendance.

The Strand Studies⁵⁶ provided considerable evidence that those most involved in the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor and LSU Strands saw these as having a major impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Chapter 7 provides more information about the implementation, successes and challenges, and sustainability of the Strands, and the detailed reports from the Strand Studies are listed in the Annex to this report. Some of the key findings in relation to pupils' attitudes and behaviour are given below.

The Gifted and Talented Strand

Teachers and headteachers reported that some of the main benefits of this Strand to pupils were in enhanced motivation and morale, growth in confidence and self-esteem. Most pupils responded well to the additional challenge provided by the Strand, which encouraged a 'can do' approach and which widened pupils' horizons.

Some pupils reported tensions with their peers, usually manifest as teasing or in resentment that some pupils appeared to be getting opportunities for trips and activities which were not available to others. The gifted and talented

⁵⁶ See Appendix 5 for a description of the Strand Studies.

pupils were generally appreciative of the additional activities and provision, particularly where any additional work set was challenging and interesting, and not just 'more of the same'. Some pupils noted that more able pupils were now getting the sort of attention which had previously been confined to less able pupils.

Learning Mentors

About two-thirds of the pupils who took part in the surveys and who reported that they had seen a Learning Mentor felt that this contact had been helpful. Pupils who reported more frequent meetings (four or more) with a Learning Mentor were more positive than those reporting fewer meetings.

All but one of the 43 pupils interviewed as part of the Learning Mentor Strand Study were also positive, identifying greater self-esteem and confidence, being able to deal more effectively with their problems, improved attitudes to learning, and improved relationships with their peers.

Teachers and Learning Mentors also reported improved self-esteem, a more positive self-image and greater confidence, leading to raised aspirations, among mentored pupils. A minority of teachers (both in the surveys and among those interviewed) commented on the benefit of this improved behaviour for both mentored pupils and the school community more widely. In some schools, teachers felt that the introduction of Learning Mentors had contributed to the existing supportive ethos, whereas for some schools Learning Mentors had contributed more positively to changing the culture of schools and extending the level of support available to pupils.

LSUs

Over half the teachers responding to the survey said that it was very important that all schools should have access to a Unit providing short-term intensive support to its pupils, and a further third thought this was fairly important. Female teachers and those with more teaching experience, tended to be the most supportive. Teachers in schools with access to an LSU were more likely than other teachers to say that EiC had been a benefit to disruptive pupils.

Both LSU staff and teachers in the host school reported a range of impacts of the Units on pupils. These included:

- improved attendance (often by addressing issues related to non-attendance, such as bullying, health or family problems)
- improved behaviour, fewer disruptive incidents, and a more cooperative attitude improved attitudes to learning and to school, especially a greater motivation to learn and improved concentration
- greater ability to form and/or maintain relationships with peers and with others such as family members.

A longitudinal study of a small number of pupils showed that many had been successfully re-integrated into the normal classroom. Some, however, continued to need support in the Unit, while others had moved to alternative forms of support.

The pupils who were interviewed were very positive about the experience of attending the LSU. The size of the Units, the high staff ratios, the patience of the staff, and the calmer atmosphere than that of the normal classroom, were all valued.⁵⁷

Beacon Schools

The surveys suggested that pupils in Beacon Schools were slightly more positive about their teachers, and about school and learning more generally, than those in non-Beacon schools. They were also slightly more positive about the facilities and resources of their schools.

Specialist Schools

The Specialist Schools visited were offering new opportunities to their pupils, by broadening the curriculum and by widening study support and out-of-school provision. Pupils responded well to these, which in some cases offered them the opportunity to take part in activities such as music making and sport which would not otherwise be available to them. This was seen as creating more positive attitudes and greater motivation, and in some cases, keeping potentially disaffected pupils '*on track*'.

CLCs

In some cases, CLCs were working specifically with challenging pupils from the host school as a strategy to help combat social exclusion. It was reported that working within the environment of a CLC had a beneficial effect on the behaviour of some pupils.

CLC Managers reported that the resources of the Centres were respected by pupils – they appreciated the more 'adult' atmosphere, and levels of vandalism were lower than in local schools.

⁵⁷ These comments are based on the perceptions of pupils who had remained in the Unit or had been re-integrated into the normal classroom in their own school. Pupils for whom the Unit had been less successful and who had, for example, been permanently excluded from the school, were therefore under-represented.

EiC Action Zones

The Directors of EiC Action Zones reported that the Zones were having an impact on motivation, behaviour, self-esteem, attendance and behaviour.

4.3 Summary

Attendance (as measured by the percentage of half days missed in a complete academic year) improved more rapidly in EiC schools in the period 1999 to 2003 than in non-EiC schools. This reduction was greatest in Phase 1 areas, where it was equivalent to just over one day per pupil per year, and rather less in Phase 2. In Phase 3 areas, the reduction was not statistically significant.

From the qualitative studies, there was considerable evidence that EiC was perceived by Partnership Coordinators, headteachers and teachers as having an impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour, but this was only partially supported by the quantitative analysis. The survey data, for instance, suggested some positive associations between being identified as gifted and talented and having more positive attitudes to school and to learning, and better (self-reported) behaviour. It was not possible to establish definitively whether more positive attitudes contributed to designation as gifted and talented or *vice versa*, or, indeed, whether there was a spiral of development with improvements in attitudes leading to improved attainment, which then fed into further improvements in attitudes. Similarly, the survey data provided no conclusive evidence that mentoring led to improved attitudes and performance.

Those most involved in the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor and LSU Strands at school level, including teachers and pupils, were almost unanimously positive about the impact of these Strands, reporting improved attendance and behaviour, enhanced self-esteem and confidence, and a transformed attitude within the school to academic success. The only negative impacts (which were reported by only a minority of participants in the case studies) were possible tensions between pupils identified as gifted and talented and those who felt excluded from the opportunities offered to this group, and a sense that EiC targeted the most and least able pupils, leaving others to become demotivated.

5. The overall impact on schools and teachers

This chapter presents the main findings of the evaluation relating to the impact of EiC on schools and teachers. It explores the impact of EiC on teaching and learning approaches, and on transition support arrangements, as well as any effect of EiC on teachers' working lives and teacher recruitment and retention. The chapter also summarises the main challenges for schools in implementing EiC and discusses the extent to which public perceptions of EiC schools are changing. However, it is worth noting that, given the wider context of educational policy, and the fact that schools are often involved in other concurrent initiatives, it is difficult to attribute any changes solely to EiC.

Key findings

Changes to teaching and learning

The benefits of EiC most frequently cited by teachers were

- being able to practice a wider range of teaching activities
- more opportunities to try new teaching and learning methods
- more opportunities for exchanging ideas with colleagues
- additional and/or more appropriate resources.

Schools reported increased use of setting and banding, and less mixed ability teaching, at Key Stage 3.

ICT in schools

While the ICT resources of EiC schools improved during the evaluation period, in 2003 these schools were still, on average, less well-resourced than schools nationally.

Teachers in EiC areas were more likely than those in non-EiC areas to feel that their ICT facilities were good or excellent, and they also reported greater use of ICT in their teaching. Over half the teachers felt that it was very important that pupils had access to specialist ICT facilities such as CLCs.

Pupils were positive about their schools' ICT resources, but would have valued greater access.

Out-of-hours learning

Between 2001 and 2003 the range of out-of-hours learning opportunities offered by schools increased substantially: much of this was attributed to EiC.

Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3

Although schools were using a slightly wider range of strategies to promote effective transition, and the contribution of EiC Action Zones and Learning Mentors was appreciated, Partnership Coordinators felt that this was area which needed further development.

Sharing good practice

Specialist and Beacon Schools, CLCs and EiC Acton Zones were all seen as improving collaboration between schools, hence promoting the sharing of expertise and good practice.

Teacher recruitment and retention

Senior managers in EiC schools generally felt that they were able to recruit good staff but felt that the retention of such staff was becoming more difficult.

For about a fifth of teachers, a school's participation in EiC would make them more likely to consider applying for a teaching post.

The challenges in implementing EiC in schools

Although schools and teachers were generally very positive about EiC, many noted the challenges of implementing a complex initiative within schools, and many referred to increases in teacher workload as a result. Some felt that EiC was introduced too rapidly and that some of the initial difficulties could have been avoided by a more considered timetable for implementation.

Public perceptions of schools

The proportion of pupils who felt that their parents and other adults viewed their school as a good one declined slightly over the period of the evaluation, but this may reflect higher expectations rather than any real decline.

Schools in EiC areas were at least maintaining and probably increasing their links with employers and training providers. Employers and training providers reported that some aspects of local schools, particularly behaviour and leadership, were improving.

Training providers were more aware of EiC, and more positive about it, than were employers, but there appeared to be considerable scope for improving links between schools and the local business community.

The evidence in this chapter is drawn from a number of sources, including the surveys of pupils, teachers, school senior managers and employers and training providers, and analysis of the Database of Teacher Records.

Two points are worth noting here. First, teachers responding to the surveys were form tutors, so will tend not to represent the least experienced teachers or those in management posts. Second, in the surveys, teachers and senior managers were asked about their perceptions of the benefits and the disadvantages or challenges of EiC for schools, teachers and pupils. These were 'open' questions, with no prompts provided. Many respondents chose not to answer these questions (typically about 40 per cent commented on benefits and 30 per cent on disadvantages), and those that responded did so in a variety of ways. We report responses to these open questions as percentages of all those who could have responded and, therefore, the percentages for each response category are small (usually less than 15 per cent). While some caution is needed in interpreting these results, they provide an insight into the overall balance of respondents' perceptions.

5.1 Were there any changes to teaching and learning approaches?

By the time of the final round of surveys in spring 2003, EiC had been operational for about three years in Phase 1 areas (and lesser periods in Phase 2 and 3 areas). Teachers' own awareness and experience of EiC varied, not only depending on the area in which they were teaching but also depending on how long they had been in their current school, their previous experience, their level of seniority and their role within the school. Consequently, the extent of any identifiable impact of EiC on their professional practice can also be expected to vary. Despite this, it appeared that the EiC policy has had a positive impact on various aspects of teachers' working lives, and evidence relating to this is presented in this section.

The experience of teachers surveyed indicated that some changes in teaching and learning approaches had taken place over the course of the evaluation. Indeed, in response to an open question about the benefits of EiC, 13 per cent of the form tutors surveyed in 2003 reported that there had been improvements in teaching and learning as a result of EiC. Primarily, these teachers commented that they:

- could practice a wider range of teaching activities
- had the opportunity to try new teaching and learning methods
- had more opportunities for the exchange of ideas with colleagues.

A similar proportion of form tutors (14 per cent) reported that they had benefited from additional resources and facilities to support their teaching as a result of EiC. Some teachers specifically mentioned that resources were now more appropriate for their teaching, while others commented positively on improvements to the school's facilities and assistance for teachers in the classroom.

The survey of schools also revealed changes in teaching and learning approaches. For example, 29 per cent of schools in 2003 said that their grouping arrangements had changed. At Key Stage 3, there was a year-on-year increase in the proportions of schools using setting and banding arrangements and a corresponding decrease in the proportions using mixed ability teaching and streaming.

The findings from the studies of the seven EiC Strands (reported in Chapter 7) provide some indications of the sources of these changes in teaching and learning. For example, the Gifted and Talented, Specialist, Beacon and CLC Strands were all said to lead to additional facilities and resources for schools and innovations in teaching and learning.

5.1.1 ICT in schools

The use of ICT for teaching and learning developed considerably during the period of the evaluation. The scale of this change is demonstrated by information provided by schools about the numbers of computers available for pupils to use. In 2001, schools taking part in the survey reported that they had one internet-enabled computer for every 30 pupils.⁵⁸ By 2003, there was one such computer for every seven pupils. However, despite the additional resources available to EiC schools, they were, on average, still less well-equipped than secondary schools nationally (DfES, 2003b).

Teachers responding to the surveys provided information about their use of ICT in teaching, and around three-quarters reported that the ICT facilities in their schools were good or excellent. This proportion increased slightly between 2001 and 2003. Those in EiC areas were more likely than those in non-EiC areas to report that their ICT facilities were excellent or good, and they reported greater use of ICT in their own teaching. Teachers responding in 2003 were generally more confident in using ICT than those responding to earlier surveys, and they also made greater use of it in their teaching. Most teachers reported that they wanted to use ICT in lessons, and the resources appeared to be available for an increasing proportion of teachers who wished to use them.

⁵⁸ In 2001, a small number of schools reported very small numbers of internet-enabled computers, and this may have distorted the overall figure. In 2002, schools reported an average of one internet-enabled computer for every nine pupils.

Pupils were also positive about their school's ICT resources. For example, in 2003, 83 per cent of Year 11 pupils in EiC schools reported that their school had good or excellent ICT resources. This was higher than the proportion in non-EiC schools. In 2001, pupils in EiC schools reported less access to ICT at school than those in non-EiC institutions, but by 2003 pupils in both EiC and non-EiC schools reported similar levels of access. However, many pupils would have valued greater access: around two-fifths of pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 in EiC schools in 2003 said that they did not have enough opportunities to use ICT out of lessons.

CLCs, with their emphasis on providing state-of-the-art ICT equipment, have contributed to the overall resources available to local schools. Although only a minority of schools had a CLC on site, the proportion having access to the Centres increased over the course of the evaluation.⁵⁹ Teachers were generally positive about such facilities, with over half reporting that they felt that it was very important for all schools to have access to specialist ICT facilities such as CLCs.

5.1.2 Out-of-hours learning

Another aspect of teaching and learning which seems to have developed through EiC is the use of out-of-hours activities to support the learning of pupils. In each year of the surveys, nearly all schools offered out-of-hours activities, with slightly more doing so in 2002 and 2003 than in 2001. In particular, there was a noticeable increase in the proportions of schools offering homework clubs, summer schools, and literacy and numeracy activities. For example, 94 per cent of schools in 2003 offered homework clubs, compared with 88 per cent in 2001. Similarly, 78 per cent of schools in 2003 offered literacy activities, compared with 59 per cent in 2001.

Increasing the range of opportunities available to pupils outside normal teaching has been an important theme in educational policy over the last few years, and some of this growth reported by EiC schools will be attributable to more general school developments and to specific initiatives such as the PLC Pilot Scheme. Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence that EiC has also been a factor. Half of all schools in both 2002 and 2003 said that the use of enrichment activities was due to EiC, while around two-fifths attributed the use of summer schools to EiC. Approximately a third of schools reported that residential activities and arts activities had been introduced as a result of EiC.

⁵⁹ The setting up of CLCs required the identification of potential sites, building and/or conversion work, and the development of the necessary ICT resources, and there was inevitably a delay between the launch of EiC in an area and the time when schools could begin to make use of the resources provided by a CLC.

5.2 Has EiC improved schools' approaches to supporting transition?

One of the initial objectives of EiC was to ensure continuity of learning as pupils move from primary to secondary school. EiC sought to address inadequacies in transition in urban areas, where there are often complex transfer patterns, with pupils from one primary school moving to many secondary schools, and with secondary schools dealing with multiple feeder primaries. There was some evidence that the policy was having an impact on schools' approaches to facilitating transition from primary to secondary education, and on pupils' experience of this. Almost all schools had special arrangements in place to support this transition, most commonly taster days for pupils and staff visits between schools. However, the proportion of schools that undertook collaborative cross-phase activities and joint summer or holiday projects was slightly greater in 2003 than in the previous year. There were also indications that schools were using a wider range of types of activity to support transition. For example, in 2001, 30 per cent of schools indicated that they had four types of activity in place to facilitate transition, and in 2003 the corresponding proportion was 35 per cent.

However, despite these slight changes in schools' approaches, most Partnership Coordinators did not feel that EiC overall had led to substantial improvements in the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, although EiC Action Zones and Learning Mentors were seen as making a contribution. Transition appeared to be an area upon which Partnerships and LEAs were often aware they needed to give a greater focus. A continuing emphasis in improving transition in the National Primary and Key Stage 3 Strategies, and the development of new types of partnership arrangements for schools, are all potential levers for change: it remains to be seen if they will be effective, and to assess the impact on transition of new admission arrangements for schools.

5.3 Has EiC had any effect on teachers' working lives?

A minority of the teachers surveyed (seven per cent in the 2003 survey) commented on the benefits that EiC had brought to school life and, in particular, to the quality of their working life and professional development.⁶⁰ This is supported by findings from the Strand-specific evaluations, which revealed that most of the teachers interviewed as part of the relevant Strand Studies felt that the Specialist and Beacon School Strands, CLCs and EiC Action Zones had led to improved collaboration between schools. Consequently, the extent of sharing and disseminating expertise and good practice within schools, as well as within and between Partnerships, had

⁶⁰ This was an open question and many teachers did not respond, or did not comment on this aspect of EiC.

increased, and teachers welcomed the additional opportunities for professional development.

5.4 Has teacher recruitment and retention changed?

Many inner city schools suffer from high rates of staff turnover and EiC sought to ameliorate this, by providing better resources to schools and by addressing some issues which contributed to difficulties in recruitment and retention, such as workload and pupils' behaviour and attendance. EiC aimed to support schools in becoming attractive to potential recruits and to current employees. In comparison with national data on the turnover of teaching staff (DfES, 2003a), the EiC schools surveyed appeared to have a similar rate of turnover. Although there was a slight increase in the numbers of teachers leaving EiC schools across the three years of the surveys, senior managers of EiC schools generally reported that they had maintained their ability to recruit staff to replace those who left, but they saw the retention of good quality teachers as being more difficult in 2003 than it had been in 2002, suggesting that retention may present a continuing challenge to EiC schools.

Despite concerns about the challenges facing teachers in inner city schools, in 2003 the majority of teachers surveyed who felt able to comment on their career plans in one year's time intended to remain within teaching (80 per cent) and indeed within their EiC school (71 per cent), with some aiming to progress within the school. This was a small increase over 2001, when about 65 per cent of teachers said that they expected to be in the same school in a year.

There were similar changes in relation to teachers' longer-term expectations. In 2001, just over 25 per cent of teachers expected to be in the same school in five years. In 2003, the corresponding figure was just under 35 per cent.

Teachers in schools with more disadvantaged intakes (as measured by entitlement to Free School Meals) were less likely than those in more advantaged schools to expect to be in same school in five years' time. Within schools with moderate to high levels of entitlement, there were year-on-year increases in the proportion of teachers expecting to stay at their current school for the next five years.

There are many influences on a teacher's decision to remain within a school or to move to a new post within or outside education, not all of which can be addressed within a single initiative. The survey of form tutors in EiC schools in 2003 indicated some of the reasons why teachers would not recommend a career in teaching, including:

- workload (about 30 per cent of those who would not recommend teaching)

- difficult pupils (about 25 per cent)
- the stressful nature of teaching (25 per cent).

These comments accord with other studies of teachers' reasons for leaving the profession, such as research for the National Union of Teachers, which found that the main reasons were workload, pupil behaviour and government initiatives (Smithers and Robinson, 2001).

Across the three surveys, the majority of teachers said that they were more likely to apply to schools which had a good Ofsted report and which had good academic results. However, in 2003, nearly a third of teachers said that they would be less likely to apply for a post in a school with many pupils with English as an additional language, and just over a quarter reported that they would be less likely to apply if a school had a high proportion of pupils who were eligible for Free School Meals. As these characteristics are a feature of many inner city schools, the responses provide an insight into the challenge faced by EiC schools in recruiting staff.

EiC appeared to have a positive influence on the decision of a notable minority of teachers to apply for a post. Across the three years of the surveys, around a fifth to a quarter of teachers indicated that a schools' participation in EiC might make them more likely to consider applying for a post. Moreover, between a third and two-fifths of teachers indicated that the existence of two of the Strands of EiC – the Gifted and Talented Strand and the LSU Strand – would positively influence their decision to apply for a post in a school, which suggests that elements of EiC could contribute to attracting or retaining some teachers.

5.5 What have been the challenges for schools in implementing EiC?

Despite the perceived benefits of EiC on schools and teachers outlined above, a number of areas have consistently caused concern for senior managers and form tutors. Around a fifth of senior managers reported that integrating EiC within schools and with other initiatives had caused problems. Some senior managers felt that EiC was implemented too quickly and, therefore, created teething problems. One wrote: *'At the outset ... as with all Government driven initiatives – too big, too fast, too controlled, too target driven'*.

Senior managers and form tutors had also encountered problems with the management and/or the time implications associated with involvement in EiC, and this had led to an increase in teachers' workload. Specifically, senior managers referred to difficulties with the overall management and

coordination of EiC and noted that there was insufficient time to complete EiC related paperwork.

5.6 Are public perceptions of EiC schools changing?

The extent of schools' popularity with pupils, their parents, the local community, employers and training providers was explored in a number of ways. An initial press scrutiny conducted in 2001, for instance, showed that the introduction of EiC was depicted in a positive light by the national, and particularly, local papers. Local media commentary in EiC areas suggested that there was widespread community support for a targeted initiative which would help remediate the problems of disadvantage and under-achievement in local schools and that there was a certain degree of pride that particular local schools had been designated to receive the extra funding.⁶¹

An examination took place of the numbers of application for places and of the numbers admitted in EiC schools, compared to schools' admissions numbers. Overall, the majority of EiC schools surveyed had more applicants than places on offer and were, therefore, over-subscribed.⁶² There was no notable change in the extent to which schools were under- or over-subscribed between 2002 and 2003.⁶³

Over the three surveys, most pupils considered that their parents and other adults thought that they attended a good school, and they themselves tended to believe that their school was good, although fewer pupils felt this in 2003 than in 2001. This may reflect greater public awareness of issues about quality of education, and higher expectations of schools in 2003 compared with 2001, rather than any real decline in standards. It may well take considerably longer to change public perceptions of schools than it does to bring about change in those schools, and three or four years after the launch of EiC (less in Phase 2 and 3 areas) may be too soon to be expect such a change.

Although there was no measurable impact on school applications, or on public perceptions (as reported by pupils), there was evidence of some change in schools' engagement with parents, employers and the community. More specifically, there were slight indications of a change in the extent to which parents attended parents' evenings and events, and in teachers' perceptions of parents' level of interest in their children's education. Furthermore, the extent of community access to schools and the involvement of employers increased slightly, with an increase in specific types of employer-related activities such as extended work-related learning, mini-enterprise and industry days.

⁶¹ Schagen *et al.* (2001).

⁶² Systems for applying for places at secondary school differ between local education authorities and many allow multiple applications.

⁶³ Based on a subset of schools providing information in both years.

The surveys of employers and training providers⁶⁴ supported this finding, and revealed that the majority of the interviewees were engaged in links with schools. Indeed, the extent of their links was either maintained throughout the course of the evaluation (about half of employers) or had increased (about a third of employers). Among training providers, not only were the majority engaged with links with schools, but in 2003 most reported that these links had increased since the time of the first interview (in 2001 or 2002). Thus, it appears that schools in EiC areas are at least maintaining and probably increasing their contact with the wider employment and training communities.

Although they were often reluctant to judge the quality of local schools and school leavers, most employers interviewed considered that schools were at least satisfactory, and a third perceived them as good or very good. Although the overall perceptions which employers and training providers had of local schools were much the same at the time of the second interviews as they had been when first interviewed, they were more positive in 2003 about specific elements of schools, such as the behaviour of pupils and leadership of the school, than previously.

The majority of the employers surveyed in 2003 recruited young people from local schools in EiC areas. While more than half the employers had not experienced any difficulties recruiting school leavers, around two-fifths did find this difficult: this proportion was unchanged from the baseline interviews. In contrast, in 2003, more of the training providers reported that they found it easy to recruit young learners than had been the case when they were interviewed previously, and the numbers of young people they recruited had also increased. Training providers remained largely positive that young people made an informed choice about their destinations post-16 and had the necessary ability to succeed. However, half of the training providers felt that young people were not well prepared when they embarked on their courses, and a quarter were concerned that pupils did not possess the appropriate skills and characteristics to succeed.

Awareness of EiC was not widespread among the employers, even in 2003, although the majority of training providers were aware of the initiative. Most employers and training providers were supportive of the elements of EiC about which they were questioned and believed that it was important for schools and pupils to have access to up-to-date ICT resources, mentors and short-term intensive support for pupils. By 2003, a quarter of the employers who were aware of EiC perceived a positive effect on local education. Training providers were more positive about the effect of EiC than employers, and they referred to a positive impact on their relationships with local schools and on the aspirations of young people.

⁶⁴ Employers and training providers in Phase 1 and 2 areas were first interviewed in 2001, and those in Phase 3 areas in 2002. Both groups were re-interviewed in 2003. For further information, see Appendix 4.

Although there were indications of growing awareness of, and appreciation of the potential benefits of, EiC among employers and training providers, it appears that in 2003 there was still considerable scope for the creation of stronger links between schools and the local business community.

5.7 Summary

Senior managers and form tutors were in agreement that the EiC programme had had a positive impact in their schools and classrooms and, to a lesser extent, on teachers' professional lives. There was some evidence that EiC was meeting its aim of improving the quality and diversity of teaching, and teachers reported an increase in the resources and facilities available to them, to develop their armoury of teaching and learning techniques and an increase in the use of out-of-hours activities to support the learning of pupils.

There was also some limited evidence that EiC has helped to strengthen the recruitment and retention of teachers. EiC schools had maintained their ability to recruit sufficient staff, but some senior managers perceived the retention of good quality teachers as more difficult in 2003 than in the previous year. Despite these concerns, most teachers taking part in the surveys intended to remain within teaching over the next year, and, indeed, within their EiC school, and there was tentative evidence that elements of EiC could attract teachers to apply for a teaching post.

Community and employer representatives were, from the start, supportive of their local schools and of EiC's aims to drive up standards and tackle disadvantage. Actual awareness of the initiative, however, remained generally modest across the three-year evaluation period. There was limited evidence that Excellence in Cities had actually improved public perceptions of schools in urban areas. There were, however, indications that, by 2003, more interactions were taking place between schools, and parents, employers and the wider community. Although these increases were small, they reflect the beginnings of a change which will need to be sustained if the standing and expectations of urban schools are to match their actual performance.

6. Impact at the local area level

As described in Chapter 1, one of the central elements of EiC was to encourage schools to work together in the expectation that this could achieve more for pupils, parents and communities than schools working in isolation or in competition. Partnerships were set up which included, as a minimum, an LEA and its maintained secondary schools, although many Partnerships chose to include a variety of other stakeholders, including local further education colleges, training providers and employers. Each Partnership had a Coordinator, and interviews with these were carried out throughout the evaluation period, in the autumn of 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004. Research was also carried out within schools to explore school partnership working from the perspective of school staff.

Key findings

Partnerships had adopted structures which met their local needs, but there was a move away from Coordinator-led approaches towards more distributed management, with greater delegation of decision-making to sub-groups of the full Partnership.

Some large Partnerships had developed sub-groups or even sub-Partnerships to ensure that schools were working with only a limited number of other schools. The LIG collaboratives of four to eight schools were seen as being an appropriate size to be effective.

Schools and teachers were felt to be benefiting from increased inter-school collaboration and sharing of resources.

While monitoring and evaluation was very effective in some Partnerships, this was an area for development in others.

For pupils completing Key Stage 3 in 2003, levels of attainment were higher in Partnerships with high levels of engagement with the collaborative ethos of EiC than in Partnerships where this was less well-developed.

The first two rounds of interviews focussed on management and implementation issues,⁶⁵ and round three on programme outcomes, impact, sustainability and good practice. The final round of interviews in 2004 was designed specifically to examine the extent to which the LEAs, schools and other partners were adhering to the core beliefs and ideals of EiC for collaboration and sharing. These final interviews also enabled more data to be gathered on some more specific issues such as transition from primary to

⁶⁵ The first round of interviews included only Phase 1 and 2 Partnerships, as they took place before the launch of Phase 3.

secondary school, LSUs, CLCs and teachers' professional development. A full list of the topics covered can be found in Appendix 3.

This Chapter first focuses structures and process of Partnership management and operation and then moves on to examine the perceived impact of local EiC networking on schools and teachers. The final section reports on some statistical analyses of the possible impact of EiC collaborative working on pupil progress and performance.

6.1 Partnership management

6.1.1 Coordinators

At the heart of each Partnership was the Coordinator and, as EiC developed, the role of this pivotal post changed and expanded. By 2002 it was noticeable that Coordinators were taking on more managerial and strategic roles, and were spending less time on immediate coordination and operational issues. This was often a response to the EiC programme becoming more established and school-owned, and with a more cohesive or 'joined-up' approach to the implementation of a range of national educational policies with similar or complementary aims. Additionally, as Strand leaders became more experienced and established in their posts, and headteachers became keen to play a more active role within the Partnership, Coordinators were able to adopt a more 'arms length' approach to Partnership management.

A central role for Coordinators was to manage and distribute the EiC finances, according to government funding regulations and Partnership agreements. In general, Coordinators reported that the EiC funding criteria had enabled them to target resources, both those from EiC and those from related programmes such as LIG and BIP, effectively within the local area. However, in autumn 2002, Coordinators expressed considerable uncertainty about future financing of EiC, and saw this as one of their major challenges.⁶⁶ In 2004, some Coordinators expressed concern that proposals to change the way in which schools are funded from 2006 would make it more difficult to retain resources for coordination and other activities at Partnership level.

6.1.2 Models of Partnership operation

The first two rounds of interviews revealed a range of Partnership management structures and approaches. Although Partnerships had adopted structures which were geared to their own needs and priorities, these structures could all be viewed as fitting one of the models below:

⁶⁶ A number of clarifications about future financing of EiC were issued during the period during which these interviews were taking place. By the time of the later interviews, there was considerably less uncertainty than at the time of the earlier interviews.

- **Leadership model**, in which the Coordinator set the agenda and exerted strong leadership on partner personnel and organisations, including the full Partnership body.
- **Facilitator model**, in which Partnership members and the central body set the agenda, with the Coordinator responding to this and facilitating developments.
- **Director model**, in which the Partnership acted more as a forum and emphasised the use of sub-groups, with the Coordinator providing operational direction and coordination.
- **Steering Group model**, whereby the Coordinator set up and worked through an executive or steering group, which reported to the full Partnership body.
- **Strand Group model**, where Strand groups were the main operational forces in the Partnership and these reported to a steering committee and/or the full Partnership body.
- **Split Partnership model** in which individual Excellence programmes had separate decision-making bodies and working groups.

It was notable that, over the course of the evaluation, the emphasis moved towards more distributed management approaches, rather than individual leadership or facilitation by the Partnership Coordinator. Partnerships were increasingly moving towards the Steering and Strand models, and one of the main reasons for this appeared to be related to creating structures which enabled more effective decision-making. Representation on Partnership boards tended to expand over the course of the evaluation (to include, for example, new CLCs or other initiatives that were being integrated with the work of EiC such as Connexions). This could make full Partnership meetings unwieldy and, in order to streamline the decision-making process, there was often a move towards sub-groups and/or a steering group as the main decision-making and agenda-setting body, and away from structures which required all decisions to be agreed by the full Partnership. Additionally, as a result of greater devolution to, and accountability of, schools, headteachers were taking an increasingly important role within the Partnership. By autumn 2004, many Coordinators described how Partnership members were happy to delegate decision-making to smaller sub-groups: the exception was resource allocation, where all members wanted to retain direct involvement.

Partnership Coordinators recognised the need to work *with* the schools, rather than to impose their own agendas, in order to develop a genuine Partnership approach to implementing EiC. The 2004 interviews showed how far some Partnerships had come in developing their EiC Partnership approach; for example, through schools working together to develop Partnership targets and taking joint responsibility for the school improvement actions necessary to achieve them. In the Partnerships that showed the most developed levels of partnership working, the schools and headteachers were very proactive in

taking forward the initiative and developing new ways of working together, rather than responding to suggestions or guidance from the Coordinator.

Many Coordinators reported that the size of the EiC network played a role in the success of Partnership working. This applied both in terms of the number of schools involved and the number of initiatives that the Partnership encompassed. The larger the Partnership, the more difficult it was for work to be coherent and for all interests to be represented fully. Partnerships had responded proactively to overcome such challenges and this had led to Partnerships developing sub-groups or even sub-Partnerships to implement the EiC programme and other related initiatives. In 2004, many Coordinators noted the very positive impact of the EIC-managed LIG, and that one of the reasons for this was felt to be that the LIG collaboratives – typically four to eight schools – were an optimum size to generate effective inter-school relationships and cooperation. As one Partnership Coordinator noted, *‘There’s definitely been more collaboration and cooperation. LIG in particular has made a significant difference to that.’*

One area of Partnership operation that has been variously developed, and for which little evaluation evidence emerged, is the engagement of partners outside the school sector in the organisation. What have been the pay-offs of such involvement for colleges, training providers, employers and community representatives and how did their contributions feed into the EiC improvement agenda for schools, teachers and pupils? The second area of perhaps unfulfilled potential is in the area of evaluation and monitoring. Some partnerships have clearly made excellent progress here and built upon pre-existing expertise in the LEA, used the EiC evaluation framework produced centrally and/or appointed local consultant evaluators to gather a range of performance and other outcome data and fed this into EiC review and planning processes. Other Partnerships have made much less concerted attempts to adopt a formative, self-evaluative approach and EiC developments have not always been founded on a strong evidence base.

6.2 Impact of Partnership working on schools and teachers

Almost all Partnership Coordinators reported that the EiC initiative had led to a considerable increase in partnership working and collaboration between schools. Over the course of the evaluation, they reported a shift from competition between schools, and an initial unwillingness to accept that they could learn from each other, towards greater cooperation and sharing. They also felt that these positive collaborative experiences had led, or contributed, to an increase in teacher morale within schools.

In the last two years of the evaluation, Coordinators, headteachers and form tutors were consistent in identifying that the main areas of EiC impact at

Partnership level were in terms of inter-school collaboration, teacher-level interactions, improved relations between schools and LEAs, with EiC becoming increasingly embedded in LEA and school practice. EiC was said to have created better *'frameworks'* for partnership working, by helping to define new forms of school collaboration and by changing schools' relationships with the LEA from that of a manager to that of a partner. One of the benefits that came out of EiC partnership working for school leaders and teachers was the sharing of resources and the combining of effort; for example through running joint CPD activities, sharing members of staff, or sharing curriculum modules. As indicated in Chapter 5, teachers particularly valued opportunities for visiting other schools and observing other teachers' classroom practice and being part of a thriving professional learning network.

6.3 Partnership engagement and the impact on pupils

One of the underlying principles and hoped for outcomes of EiC is the 'Partnership dividend' – the additional benefits which accrue to schools and pupils from working together and from sharing resources rather than from using those same resources within a more isolationist or even competitive environment. In previous sections of this Chapter, we have discussed the perceptual evidence for the impact of Partnership working on schools and teachers. At interview, Coordinators were keen to give their views on the impact of EiC on pupils' attitudes, attendance and achievement. Some of the Partnerships which had placed an emphasis on monitoring and evaluation could back up this 'soft data' with statistical evidence of the likely impact of EiC upon pupils. As well as assessing the impact of EiC on pupils at school-level, we were interested in examining the hypothesis that pupil progress at Key Stage 3 and 4 would be higher in schools in those EiC Partnership which were more actively engaged in implementing EiC principles and practices. This section examines the evidence for this Partnership dividend.

Chapter 3 considered the attainment of pupils in EiC schools in relation to school and pupil characteristics. This section examines the extent to which there was a measurable relationship between the development of a partnership ethos and pupils' attainment.

The focus of the interviews with Partnership Coordinators carried out in autumn 2004 was the extent to which schools within the Partnership had developed a 'partnership ethos' in terms of overall engagement with EiC, the extent of collaboration, cooperation and the sharing of resources and of good practice, 'shared ownership', for example in meeting Partnership targets, and the extent to which Partnership schools were prepared to implement decisions in which they had not been directly involved. Wherever possible, Coordinators were asked to provide supporting evidence or examples.

As a result of the interviews, Partnerships were grouped into five categories, ranging from those seen by their Partnership Coordinator to be at an early stage in developing this shared approach, to those where it was well embedded in school and Partnership practice. This categorisation should be treated with some caution. It is based on the evaluation team's interpretation of Partnership Coordinators' reports about their own area, and therefore involves a considerable degree of subjectivity. Most Partnership Coordinators, however, were able to provide considerable evidence to support their perceptions, for example from recent self- and peer- reviews. A further point to note is that the interviews took place over a year after the end of the period covered by this evaluation. In categorising the Partnerships, therefore, we attempted to establish the 'condition' of the Partnership in mid-2003. For example, we discounted the impact of LIG, which was implemented from April 2003 and which, as noted previously, many Coordinators reported as having had a considerable impact.

It might be expected that the categorisation described above would be closely related to the maturity of the Partnership, in terms of Phase of EiC. In practice, there was little relationship between Phase and category, and each category included Partnerships from all three Phases. Over half of the 11 Partnerships in the lowest category, and two out of eight in the highest category, were from Phase 1 areas.

In Chapter 3, we saw that the average levels achieved by pupils completing Key Stage 3 in summer 2003 in EiC schools did not differ significantly from those of otherwise similar pupils in non-EiC schools.⁶⁷ Using the single-cohort approach, the model was extended to include both level of partnership engagement and Phase of EiC in the analysis, and a more complex picture was revealed:⁶⁸

- Overall, pupils' progress during Key Stage 3 was greater in those areas showing high levels of engagement with the partnership principle of EiC than it was in EiC Partnerships where the level of engagement was lower. This was equivalent to a difference of about a month of progress (0.04 of a level) between those EiC Partnerships with the lowest levels of engagement and those with the highest levels.
- However, it was also the case that pupils in Phase 2 and Phase 3 (but not Phase 1) areas made significantly less progress, by about 0.05 of a level, than those in non-EiC areas.

From this, we can see that, for the 2003 Key Stage 3 cohort, when account is taken of the overall level of engagement with EiC of schools in each Partnership, in Phase 1 areas pupils' attainment (for all levels of partnership

⁶⁷ Using the 2003 NPD

⁶⁸ Note that Partnerships where it had not been possible to conduct an interview in 2004 had to be excluded from this analysis.

engagement) was higher than that of similar pupils in non-EiC areas. In Phase 2 and 3 areas, only those pupils in Partnerships with the highest level of engagement were making progress similar to, or greater than, that of pupils in non-EiC areas.

We also explored the relationship between Partnerships' level of engagement and attainment at the end of Key Stage 4, but there was no evidence that level of engagement was related to Key Stage 4 outcomes in 2003. It is unclear why associations between EiC Partnership working should occur at Key Stage 3 and not Key Stage 4. It may be that there has been more collaborative effort placed by teachers in EiC schools on enhancing the motivation and performance of pupils in lower secondary education, although the Strand studies and interviews do not necessarily show this. Alternatively, perhaps EiC is interacting positively with the National Strategy at Key Stage 3 on this age group.

6.4 Summary

The evidence in this Chapter indicates that there has been a substantial 'Partnership dividend' from EiC in both qualitative and quantitative terms. As the Partnerships have matured, there has been increased ownership of EiC by schools and increased interaction between teachers and school leaders across EiC institutions. A further benefit has often been improved relationships between schools and their LEA. To meet these changing demands, new and more devolved forms of Partnership management have evolved and the role of the Coordinator has become more strategic than operational.

One of the main successes of EiC has been the development of more and better framed collaborative activity leading to the sharing of resources, professional development activities and the mutual exchange of effective practice. Several of the Strands have contributed to this improved cross-school cooperation. There is far less evidence on the outcomes for different parties from the involvement of non-school partners.

Quantitative analyses of the level of EiC Partnership engagement and pupil outcomes, provided an indication, with some caveats, that pupils' progress, at least at Key Stage 3, and particularly for pupils in Phase 1 schools, has been enhanced by effective EiC funded collaboration. No association, however, has been found between effective Partnership working and pupil progress at Key Stage 4. The reason for the difference between the results for the two Key Stages is not clear, but it may be that the emphasis placed on schools' performance at Key Stage 4 encourages competition rather than collaboration.

7. The EiC Strands

The EiC policy Strands have evolved since its introduction in 1999 but, for the period covered by the evaluation, there were seven Strands to the programme:

- the Gifted and Talented Strand
- Learning Mentors
- Learning Support Units (LSUs)
- Specialist Schools
- Beacon Schools
- City Learning Centres (CLCs)
- EiC Action Zones.

These Strands were varied in nature: some targeted pupils, often small groups of pupils (for example the Gifted and Talented and Learning Mentor Strands), while others were whole-school approaches (for example, Beacon and Specialist Schools) or linked several schools (EiC Action Zones). CLCs aimed to provide resources for a number of schools and the community more generally.

A separate Strand study was undertaken for each of the seven Strands to explore their implementation and impact. Each Strand study was designed to collect in-depth information by means of interviews and case studies; for example, case studies of schools for the Gifted and Talented Strand, or CLCs for the CLC Strand, on the ways that the Strands were working and how they were perceived by those involved, as well as information on funding and resourcing issues. This information supplemented the large amounts of quantitative data collected via the EiC national school, teacher and pupil surveys. The methodology used in each of the Strand studies is given in more detail in Appendix 5.

Key findings

The main successes of the Strands of EiC were seen as being:

- the creation of a school ethos of high expectations and of celebrating success, and an impact on teaching and learning in the classroom, to provide challenge for the most able pupils (the Gifted and Talented Strand)

- improved levels of self-esteem, behaviour and motivation among pupils supported by a Learning Mentor, and a reduction in levels of disruption in the class which was of benefit to all pupils (the Learning Mentor Strand)
- effective support for pupils who were disaffected or in danger of exclusion from school, with many examples of successful re-integration into mainstream classes (the LSU Strand)
- an improvement in educational outcomes in Specialist and Beacon Schools
- access to high quality ICT resources, benefiting not only pupils but also teachers and other staff, by providing opportunities for professional development (CLCs)
- partnership and cooperation between schools, with improved pupil attitudes and achievement (EiC Action Zones).

There were also challenges, including:

- concerns among some teachers about the possible elitism of the Gifted and Talented Strand
- initial negative reaction from some teaching staff about the role of Learning Mentors, although these had generally been replaced by a greater appreciation of how teachers and Learning Mentors can work together
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining appropriate staff, and concerns that some pupils could thrive in an LSU but could not, realistically, return to mainstream classes full-time (the LSU Strand)
- lack of clear linkage with EiC (Specialist and Beacon Schools, and EiC Action Zones)
- the cost of maintaining state-of-the-art resources during a period of rapid development in ICT, recruiting and retaining appropriate staff, and issues related to access to CLC resources for those pupils not attending the host school (CLCs).

This chapter draws together all the data gathered on each EiC policy Strand, with particular emphasis on the implementation and sustainability of each Strand. It includes the Strand-specific evaluations, as well as key findings from the surveys of schools, teachers and pupils, interviews with Partnership coordinators and the analysis of Partnership plans.

Reports on the Strand Studies are listed in the Annex.

7.1 The Gifted and Talented Strand

The Gifted and Talented Strand provided schools with additional resources to support the teaching and learning of the most able pupils (defined as the most able five to ten per cent of pupils within each school), in order to ensure that

these pupils were sufficiently challenged and could fulfil their potential. The main aims of this Strand were:

- the introduction of a whole school policy and a distinct in-school teaching and learning programme for the gifted and talented cohort
- the introduction of an extensive programme of out-of-hours study support opportunities for these pupils.

‘Gifted’ pupils are those having particular academic ability across the curriculum or in one or more subjects in the statutory school curriculum other than art, music and PE, and ‘talented’ pupils have aptitude in the arts or sports. Schools can determine the proportion of gifted children and talented children within the cohort, but not more than third of the cohort should be identified as talented.

7.1.1 Funding of the Gifted and Talented Strand

EiC allocated substantial resources to Partnerships for the Gifted and Talented Strand, and one of the first tasks of each Partnership was to decide how funding should be allocated to schools. Partnerships used different models to work out this resource allocation which, in most cases, was based solely on pupil numbers. However, in some Partnerships it also included an element related to levels of entitlement to Free School Meals. Some funding was also retained centrally by the Partnership. A detailed study of a small number of Phase 1 Partnerships in 1999/2000 showed that the amount centrally retained varied from 14 to 36 per cent. This study also showed that the amount allocated per pupil through the Gifted and Talented Strand averaged about £23 (on a whole-school basis), but was over twice this in one Partnership. Given that this money would have been used primarily for the ten per cent or so of pupils identified as gifted and talented, this represents a considerable expenditure on these pupils.

Consequently, schools received differing amounts of money and they were able to spend the resources in different ways. The surveys of schools revealed that around a quarter of the Gifted and Talented funds in schools were spent on specialist teaching materials, and a similar amount was spent on teacher salaries or supply cover. Out-of-school activities accounted for approximately 15 per cent of expenditure, and a similar amount of the money received was spent on additional responsibility points for the gifted and talented coordinator. As a result of receiving funds for the Gifted and Talented Strand, around 15 per cent of schools indicated that they had been able to release resources to spend elsewhere in the school. However, a slightly lower proportion of schools had supplemented the resourcing of the Strand from the main school budget.

7.1.2 Implementation of the Gifted and Talented Strand

How was the Gifted and Talented Strand managed?

The research highlighted that the successful implementation of the Gifted and Talented Strand was, to some extent, dependent on the Strand being actively managed in schools and supported by schools' senior management. Almost all case-study schools had a coordinator for the Gifted and Talented Strand and, in most cases, this was a middle or senior manager, holding a specific post of responsibility, which demonstrated the importance attached to the post and to the Strand.

In most schools, coordinators for gifted and talented pupils were allocated time specifically to fulfil their role, although this varied considerably between schools. On average, about 16 per cent of Strand coordinators' time was designated for Strand-related activity. However, in reality, allocated time was commonly eroded by other pressures in school, and many coordinators felt that they did not have sufficient time to be really effective in their role. In particular, they felt that they had insufficient time to work with departments to focus upon incorporating provision for gifted and talented pupils into their schemes of work, and this was perceived to be inhibiting the success of the Strand. Indeed, close liaison between the coordinator and heads of department, and the active commitment of heads of department to differentiating the curriculum in ways appropriate and effective for gifted and talented pupils, were felt to be key factors in the successful implementation of the Gifted and Talented Strand.

Which pupils were identified as Gifted and Talented?

Schools generally worked with the DfES definition of gifted and talented, i.e. the top five to ten per cent of pupils within a school population. Overall, coordinators were confident about the identification process: most used assessment data to identify 'gifted' pupils and teacher nominations to identify 'talented' pupils as well as those with potential to achieve.

However, when asked to identify their 'gifted' and 'talented' pupils, many schools were unable to distinguish between these groups, although they could identify which pupils were part of the 'gifted and talented' cohort. Analysis of pupils' background data revealed that, overall, pupils identified as gifted and talented were slightly more likely than those not identified as gifted and talented to:

- be female
- be from a white UK background
- not be entitled to Free School Meals
- have no identified special needs
- have English as their first language.

Not surprisingly, given the methods for selecting pupils, those identified as gifted and talented also tended to have higher levels of achievement, but there was considerable diversity within these groups.

The proportion of gifted and talented pupils was slightly higher for older year groups than for younger ones.

Initially, provision for pupils identified as gifted or talented largely involved separate and self-standing extension and enrichment activities for relatively small numbers of pupils. In many cases, participation was not limited to those pupils identified as part of the gifted and talented cohort. These included summer schools, masterclasses and breakfast or after-school clubs. However, over the course of the evaluation, the provision in many schools developed and became more varied, for example by offering new GCSE courses and new opportunities for working with pupils from other schools, and there was a move towards grounding provision in regular classroom lessons. Indeed, this focus on mainstream curriculum provision was seen by school coordinators for gifted and talented pupils, as well as by Partnership Coordinators and Partnership-level Strand Coordinators to be of paramount importance to the future embedding of gifted and talented provision into schools, as it provides a way of stretching gifted and talented pupils in their everyday learning. Those interviewed in the Strand study also felt that, as the Strand became more embedded in teaching and learning, it would benefit pupils across the ability range.

7.1.3 Successes and challenges of the Gifted and Talented Strand

The Gifted and Talented Strand provoked mixed reactions among practitioners at the outset. It was generally welcomed by Partnerships and by many headteachers and teachers, as it offered significant additional resources to schools and an opportunity to enhance provision for gifted and talented young people, a group whose needs had not always been addressed in the past. Many teachers also welcomed the opportunity to enhance or create a school ethos of high expectations and of celebrating success. However, there were also widespread concerns about the potentially elitist and divisive nature of the Strand, because, as emphasised by one senior manager, '*pupils who were not identified for some activities felt excluded*'. While many senior school managers saw the Strand as one of the main benefits of EiC, a substantial minority were concerned that it did not fit well with inclusion policies.

These issues, however, became less apparent as the Strand developed, and as schools increased their understanding of what the Strand was trying to achieve. Although Partnership Coordinators as well as school coordinators for gifted and talented pupils highlighted that a major challenge for them at the outset had been to overcome barriers and cultural resistance, in most cases this had been successfully achieved, and the majority of coordinators felt that they

had made good progress in raising the profile of gifted and talented provision. In particular, they noted that there had been an increased awareness across the whole school that teachers must try to extend the learning of the most able pupils in their lessons through differentiated teaching of the mainstream curriculum.

Thus, in general, by 2003 the Gifted and Talented Strand was regarded by practitioners as having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and achievements, and on the school as a whole, although there was a substantial minority of teachers who were still not committed to the Strand. The Partnership aspect of EiC seemed to be more evident in relation to the Gifted and Talented Strand than for some of the other Strands, with a considerable amount of sharing of information and good practice taking place, according to Partnership Coordinators. School coordinators felt that this was benefiting not only pupils, but also the professional development of teachers. Indeed, the sharing and dissemination of expertise and activities within schools, within Partnerships and between Partnerships was seen by school coordinators as a key success of the Strand.

7.1.4 Sustainability of the Gifted and Talented Strand

Generally, teaching staff at all levels wanted to see Gifted and Talented activities continuing. Some elements of provision, such as greater differentiation in classroom teaching, early examination entry, and the use of setting were seen as sustainable whether or not funding of the Strand were to continue. Most coordinators perceived that integration of provision into the mainstream curriculum was the key to the future of the Gifted and Talented Strand. They hoped that Gifted and Talented provision would become fully integrated and embedded within curriculum delivery across all subjects, so that pupils could be continually stretched within their everyday learning. This was summed up by one coordinator, who hoped that:

Gifted and Talented will be part of day-to-day teaching, that a person who is more able in a subject will experience something in every lesson and subject where they are being stretched and challenged.

Coordinators felt that this would be facilitated by their continued liaison with subject departments, INSET, and the integration of gifted and talented provision with other school initiatives.

Other aspects of Gifted and Talented provision, on the other hand, including enrichment activities, which tend to take place outside the normal teaching week, were felt to be more dependent on continued funding.

7.2 Learning Mentor Strand

The aim of the Learning Mentor Strand was to help schools reduce barriers to learning and to give them an additional resource which could be used to support pupils and enable them to succeed. Learning Mentors' primary role was to work with pupils to identify and address underlying issues which may undermine their progress and achievement. These barriers can be complex and varied and include personal problems, such as bereavement, difficulties at home, poor social skills and low self-esteem, as well as behavioural problems and poor attendance or punctuality.

7.2.1 Funding of the Learning Mentor Strand

As with the Gifted and Talented Strand, Partnerships had to agree how to allocate Learning Mentor Strand funding to schools and, as a result, schools received differing amounts of money. As Partnerships had some freedom in allocating funds between the Learning Mentor and LSU Strands, the two Strands were generally considered together in deciding how to provide the most appropriate support to pupils within the resources available. These resources were distributed between schools according to formulae which usually included a combination of overall pupil numbers, known levels of entitlement to Free School Meals, and other criteria such as measures of deprivation and levels of exclusion.

A detailed study of resource allocation in a small number of Phase 1 Partnerships in 1999/2000 showed that the average allocation per pupil in the school was about £48, but with considerable variation, up to a maximum of £100 per pupil. Depending on the ways in which Learning Mentors are deployed in schools, and the numbers of pupils with whom they are working, this may represent considerable expenditure on each of a relatively small number of pupils, or more modest expenditure on larger numbers of young people.

At school level, most of the funding received for the Learning Mentor Strand was spent on salaries or supply cover (around 90 per cent). In a minority of schools, approximately one in ten, resources had been freed to spend elsewhere in the school as a result of EiC Learning Mentor funds. In contrast, around a third of schools were using funds from other sources to supplement the Learning Mentor budget. Among those schools making such contribution, the average additional funding was approximately £12,000 per school, which suggests considerable support for this Strand.

7.2.2 Implementation of the Learning Mentor Strand

Who were the Learning Mentors?

In general, schools had not experienced difficulties in recruiting Learning Mentors and had recruited people whom they regarded to be of good quality.

The Learning Mentors came from a variety of professional backgrounds including education, youth work, counselling and business, which meant that they were able to bring a wide range of knowledge and skills to their Learning Mentor role. However, it was difficult to ensure that Learning Mentors received appropriate induction and professional development which took account of this wide range of backgrounds and experience.

In the main, Partnership Coordinators did not report problems in retaining Learning Mentors. However, there was a recognition that the competition from other new roles such as Connexions Personal Advisers, job insecurity, differences in pay scales between Partnerships and a lack of career development opportunities for Learning Mentors could impact on future retention.

What did the Learning Mentors do?

Learning Mentors were deployed to work with young people in a variety of ways, and, generally, schools encompassed a combination of behavioural, pastoral and educational approaches when formulating their mentoring policy. The role of the Learning Mentors was diverse, with an emphasis on flexibility and an ability to reflect and respond to individual school and pupil needs. However, in most schools, the main elements of the Learning Mentor role usually included activities such as:

- one-to-one meetings with referred pupils
- supporting mentored pupils in the classroom
- workshops on issues such as anger management and self-esteem
- revision classes.

Access to Learning Mentors was made on a formal or informal basis by members of staff, parents and pupils themselves, although most schools designated a senior member of staff to coordinate referrals to the Learning Mentors. Some schools also used a drop-in approach to complement a more formal appointment system for pupils to access support out of lesson time. However, this approach required careful management to ensure that pupils did not misuse the system.

Which pupils were referred to a Learning Mentor?

Schools varied considerably in the ways in which pupils were identified for Learning Mentor support and whether provision was targeted at particular year groups or specific groups of pupils. Nevertheless, there were some clear patterns, and quantitative analysis of pupil background data revealed that pupils referred to a Learning Mentor were more likely than those not referred to:

- be male
- be from a White or Black (rather than Asian) background
- be known to be eligible for Free School Meals
- have identified special educational needs
- have a history of at least one fixed term exclusion from school
- have low levels of achievement
- be less motivated to succeed and less well-behaved.

7.2.3 Successes and challenges of the Learning Mentor Strand

The Learning Mentor Strand has been widely welcomed in schools and, along with the Gifted and Talented Strand, was one of the benefits of EiC most frequently mentioned by teachers, senior school managers and Partnership Coordinators as a strength of EiC. Learning Mentors were perceived as having an impact on many of the young people they worked with, and staff reported improvements in pupils' self-esteem, behaviour and motivation, as well as their relationships with their teachers and peers. More generally, Learning Mentors were said to have affected the wider school through helping to reduce the level of classroom disruption and extending the level of support available to pupils.

Despite these successes, implementing the Learning Mentor Strand was not without its challenges. This was mainly due to an initial lack of understanding of the role, and friction between Learning Mentors and other staff within the school, who found that they were dealing with what was essentially a new type of professional within the school environment. These negative attitudes from teachers were generally related to resentment of the time and funding Learning Mentors received, and the focus and approach which they could adopt with pupils. However, as the role of the Learning Mentor has evolved, both Learning Mentors and teaching staff became more aware and appreciative of their own and each others' roles and requirements. In particular, teachers began to realise the contribution which Learning Mentors could make to individual pupils and to reducing staff workload. Effective communication was seen to be essential in developing shared understanding, and some Learning Mentors noted that there was a continuing need to work with teachers who did not yet understand the role of Learning Mentors.

Pupils also held Learning Mentors in positive regard and, among pupils taking part in the surveys, about two-thirds of those who reported that they had talked to a Learning Mentor said that this had been helpful. The pupils welcomed the Learning Mentors because they perceived them to be different from teachers in the time they had to offer and their availability, their more informal and relaxed approach, and their skills and knowledge.

7.2.4 Sustainability of the Learning Mentor Strand

On the whole, the Strand was well received, and schools and Partnerships were keen to expand on and strengthen the role of the Learning Mentor. There was a growing commitment to the role as a result of its success, and indeed, some schools were so positive about Learning Mentors that they were paying for additional Learning Mentors out of their own budget. However, stakeholders acknowledged that improved management of the Strand and improved communication between Learning Mentors and teachers were central to the future development of this Strand.

7.3 Learning Support Units

Learning Support Units (LSUs) are small, school-based units for pupils at risk of exclusion. The Units provide short-term teaching and support programmes tailored to the needs of the pupils attending them. These Units aim to keep more pupils in school and working whilst their problems are tackled, helping to re-integrate them into mainstream classes as quickly as possible.

7.3.1 Funding of Learning Support Units

At the outset, many Partnerships wanted to establish an LSU in every school, but the funding available was not sufficient. Consequently, Partnerships had to use various strategies for making LSU facilities available to schools and pupils (these are discussed in further detail in Section 7.3.2).

At the average EiC school in Phase 1 areas in 1999/2000, the funding for the LSU Strand amounted to about £30 per pupil, but this was very skewed, with some schools receiving no funding and others receiving much more substantial allocations – up to nearly £400 per pupil where building work was necessary in order to establish a Unit.

The survey of schools revealed that, in 2003, over 80 per cent of the resources for LSUs were being spent on salaries. In the beginning, around 12 per cent of the funding received by schools went on capital expenditure (including ICT hardware), but by 2003 this had reduced to less than five per cent. Very few schools reported that receiving funds for an LSU had enabled them to free up resources to use elsewhere, but over a third of schools with such a Unit were supplementing the funding. Where schools were making such a contribution, the average contribution was almost £22,000. In some Partnerships, the decision had been made to increase the number of Units, with schools sharing the EiC funding for the Strand and contributing the balance from the main school budget so that more Units could be established.

In this context, it is of interest to note that a number of Partnerships and schools had chosen to utilise the option of viring resources between the

Learning Mentor and LSU Strands to redistribute some funding to the LSU, rather than the other way around. This suggests that the introduction of LSUs was proving resource intensive, but that the Units were being seen as a valuable strategy worthy of investment.

7.3.2 Implementation of Learning Support Units

Few schools had a facility that resembled an LSU prior to the introduction of EiC. By 2003, almost 65 per cent of EiC schools surveyed reported that they had an LSU on site. However, over a quarter indicated that they still had no access to such a Unit, although it is worth noting that, in some schools, there was little desire to have an LSU. Partnerships used various strategies for making LSU facilities available to schools and pupils, and four models of LSU provision were identified:

- an LSU in every school
- funds from the LSU Strand being allocated to every school, with some using the money to establish an LSU on site
- LSUs being located in selected schools, with non-LSU schools having access to alternative provision
- shared LSUs.

However, despite these four models, the survey and case-study data both showed that the extent of shared provision between LSUs was very limited in secondary schools, with the majority of Units attended only by pupils from the school in which they are based.⁶⁹

How were the LSUs staffed?

Staffing the Units was a concern in many EiC areas. A third of the schools with a Unit on site reported difficulties in recruitment, with schools in London and the West Midlands being the most likely to report that recruitment was an issue. This variation may be partly attributable to the considerable diversity in terms of status and pay scales for staff, particularly support staff, between Partnerships and, in some cases, between schools within a Partnership. In some Partnerships, Coordinators reported that neighbouring areas were able to offer better salaries and that this was contributing to the difficulties of recruiting and retaining Unit staff. Furthermore, working in the Units was said to be very demanding on individuals: staff were often working with very challenging pupils and were sometimes said to be ‘*on duty*’ for the whole day without a break. Unit managers, school senior managers and Partnership LSU Strand Coordinators all noted the lack of a clear job specification and of any specialised training and/or certification for LSU managers, which was described as the ‘*poor relation*’ and the ‘*Cinderella*’ Strand, unlike the

⁶⁹ In contrast, LSUs established as part of the Primary Pilot were generally used as a resource shared between schools

Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented Strands which both had well-developed training programmes. This not only added to staffing pressures, but was seen, by some of those interviewed, as continuing the marginalisation of disaffected pupils.

The surveys showed that most Units had recruited at least one or two members of staff (full-time equivalent), including an LSU manager, as well as support workers. Most of the LSU managers in the case-study schools had been recruited internally from the schools, and tended to have teaching backgrounds. In addition to their role as LSU manager, some also had other responsibilities in school within this area, such as head of learning support, which was thought to be beneficial as it gave them an overview of support provision in the school.

LSU staff interviewed in the case studies reported that they spent most of their day, including breaktimes and lunchtimes, in the LSU itself. Whilst acknowledging the necessity for this, LSU staff commented that it meant they had no free time, which made the already demanding work more tiring. However, this meant that there were at least two members of staff present in the LSU at all times, which allowed for better teacher/pupil ratios and, in many instances, one-to-one tuition. Some LSU staff also provided support to pupils in mainstream classes, which was believed to enhance relationships and integration. However, this placed even more demands on their time.

How did pupils access the LSU?

The numbers of pupils attending the LSUs at any one time were relatively small (usually varying between two and 12 pupils). The pattern of pupil attendance at an LSU was very variable, and most schools reported that there was a combination of full-time and part-time attendance, to meet the needs of particular pupils. The majority of pupils attended during the lessons for subjects in which they were having particular difficulties and were then gradually '*fed back in*' to these lessons, to maintain the link with mainstream schooling.

In the majority of case-study schools, referral of pupils to the LSU was through the pastoral system of the school, and pupils were referred to LSUs for three main reasons: non-attendance, behaviour, and learning support. Once a referral had been made, provision was planned according to individuals' learning, social and emotional needs. Both LSU and school staff emphasised the need for the curriculum followed by the LSUs to be closely linked to that of the mainstream school, so that pupils did not fall behind and there was some continuity on their return to mainstream. However, a rigid adherence to the same timetable was not always possible, and it was felt that a more flexible or informal approach to lessons was sometimes needed, especially with more vulnerable pupils.

7.3.3 Successes and challenges of LSUs

Although it took some time for the Learning Support Unit Strand to become established, most stakeholders felt that it was making good progress. Despite being resource intensive, most interviewees considered LSU provision to be valuable both at Partnership and school level. The Strand was seen as bringing about a change in school culture, and the majority of teachers in schools with an LSU felt that the Units were:

- benefiting the pupils attending them and reducing classroom disruption
- providing for pupils who were disaffected or who had behavioural problems
- encouraging teacher recruitment and retention.

However, LSU staff noted that there were some pupils who could thrive in the Unit but who could not, realistically, return to normal classes. It was also evident from the case histories gathered as part of the Strand study that LSUs alone could not guarantee success, and that they must be seen as part of a wider network of support and behaviour management within the school.

LSU Strand coordinators in the case-study Partnerships felt that it was very important that the ethos of the LSU was shared by the school. Equally, the success of the LSU was believed to depend very much on the support given, and the status accorded to it, by senior management. It was thought that LSUs should be viewed as an integral part of the other support structures in place within the school (such as Special Educational Needs departments and Learning Mentors). Where LSU staff worked in mainstream classes, teaching or supporting pupils, this was seen by them as particularly effective in enhancing relationships with teachers and integrating the LSU within the school, as well as creating opportunities to spread good practice throughout the school. However, there was a feeling, especially amongst LSU support staff interviewed in case-study schools, that this should be a two-way process and that greater linkage and communication between LSU and mainstream staff, and more encouragement to visit the LSU, would be beneficial.

Despite the perceived benefits of the LSU Strand, there were some concerns in relation to its implementation, particularly with regard to staffing. As highlighted above, the recruitment of appropriate staff was a challenge in many EiC areas, and Partnership Coordinators emphasised the need for greater parity of status and pay scales for LSU staff, particularly support staff, between schools in order to improve recruitment and retention. In addition, despite the very evident skills of the LSU staff, working with vulnerable young people with challenging and complex difficulties had highlighted additional training needs. Although there were opportunities at a local level, there was no national training programme for the LSU Strand (unlike the Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented Strands, which both had well-

developed programmes), and LSU staff emphasised the need for such a programme to be developed. There has been some attempt to address this, with the DfES producing new guidelines for establishing and managing LSUs and introducing National Occupational Standards for Learning, Development and Support Services in schools.

7.3.4 Sustainability of LSUs

Sustainability of LSU provision beyond EiC funding was raised as a concern by both Strand coordinators and LSU managers. Both coordinators and managers felt that, whilst continued funding would be problematic, the Units were becoming embedded in the support systems within schools and were, therefore, too valuable a resource for schools to do without. This was summed up by one deputy headteacher who stated: *'We will have to make it sustainable, to be honest....we couldn't just cut it off, throw it away and carry on...I would hate to envisage us trying to do without it'*. Thus, there was no suggestion of discontinuing provision, rather the intention was to extend and enhance it, with future funding found from within school budgets, or from alternative sources, such as through Behaviour Improvement Programmes.

However, many Partnership Coordinators felt that, while the flexibility to develop Learning Support Units in ways which responded to the context of individual schools was welcome, the impact of the Units would be limited until there was a more coherent strategy for them. Such coherence, both nationally and within Partnerships, was felt to be necessary if the Strand was to be sustainable.

7.4 Specialist Schools

The Specialist Schools Programme was launched (as the Technology Colleges Programme) in 1993, and therefore pre-dates the introduction of EiC. The programme was initially designed to encourage maintained secondary schools to specialise in technology (along with science and mathematics). It was extended in 1994 to include modern foreign languages and in 1996 to cover sports and arts. There were, therefore, four types of Specialist School at the time when EiC was launched.⁷⁰

The programme helps schools, in partnership with private sector sponsors and supported by additional Government funding, to establish distinctive identities through their chosen specialisms. Specialist Schools have a special focus on their chosen subject area(s) but must meet the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements and deliver a broad and balanced education to all pupils. The programme promotes school improvement by providing

⁷⁰ The Specialist programme has now been extended to a further six specialist areas: business and enterprise, engineering, humanities, mathematics and computing, music and science.

opportunities for schools to develop their own particular strengths and character, enabling them to deliver effective teaching and learning in their areas of expertise as well as across the curriculum. Specialist Schools are also required to share their expertise and resources with partner schools and the wider local community.

7.4.1 Funding of Specialist Schools

Schools wishing to gain Specialist status are required to submit development plans setting clear objectives and measurable targets for extending their teaching and raising the standards in the specialist areas. They are also required to raise £50,000 of sponsorship towards the cost of a capital project to improve their facilities for the specialist area(s). Schools that are successful in the bidding process and are designated Specialist Schools receive £100,000 from the DfES for a capital project to improve facilities in the subjects related to the school's specialism and revenue funding of approximately £126 per pupil per year for four years, to implement their Specialist School development plans (DfES, 2004).

7.4.2 Implementation of the Specialist School Strand

With the launch of EiC, each Partnership was given the chance to make priority bids for new Specialist Schools. Initially, there was a limit, set by DfES, on the number of Specialist Schools within an LEA, and in some Partnership areas the phasing of new, EiC-linked, Specialist Schools was not consistent with pre-existing LEA policy. In a few cases, individual schools decided to seek Specialist status even though this did not accord with agreed Partnership plans.

Reasons given by the case-study schools taking part in the Strand study for seeking Specialist status included, unsurprisingly, the financial advantages offered by the programme, including the opportunities associated with the additional funding. Some interviewees also saw Specialist status as a catalyst which would improve performance, foster inclusion and provide credibility for schools in difficult circumstances. In contrast, in other schools, Specialist status served more to reinforce and consolidate existing good practice. In most cases, the specialist area was one in which the school had pre-existing strengths. In five of the six case-study schools that had achieved Specialist status under the auspices of EiC, preparation of the bid pre-dated EiC, thus suggesting that, while the policy may have ensured that more schools in urban areas were granted Specialist status, it had not induced inner-city schools to apply.

What did EiC Specialist School activities involve?

There was great variation in how EiC schools were operationalising their Specialist status. Some focused their efforts on 'whole school' development, while others were more departmentally based. Some used the additional

resources to improve the quality of what they already believed were effective practices, while others were pursuing untried routes, the efficacy of which would take time for them to assess. All the case-study schools had introduced new courses as a result of specialisation and, in many schools, this included new courses at Key Stage 4.

Additional out-of-hours classes were offered by most of the schools, with various specialist subjects being offered during lunchtime and after school; these were most often targeted at higher-attaining pupils. New extra-curricular activities were, however, often used as a means of attempting to engage potentially disaffected pupils.

Capital projects had, predictably, greatly enhanced the quality and quantity of physical resources available at the case-study schools, and schools had been able to invest in 'state of the art' equipment in their chosen area of specialism. Furthermore, irrespective of the area of their specialism, all the case-study schools appeared to have enhanced their ICT facilities. Innovations in the use of teachers' time, as well as additional staff, were also reported as a result of obtaining Specialist status. Programmes of lesson observation and teaching in linked primary schools were all felt to have been beneficial for staff development and motivation.

As well as striving to raise standards within the school, the Specialist Schools Programme also requires schools to be outward looking and to support other schools and community groups. Specialist Schools are expected to allocate a third of their additional funding to these activities. However, establishing links with the wider community was seen as particularly challenging. The most widespread form of network activity comprised links with (particularly feeder) primary schools. Links with secondary schools, on the other hand, had encountered some barriers and must be understood in the context of competitive pressures between schools. Secondary schools were very wary of being perceived, even implicitly, as the 'junior partner' in a relationship, an observation that has also been made in other research on partnership working and Specialist Schools (Bell and West, 2003).

7.4.3 Success and challenges of Specialist Schools

It was clear that stakeholders believed that at least some elements of the Specialist Schools Programme were effective in terms of raising standards within schools. Not only had the programme enabled schools to extend their curriculum, through new courses and out-of-hours activities, it had also enhanced the quality and quantity of physical resources available and had led to innovations in teaching and learning.

However, although the Specialist School Strand was considered to be making progress, it was generally perceived as one of the least successful aspects of EiC, and many interviewees were unclear how the policy linked with EiC.

Many Partnership Coordinators and schools would have welcomed guidance and clarification from DfES on how the role of Specialist Schools ‘added value’ to the EiC programme. Furthermore, the Specialist School initiative was seen by Partnership Coordinators to have had an adverse effect on the positive collaboration fostered elsewhere in EiC. They expressed concern that schools seeking Specialist status became isolated from the Partnership and tended to work to their own agenda, and that competition for business funding could sometimes be in conflict with better collaboration between schools.

It was generally considered that development work was necessary, especially within LEAs, to plan and broker inter-school links and provision, and to help schools understand the Specialist role within EiC. Specialist Schools were recognised as an important resource, but one that was presently under-used due to a lack of integration with LEA strategy. However, it may be that this position will change as the number of Specialist Schools increases.

7.4.4 Sustainability of Specialist Schools

There were significant changes to the Specialist Schools policy during the period of the evaluation, with considerable increases in the number of Specialist Schools, as well as the introduction of new specialisms. Nevertheless, the anticipated interaction between the Specialist Schools policy and EiC does not seem to have come about. It is clear that, if this Strand was to continue to develop and to realise its potential, more needed to be done to help schools understand the role of the Specialist Schools programme within EiC. More specifically, Partnership Coordinators felt that in order to improve the integration of Specialist Schools within EiC there was a need to:

- develop better links between Specialist and other schools within the Partnership
- promote greater integration between Specialist Schools
- reconcile the cooperative approach of EiC with the competitive nature of bidding for Specialist status
- ensure that Specialist Schools satisfied their own remit while using their specialism for the good of the Partnership.

7.5 Beacon Schools

The Beacon Schools programme was established in 1998, prior to the introduction of EiC. The programme is now being phased out and being replaced with the Leading Edge/Leading Partnership programmes. The Beacon Schools programme identified high performing schools across England which represented examples of successful practice, with a view to sharing and spreading that effective practice to other schools to raise standards in pupil attainment. Beacon Schools offered advice to, and shared practice

with, other schools on a wide range of areas including specific curriculum subjects, pupil monitoring, school management, improving parental involvement, special educational needs and anti-bullying strategies. Beacon Schools worked with their partner schools through a variety of activities including seminars to teachers, mentoring, work-shadowing, provision of in-service training and consultancy.

Several of the aims of the Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme; for example, those to do with transferring good practice and the networking of schools, overlap with the goals of the Beacon initiative. When the EiC policy initiative was announced in March 1999, the importance of promoting educational partnerships and the dissemination of good practice was once again emphasised. The Beacon initiative was embraced within the EiC policy, since these schools were already attempting to disseminate good practice through partnerships in a national context.

7.5.1 Funding of Beacon Schools

Each Beacon School (these can be nursery, primary, secondary or special schools) received around £38,000 of extra funding a year, usually for a minimum of three years, in exchange for a programme of activities enabling the school to collaborate with others to disseminate good practice and raise standards in schools. Schools reported that most of this financial resource had been spent on providing supply cover within the Beacon School and its partner schools to enable visits to take place and on the payment of salaries, as well on providing equipment and paying for administrative support.

7.5.2 Implementation of the Beacon School Strand

How was the Beacon School Strand managed?

All of the case-study schools managed their Beacon activities by appointing an existing member of staff as a 'Beacon coordinator' or manager, who was often a senior manager. In addition to time for teaching staff, some schools had also built in time for administrative staff to support their Beacon work. However, it was clear from the research that Beacon activities had not usually involved all teaching staff. The two main reasons for this were reported to be that teachers were reluctant to commit themselves to additional work on top of already heavy workloads, and that some teachers lacked confidence in terms of partnership working and needed support to develop the skills necessary to share their expertise with staff from other schools.

What did Beacon School activities involve?

Beacon activity in the case-study schools was varied, and encompassed academic and pastoral provision, organisational issues and teachers' professional development. The activities included specific subject areas in the curriculum, aspects of extra-curricular provision, aspects of school management, the use of ICT, and provision for particular groups of pupils

(such as gifted and talented, and disaffected pupils). In terms of activities undertaken, these schools were broadly representative of Beacon Schools nationally,⁷¹ though work with gifted and talented pupils and activities related to inclusion received a stronger emphasis in the EiC Beacon Schools than in non-EiC Beacon Schools.

By far the most common partnerships established by the Beacon Schools were with schools in their own EiC partnership areas or in neighbouring LEAs. The schools reported links with other secondary schools and with primary schools, with feeder primary schools featuring prominently. As well as benefiting the particular partner primary school, this was also seen as beneficial to the Beacon School, which would eventually admit some of these pupils.

7.5.3 Successes and challenges of Beacon Schools

Many of the issues and perceptions relating to Specialist Schools were also relevant to the Beacon School Strand, including concerns that the Beacon Strand had an adverse effect on the positive collaboration fostered elsewhere in EiC. In some Partnerships, collaborative working and the sharing of practice had been successfully developed, but, generally, the Beacon School Strand was not seen to be as effective as some other Strands in bringing about change in EiC areas.

Teachers were generally positive about Beacon Schools: in each of the three rounds of surveys, about 60 per cent of teachers felt that it was important that all schools should have access to the expertise of Beacon Schools in order to raise achievement. However, on the whole, they did not see a specific link between the Beacon policy and EiC, and school staff would have liked more information to help them understand the role of Beacon Schools within EiC.

The surveys of teachers revealed that teachers in EiC Beacon Schools had more positive views of their schools and of their work than those in non-Beacon schools. For example, Beacon teachers were more positive than their non-Beacon colleagues about the quality of their school facilities, and they had stronger affiliations to their school. There are, of course, many factors that can influence teacher opinions and perspectives, but this suggests that the experience of working in an EiC school that has Beacon status may at least contribute to positive teacher viewpoints.

One of the key findings from an evaluation of Beacon Schools nationally (Rudd *et al.*, 2001) was that they had a tendency to work with schools with similar profiles, circumstances and environments, and within the same phase. This was also the case with EiC Beacon Schools as they were working largely within their own local areas. There was, however, more evidence of Beacon Schools in urban areas working across phases and particularly with colleagues

⁷¹ See Rudd *et al.* (2001).

in local, often feeder, primary schools. This way of working can be seen as advantageous to the EiC initiative overall, in that an important local resource – the expertise of Beacon Schools within the LEA – was being largely used for the benefit of other neighbouring schools. However, some EiC Beacon Schools felt that they were ‘*under-used*’ within their own LEA.

7.5.4 Sustainability of Beacon Schools

Overall, it could be considered that the Beacon Schools in EiC areas were making a contribution to EiC policy, but there was a feeling that even more could be achieved if their work and expertise were utilised more fully. Whilst the Beacon School programme is currently being phased out, it is clear that some valuable partnerships have developed between schools as a result of the programme. It would clearly be to the benefit of all schools if EiC Partnerships could assist in capitalising further on this willingness of schools to collaborate.

7.6 City Learning Centres

City Learning Centres (CLCs), of which over 100 have been established since 2000, are designed to enhance the whole curriculum using high quality ICT facilities. Their aims are to raise educational standards and skill levels and thus promote employability and social inclusion. Each Partnership has a small number of CLCs, designed to be resources shared not only by schools but also by the community more generally. The aim was that each CLC should provide state-of-the-art ICT-based learning opportunities for the pupils at the host school, for pupils at a network of surrounding schools, and for the wider community.

7.6.1 Funding of the CLC Strand

Partnerships received about £150,000 as initial capital expenditure for each of their CLCs, although they had some flexibility in how this funding was allocated to CLCs. Centres also receive over £200,000 per year for their running costs.

Generally, CLC managers were satisfied with the funding they had received to set up the Centres. Only a minority of the CLC managers surveyed had needed to obtain other funds to assist with the capital costs of the CLC. However, over half reported that additional funds had been secured to assist with running costs for 2001/2002. The majority of recurrent expenditure was on staffing, but hardware, software, utilities and transport costs were also important elements.

There was considerable satisfaction amongst Centre managers with the facilities that had been created. However, there were fears that overspending on the capital budget had left reduced funding for running and maintaining the

Centres, and more than two-thirds of the CLC managers felt that the revenue budget provided by DfES was inadequate. There was also concern as to whether future funding was going to be adequate to ensure that CLCs could always offer state-of-the-art resources in a period of rapid change and development in ICT.

7.6.2 Implementation of the CLC Strand

The Strand had a relatively slow start because it was necessary to identify suitable sites for the Centres (not always easy in inner city areas), convert existing premises or build a Centre, and to equip and set up the new Centres. However, by autumn 2002, most Partnerships reported that the infrastructure was in place and that Centres were becoming operational.

Who had access to the CLCs?

The CLCs worked in partnership with a number of schools – in February 2002, the case-study CLCs reported working with an average of 11 secondary and 28 primary schools. A ‘hub and spoke’ model was the most common mode of operation for the Centres, whereby ‘spoke’ schools had remote access to the facilities at the central ‘hub’, or host school. However, although the Centres were set up to be a shared resource, in many cases the host school was the main user.

The CLCs were accessible not only to pupils but also to teachers and other school staff for training and professional development. A minority also reported that they were used by businesses, youth service staff, unemployed people and other groups in the wider community. All the CLCs offered users access to the internet, word processing and spreadsheets, as well as a wide range of other applications such as email and databases, and specialist equipment including interactive whiteboards, digital video recorders and music software.

CLCs operated for considerably longer than the normal school day, with an average of over 50 hours per week (Monday to Friday) in term time plus, in most cases, some time at weekends and in half-term breaks. CLCs operated a variety of systems for users to gain access to the Centre, including both advance booking and drop-in access. Some CLCs had also made attempts to widen access by providing supported self-study and out-of-school-hours-learning.

How were the Centres staffed?

Each Centre had a manager, supported by technical, administrative and teaching staff. However, the majority of CLC managers felt that staffing levels were inadequate, particularly to support the extended opening hours that they wished to operate. They also complained about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified staff, largely on account of unattractive salary levels, hours and conditions. Some Centre managers found that they developed

the ICT skills of their teaching staff, who then moved on to advisory roles elsewhere. While this represents a welcome enhancement of ICT expertise within the teaching profession, it created additional pressure on CLCs, which were continually having to train and develop new staff.

7.6.3 Successes and challenges of the CLC Strand

Despite the initial difficulties in establishing the CLCs, there was considerable evidence that stakeholders felt that pupils were benefiting from the Centres. Almost all the teachers responding to the surveys thought that it was important that all schools should have access to specialist ICT facilities, such as those provided by a CLC. Furthermore, teachers' views on whether their pupils had benefited from accessing a CLC became more positive over the course of the evaluation (from 14 per cent in 2001 to 39 per cent in 2003). However, it is worth noting that this is still a minority of teachers.

Benefits to pupils were also recognised by the Centre staff interviewed. In over half the Centres visited, staff felt that pupil behaviour and examination results (including end of Key Stage tests, and GCSE and GNVQ examination results) had improved amongst pupils who had used the Centre. Staff also welcomed the increased cooperation between schools that had occurred as a result of the Centres, particularly through providing resources for the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor and Specialist and Beacon School Strands of EiC, and also the improving collaboration with the wider community.

Despite these strengths of the Strand, CLC managers had ongoing concerns about the implementation and sustainability of the Centres. There was criticism from Partnership Coordinators that there was not equal access to the resource throughout Partnerships, and the evidence suggested that host schools prioritised their own pupils. The issue of transport to bring in pupils not based at the host school was also an issue of concern for the majority of CLC staff interviewed. Some EiC Partnerships had tried to find solutions to this problem, including purchasing a minibus to facilitate access to the Centre, which reflects the importance placed on ensuring access to all groups which needed it. However, there were concerns from Centre managers and Partnership Coordinators as to the sustainability of strategies such as this, and how they should be financed.

7.6.4 Sustainability of CLCs

A key issue for the sustainability of the Strand will be to ensure that all pupils have access to a CLC and that the Centres have sufficient resources both to maintain and enhance existing provision. In particular, it is not known whether future funding will be adequate to ensure that CLCs can always offer state-of-the-art resources in a period of rapid change and development in ICT. CLC managers also felt that it is important for CLCs to integrate with the other

Strands of EiC, in order to embed the position of the Centres within the LEA and thus strengthen their future viability.

7.7 EiC Action Zones

Statutory Education Action Zones (EAZs) existed prior to the implementation of EiC. EiC adopted a revised model of the original Education Action Zones (initially referred to as large EAZs)⁷² by creating a less formal partnership between schools, typically one or two secondary schools with a number of their associated primary schools. These were initially known as mini-EAZs, then as small EAZs and finally as EiC Action Zones. The Zones enable local partnerships, which can include private sector organisations, to target action on areas of need and develop innovative solutions for raising educational standards in local schools.

7.7.1 Funding of EiC Action Zones

Each EiC Action Zone received £250,000 core funding from the DfES each year, for three years. Zones were also encouraged to work closely with local businesses to acquire further funding, and any sponsorship achieved was matched by the DfES, up to an additional £50,000. In reality, however, stakeholders reported that obtaining matched funding was difficult and time consuming.

In some Zones, funds were allocated equally to all schools, or at least to all primary schools, while in others it was allocated by a formula based on school factors such as level of entitlement to Free School Meals, or according to request. In others, there was a deliberate move not to allocate money to individual schools, in order to promote a sense of partnership. In these cases, money was held by the Zone to fund a range of activities for the schools, and schools had to request a refund for the costs incurred and justify the activity in terms of the EiC Action Zone's priorities. Some headteachers expressed frustration with this system, as they felt it was difficult to work with dispersed budgets, but most also saw the advantages of the rigour of having to justify expenditure.

7.7.2 Implementation of EiC Action Zones

Each case-study Partnership established at least one EiC Action Zone, and as of December 2004, there were 117 EiC Action Zones in total. They were each composed of one (or occasionally two) secondary school(s) and their feeder primary schools.

⁷² Each statutory EAZ was created for a fixed period of time. As these arrangements come to an end, each EAZ is transforming into an EiC Action Zone, for those located within an EiC Partnership, or an Excellence Cluster elsewhere.

The case studies of EiC Action Zones showed that the pre-existence of partnerships between schools was a significant factor in the development of many of the Zones, and more than half of the case-study Action Zones indicated that it was pre-existing links between schools in the area that provided the impetus for application to become a Zone. It is notable that none of the headteachers and Zone Directors interviewed referred to supporting the wider work of EiC Partnership when asked why the Zone had been established, or why a particular school was included. Rather, schools became involved in order to support the specific needs of local schools in local contexts, and to develop current partnership practice.

EiC Action Zones took time to develop. Partnership Coordinators noted that detailed planning was needed to ensure that collaborative working was effective, and that time was needed both for schools within an EiC Action Zone to build relationships and for initiatives involving changes in teaching and learning to become embedded in classroom practice. Partnership Coordinators emphasised the importance of the Zone Director, who had overall day-to-day responsibility for the Zone, but who also had to provide strategic leadership in order to bring about change.

All EiC Action Zones had two or three priorities for action, focusing on a variety of linked areas such as raising standards in literacy and numeracy, transition from the primary to the secondary phase, improving the quality of teaching and learning, and increasing social inclusion. The EiC Action Zones provided opportunities to be involved in activities that schools would not otherwise have been able to resource, such as curriculum groups involving subject coordinators from all the Zone schools, and the employment of ICT specialists to provide technical support to all the Zone schools. Such activities often resulted in outcomes that could not be easily quantified but which were seen to have a substantial impact on pupils, parents and schools.

7.7.3 Successes and challenges of EiC Action Zones

In many cases, Coordinators reported favourably on the impact of the Zones, and felt that they were improving and strengthening collaboration, both between the Zone primary schools and between the secondary school and the primary schools, and making progress in raising attainment and improving pupils' attitudes. Indeed, in a notable minority of partnerships, stakeholders considered EiC Action Zones to be one of the most successful Strands of EiC. The small scale of the EiC Action Zones, in comparison to the large EiC Partnership, was seen to be one of the strengths of the Strand, as this was felt to facilitate local partnership working.

However, in several EiC Action Zones visited, primary headteachers did not have a clear view of the Zone's priorities and targets. In most cases, the primary schools in EiC Action Zones had no link with EiC except through the Zone. They were often not really aware of, and did not feel part of, the EiC

Partnership, and did not fully understand how Zone activity linked to that of the wider Partnership. Awareness of EiC was generally better within secondary schools but, even here, where the EiC Partnership had limited involvement in the establishment of the EiC Action Zone, there was a feeling that EiC was only tangentially linked to the Action Zone.

Other difficulties in implementing the EiC Action Zones included ensuring school and staff commitment to the EiC Action Zone, particularly in the context of multiple initiatives, and that schools felt ownership of the EiC Action Zone. However, even though there were ongoing issues and challenges, it was evident that Zone Directors and schools were aware of these and were aiming to find solutions to ensure continuing development of the Zones.

7.7.4 Sustainability of EiC Action Zones

There was some confusion expressed over what would happen to the EiC Action Zones in the future, particularly from school staff who felt they knew little about EiC. However, the majority of school staff and Partnership Coordinators hoped that EiC Action Zones would continue, though many noted a need for a period of consolidation of good practice.

There was a general view among Zone Directors that, without continued funding, most of the EiC Action Zones would not be sustainable in the manner that they had operated so far. However, schools appeared more confident that the most successful aspects of Zone involvement – the partnerships between schools, leading to, amongst other things, sharing of good practice – would be sustainable.

7.8 Links and interactions between the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor and LSU Strands

Each of these Strands provides support to individual pupils within a school, and it is important that these Strands operate in a well-articulated and consistent fashion in providing this support. Among the pupils taking part in the surveys, very few were identified as being involved in more than one of these Strands, but the Strand Studies and interviews with Partnership Coordinators provide some insights into the ways in which schools and Partnerships were using the Strands more strategically to provide a coherent system of support.

Most notably, there was a link between the Learning Mentor Strand and the Learning Support Unit Strand with resources being shared between the two Strands in some Partnerships. In some cases, Learning Mentors and LSU staff were part of the same team, operating under the same line manager. They therefore attended the same meetings, shared information and discussed

referrals and concerns. In some schools, Learning Mentors were working closely with the LSUs, either spending some time working in the LSU or in helping to ensure a smooth transition back to normal classes for pupils who had been attending the Unit. For some pupils, this might mean attending an LSU for part of the day and having the support of a Learning Mentor at other times. There was increasing recognition both of the importance of this continuing support and of the ways in which Learning Mentors could provide it. LSU staff sometimes worked in classrooms with pupils who had been referred to the Unit, which was seen as helping to maintain continuity and to enhance mutual understanding between teachers, Learning Mentors and LSU staff.

The other main links with regard to the Gifted and Talented and Learning Mentor Strands were in relation to providing Learning Mentor support for pupils who had been identified as gifted and talented but who were seen to be under-achieving.

However, stakeholders commonly recognised that the level of collaboration between the Strands was under-developed and needed to be addressed in the future if each of the Strands was to be seen as part of a wider network of support within schools. Indeed, there was some suggestion that the EiC Action Zones could be key in linking the other Strands of EiC, as these Zones support all activity under the remit of EiC.

7.9 Summary

Although some of the EiC Strands seemed to have been more successful than others, all the Strands were seen as important developments that were having positive impacts on schools and pupils. In some Partnerships, there were ongoing issues with the implementation of the Strands, although generally, stakeholders would like to see the Strands continuing and being made part of mainstream provision. However, there were some concerns about the potentially divisive nature of the EiC policy. Schools were worried that EiC focuses on gifted and talented and disaffected pupils, leaving other pupils feeling excluded and demotivated about learning. Although it seemed that the EiC Strands were having wide-ranging benefits through the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor and LSU Strands, there was also a need to offer academic and pastoral programmes for all pupils. In an attempt to address this, many schools and Partnerships had extended the provision for each of the Strands, for example, by widening the provision for all able pupils, not only those in the gifted and talented cohort, by employing additional Learning Mentors and by opening new LSUs, to ensure that as many pupils as possible benefited.

8. Summary and conclusions

This chapter starts with a brief summary of the key findings from the evaluation, discusses these findings in the context of the aims of objectives of EiC as it has evolved, and considers some of the implications in order to inform future policy developments.

Pupils' attainment

The most positive finding related to pupils' levels of attainment in Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3, where EiC has led to an overall increase in levels of attainment. Overall, pupils attending EiC schools had higher levels of attainment in Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 3 than otherwise similar pupils attending schools that were not part of EiC, after taking into account a range of school and pupil factors including attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. This was equivalent to increasing the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above by between 1.1 and 1.9 percentage points. The higher estimate relates to Phase 1 schools, many of which were also involved in the PLC Pilot Scheme.

There was no evidence to show that EiC had an impact on levels of attainment in English or Science at the end of Key Stage 3, or on any of the outcome measures considered at key Stage 4.

Gender differences

In both EiC and non-EiC schools, girls had higher levels of attainment than boys in English. At the end of Key Stage 3, this differential between boys' and girls' progress was slightly less in EiC Phase 1 and Phase 2 schools than in non-EiC schools for pupils with moderate levels of prior attainment. For Science, while girls generally had lower levels of attainment than boys, the differential was slightly less in EiC schools (especially those in Phase 1 and Phase 3 areas) than in non-EiC schools.

At the end of Key Stage 4, there was no evidence suggesting that the impact of EiC differed between boys and girls.

Ethnicity differences⁷³

At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils from Chinese backgrounds attending EiC schools had higher levels of attainment than otherwise similar pupils in non-EiC schools. For other minority ethnic groups, the picture was more mixed, with the impact (if any) of EiC depending on the gender of the pupil and the outcome measure used.

At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils from all the minority ethnic backgrounds considered (except for girls from Black Other backgrounds) and attending EiC Phase 1 schools had higher capped and uncapped point scores than pupils

⁷³ The detailed analysis of pupils from minority ethnic groups was carried out for non-EiC and Phase 1 areas only.

from similar ethnic backgrounds and with similar characteristics, including attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, in non-EiC schools. Black Other pupils in Phase 1 schools had a greater probability of achieving at least five good GCSEs than similar non-EiC pupils, while Pakistani pupils in Phase 1 areas had a slightly lower probability of achieving this benchmark than those in non-EiC areas.

Impact of the Strands of EiC

At the end of Key Stage 3, the quantitative data showed that pupils designated as gifted and talented had higher levels of attainment than otherwise similar pupils not designated, and that pupils referred to a Learning Mentor had lower levels of attainment than otherwise similar pupils, with some evidence to suggest that early mentoring (in Year 7) had enabled some pupils to overcome barriers to learning.

The quantitative data did not find any association between attending an LSU or a CLC and attainment at Key Stage 3, once pupil and school factors had been taken into account. There was no consistent pattern suggesting that the impact of Beacon and Specialist Schools in EiC areas differed between EiC and non-EiC areas, or that EiC Action Zones had an overall impact on performance

At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils identified as gifted and talented generally had higher levels of attainment than otherwise similar pupils not so designated. The impact of being designated as gifted and talented was not uniform, and was associated with level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, attitudes to education, behaviour and ethnicity.

In relation to the Learning Mentor Strand, there were positive associations between mentoring and achievement for some groups of pupils and some outcome measures at the end of Key Stage 4.

As at Key Stage 3, there was no quantitative evidence that EiC had had an impact on pupils referred to an LSU, or attending a CLC, that EiC added value to existing Specialist and Beacon School programmes, or that EiC Action Zones had an impact on attainment.

A 'partnership dividend'

EiC was associated with a 'partnership dividend', in that pupil attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 was greater in those LEA areas where there was evidence that schools were demonstrating a high level of engagement with the EiC Partnership.

Cost effectiveness

The per-pupil costs of the EiC policy were modest in relation to overall school expenditure. A simple cost-benefit analysis suggested that EiC was potentially cost-effective (in terms of the long-term wage return to individuals) at Key Stage 3, under the following assumptions:

- an improvement of one level can be interpreted as equivalent to two years of education
- the wage return to an additional year of schooling is eight per cent

- future wages will have a similar age profile (with a real terms increase of two per cent per year) to current patterns of earnings.

It was not possible to carry out an analysis of cost effectiveness at the end of Key Stage 4.

Pupils' attendance and attitudes

Attendance

Using the overall percentage of half-days missed, calculated for a complete academic year on a whole-school basis (the only measure available nationally), there was an overall improvement in attendance between 1998/1999 (before EiC was introduced) and 2002/2003, with a greater improvement in EiC areas, by about one day per pupil per year.

Young people's attitudes and behaviour

Among Year 11 pupils in EiC schools, those designated as gifted and talented had more positive attitudes to learning and education, and better (self-reported) behaviour than otherwise similar pupils in terms of their general behaviour at school and completing homework. They also had lower levels of authorised absence (but higher levels of unauthorised absence) than similar pupils not so designated. However, the analysis could not eliminate the possibility that pupils were more likely to be designated as gifted and talented if they already demonstrated these positive attitudes, rather than these attitudes being developed as a result of being in the gifted and talented group. The longitudinal study, which tracked one group of both EiC and non-EiC pupils from Year 9 to Year 11 showed no evidence to suggest that involvement in EiC, either overall or for specific Strands, changed pupils' attitudes.

Comparing three successive Year 11 cohorts, pupils who had been mentored had, on average, a less positive attitude to education and were less likely than their peers to demonstrate good behaviour in terms of self-reported punctuality, attendance, completion of homework and coursework, and attentiveness in class.

The evidence did not suggest that pupils' attitudes at the end of Key Stage 3 were affected by their involvement in the Strands of EiC.

Teaching and learning

Teachers were generally positive about the forms of pupil support offered by EiC. A sizeable minority of teachers reported that, if they were to apply for a new post, EiC in general and the Gifted and Talented and LSU Strands in particular would positively influence their decision to apply to a school.

Teachers cited a number of benefits of EiC, including:

- being able to practice a wider range of teaching activities
- more opportunities to try new teaching and learning methods
- more opportunities for exchanging ideas with colleagues
- additional and/or more appropriate resources.

Schools reported increased use of setting and banding, and less mixed ability teaching, at key Stage 3.

Additional study opportunities

Over the course of the evaluation, there was a noticeable increase in the proportions of schools offering additional study opportunities such as homework clubs, summer schools, and literacy and numeracy activities. While some of this growth may be related to the PLC pilot (in some Phase 1 schools) or to more general school developments, significant proportions of schools attributed these developments to EiC.

Public perceptions of schools

The proportion of pupils who felt that their parents and other adults viewed their school as a good one declined slightly over the period of the evaluation, but this may reflect higher expectations rather than any real decline.

Schools in EiC areas were at least maintaining and probably increasing their links with employers and training providers. Employers and training providers reported that some aspects of local schools, particularly behaviour and leadership, were improving.

Training providers were more aware of EiC, and more positive about it, than were employers, but there appeared to be considerable scope for improving links between schools and the local business community.

Successes and challenges

Partnership Coordinators, school senior managers and teachers were generally very positive about EiC. Although only a minority reported a direct impact on attainment, many noted the ways in which EiC was creating a more positive climate for teaching and learning and improving pupils' motivation.

EiC was seen by stakeholders as:

- **widening diversity and extending opportunity** by offering extension and learning support opportunities and through enhancements to the mainstream curriculum
- **promoting inclusion and equality of opportunity**, although there were also concerns that EiC did not directly impact on the majority of young people in inner city schools
- **creating a greater sense of partnership between schools and their LEAs.**

The Strands of EiC

The main successes of the Strands of EiC were seen in:

- the creation of a school ethos of high expectations and of celebrating success, and an impact on teaching and learning in the classroom, to provide challenge for the most able pupils (the Gifted and Talented Strand)
- improved levels of self-esteem, behaviour and motivation among pupils supported by a Learning mentor, and a reduction in levels of disruption in the class which was of benefit to all pupils (the Learning Mentor Strand)
- effective support for pupils who were disaffected or in danger of exclusion from school, with many examples of successful re-integration into mainstream classes (the LSU Strand)
- an improvement in educational outcomes in Specialist and Beacon Schools
- access to high quality ICT resources, benefiting not only pupils but also teachers and other staff, by providing opportunities for professional development (CLCs)
- partnership and cooperation between schools, with improved pupil attitudes and achievement (EiC Action Zones).

There were also challenges, including:

- concerns among some teachers about the possible elitism of the Gifted and Talented Strand, with about one in five teachers seeing it as potentially divisive
- initial negative reaction from some teaching staff about the role of Learning Mentors, although these had generally been replaced by a greater appreciation of how teachers and Learning Mentors can work together
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining appropriate staff, and concerns that some pupils could thrive in an LSU but could not, realistically, return to mainstream classes full-time (the LSU Strand)
- lack of clear linkage with EiC (Specialist and Beacon Schools, and EiC Action Zones)
- the cost of maintaining state-of-the-art resources during a period of rapid development in ICT, recruiting and retaining appropriate staff, and issues related to access to CLC resources for those pupils not attending the host school (CLCs)

Many schools and teachers noted the challenges of implementing a complex initiative within schools, and the potential this had to increase teachers' workloads. Some felt that EiC was introduced too rapidly and that some of the initial difficulties could have been avoided by a more considered timetable for implementation.

8.1 Understanding and measuring impact

Before drawing conclusions on what has been learned from the evaluation evidence, it is worthwhile reflecting on the nature of EiC, its potential for effecting change and the measurement problems that it has posed for evaluators.

EiC was not launched onto a green-field site. Concern with the under-performance of pupils generally, and especially those in the inner cities, has been the subject of government intervention throughout the 1990s and thereafter. This has shown itself in a range of initiatives which have performance improvement as their central aim and which co-exist and interact with EiC in schools, and thus may mask any unique EiC effect. Moreover, many partnerships have deployed EiC resources and strategies alongside other initiatives within a comprehensive school improvement strategy. Many schools have pooled resources for similar activities in order to improve the overall provision in a given area. These factors have often made it more difficult to trace out the specific EiC effect, which is likely to be contributory to any observed change rather than acting as the sole change agent.

EiC has a clear focus on raising standards and achievement in urban schools and hence on improving the educational and life chances of young people in the most deprived areas of England. It is predicated upon a belief that driving up standards requires sustained effort and a range of levers for change, as identified through the different EiC Strands and cross-cutting themes.

Some of these levers have been directed at LEA or cross-school level and have taken the form of strategies aimed at generating improvement through partnership working, teacher collaboration and sharing resources and good practice. Beacon and Specialist schools, through their partner programmes, and Education Action Zones in EiC areas, all fall within this category, as do the more context-specific collaborative working arrangements of the EiC partnerships. Other EiC levers have operated at whole-school level enabling schools to focus on improving leadership, teacher capacity, improving ICT provision and behaviour management. The third set of levers has been targeted on specific, and often relatively small, groups of pupils through the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor, LSU and CLC programmes.

Each of these strategies has a different reach and potential for effecting change in schools and pupils, and this fact needs to be kept in mind when assessing the outcomes of different EiC Strands, as well as of the initiative as a whole. The quantitative and qualitative evidence on the pupil-centred Gifted and Talented and Learning Mentor Strands, for instance, suggest that these clearly focused Strands have had demonstrable impacts on their target populations, helping to reduce, if not yet eliminate, achievement gaps. Both the LSU and CLC Strands have had a more limited reach and been very diversely

implemented. Their effects, therefore, are not readily visible in the overall quantitative data analyses, but there is strong interview evidence, particularly in relation to LSUs, which clearly suggests that they have had a positive influence on the motivation, behaviour and skills development of some young people in EiC schools. It has been difficult, by comparison, to trace out the effects of more diffuse whole-school or inter-school initiatives such as Specialist and Beacon schools, especially since these both pre-date EiC and operate both within and outside EiC areas.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, in terms of the money spent per pupil, EiC is a relatively modest initiative and its potential for impact is relatively small when averaged out across pupils and schools. As we have seen, the main effects from the quantitative analysis have been in three areas:

- in improving levels of attainment in Mathematics at Key Stage 3 (with the greatest impact in the most disadvantaged schools)
- for pupils identified as gifted and talented
- in improving attendance.

But there is much perceptual evidence of more wide-ranging impact of EiC gathered from interviews in schools and LEAs. This suggests that either interviewees are giving EiC more credit for improvement than it deserves, the evaluation has not fully captured its impact, or the observed impacts in given localities have not, or not yet, fed through into the overall national or average results. Indeed, since the main evaluation lasted from summer 2000 to autumn 2003, this has given relatively little elapsed time for EiC interventions to bed down and become identifiable in terms of pupils performance gains, especially in those schools joining EiC most recently.

EiC has also been a phased initiative. As seen in Table 2.6, Phase 1 schools entered EiC in September 1999, Phase 2 in 2000 and Phase 3 only entering in 2001. Indeed, some of the strongest effects were often seen in Phase 1 institutions, but these were by no means uniform. The picture is made more complicated because, as summarised in Section 3.1, schools in the three Phases are different. Phase 1 schools not only have the longest experience of EiC, but also have the highest proportions of pupils in vulnerable and under-performing groups. They, therefore, have had the greatest overall potential for performance gains. Phase 2 and 3 schools exhibit lower, but distinctly varying, levels of disadvantage when profiled on different background factors. In addition, different year groups in the three Phases are likely to have been variously exposed to EiC interventions and differently affected by the policy changes introduced since the initiative began (see Chapter 1). This matrix of factors must go some way to explaining why we see such a range of outcomes for schools and pupils with different characteristics in differing Phases and at different Key Stages.

8.2 Where have the greatest impacts been?

In measuring impact, there needs to be a realistic notion of the type and degree of change that becomes discernible at different stages of a programme's implementation. To provide a framework for understanding what can and cannot be expected of EiC, the team developed a four-level typology of impact and change (Stoney *et al.*, 2002), as summarised below. These are:

- **first-level impacts** that change inputs (for example infrastructure, staffing and material resources, staff expertise and skills) and institutional processes (such as Partnership operations, approaches to curriculum planning, and the development of strategies for providing support for all pupils)
- **second-level impacts**, where the first-level changes begin to make their presence felt on the key players within the main initiative institutions and to bring about change in their everyday experiences
- **third-level impacts**, where changes begin to have measurable impact on the outcomes for the target population(s) of schools, teachers, pupils, employers and the community
- **fourth-level impacts** associated with embedded change to infrastructure, systems and processes and with more widespread transference and spill-over of practices and ideas to institutions outside the initiative.

At the stage when the evaluation was being conducted, many schools and Partnerships were still in the process of putting in place the systems and processes to support EiC, and it takes time for such changes to become embedded in schools, and the impacts of EiC would be expected to increase as the policy developed further. The focussed natures of the Strands of EiC also mean that the impact of EiC, taken over whole schools or whole Partnerships, will be less than for specific groups of pupils or schools.

Nevertheless, the evaluation provides a great deal of evidence of first- and second-level impacts, particularly in terms of infrastructure development, new partnership working, much enhanced learning support provision and improved ICT resourcing. For teachers, there have been more professional exchange and shared development opportunities through the new partnership arrangements, which have been widely seen as one of the major successes of EiC by partnership managers and schools alike. These growth opportunities are likely to have pay-offs for young people in a variety of ways. Whilst causal links cannot be made with any certainty, there does appear to have been 'a partnership dividend', in that overall pupil progress at Key Stage 3 was greater in those LEA areas where there was a higher engagement in EiC partnership activities than in other areas. Pupil progress in those EiC areas with high or relatively high levels of partnership working was at least as good as that in non-EiC areas; for Phase 1 pupils in highly active Partnerships, it was better.

Excellence in Cities has certainly helped spearhead the development of more and a wider range of extra-curricular activities and support provision, which have channelled through into the experience of pupils and have helped both extend the diversity of provision and remove barriers to effective learning, two of the original objectives for EiC. There is less compelling evidence for substantial developments in the subject curriculum or in teacher practice occasioned by EiC, despite the greater use of ICT in classroom settings and some changes taking place to pupil grouping arrangements.

Excellence in Cities appears to have had some, but not a major, impact on the behaviour of the teaching profession in urban schools, who continued to demonstrate a variable knowledge and engagement with EiC. Particular benefits for teachers appear to have arisen from improved professional development and from the further opportunities made available for sharing and observing practice. Teachers generally became rather more positive about their future in the profession during the course of the evaluation, with many intending to continue teaching, and indeed to stay in the same school, for some years. These changes have been especially welcomed by teachers and are likely to have contributed to the broadening range of curricular and extra-curricular teaching strategies which have been deployed in EiC schools. These are likely to have had positive impacts on teaching quality, although it has not been possible to trace such intermediate changes through into observable effects on pupil attainment.

Pupil-teacher ratios remained less favourable in EiC schools than in others throughout the three years of the evaluation. There appeared to be no set pattern across subject areas of greater or lesser use of non-specialist teachers in EiC schools than other institutions and teacher recruitment and retention rates in EiC schools were little different from those in non-urban settings.

In terms of **third-level outcomes for pupils**, the overall picture is both complicated and mixed. Performance has risen in both EiC and non-EiC schools since 1999, and on some measures of performance (such as the percentage gaining five or more good GCSEs), EiC schools, particularly those that have been in EiC for the longest time, have shown most improvement. However, when key school and pupil background factors such as prior attainment and entitlement to Free School Meals are introduced into the value added analyses which measure pupil progress, these apparent gains diminish. Nevertheless we can say with some certainty that Excellence in Cities appears to have been associated with a range of changes in pupils' attainments.

- EiC has led to a significant effect of attainment in Mathematics at Key Stage 3, where a 4.4 per cent increase in expenditure per pupil delivered, for the most able pupils in schools with the highest rates of entitlement to Free School Meals, a 2.9 to 4.8 per cent increase in the number of pupils achieving at least level 5. The effect was greatest in Phase 1 areas, partly due to the Pupil Learning Credit pilot which operated in the most deprived

schools in these areas. For less able pupils and for those attending less disadvantaged schools, the effect was much weaker.

- The impact of EiC on pupils' attainment at Key Stage 3 was greater in those Partnerships where schools demonstrated a high level of engagement with EiC than in those where levels of engagement were lower.
- There was little evidence suggesting that EiC had an overall impact on performance at Key Stage 4.
- EiC had more discernible impact at Key Stage 3 on pupils in Phase 1 and 2 schools (where EiC was introduced earlier), than in Phase 3 areas.
- EiC was associated with performance gains for those designated as gifted and talented, and, to a lesser extent for some groups being mentored, although mentored students still continued to under-perform relative to other groups. There were no measurable gains in pupil performance or progress linked to any of the other Strands.
- EiC benefited pupils from most minority ethnic groups at Key Stage 4 but only those from Chinese backgrounds at Key Stage 3.

There may be a number of reasons why EiC had more impact on pupils during Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. For example, schools and Partnerships may have targeted support at younger pupils, or it may be that similar levels of support exert differing leverage at Key Stages 3 and 4. It remains to be seen whether the improved levels of attainment seen by pupils completing Key Stage 3 in 2003 are maintained as these pupils progress through Key Stage 4.

Thus, despite the fact that EiC is associated with a range of performance gains for particular groups at different Key Stages, the initiative has not led, or not yet led, to a decided change in the overall performance of pupils in deprived inner city schools, apart from in Mathematics at Key Stage 3. However, the qualitative data analyses have suggested that EiC has promoted a positive ethos towards learning and improved pupils' motivation and behaviour. The quantitative analysis has shown the ameliorating effect of EiC on attendance, especially for Phase 1 schools, and evidence of some small but important changes in the attitudes of mentored pupils. These changes may be important precursors to improved pupil performance.

8.3 What are and will be the main legacies of the original EiC policy?

In this section, we reflect upon the **fourth-level impacts of EiC** in terms of those facets which have spilled over from EiC and been taken into mainstream provision for other pupil groups and for non-EiC schools. One of the notable features of EiC has been the extent of the spill-over of Strand activities into other schools and for other pupil groups, and the speed with which this has

occurred. This has provided a further level of masking of any distinct EiC effect and made comparison with other schools that much more difficult.

Many schools have appreciated the benefits of having Learning Mentors and other new forms of individualised learning support and this, arguably, has been the area of most frequent replication. Similarly, many schools have drawn up and implemented strategies for gifted and talented pupils and provided more stretching opportunities for their most able pupils.⁷⁴ The level of mainstreaming of these Strand activities is likely to be one of the lasting legacies of EiC. The know-how gained from tackling their motivational, behavioural and cognitive barriers to effective learning and personal growth will have lasting benefits for schools, although many of the strategies adopted are resource intensive and will need further funding to maintain at current levels. Transference of EiC interventions outside of the local designated school population has been enabled by planned partnership strategies for sharing the benefits of EiC wherever possible with other local schools. Indeed, Partnership Coordinators have felt that another of the lasting legacies will be new and better forms of teacher collaboration and sharing of knowledge and resources across schools. They add the caveat that, to do this effectively, continued resourcing for the Partnerships would be needed.

8.4 Has EiC been cost-effective?

The investment in EiC since its inception in 1999 has been extensive, as noted in Section 1.2.1. As we have seen above, in terms of the average amount per pupil, the initiative has been relatively modest, although more funding has been targeted upon specific groups and there are some observable consequences of this.

Cost-benefit analysis, which, for technical reasons,⁷⁵ was undertaken only for Key Stage 3 have indicated that EiC has had most identifiable impact on attainment in Mathematics. In the early years of EiC within each Phase, the benefit of the policy was zero, and hence the rate of return was zero and the costs of EiC outweighed its benefits. However, after two years in Phase 1 and 3 areas, and after three years in Phase 2 areas, the policy was generating a positive return, or in other words the per pupil benefits outweighed the per pupil costs. The estimates of this return in terms of lifelong earnings vary from four to seven per cent, depending on Phase and year. In 2003, the rate of return for pupils in Phase 1 areas and exposed to both the EiC and PLC initiatives

⁷⁴ There is now a National Programme for Gifted and Talented Education which seeks to improve the education of gifted and talented children and young people aged 3 – 19 in schools and colleges throughout England.

⁷⁵ The focus on pupil outcomes for the cost-benefit analysis at age 14 (Key Stage 3), rather than at age 16 (Key Stage 4), was because there was not a good prior attainment measure for those aged 11 at the end of Key Stage 2 available.

was about five per cent, compared with seven per cent for Phase 1 pupils more generally in the same year.

8.5 Has EiC been successful in meeting its core aims and objectives?

We turn now to some overall judgements about EiC and the progress that has been made towards meeting its founding aims and objectives as set out in Chapter 1.

This report has borne witness to the widening diversity and extending opportunity of provision occasioned by EiC in inner city schools, and this can be seen as one of the main successes of the policy. This has been achieved through both extension and learning support provision and enhancements to the mainstream curriculum. The rhetoric of EiC has been one of inclusion and of enhancing school-based learning for all pupils in urban schools. The reality has been that its most successful strategies have been those that have been clearly targeted upon specific needs – generally the most and least able and those who have presented learning or behavioural problems. Indeed, the interview evidence documented many instances of individuals on the fringes of school life who were in danger of failing, being excluded or otherwise not fulfilling their potential, who have benefited from the individualised support of EiC. Sub-group analyses have provided indications that EiC enhancements have helped reduce some performance differentials, for example those between ethnic groups. In these senses, EiC has made some progress in meeting its inclusion and equality of opportunity agendas.

There is a good body of evidence to suggest that EiC has had an increasingly strong and successful networking and partnership dimension, so far as promoting collaborative working between teachers and school leaders has been concerned. The EiC Education Action Zones, Beacon Schools and, to a lesser extent, Specialist Schools, have all had specific remits to contribute towards this. As the initiative has progressed, the local Partnerships have become increasingly run and owned by participating schools. As we have seen above, pupil performance improvement at Key Stage 3 has been related statistically to the level and effectiveness of partnership operation – resulting in the hoped-for partnership dividend. The evaluation evidence is far less compelling about EiC as a generator and sustainer of other partnerships – with parents, and with employers and training providers. Interview programmes with these groups continued to suggest that EiC is still not a well understood initiative in the local community and that, on its own, it has not led to a plethora of new local linkages outside of the education sector or a range of new cross-sector partnerships for raising pupil performance.

EiC has also been aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning through improved ICT resourcing, the adoption of more innovative and diversified teaching methods, through improved school leadership, through more collaborative professional development opportunities for teachers and through improved arrangements for young people's transfer from the primary to the secondary stage. The evidence collected certainly suggests that some improvements here have been achieved in terms of teaching diversification, increased usage of ICT as a teaching resource and more sharing of good practice between teachers. CLCs have often been seen as promoting teaching innovation and pupil motivation within EiC, although their limited numbers and questions of access for non-host schools has perhaps restricted their impact across urban schools. Without detailed classroom observations over a sustained period in a wide range of schools, however, it is hard to be definitive about the pay-offs from these EiC interventions onto classroom practice.

One area where EiC does not appear to have had a marked effect as yet is improving the quality and continuity of learning as pupils' progress from primary to secondary schooling through more collaborative working. However, individual schools appeared to have more strategies in place by the end of the evaluation than at the start and EiC Action Zones were felt by some to have had a positive impact on primary-secondary collaboration in a number of areas.

Uppermost of all its core aims, EiC will be judged by its ability to drive up performance in inner city schools to levels comparable with the rest of the school population. As demonstrated earlier, this is a very challenging agenda. The evaluation team has conducted a wide range of analyses using both educational and econometric techniques, and by analysing national performance datasets, as well as the team's own primary data collections. The analyses have indicated that some progress is being made in improving progress and achievement, particularly for some pupil groups. To date, EiC's measurable overall impact on pupil performance has been relatively small, apart from its impact on Key Stage 3 Mathematics, and a range of reasons has been given in this chapter to explain why this might be.

8.6 What have been the main lessons learned for future innovations?

It is likely that, given the timescale of the evaluation, the full impact of EiC has not yet been seen in terms of improving pupil motivation or attainment. EiC has highlighted both the possibilities and the difficulties in raising pupils' performance in urban schools and mediating the effects of disadvantage. It has demonstrated yet again that performance improvement needs a long-term strategy and sustained effort. This raises the immediate question of how long does it take to remediate fully the effects of disadvantage or to turn round

under-performing schools, which have, in some cases, a long history of failing their pupils?

The evaluation has also brought into sharp focus the fact that EiC has operated in a very diverse and changing milieu, making it difficult to trace out unique EiC effects from the 'noisy' and moving background. In addition, the lack of a good comparison group against which to test the extent and efficacy of EiC interventions has been an on-going problem for the evaluation. However, the consortium has partly been able to overcome this difficulty by using a range of change-over-time comparisons and comparisons between the three Phases of EiC, analysing the national datasets and constructing a quasi-control group for the economic analyses.

The fact that a range of impacts has been identified statistically against this 'noisy' backdrop suggests that the policy has had considerable transformative power. Nevertheless, the question arises as to whether it has been productive or not, in terms of raising standards and attainment, to have so many similarly targeted funding streams, including EiC, going into schools at the same time. Together, they have certainly placed a substantial administrative burden on schools and sometimes caused confusion. While there is evidence that EiC was cost effective, at least at Key Stage 3, it is less clear whether similar or greater benefits could have been achieved by concentrating resources on fewer schools. This is now being addressed through the government's New Relationship with Schools and School Improvement Partner (SIP) policies. Proposals to introduce greater long-term stability in school funding and to simplify and streamline existing standards-related funding streams were announced in February 2005 (DfES, 2005), and are designed to ensure that resources are used as effectively as possible within schools.

EiC has been a multi-faceted initiative that has had a wide reach within and across schools, and has operated at a range of levels. The overall vision of EiC saw the seven Strands as elements in the delivery of something much bigger. The Strands were not always seen in this way in schools, and future policies need to ensure that each element contributes to make the whole greater than the sum of the parts, rather than creating separate initiatives, however successful each of these may be individually. It is not evident from the evaluation evidence that this overall notion of EiC has always been wholly conveyed to schools or the vision become fully realised, although in some Partnerships there has been considerable engagement with the overall EiC 'package': these are the Partnerships showing the greatest evidence of an impact on pupils' levels of attainment. The messages here for future multi-strand initiatives are that these need to have a strong overarching framework which demonstrates how each element coheres to the rest and contributes to the overall change agenda, and that this vision needs to be articulated clearly to schools and teachers.

A further question arises as to whether the policy's reach has been too wide and diverse and whether future interventions should be more coherent, contained and targeted and thus more readily amenable to evaluation. At the same time and despite having several whole-school strategies within its scope, the impact of EiC has been most evident for some curriculum areas, for some groups of pupils or for some types of school, for example by improving attainment in Mathematics at the end of Key Stage (particularly for pupils from more disadvantaged schools) and by improving the performance of pupils identified as gifted and talented. In promoting more widespread impacts on pupils in inner city schools, future interventions could, arguably, be targeted more directly on upskilling the teaching profession and removing barriers to effective teaching, stimulating more direct classroom and curriculum change and encouraging and supporting a more self-evaluating and formative approach by teachers and partnerships. The evaluation has also indicated that the main impacts are in schools in more challenging circumstances. Could greater net benefit have been obtained by targeting more money directly at these schools, but would other urban schools have been so actively engaged and would the partnership dividend have been lost by this?

The evaluation has demonstrated that initiatives such as EiC can have a positive and substantial effect on pupils' attainment. The exploration of pupils' survey responses demonstrated that positive attitudes to education, good behaviour and higher levels of attainment were significantly more evident in schools in which young people believed that they were listened to and treated with respect, in which there was a culture of praise and support, in which young people they felt had opportunities to discuss their progress and in which teachers were clear about (and enforced) acceptable standards of behaviour. The re-engineered EiC initiative, through its focus on sharing good practice and teaching and learning improvements, together with the Leadership Incentive Grant and Behavioural Improvement Programme, and the continuing emphasis on raising attainment in primary schools through the National Primary Strategy, have the potential to ensure that all pupils in urban areas can benefit as much from their schools as their counterparts elsewhere.

The NFER/LSE/IFS evaluation has borne witness to the wide range of benefits that Excellence in Cities has brought to the more deprived inner city schools of England. At the same time, the evaluation has highlighted the difficult milieu in which EiC has operated, the areas of unfulfilled potential and the challenges which have restricted its impact. There is no doubt that EiC has been an important stimulus for change, a founding and trialling ground for better forms of learning support and enhancement and a generating force for more effective professional sharing and networking. As much as the identified quantitative impacts and the stakeholder evidence, the fact that so much EiC-funded practice has already been replicated and taken into the mainstream of school life is a testimony to the perceived efficacy of its strategy elements. As the evaluation period comes to an end, new policies have been, or are about to

be, launched which will take forward the EiC improvement agenda within inner city and other schools. It is hoped that this report makes a contribution to understanding education renewal processes within these areas and what constitute the most effective levers for improvement in urban schools.

Annex Publications on website

(<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/>)

Title of publication
Overviews
Evaluation of Excellence in Cities: Overview of Interim Findings (June 2002) <i>Sheila Stoney, Anne West, Lesley Kendall and Marian Morris</i>
Overview to December 2003 (May 2004) <i>Lesley Kendall</i>
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Teachers – Overview of Detailed Findings from the First Survey of Teachers (December 2001) <i>Marian Morris</i>

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Schools in EiC Areas: 2001 to 2003 (May 2004) <i>Sarah Golden, Claire Easton</i>
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Findings from Partnership Manager Interviews (June 2001) <i>Peter Rudd, Sarah Knight, Lesley Kendall</i>
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Title of publication
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The Gifted and Talented Strand in Phase 3 Partnerships – Executive Summary (June 2003) <i>Suzanne Edmonds</i>
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Learning Mentors Strand Study (Phase 3) (June 2003) <i>Sarah Golden, Paula Smith, David Sims</i>
City Learning Centres Strand Study: Final Report (December 2003) <i>Eleanor Stokes, Anne West</i>
Learning Mentor Strand – Survey Findings (December 2003) <i>Lisa O'Donnell, Sarah Golden</i>
The Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Pupils (December 2003) <i>Lesley Kendall</i>
A Qualitative Study of Specialist Schools in Excellence in Cities Areas (May 2004) <i>Philip Noden, Annette Braun, Hazel Pennell, Anne West</i>
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Funding EiC Partnerships and Funding Schools (December 2001) <i>Philip Noden, Annette Braun and Anne West</i>
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Minority Ethnic Pupils and EiC in 2002: a Working Paper (May 2004) <i>Lesley Kendall, Simon Rutt, Joanne Kaye</i>
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Appendix 1 The evaluation design

The Excellence in Cities (EiC) evaluation consortium was formed in 2000 in order to undertake the national evaluation of Excellence in Cities in Phase 1 and 2 Partnership areas for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The consortium is made up of:

- the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)
- the Centre for Educational Research (CER) at the London School of Economics (LSE)
- the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) at LSE
- the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS).

DfES subsequently awarded the consortium a range of further contracts in order to extend the evaluation to include EiC Phase 3 Partnerships, and to undertake a series of linked evaluations of 'Excellence-related' programmes:

- The Primary Pilot for Excellence in Cities
- Excellence Clusters
- Excellence Challenge (now Aimhigher).

There was also a separate but linked evaluation of the Pupil Learning Credits (PLC) Pilot Scheme, which was led by CER.

All the evaluations draw upon many of the same evaluative strategies, data collections and analytical techniques as adopted for the original EiC evaluation.

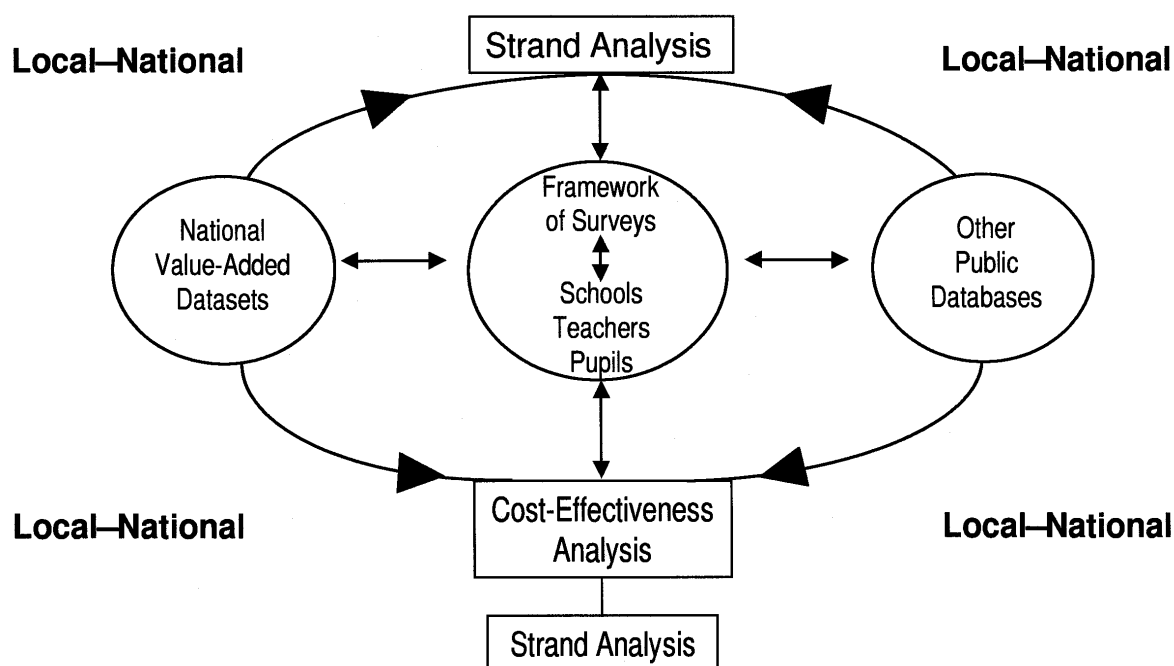
The five programme evaluations have very similar aims, and these can be summarised as establishing their effectiveness in terms of:

- their impact on the nature of inputs to the educational process (for instance, on: teacher recruitment and professional development; capital resourcing; ICT provision; and learning support resources and staffing)
- the processes through which inputs are implemented, and by which outcomes and outputs are achieved (including: the quality and diversity of teaching and learning; the range of extra-curricular and study-support activities; the operation of collaborative networks and coordinated provision)

- the impact on the outputs and outcomes of the educational process (such as: improved test/examination results; improved attendance; improved motivation; better destinations; improved parental, employer and public perceptions of students and schools; lower rates of exclusion; fewer barriers to learning and increased participation in further and higher education)
- for EiC, Primary EiC, Excellence Challenge and PLCs, their cost-effectiveness, value for money, and as far as possible, the cost-benefits.

All these evaluations adopt a mixed methodological design and each is a variant of the design concept for the 'main evaluation' of secondary schools in Phase 1, 2 and 3 Partnerships. This depicted diagrammatically below.

Evaluation Design



The key features of the main EiC evaluation, which began in summer 2000 were:

- annual surveys of headteachers and teachers in EiC and non-EiC schools, beginning in 2000/2001 academic year
- annual tracking surveys of whole year groups of pupils in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 in the 2000/2001 academic year in EiC schools, with follow-up into Year 12, and a comparison group of young people who were in Year 9 in non-EiC schools in 2000
- face-to-face and/or telephone surveys with Partnership Coordinators (annually) and providers of post-16 training and employers (in 2001, 2002)

and 2003), with an additional round of interviews with Partnership managers in 2004

- on-going studies of funding, cost effectiveness and, as far as the data allowed, cost benefit by LSE/IFS colleagues
- special studies of the seven Policy Strands (Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentors, Learning Support Units, City Learning Centres, Specialist Schools, Beacon Schools and EiC Action Zones)
- sophisticated analyses of impact and value added using the evaluation's own and other national datasets, multivariate modelling techniques, composite indicators of exposure, suites of outcome measures, change-over-time analyses and comparison groups.

Further details of the surveys of schools, teachers and pupils are given in paper Appendix 2.

The evaluation made extensive use of national performance datasets and other publicly available data for contextual and comparative purposes, provided feedback to participating schools and Partnerships in the form of aggregated results from the pupil surveys showing how they compared with the national picture.

All the working papers produced by the consortium are available at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/>.

Appendix 2 The surveys of schools, teachers and pupils

1. The overall design of the school, form tutor and pupil surveys

The first round of surveys took place in autumn 2000 and spring 2001. In autumn 2000, all secondary schools in EiC Phase 1 and 2 Partnerships were invited to take part in the evaluation. Each school that agreed to take part was sent a questionnaire to be completed by the headteacher or other senior members of staff. Each school was also sent questionnaires for all the pupils in a specified year group. The schools were divided into five subsets, with the subsets having similar profiles in terms of factors such as level of entitlement to Free School Meals, levels of attainment and size. As far as possible, all five subsets had similar proportions of Beacon and Specialist Schools. Each subgroup was asked to distribute pupil questionnaires to one year group (Year 7 to Year 11, depending in the subset to which the school had been allocated), and questionnaires for the form tutors of these pupils. Schools were also asked to provide a range of information about each pupil, including such factors as entitlement to Free School Meals and identified special educational needs,⁷⁶ as well as information relating to each pupil's involvement in the Strands of EiC.

The aim of the questionnaire for headteachers was to gain an insight into the strategic management and planning in EiC schools, and details of the implementation of EiC, and to explore the extent of any change over time. The questionnaire asked about school organisation and context, teacher recruitment and retention, links with other schools and the community, ICT in the school and opportunities for out-of-school learning, as well as a range of questions directly related to EiC and its Strands.

In order to explore the experiences of teachers located in EiC schools, surveys of form tutors were undertaken in each year. Form tutors were asked about their teaching approaches and their perceptions of their pupils and of the facilities and resources of the school, as well as a range of questions about their background, qualifications and attitudes to teaching. A number of questions explored teachers' expectations for, and knowledge and experience of, EiC.

⁷⁶ In some cases, LEAs were able to provide some of this information, which reduced the burden on schools.

The attitudes and experiences of pupils in EiC schools were explored through a suite of surveys of pupils in each of Years 7 to 11. In each participating school, a year group of students were surveyed as they progressed through the school. Pupils were asked about their attitudes to school, to their teachers and to education, and about their behaviour, as well as a range of questions about their background and home circumstances. The questionnaires for each year group were broadly similar, with additional questions for Year 7 pupils related to the transition from primary school, and for Year 10 and 11 pupils on their post-16 plans and aspirations.

The surveys were repeated in spring 2002 and 2003, with the addition of schools in Phase 3 areas,⁷⁷ where EiC was launched in September 2001. For the 2002 round of surveys, schools in which Year 7 pupils had completed the questionnaire in 2001 were asked to take part again and were sent questionnaires for what were now the Year 8 pupils, with a similar design for other year groups. The design of the surveys was such that the information relating to an individual pupil could be linked from one survey to the next. (Schools that provided information for Year 11 pupils in 2001 were asked to survey a new cohort of Year 7 pupils in 2002.) In 2003, the same pupils were surveyed again (again with a new Year 7 cohort). Thus, over the course of the evaluation, information was gathered

- for individual pupils for three successive years, for example Year 7 to Year 9, or Year 9 to Year 11
- for three successive Year 7 cohorts, three successive Year 8 cohorts, and so on.

In addition, in 2000 about 150 schools in broadly similar circumstances to those in EiC areas were also invited to participate, to provide a comparison group. Each school was asked to complete a school questionnaire, and to arrange for Year 9 form tutors and pupils to complete questionnaires similar to those used in EiC schools. In each case, the questionnaire was a modified version of that used in EiC schools. In subsequent years, most of these schools were again asked to participate along with their Year 10 pupils and form tutors (2002) and Year 11 pupils and tutors (2003). However, several of the schools in the original comparison group became part of EiC either by being in Phase 3 areas or by becoming part of an Excellence Cluster, and so the size of the available pool of comparison schools was significantly reduced for the 2002 and 2003 surveys. Comparison group schools were reimbursed for the cost of participation in the surveys.

⁷⁷ Each school in a Phase 3 area was allocated to one of the five matched subsets set up for the 2000 survey.

2. The response rates

Despite determined efforts to engage the participation of schools, response rates to the surveys were lower than had been anticipated at the outset. Below are the total numbers of school, teacher and pupil questionnaires returned.

School survey

In the spring of 2001, 2002 and 2003, EiC schools that had agreed to participate were sent a questionnaire for headteachers / senior managers. In each year, the following number of EiC schools responded to the school survey:

- 2001: 296 out of 762 schools replied (39 per cent)
- 2002: 319 out of 924 schools replied (35 per cent)
- 2003: 320 out of 90678 schools replied (35 per cent).

Phase 3 schools became involved in EiC in 2002 and were not included in the first survey.

Form tutors

In each year of the surveys, the following number of teachers replied:

- 2001: 1,381 teachers responded
- 2002: 1,480 teachers responded
- 2003: 1,709 teachers responded.

As the individual teachers who were form tutors may have changed each year, the form tutors who replied may not have been the same individuals in each year of the surveys.

Pupil surveys

Table A2.1 provides details of the number of students in each year group who responded to the survey in each year.

⁷⁸ Changes in the numbers of EiC schools are due to schools merging or closing and the addition of Phase 3 schools

Table A2.1 Student surveys 2001 to 2003: numbers responding

Year group	2001	2002	2003
Year 7	11,962	13,621	15,449
Year 8	10,794	11,488	14,932
Year 9	12,340	10,567	12,430
Year 10	7,695	12,045	11,943
Year 11	8,809	8,483	12,116

Tables A2.2 to A2.5 provide a detailed breakdown of the response rates.

Table A2.2 Summary of response rates: 2000 survey

	Phases 1 and 2	Phase 3	All EiC	Comparison	Total
Total number of schools invited to participate	762	n/a	762	136	898
Schools agreeing to take part	449	n/a	449	55	504
Percentage of schools agreeing to take part	59%	n/a	59%	40%	56%
Number of school questionnaires returned	281	n/a	281	29	310
Percentage of schools returning school questionnaire	37%	n/a	37%	21%	34%
Number of schools returning pupil questionnaires	316	n/a	316	34	350
Percentage of schools returning pupil questionnaires	41%	n/a	41%	25%	39%
Number of pupil questionnaires sent	88,131	n/a	88,131	9,999	98,130
Number of pupil questionnaires returned	51,028	n/a	51,028	5,030	56,058
Number of teacher questionnaires sent	3,748	n/a	3,748	409	4,157
Number of teacher questionnaires returned	1,037	n/a	1,037	100	1,137

Table A2.3 Summary of response rates: 2002 survey

	Phases 1 and 2	Phase 3	All EiC	Comparison	Total
Total number of schools invited to participate	754	169	923	111	1,034
Schools agreeing to take part	445	79	524	44	568
Percentage of schools agreeing to take part	59%	47%	57%	40%	55%
Number of school questionnaires returned	250	52	302	26	328
Percentage of schools returning school questionnaire	33%	31%	33%	23%	32%
Number of schools returning pupil questionnaires	303	59	362	30	392
Percentage of schools returning pupil questionnaires	40%	35%	39%	27%	38%
Number of pupil questionnaires sent	82,797	15,406	98,203	7,971	106,174
Number of pupil questionnaires returned	43,800	8,988	52,788	4,321	57,108
Number of teacher questionnaires sent	3,608	577	4185	347	4,532
Number of teacher questionnaires returned	1,159	250	1409	135	1,544

Table A2.4 Summary of response rates: 2003 survey

	Phases 1 and 2	Phase 3	All EiC	Comparison	Total
Total number of schools invited to participate	733	156	889	99	988
Schools agreeing to take part	462	100	562	42	604
Percentage of schools agreeing to take part	63%	64%	63%	42%	61%
Number of school questionnaires returned	251	64	315	29	344
Percentage of schools returning school questionnaire	34%	41%	35%	29%	35%
Number of schools returning pupil questionnaires	357	80	437	34	471
Percentage of schools returning pupil questionnaires	49%	51%	49%	34%	48%
Number of pupil questionnaires sent	86,908	20,262	107,170	6,882	114,052
Number of pupil questionnaires returned	53,759	13,370	67,129	4,420	71,549
Number of teacher questionnaires sent	4,189	866	5,055	356	5,411
Number of teacher questionnaires returned	1,320	332	1,652	137	1,789

Appendix 3 The Partnership interviews

The Partnership approach is at the heart of the EiC programme's implementation and is premised on the concept of school improvement through sharing and collaboration. All Partnerships have a Partnership Coordinator (or an equivalent) who is responsible for helping to manage and develop the Partnership. The views and perceptions of Partnership Coordinators were sought in order to provide a valuable perspective on the implementation of the EiC initiative. In 2000, Phase 1 and 2 coordinators were interviewed (as Phase 3 had not yet been established). In the other years, Coordinators from all three Phases were interviewed (a total of around fifty Coordinators).

The interviews were typically around one to two hours long and were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone.

The findings from the first three rounds of Partnership interviews are given in the following papers, which can be found at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-partnerships.cfm>

Findings from Partnership Manager Interviews, Peter Rudd, Sarah Knight, Lesley Kendall (2001)

A Report of the Findings of Interviews with Secondary Partnership Coordinators, David Pye, Lesley Kendall, Paula Smith, Kathy O'Connor, Rachel Bemrose (2002)

The Functioning and Impact of Secondary Partnerships in Excellence in Cities, NFER (2003)

The interviews covered a range of topics, but focused on management and organisational issues and the implementation of the various Strands. The full list of topics covered, along with the year in which they were included, is given below.

Table A3.1 Topics covered in Partnership interviews

Topic	2000	2001	2002	2004
Background and role of partnership coordinators	2000	2001		
The local context of the Partnership	2000	2001	2002	
How the partnership was set up and its key partners	2000			
Resource allocations and the decisions behind these	2000			
How the partnership and EiC programme was managed	2000	2001	2002	
How the partnership was organised and structured	2000	2001		
Implementation of the programme and the Strands	2000	2001	2002	
Targets and progress relative to targets	2000	2001	2002	
Local monitoring and evaluation	2000	2001	2002	
EiC national priorities and responsiveness to local needs	2000		2002	
Successes and challenges of EiC and the Strands	2000	2001	2002	
EiC and managing change		2001		
Links with other EiC Partnership areas	2000	2001	2002	
Links between EiC and associated programmes, such as the Primary Extension and Excellence Challenge (where appropriate)		2001	2002	
Impact and sustainability and examples of effective practice			2002	
Engagement and involvement of schools				2004
Collaboration and cooperation				2004
Shared ownership and responsibility for school improvement				2004
Sharing resources and good practice				2004
Decision-making and delegation				2004
LSU and CLC: progress in implementation				2004
Transition between KS2 and KS3				2004
Continuing professional development				2004

Appendix 4 The surveys of employers and training providers

1. **Background**

One of the main aims of Excellence in Cities (EiC) was to improve the profile of schools in their local communities. Employers and training providers in these EiC areas have an interest and involvement in the educational experience of young people who are their potential employees and future learners. Their perspectives of, and views on, local schools and school leavers are, therefore, worthy of exploration.

As part of the national evaluation of EiC, the consortium conducted baseline and follow-up surveys of employers in a sample of EiC areas. The aim of this element of the research was to gain an insight into employers' and training providers' perceptions of local education, including their:

- relationship with, and views on, local schools
- experience of local school leavers, including their skills, knowledge and attitudes
- perspectives on EiC and the impact of the initiative on education locally.

2. **Summary of methods**

In order to explore these aims, samples of employers and training providers in EiC areas were interviewed when EiC was a relatively new development in their area. Employers and training providers in Phase 1 and 2 were interviewed in 2001, and those in Phase 3 areas were interviewed in 2002.

These same interviewees were re-contacted in 2003 to investigate the extent of any change in their experiences and perceptions. Between June and October 2003, a telephone survey of 383 employers and 72 training providers in 35 EiC areas was conducted. Of those who had previously participated, 54 per cent of employers and 51 per cent of the training providers were successfully contacted and re-interviewed.

A semi-structured schedule of questions was used. The same schedule was used for all of the rounds of interviews, to enable comparisons to be made with the baseline responses, and included questions relating to:

- background to the organisation
- recruitment practices

- involvement in school–industry links
- perceptions of schools and school leavers
- views of EiC.

The analysis explored the interviewees' responses in 2003 and compared them with the responses of the same individuals in 2001, or 2002 in the case of Phase 3 interviewees.

The findings from the surveys of employers and training providers are reported in the following papers, which can be found at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-public-perceptions.cfm>

Report on Employers and Training Providers, Sarah Golden and David Sims (2002)

Report on Employers and Training Providers in Phase 3 EiC Partnerships, Sarah Golden (2003)

The Experience and Views of Employers and Training Providers in EiC Areas, Sarah Golden (2003)

Appendix 5 The Strand Studies

This Appendix outlines the methodology of each of the Strand Studies.

1. Evaluation of the Gifted and Talented Strand

The evaluation of the Gifted and Talented Strand involved several different elements:

- **Analysis of Partnership plans submitted to DfES.** These plans were drawn up in the period prior to each Partnership becoming part of EiC, roughly early 1999 (Phase 1), early 2000 (Phase 2) and early 2001 (Phase 3).
- **Interviews with Partnership Coordinators** in autumn 2000 (Phases 1 and 2) and autumn 2001 (Phases 1, 2 and 3).
- **Detailed case studies in 14 Phase 1 and 2 schools**, with interviews being carried out in autumn 2001.
- **Telephone interviews with Strand coordinators in 23 Phase 3 schools.**
- **Focus group discussions with parents in a small number of Phase 1 and 2 schools** (summer 2001) and **Phase 3 schools** (summer 2002).
- **Analysis of the characteristics of the gifted and talented cohort.** This involved an analysis of the background characteristics and prior attainment of gifted and talented pupils, compared with pupils not in this cohort, based on information provided by over 300 EiC schools in 2003.

The following papers, which can all be found at:

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-strands.cfm>

relate to the Gifted and Talented Strand.

Gifted and Talented Strand of EiC, Keith Pocklington, Felicity Fletcher-Campbell, Lesley Kendall (2002)

Gifted and Talented – the Views of Pupils, Keith Pocklington, Lesley Kendall (2002)

The Gifted and Talented Strand in Phase 3 Partnerships – Executive Summary, Suzanne Edmonds (2003)

Evaluation of the Gifted and Talented Strand in Phase 3 Partnerships, Suzanne Edmonds, Felicity Fletcher-Campbell, Lesley Kendall (2003)

The Gifted and Talented Strand (Phases 1 & 2), Lesley Kendall (2003)

The Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Pupils, Lesley Kendall (2003)

2. Evaluation of the Learning Mentor Strand

In addition to **quantitative analysis** of data from surveys of schools, form tutors and pupils (2001/2003), exploring the implementation and experience of Learning Mentors, the research into the Learning Mentor Strand included a **qualitative study** of EiC schools in 2002 and 2003.

The main qualitative research was conducted in 2002 in **six EiC partnerships** (two in **Phase 1** and four in **Phase 2**). In each partnership, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Partnership staff and with Learning Mentors, teaching staff and pupils in two schools in each partnership. In 2003, the Strand Study focused on ten of the 11 **Phase 3** EiC Partnerships. This research consisted of **telephone interviews** with the Link Learning Mentors in eight of these ten Partnerships and case-study visits to two schools in each of the remaining two partnerships.

The following reports which can all be found at:

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-strands.cfm>

relate to the Learning Mentor Strand.

Learning Mentors Strand Study, Sarah Golden, Sarah Knight, Lisa O'Donnell, Paula Smith, David Sims (2002)

Learning Mentor Strand Study (Phases 1 & 2) – Executive Summary, Sarah Golden, Sarah Knight, Lisa O'Donnell, Paula Smith, David Sims (2003)

Learning Mentors Strand Study (Phase 3), Sarah Golden, Paula Smith, David Sims (2003)

Learning Mentors Strand – Survey Findings, Lisa O'Donnell, Sarah Golden (2003)

3. Evaluation of the Learning Support Unit Strand

The LSU Strand Study involved **qualitative case-studies** of EiC Partnerships. The first phase of the evaluation involved visits to one LSU in each of six EiC Partnerships (three Phase 1 Partnerships and three Phase 2 Partnerships). Each Partnership visit involved interviews with the designated LEA officer with overall responsibility for the LSU Strand of EiC, as well as visits to each of the six LSUs over the three terms of the academic year 2001/2002 to gather information relating to LSU policy and practice from LSU staff, school staff and pupils attending the LSU.

Follow-up visits and/or telephone interviews were carried out in each of the six case-study LSUs at the start of the autumn term 2002, in order to ascertain any changes to, or developments in, the provision offered, to gather perceptions of any increased or further impact, and any future developments planned, as well as to obtain an update on the progress of the pupils interviewed over the previous three terms, including destinations.

The **Phase 3** element of the LSU Strand Study comprised all 11 Phase 3 partnerships and involved **telephone interviews** with the LEA coordinators with responsibility for LSU provision within each authority, as well as interviews with either one or two LSU managers within each LEA, a total of 16. Thus, a total of 27 telephone interviews were conducted within this part of the study.

The following papers which can be found at:

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-strands.cfm>

relate to this Strand.

Learning Support Unit (LSU) Strand, Anne Wilkin, Charlotte Fletcher-Morgan (2002)

Learning Support Unit Strand Study, Anne Wilkin, Melanie Hall, Kay Kinder (2003)

4. Evaluation of the Specialist School Strand

The Specialist School Strand evaluation involved:

- **Qualitative case studies of eight Specialist Schools.** Six of these schools were designated after the EiC policy was introduced and two became Specialist prior to the introduction of EiC. Five of the Specialist Schools were in EiC Phase 1 and three in EiC Phase 2 areas. The case-study schools were selected to include five different specialist areas (Technology, Languages, Sports, Arts, and Business and Enterprise) and different regions, reflecting the variations in the known eligibility for Free School Meals and ethnic composition of schools across EiC areas. Face-to-face interviews were carried out with key staff in these schools, including headteacher and head of specialism, plus telephone interviews with staff in 13 partner schools (five secondary, eight primary).
- **Quantitative analysis.** Analysis of 2002 GCSE results and school performance tables and Annual School Census data was carried out to explore whether pupils in Specialist Schools in EiC areas make more progress than pupils at other schools, and whether Specialist Schools add value because of participation in the programme, or because 'better' schools are granted Specialist status.

The following papers which can be found at:

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-strands.cfm>

relate to the Specialist School Strand.

GCSE Attainment in Specialist Schools: a Multilevel Analysis, Philip Noden, Ian Schagen (2002)

A Qualitative Study of Specialist Schools in Excellence in Cities Areas, Philip Noden, Annette Braun, Hazel Pennell, Anne West (2004)

Specialist Schools – Further Quantitative Findings, Philip Noden, Annette Braun (2004)

5. Evaluation of the Beacon School Strand

The evaluation of Beacon Schools drew on two main data sources:

- **Quantitative data from the main EiC surveys.** A special set of analyses of the teacher and pupil survey data was carried out specifically for this Strand Study, dividing responses into those from Beacon Schools within EiC areas and those from non-Beacon Schools within these areas.
- **Qualitative data from six in-depth school case studies.** The case-study schools were secondary schools working in Phase 1 or Phase 2 EiC Partnership areas. Visits to these schools involved analysis of key documents, such as the school's application for Beacon status and programme of Beacon activities, and interviews with key Beacon School staff, responsible for coordinating and delivering provision.

This paper which can be found at:

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-strands.cfm>

relates to the Beacon School Strand:

Evaluation of the Beacon Schools Strand of the Excellence in Cities Policy, Susan McMeeking, Deborah Davies, Peter Rudd (2002)

6. Evaluation of the City Learning Centre Strand

The Strand Study of City Learning Centres involved:

- **Visits during 2002 and 2003 to nine CLCs** in seven Partnership areas (four CLCs in Phase 1 areas and five in Phase 2 areas). All of these were on the premises of, or in close proximity to, the host school building. The main aim of these visits was to gather information relating to the process and delivery of the CLCs, through structured discussions with CLC managers and key staff involved in the setting up and running of the Centres.
- **An email survey of 30 CLC managers**, in February 2002. A total of 26 questionnaires were returned from CLCs in 17 Partnerships, giving a response rate of 87 per cent.

The papers relating to CLCs can be found at:

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-strands.cfm>

and are listed below.

City Learning Centres Strand Study: Preliminary Report, Eleanor Stokes, Anne West (2001)

Survey of City Learning Centres, Anne West, Audrey Hind with Eleanor Stokes, John Wilkes (2002)

City Learning Centres Strand Study: Final Report, Eleanor Stokes, Anne West (2003)

7. Evaluation of the EiC Action Zone Strand

The evaluation used a **qualitative case-study** approach in order to evaluate the operation and perceived impact of the EiC Action Zones on the wider EiC Partnership. Case studies were carried out in **12 EiC Action Zones**. In order to select the EiC Action Zones to be used in the case studies, all EiC Action Zones were categorised as one of four models:

- Model 1: a single EiC Action Zone within an EiC Partnership
- Model 2: two or more EiC Action Zones within an EiC Partnership with one Director
- Model 3: an EiC Action Zone within an EiC Partnership that has an existing large EAZ (the large EAZs are now known as Transformation Zones)
- Model 4: two or more EiC Action Zones with distinct Zone Directors.

The research team selected three Model 1, three Model 2, four Model 3 and two Model 4 EiC Action Zones. These case studies were distributed evenly between Phase 1 and Phase 2 Partnerships and had a similar geographical distribution to that of Zones generally.

At least four key personnel were interviewed in each of the case-study Zones. These consisted of the Zone Director, headteachers of primary and secondary partners, and other key actors and agency contacts within the EiC Action Zones. Additional interviewees included other teachers, Action Zone Forum representatives, business partners, LEA officers and school governors. During visits to the EiC Action Zones, Action Plans and other documentation were collected, providing further data for the evaluation.

This Strand Study below, which is available at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-strands.cfm>

reports on this work.

EiC Action Zone Strand Study, Kathryn Tomlinson, David Pye, Tamsin Archer, Sarah Knight (2003)

8. Evaluation of school partnership working (combined Strand study)

At least three of the Strands that make up the EiC programme – Beacon Schools, Specialist Schools and Education Action Zones (EAZs) – actively encourage school partnership working as a way of raising standards.

This evaluation used a **qualitative case-study** approach in order to examine partnership working. **Six EiC case-study areas** were selected to be used as case-studies. The six EiC areas included three from Phase 1 of the programme, two from Phase 2 and one from Phase 3.

A total of 18 schools across the six EiC areas (and a minimum of two in each area) were visited by members of the research team. Some 38 school staff were interviewed (headteachers, senior managers and teachers involved with EiC) mostly individually and face-to-face, and the views of around 40 pupils were collected via small-group discussions.

The following paper can be found at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-partnerships.cfm>.

Excellence in School Partnership Working? Combined Strand Study,
Kerensa White, Peter Rudd (2003)

Appendix 6 The national datasets

1. Key Stage 3 attainment

National datasets linking pupils' Key Stage 3 results in 2001, 2002 and 2003 with their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively were made available to the evaluation consortium by DfES. This data included a wide range of pupil level background data, drawn from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC). This is an extremely rich dataset, and allowed detailed exploration of the factors which seemed to be most strongly related to attainment and progress.

For each pupil in the datasets, it was possible to determine whether the school attended was involved in EiC, and if so in which Phase, whether the school was a Specialist and/or Beacon School, and whether it was part of an Education Action Zone.⁷⁹

2. Key Stage 4 attainment

Similar national datasets linking pupils' end of Key Stage 4 results in 2001, 2002 and 2003 with their earlier attainment were made available to the evaluation consortium by DfES.

3. Financial data

We also had access to Section 52 financial data: this was used in conjunction with other sources of information on income and expenditure, such as Partnership plans and school questionnaire responses, when considering the allocation of resources to schools.

4. Recruitment and retention data

The evaluation team had access to selected data from the Database of Teacher Records, which were used to explore issues related to teacher recruitment and retention.

⁷⁹ Including EiC Action Zones

Appendix 7 The analysis techniques

1. **Multilevel modelling**

Much of the analysis undertaken as part of the national evaluation of EiC is intended to help to assess the links between involvement in the policy (and its Strands) with pupils' attainment and attitudes. Given the nature of the data one appropriate approach towards this is multilevel modelling. This section provides a brief discussion about multilevel modelling.

Multilevel modelling is a form of regression analysis which takes account of data which is grouped into similar clusters at different levels. For example, individual pupils are grouped into year groups or cohorts, and those cohorts are grouped within schools. There may be more in common between pupils within the same cohort than with other cohorts, and there may be elements of similarity between different cohorts in the same school. Multilevel modelling allows us to take account of this hierarchical structure of the data and to produce more accurate predictions, as well as estimates of the differences between pupils, between cohorts, and between schools.

As well as taking into account the structured nature of the data, the analysis also needed to take into account differences in background characteristics. In general, EiC schools were in more deprived areas than non-EiC schools. The analysis sought to identify which differences in achievement and attitudes between our samples were related to involvement in EiC rather than due to any background factors.

The technique also allowed us to take account of a range of background variables, some of which were measured at the pupil level, e.g. whether a pupil was entitled to Free School Meals, and some at the school level, e.g. whether or not the school was part of an EiC Action Zone.

Multilevel models can be used both for outcomes which can be treated as being measured on a continuous scale, such as point scores, and for dichotomous or binary outcomes such as achieving a particular threshold. In the latter case, results are reported in terms of odds ratios (see section 4 of this Appendix).

Multilevel models were used in two main ways within this evaluation. In some case we considered a single cohort, for example pupils completing Key Stage 3 in 2003, and compared groups of pupils within this cohort. We could then compare pupils in each Phase of EiC with pupils in non-EiC areas. We call this the single cohort approach.

The cohort comparison approach used data from two or more cohorts, for example pupils completing Key Stage 3 in 2001, 2002 or 2003. By extending the multilevel models, we can examine not only the overall difference between, say, Phase 1 area and non-EiC areas but also the way in which this difference changed over time.

2. Factor analysis

To simplify the interpretation of the data collected from the pupil survey, a factor analysis of the pupil questionnaires was carried out. Rather than looking at each question individually, factor analysis was used to group questions into related themes or ‘factors’. Each factor comprises a cluster of questions and represents a particular set of attitudes or self-reported behaviours.

3. Difference-in-differences

The ‘difference-in-differences’ methodology involved comparing outcomes in the ‘treatment’ group (in our case the group of schools taking part in EiC) with those in the comparison group before and after the policy was introduced. In other words, this analysis was looking at the change in test scores over time in the group of schools that became subject to the policy compared with those in a group of schools that did not become subject to the policy. The advantage of this approach is that it ‘differences out’ the effect of time-constant factors that may be correlated with the outcome of interest and whether the school is in the treatment group (even if these factors are unobserved – for example, socio-economic characteristics of the average intake of schools, which is only crudely measured in available indicators). Standard errors are appropriately corrected for clustering at the school level.

In addition, for most of the analyses, the ‘treatment’ and ‘comparison’ groups did not include all EiC and non-EiC schools. The sample of schools was trimmed to remove schools that looked too different from each other in the pre-EiC period in terms of their observable characteristics. This has been done using ‘propensity score matching’ and is based on school characteristics in the pre-EiC period. It is a stronger test of the existence of an EiC effect on outcome measures.

Further details can be found in Machin *et al.* (2003) and Emmerson *et al.* (2004).

4. Odds ratios

For an outcome measure which can take one of two values (often called a binary outcome), such as achieving or not achieving a particular level of attainment, many statistical techniques consider the odds of achieving the threshold. If p is the probability of achieving the threshold, the odds are:

$$\frac{p}{(1-p)}$$

For comparing groups, for example pupils attending EiC and non-EiC schools, we use the odds ratio, which is the odds for one group (e.g. pupils attending an EiC school) divided by the odds for the second group (pupils attending a non-EiC school).

If the odds ratio for comparing pupils in EiC and non-EiC schools is greater than 1, pupils attending EiC schools are more likely than those attending non-EiC schools to achieve the threshold under consideration. If the odds ratio is less than 1, pupils attending EiC schools are less likely to achieve this threshold.

A given odds ratio does not always translate into the same difference in probabilities between the groups. Suppose that 25 per cent of pupils attending an EiC school and 20 per cent of those attending non-EiC schools achieve a given threshold. There is a five percentage point difference between the groups, and the odds ratio is 1.33. If the percentages are 55 per cent and 50 per cent, again a five percentage point difference, the odds ratio is 1.22, and for 75 per cent and 70 per cent, the odds ratio is 1.29.

Odds ratio are not always easy to interpret as they depend on the actual percentages in each group as well as the difference between them. As a guide, Table A7.1 below gives the odds ratio for selected differences between two groups

Table A7.1 Odds ratios for selected differences between groups

Percentage in Group		Odds ratio
A	B	
30%	50%	2.33
35%	50%	1.86
40%	50%	1.50
45%	50%	1.22
50%	50%	1.00
55%	50%	0.82
60%	50%	0.67
65%	50%	0.54
70%	50%	0.43

References

EMMERSON, C., FRAYNE, C., McNALLY, S. and PELKONEN, P. (2004). Evaluation of Excellence in Cities Primary Pilot: Economic Evaluation of the Excellence in Cities Primary Pilot. October 2004. Unpublished report.

MACHIN, S., McNALLY, S. and MEGHIR, C. (2003). *Excellence in Cities: Evaluation of an Education Policy in Disadvantaged Areas* [online]. Available: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/secondary-eic-econ.cfm> [28 June, 2005].

Appendix 8 **EiC-related coefficients from the national multilevel models used in the evaluation**

Table A8.1 Key Stage 3 single cohort analysis (2003): key to EiC-related variables

Variable	Description
PHASE 1	Phase 1 EiC v. non-EiC
PHASE 2	Phase 2 EiC v. non-EiC
PHASE 3	Phase 3 EiC v. non-EiC
PLC	In PLC pilot v. not in PLC but in EiC
PH1BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 1 area v. non-Beacon Phase 1 school
PH2BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 2 area v. non-Beacon Phase 2 school
PH3BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 3 area v. non-Beacon Phase 3 school
OTHBEAC	Beacon School in non-EiC area v. non-Beacon non-EiC school
PH1EAZ	Phase 1 EAZ school v. Phase 1 non-EAZ school
PH2EAZ	Phase 2 EAZ school v. Phase 2 non-EAZ school
PH3EAZ	Phase 3 EAZ school v. Phase 3 non-EAZ school
OTHEAZ	Non-EiC EAZ school v. non-EiC non-EAZ school
SPDES98	Specialist School designated in September 1998 or earlier v. other Specialist Schools
PH1SPEC	Phase 1 Specialist School v. Phase 1 non-Specialist School
PH2SPEC	Phase 2 Specialist School v. Phase 2 non-Specialist School
PH3SPEC	Phase 3 Specialist School v. Phase 3 non-Specialist School
OTHSPEC	Non-EiC Specialist School v. non-EiC non-Specialist School

Notes: Phase 1 Specialist Schools include all Specialist Schools in Phase 1 areas, regardless of when designated or whether designated as a result of a priority application, and similarly for other Phases

EAZs refer to statutory Education Action Zones. No significant findings were identified in relation to EiC Action Zones.

Table A8.2 Key Stage 3 single cohort analysis (2003): summary of significant EiC-related coefficients

Variable	Average level		Mathematics level		English level		Science level	
	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval
PHASE 1								
PHASE 2								
PHASE 3								
PLC								
PH1BEAC	0.397	(0.108,0.686)	0.351	(0.030,0.671)				
PH2BEAC	0.508	(0.052,0.963)						
PH3BEAC	0.833	(0.068,1.599)						
OTHBEAC	0.364	(0.170,0.558)	0.318	(0.103,0.532)	0.467	(0.133,0.800)	0.292	(0.080,0.504)
PH1EAZ								
PH2EAZ								
PH3EAZ								
OTHEAZ								
SPDES98	0.183	(0.071,0.295)	0.153	(0.029,0.276)			0.192	(0.033,0.352)
PH1SPEC								
PH2SPEC								
PH3SPEC								
OTHSPEC								

Table A8.3 Key Stage 3 cohort comparison analysis (2001, 2002 and 2003): key to EiC-related variables

Variable	Description
PHASE 1	Phase 1 EiC v. non-EiC
PHASE 2	Phase 2 EiC v. non-EiC
PHASE 3	Phase 3 EiC v. non-EiC
PH1YR	Additional effect in Phase 1 areas in 2003
PH2YR	Additional effect in Phase 2 areas in 2003
PH3YR	Additional effect in Phase 3 areas in 2003
PLC	In PLC pilot v. not in PLC but in EiC
PLCYR	Additional PLC effect in 2003
PH1BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 1 area v. non-Beacon Phase 1 school
PH2BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 2 area v. non-Beacon Phase 2 school
PH3BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 3 area v. non-Beacon Phase 3 school
OTHBEAC	Beacon School in non-EiC area v. non-Beacon non-EiC school
PH1EAZ	Phase 1 EAZ school v. Phase 1 non-EAZ school
PH2EAZ	Phase 2 EAZ school v. Phase 2 non-EAZ school
PH3EAZ	Phase 3 EAZ school v. Phase 3 non-EAZ school
OTHEAZ	Non-EiC EAZ school v. non-EiC non-EAZ school
SPDES98	Specialist School designated in September 1998 or earlier v. other Specialist Schools
PH1SPEC	Phase 1 Specialist School v. Phase 1 non-Specialist School
PH2SPEC	Phase 2 Specialist School v. Phase 2 non-Specialist School
PH3SPEC	Phase 3 Specialist School v. Phase 3 non-Specialist School
OTHSPEC	Non-EiC Specialist School v. non-EiC non-Specialist School

Notes Phase 1 Specialist Schools include all Specialist Schools in Phase 1 areas, regardless of when designated or whether designated as a result of a priority application, and similarly for other Phases

EAZs refer to statutory Education Action Zones. No significant findings were identified in relation to EiC Action Zones.

Table A8.4 Key Stage 3 cohort comparison analysis (2001, 2002 and 2003): summary of significant EiC-related coefficients

	Average level		Mathematics level		English level		Science level	
	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval
PHASE 1	-	-			0.473	(0.235,0.710)	-	-
PHASE 2	-	-			0.331	(0.122,0.541)	-	-
PHASE 3	-	-			-	-	-	-
PH1YR2	-	-			-	-	-	-
PH2YR2	-	-	-0.167	(-0.284,-0.049)	-	-	-	-
PH3YR2	-	-			-	-	-	-
PH1YR3	-	-			-	-	-	-
PH2YR3	-0.187	(-0.289,-0.085)	-0.198	(-0.310,-0.085)	-	-	-0.174	(-0.286,-0.062)
PH3YR3	-	-			-0.253	(-0.465,-0.042)	-	-
PLC	-	-			-	-	-	-
PLCYR2	-	-	-0.178	(-0.297,-0.059)	-	-	-	-
PLCYR3	-0.12	(-.229,-0.011)			-	-	-0.271	(-0.393,-0.149)
PH1BEAC	0.368	(0.137,0.599)			0.449	(0.114,0.783)	0.299	(0.031,0.567)
PH2BEAC	0.618	(0.238,0.998)	0.538	(0.101,0.974)	0.662	(0.128,1.196)	0.531	(0.093,0.968)
PH3BEAC	-	-			-	-	-	-
OTHBEAC	0.388	(0.236,0.549)	0.379	(0.189,0.569)	0.415	(0.191,0.639)	0.367	(0.180,0.555)
PH1EAZ	-	-			-	-	-	-
PH2EAZ	-	-			-	-	-	-
PH3EAZ	-	-			-	-	-	-
OTHEAZ	-	-			-	-	-	-
SPDES98	-	-	0.148	0.037,0.258	-	-	0.145	(0.033,0.257)
PH1SPEC	0.232	0.046,0.418	-	-	-	-	0.259	(0.043,0.474)
PH2SPEC	-	-			-	-	-	-
PH3SPEC	-	-			-	-	-	-
OTHSPEC	-	-			-	-	-	-

Table A8.5 Key Stage 4 single cohort analysis (2003): key to EiC-related variables

Variable	Description
PHASE 1	Phase 1 EiC v. non-EiC
PHASE 2	Phase 2 EiC v. non-EiC
PHASE 3	Phase 3 EiC v. non-EiC
PLC	In PLC pilot v. not in PLC but in EiC
PH1BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 1 area v. non-Beacon Phase 1 school
PH2BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 2 area v. non-Beacon Phase 2 school
PH3BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 3 area v. non-Beacon Phase 3 school
OTHBEAC	Beacon School in non-EiC area v. non-Beacon non-EiC school
PH1EAZ	Phase 1 EAZ school v. Phase 1 non-EAZ school
PH2EAZ	Phase 2 EAZ school v. Phase 2 non-EAZ school
PH3EAZ	Phase 3 EAZ school v. Phase 3 non-EAZ school
OTHEAZ	Non-EiC EAZ school v. non-EiC non-EAZ school
SPDES98	Specialist School designated in September 1998 or earlier v. other Specialist Schools
PH1SPEC	Phase 1 Specialist School v. Phase 1 non-Specialist School
PH2SPEC	Phase 2 Specialist School v. Phase 2 non-Specialist School
PH3SPEC	Phase 3 Specialist School v. Phase 3 non-Specialist School
OTHSPEC	Non-EiC Specialist School v. non-EiC non-Specialist School

Notes Phase 1 Specialist Schools include all Specialist Schools in Phase 1 areas, regardless of when designated or whether designated as a result of a priority application, and similarly for other Phases

EAZs refer to statutory Education Action Zones. No significant findings were identified in relation to EiC Action Zones.

Table A8.6 Key Stage 4 single cohort analysis (2003): summary of significant EiC-related coefficients

Variable	5 good GCSEs		Capped score		Uncapped score		English		Mathematics		Science	
	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval
PHASE 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.091	(0.028,0.155)	-	-
PHASE 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PHASE 3	-	-	-	-	-1.062	(-2.113,-0.011)	-0.075	(-0.147,-0.004)	-	-	-	-
PLC	1.206	(1.001,1.453)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PH1BEAC	-	-	-	-	1.234	(0.132,2.336)	-	-	-	-	0.15	(0.016,0.284)
PH2BEAC	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.179	(0.030,0.327)	-	-	-	-
PH3BEAC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.399	(0.036,0.761)
OTHBEAC	1.236	(1.079,1.414)	0.615	(0.218,1.012)	1.386	(0.611,2.161)	-	-	0.063	(0.001,0.126)	0.121	(0.031,0.212)
PH1EAZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PH2EAZ	1.418	(1.034,1.946)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PH3EAZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHEAZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.069	(-0.127,-0.011)	-	-	-	-
SPDES98	1.251	(1.117,1.402)	0.559	(0.220,0.897)	1.463	(0.805,2.121)	0.046	(0.009,0.083)	0.077	(0.041,0.113)	-	-
PH1SPEC	-	-	-	-	1.478	(0.521,2.435)	-	-	-	-	-	-
PH2SPEC	-	-	-	-	2.274	(1.143,3.405)	-	-	-	-	-0.199	(-0.329,-0.068)
PH3SPEC	1.494	(1.071,2.083)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHSPEC	1.160	(1.048,1.285)	-	-	0.950	(0.342,1.559)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Coefficients associated with five good GCSEs are odds ratios.

Table A8.7 Key Stage 4 cohort comparison analysis (2002 and 2003): key to EiC-related variables

Variable	Description
PHASE 1	Phase 1 EiC v. non-EiC
PHASE 2	Phase 2 EiC v. non-EiC
PHASE 3	Phase 3 EiC v. non-EiC
PH1YR	Additional effect in Phase 1 areas in 2003
PH2YR	Additional effect in Phase 2 areas in 2003
PH3YR	Additional effect in Phase 3 areas in 2003
PLC	In PLC pilot v. not in PLC but in EiC
PLCYR	Additional PLC effect in 2003
PH1BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 1 area v. non-Beacon Phase 1 school
PH2BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 2 area v. non-Beacon Phase 2 school
PH3BEAC	Beacon School in Phase 3 area v. non-Beacon Phase 3 school
OTHBEAC	Beacon School in non-EiC area v. non-Beacon non-EiC school
PH1EAZ	Phase 1 EAZ school v. Phase 1 non-EAZ school
PH2EAZ	Phase 2 EAZ school v. Phase 2 non-EAZ school
PH3EAZ	Phase 3 EAZ school v. Phase 3 non-EAZ school
OTHEAZ	Non-EiC EAZ school v. non-EiC non-EAZ school
SPDES98	Specialist School designated in September 1998 or earlier v. other Specialist Schools
PH1SPEC	Phase 1 Specialist School v. Phase 1 non-Specialist School
PH2SPEC	Phase 2 Specialist School v. Phase 2 non-Specialist School
PH3SPEC	Phase 3 Specialist School v. Phase 3 non-Specialist School
OTHSPEC	Non-EiC Specialist School v. non-EiC non-Specialist School

Notes Phase 1 Specialist Schools include all Specialist Schools in Phase 1 areas, regardless of when designated or whether designated as a result of a priority application, and similarly for other Phases

EAZs refer to statutory Education Action Zones. No significant findings were identified in relation to EiC Action Zones.

Table A8.8 Key Stage 4 cohort comparison analysis (2002 and 2003): summary of significant EiC-related coefficients

Variable	5 good GCSEs		Capped score		Uncapped score		English		Mathematics		Science	
	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval	Coefficient	95% confidence interval
PHASE 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.097	(0.042,0.152)		
PHASE 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
PHASE 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
PH1YR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
PH2YR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.046	(-0.076,-0.015)	-0.076	(-0.120,-0.032)
PH3YR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.059	(-0.108,-0.011)	-0.045	(-0.089,-0.002)		
PLC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
PLCYR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
PH1BEAC	1.169	(1.065, 1.283)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-0.128	(-0.177,-0.078)
PH2BEAC	-	-	0.634	(0.130,1.137)	1.241	(0.335,2.147)	0.085	(0.009,0.160)			0.149	(0.055,0.243)
PH3BEAC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
OTHBEAC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
PH1EAZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
PH2EAZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
PH3EAZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
OTHEAZ	-	-	-0.426	(-0.750,-0.102)	-	-	-	-				
SPDES98	1.225	(1.109,1.225)	0.77	(0.560,0.980)	1.531	(0.979,2.083)	0.051	(0.020,0.081)	0.066	(0.035,0.096)	0.054	(0.016,0.092)
PH1SPEC	1.188	(1.029,1.372)	0.483	(0.073,0.893)	1.361	(0.588,2.134)						
PH2SPEC					1.726	(0.812,2.640)						
PH3SPEC	1.423		1.176	(0.390,1.962)	1.89	(0.448,3.332)						
OTHSPEC	1.175				0.62	(0.127,1.114)						

Note: Coefficients associated with five good GCSEs are odds ratios.

Appendix 9 **EiC-related coefficients from the difference-in-differences model for Mathematics at Key Stage 3**

Table 9.1 Probability of attaining level 5 or above in Mathematics, full sample (2003 and 1999)

	(1) Basic EiC*policy on; EiC; year dummies	(2) Controls for Key Stage 2, gender, secondary school characteristics (1999); primary school characteristics	(3) All controls and school fixed effects	(4) As (3) Boys only	(5) As (3) Girls only
EiC*policyon	0.034 (0.003)	0.019 (0.002)	0.019 (0.002)	0.018 (0.003)	0.019 (0.003)
Phase 1	-0.166 (0.009)	-0.028 (0.007)			
Phase 2	-0.122 (0.009)	-0.028 (0.007)			
Phase 3	-0.113 (0.012)	-0.024 (0.007)			
Cluster 1	-0.182 (0.023)	-0.028 (0.003)			
Cluster 2	-0.120 (0.025)	-0.029 (0.009)			
Number of pupils	1,122,164	1,122,164	1,122,164	567,991	554,044
Number of schools	3157	3157	3157	3014	3030

Notes In column 1, controls are included for EiC Phase and year. In column 2, additional controls are included for the pupils' prior attainment (at the end of key Stage 2), gender, primary school characteristics and pre-EiC secondary school characteristics. In column 3, school fixed effects are also included. Columns 4 and 5 repeat the most detailed specification (Column 3) for boys and girls respectively. For further details, see Machin et al. (2005).
EiC*policyon indicates the effect of being educated in an EiC school over a time period in which the EiC policy was in operation.
Standard errors in brackets.

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