



A report on schools: progress in the last ten years and challenges ahead

30th November 2006

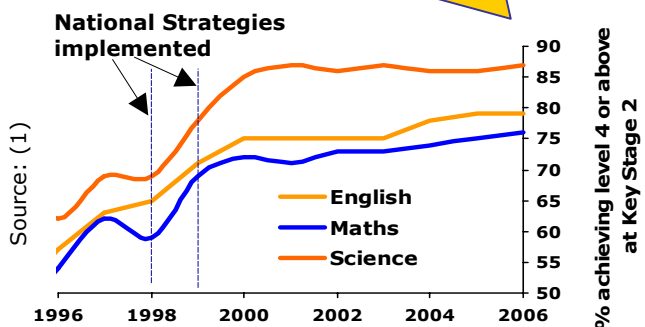


Since 1997, the performance of schools has risen markedly, with higher standards – and reductions in failing schools and local authorities

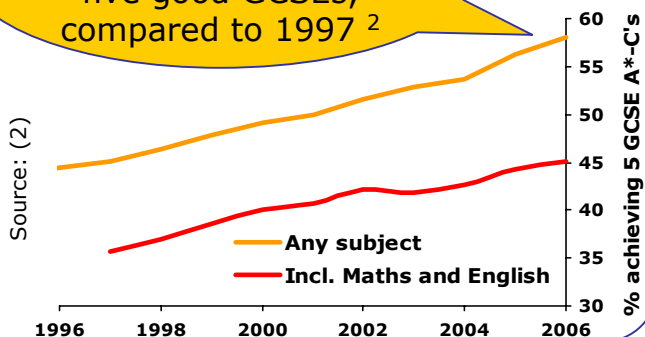
Schools since 1997	System reform
Curriculum	Personalising learning
Case studies	

Rising standards

An extra 100,000 11 year olds have the mastery of English they need to succeed at secondary school ¹

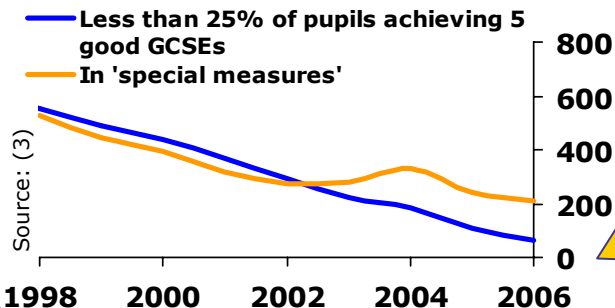


25% more young people now achieve five good GCSEs, compared to 1997 ²



Declining number of failing schools

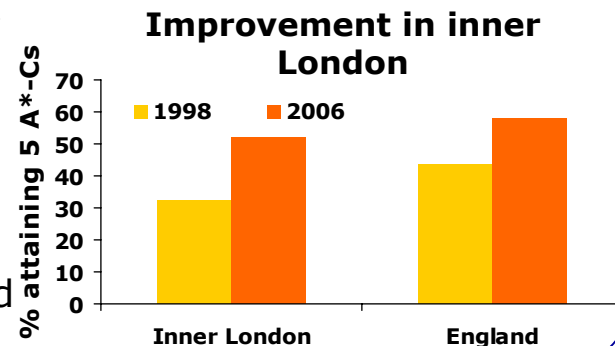
Number of failing secondary schools



The number of schools below this 25% floor target has fallen from 616 in 1997, to around 60 in 2006. Whereas the number achieving over 70% has increased from around 80, to nearly 600 ³

Declining number of failing local authorities

- In 1998, 170,000 GCSE candidates studied in local authorities in which less than 40% of pupils achieved five good GCSEs. In 2006, no candidates studied in such local authorities ²
- In 1998, only two of the 13 inner-London boroughs had 45% of students achieving five good GCSEs. In 2006, they all achieved this milestone ²



(1) National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 2 in England, DfES, 2006 (2) GCSE and Equivalent Results and Associated Value Added Measures in England (97/98 to 05/06), DfES (3) DfES

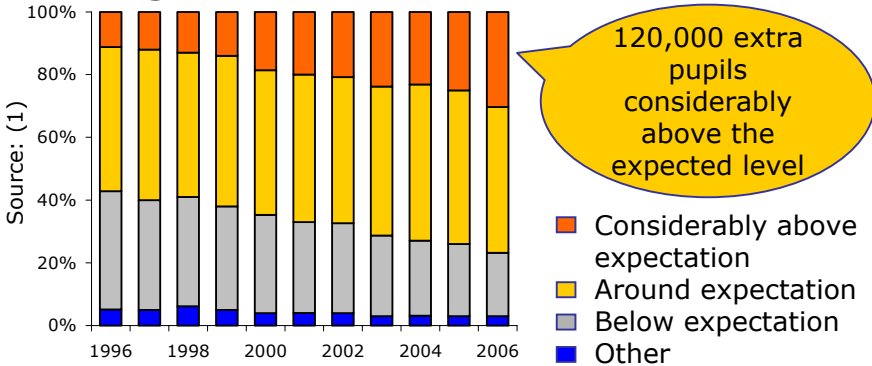
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Other less well-known measures also illustrate the progress that can be seen in schools

There have been performance **improvements across the board**, not only among those close to target boundaries ¹

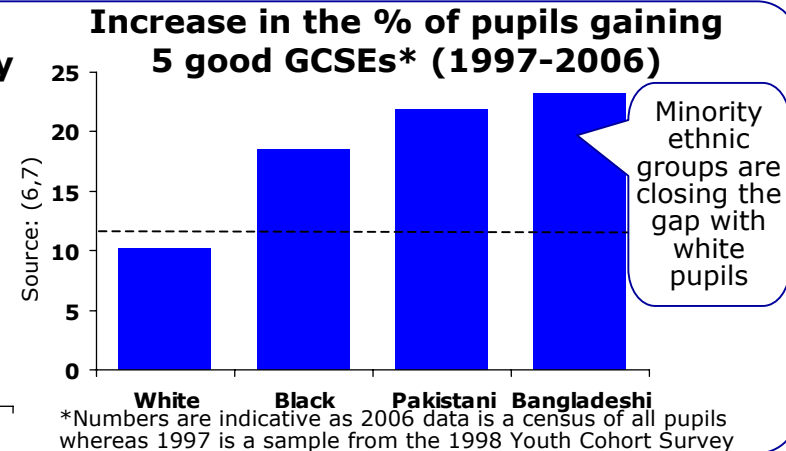
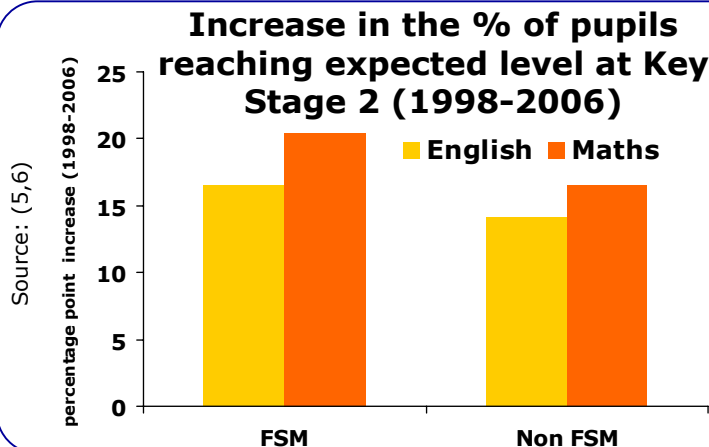
A series of recent studies suggests that **underlying standards have improved**

Age 14, levels attained in Maths



- One study suggests primary school pupils now have a **spelling age 12 to 18 months higher than in 1975**²
- GCSE students use better punctuation, more complicated sentences and a wider vocabulary than comparable students in 1994 ³

Groups whose attainment has been **below average in the past**, have achieved the **greatest improvement in performance**



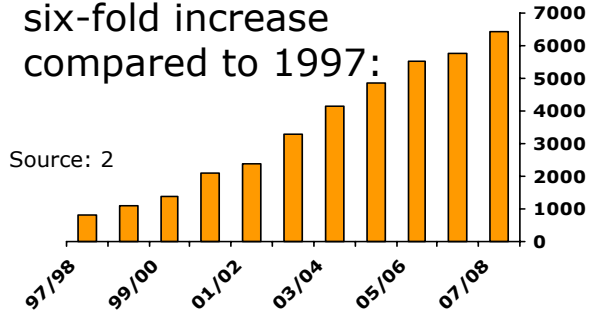
(1) DfES, 2006 (2) *Graded Word Spelling Test*, Hodder Murray, 2006 (3) Massey et al. *Variations in aspects of writing in 16+ English examinations*, Cambridge Assessment Research Matters, 2005 (5) *Trends in Attainment Gaps*, DfES, 2005 (6) *National Curriculum assessment by pupil characteristics*, DfES, 2006 (7) *Youth Cohort Study*, DfES, 2005

Investment and reform, with the specialist schools movement at the forefront, have both played an important role in raising achievement

Schools since 1997	System reform
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Schools have more and better resources

- Funding per pupil has doubled since 1997 ¹
- Capital investment shows a six-fold increase compared to 1997:

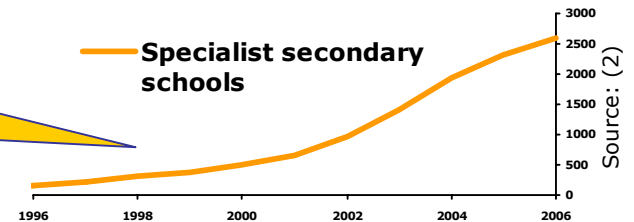


- Since 1987, **sponsors have contributed over £250 million** to city technology colleges, specialist schools and academies ³
- The number of **support staff employed has doubled since 1997** ⁴
- The number of teachers has increased by 36,000 ⁵

Government reforms have played a role in improving standards

- The national **numeracy and literacy strategies** have raised standards in primary schools⁶
- The number of **specialist schools** has risen dramatically³

The percentage of secondary schools that are specialist has increased from 8% in 1997, to 80% now



- In specialist schools 61% of student achieve 5 A*-C GCSEs, compared to 48% in non-specialist schools ³
- In disadvantaged areas, the probability of gaining at least five good GCSEs including English and Maths is 7% higher in specialist schools ³
- The number of **Academies** has also risen sharply with 46 open today ³
- Pupil GCSE performance in Academies has been growing faster than the national average, with 40% achieving five good GCSEs this year compared to 21% in the Academy predecessor schools in 2000⁷
- Improvements in attendance has been greater in **Excellence in Cities** schools than other similar schools ⁸

(1) *The Budget*, HMT, 2006 (2) DfES, 2006 (3) Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, 2006 (4) DfES, 2006 (5) *Teacher numbers in the maintained sector*, DfES, 2006 (6) *Primary National Strategy: an evaluation of its impact in primary schools 2004/05*, Ofsted, 2005 (7) Department for Education and Skills, 2006 (8) *Evaluation of the Excellence in Cities Policy*, NFER, 2003.

However, substantial challenges remain – and new challenges have emerged

A number of longstanding challenges remain

- Although the number of failing schools has halved since 1997 (despite Ofsted raising the bar on inspections), **a persistent minority of schools continue to under perform**
- **Standards** could be higher in a number of areas:
 - Progress on attainment at age 11 has slowed¹
 - The percentage of pupils that fail to achieve level 2 functional literacy and numeracy at 16 remains too high¹
- **Pupil background** continues to have a significant impact on attainment:
 - Parents' income and socio-economic classification strongly affects GCSE attainment²
 - Girls continue to perform better than boys, with this gap being most pronounced at secondary school¹
- The percentage of **17 year-olds** in education or training remains below the OECD average³. In 2005, 11% of 17 year olds were not in education, employment or training⁴

New challenges have emerged in the past decade

- **Globalisation** is changing the skill set that the education system must provide:
 - Increasing demand for higher level skills⁵
 - Transferable 'life skills', such as communication and teamwork, are increasingly identified by employers as being important⁶
- The majority of 11 year olds below expected levels now belong to one or more **intractable groups** with complex problems (e.g. special educational needs, low parental income)⁷
- **The public's expectation** of the level of service provided by the public sector is increasing

The UK has developed a clear approach to school reform with accountability, choice and autonomy. Other countries are following similar approaches

Schools since 1997	System reform
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Accountability for minimum standards

- **Targets** focussed on improving the educational outcomes of all students
- **Strengthened school autonomy** – greater freedoms for schools (e.g. over budgets and curriculum)
- **A proportionate inspection system** – failing and coasting schools challenged, inspection focused on key aspects of performance, such as leadership

Open, dynamic school system

- **A diverse and open school system** - welcoming new providers & partners through Academies and Trusts
- **A new role for local authorities** – commissioners not providers, champions for parents and pupils

Better Schools for All Pupils

Support for schools and teachers

- **Specialist schools** - developing and spreading expertise through the system
- **Workforce development** - teachers continually developing skills and the increased use of classroom assistants
- **Supporting school leaders** – through School Improvement Partners and the National College for School Leadership

Parents & pupils given choice and influence

- **A system centred on parents and pupils** – funding following parents' choices, parents offered greater influence over education within schools, and regular engagement about their children's performance
- **Supporting parental choice** – ensuring parents have the information and support they need to make informed choices

System reform will continue with stronger partnerships between schools and greater involvement of external partners

Schools since 1997	System reform
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Independent schools are getting more involved in the state sector

- We are already seeing independent schools sponsoring Academies e.g. Belvedere, an independent school in Liverpool, has applied to become an Academy with sponsorship from HSBC and the Girls' Day School Trust
- There are benefits to independent schools of partnership: greater breadth of staff experience, sharing of best practice in teaching and non-teaching areas (e.g. financial management) and the opportunity to spread success to a wider student base

Collaboration with external partners is set to continue

- Numerous organisations and individuals are providing funding and expertise through the Academies and Specialist Schools programmes
- There are clear benefits to both sides. Schools benefit from pupil and staff skills being developed. Partners have the opportunity to give something back to the community and benefit from improved motivation and retention of staff
- A number of partners, including businesses and universities are already coming forward to lend their energy and expertise in supporting Trust schools

The Education and Inspections Act will enable branded chains of strong schools to further develop

- Several new chains of schools – linked through governance arrangements and a shared ethos – are already emerging. For example, Thomas Telford City Technology College has established two academies and organisations like the United Learning Trust manage numerous Academy projects across the country, enabling them to share best practice across schools
- The Education and Inspection Act will support this further by enabling single Trusts to work with multiple schools

The Executive Head model is an important way of building strong partnerships

- Executive heads break the traditional "one school, one head" model of leadership in which one individual oversees numerous schools, each with a separate head.² The model allows multiple schools to benefit from the strategic vision of a visionary head
- This has successfully turned-around schools in Birmingham and Gloucester (the Ninestiles Federation) and Lewisham (the Knights Academy federation with Haberdashers Aske's City Technology College)

Within a diverse system, there is still a need for a common national curriculum that equips students for life, work and study in the 21st century

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30 years after Callaghan's Ruskin speech, the **case for a national curriculum** is just as clear

Economic and social changes mean that we need **to prepare students for life and work** in the 21st century

- 30 years ago last month, James Callaghan argued for society's right to have say in what is taught in schools – through establishing a 'core curriculum of basic knowledge'
- A national curriculum is just as important today to delivering our goals of a **prosperous, cohesive and fair society**, by:
 1. Clarifying each pupil's entitlement to the skills & knowledge which will enable them to play a full role in society regardless of the educational institutions they attend
 2. Defining expectations of **basic universal standards** for pupils and school performance that can be assessed
 3. Ensuring **flexibility** in responding to individual pupil's needs and balancing **breadth and depth**

Whilst at school every young person is entitled to access and develop a basic understanding about important **subjects, general knowledge, cultural knowledge, skills** for the work place and adult life, and **attitudes**.

Employability skills are increasingly important for individuals' success in an ever more **global economy**

- Customer and inter-personal skills will become more important as services involving personal interaction rise as a proportion of employment
- Creativity and innovation are predicted to be the most valued employee skills in 10 years time

Increasing differences in **personal and social** skills are affecting **social mobility**

- Differences between socio-economic groups in social skills emerge at the age of 7 and influence income and employment over and above academic results
- Personal and social skills are now 33 times more important than before in determining life chances ¹– at a time where there are growing differences between families' capacities to develop these skills in the home

Children with high **social skills** live **healthier & well-balanced** lives

Looking ahead, it is critical that all schools help their pupils acquire a broad and rich set of "life skills"

'Life skills' are the general and specific skills and attitudes that are important for coping with adult life

All young people should have the opportunity to develop their life skills

- By "life skills" we mean
 - General **personal, learning and thinking skills** ¹:

Team working	Creative thinking	Self management	<i>E.g. self motivation & confidence</i>
Independent enquiry	Reflective Learning	Effective participation	

E.g. analysis and evaluation

E.g. self-expression and social awareness

- **Specific skills**, such as cooking, and financial capability
- The right **attitudes and behaviours** for adult life, such as tolerance and respect for others
- As well as through formal instruction, life skills can be developed through **active participation**: structured classroom, extra-curricular and out-of-school activities can all foster life skills

Schools need to develop these skills alongside, and as part of, the teaching of literacy, numeracy and traditional academic subjects

- Most pupils do develop life skills at school, through classroom or out of school activities
- However this does not always happen consistently
- To address this, we will ensure that all young people are ready for further study and the world of work and have opportunities to:

Contribute to the wider community	Prepare for the world of work	Prepare to be an independent adult
by participating in an artistic or creative endeavour	by undertaking work experience	by learning to cook healthy meals
by understanding the importance of sustainable development	by understanding the importance of life-long learning	by learning to be confident learners and communicators, e.g. contributing to a formal debate
by volunteering for community service	by working in a team	by being financially aware

Students from 14-19 will soon have a broad portfolio of curricular choices open to them, including Specialised Diplomas, GCSEs, A levels and the IB

Schools since 1997	System reform
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A radical strategy of reform of 14-19 qualifications will deliver a credible route which combines general and applied education and more stretching A levels and GCSEs

- **Specialised diplomas** are being designed to deliver **the first effective mixed general and applied education route** this country has see:
 - We expect at least 50 000 students to start courses in ICT, engineering, construction, care and media in 2008. Nine further diplomas will be available to students by 2013
 - Skills Academies will ensure best-practice and continual improvement in each of the 14 areas
- **A levels and GCSEs have been strengthened** to guarantee basic standards for all and to provide stretch for the most gifted
 - The key measure for performance at GCSE (5 A*-Cs) now includes Maths and English to emphasise the importance that all students master the basics
 - A levels are being strengthened by introducing more stretching questions which require deeper subject knowledge and understanding
 - A new A* will recognise achievement in this more demanding exam

This will be now be complemented with access to the IB diploma in every local area - increasing choice and providing breadth for 16-19 year olds

- **Extending access to the IB** will provide increased choice to pupils
 - The IB provides **breadth** whilst ensuring core knowledge: every student must study English, maths, a science, a language and a humanities subject
 - The content also puts emphasis on **life skills** through a theory of knowledge course and participation in community service
- By 2010 at least **one state school or college in every local authority will offer the Diploma**
 - DfES will provide funding to the 87 local authorities that do not currently have a maintained institution offering the IB, principally through a sixth form institution
 - The hope that this choice is extended to every 14-19 partnership in the years that follow

Our best schools are tailoring education to the needs of pupils, with the aim that every learner progresses to achieve their full potential

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Evidence shows that **when regular classroom assessment is used to adapt teaching and learning**, this results in **gains of between half and three quarters of a level at Key Stage 2**, with even greater gains for lower-attaining pupils, making it one of the **highest impact innovations in teaching and learning**¹

PERSONALISED LEARNING: PROGRESS FOR ALL²

Individual progress targets set against high national expectations

Regular monitoring of progress

- Frequent formal assessment e.g. tests, essays
- Classroom techniques that involve pupils in understanding where they are now and where they are trying to get to

Assessment then used to adapt teaching and learning

Learners receive specific feedback about how to improve

Teachers adapt approaches to meet learner needs based on evidence of what works

At Cramlington Community High School in Northumberland pupils have an individual target for each subject, every term

At Champion High School in Northamptonshire, half termly assessments are used to give feedback to pupils and parents

At Jo Richardson Community School in Dagenham, pupils will mark each other's work to develop understanding of what good work looks like

Whenever work is marked at Seven Kings High School in Ilford, pupils are given clear comments about how to improve including goals for future work

At Preston Manor High School in Brent, every pupil benefits from targeted group support, with interventions designed to cover the full spectrum of achievement

Rigorous ongoing assessment linked to evidence-based teaching

- Teachers have high expectations for all pupils, regardless of their situation
- Pupils and their parents are involved in setting learning goals
- Pupils and their parents understand what level they should be reaching and how their current performance compares to this
- Teachers use assessment information to identify issues and learning needs
- Pupils have a personal understanding about what they need to improve to achieve their potential
- Teachers continuously develop and apply their knowledge and skills, based on robust evidence about what works well, drawn from practice and from wider research

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School leaders have a vital role to play and we will continue to develop strong leadership in schools

We will need our school leaders to establish a culture that supports personalised learning

Whilst personalised learning is not a new concept, it does represent a cultural shift in the system. We will depend on school leaders to support pupils and teachers through:

- Setting a clear vision about learning and behaviour, with a culture of high expectations and progress for all pupils
- Ensuring systems are in place to track pupil progress and identify those at risk of underachieving
- Putting staff development as a priority and making space within the timetable for collaboration, peer observation and development
- Being creative and flexible with the timetable and deployment of staff
- Ensuring pupils have the opportunity to discuss their progress and learning with an adult (e.g. an academic mentor)
- Seeking opportunities to involve pupils, demonstrate their views are valued, and get their feedback about all aspects of school life
- Investing in relationships with parents and creating opportunities for regular, personal communication

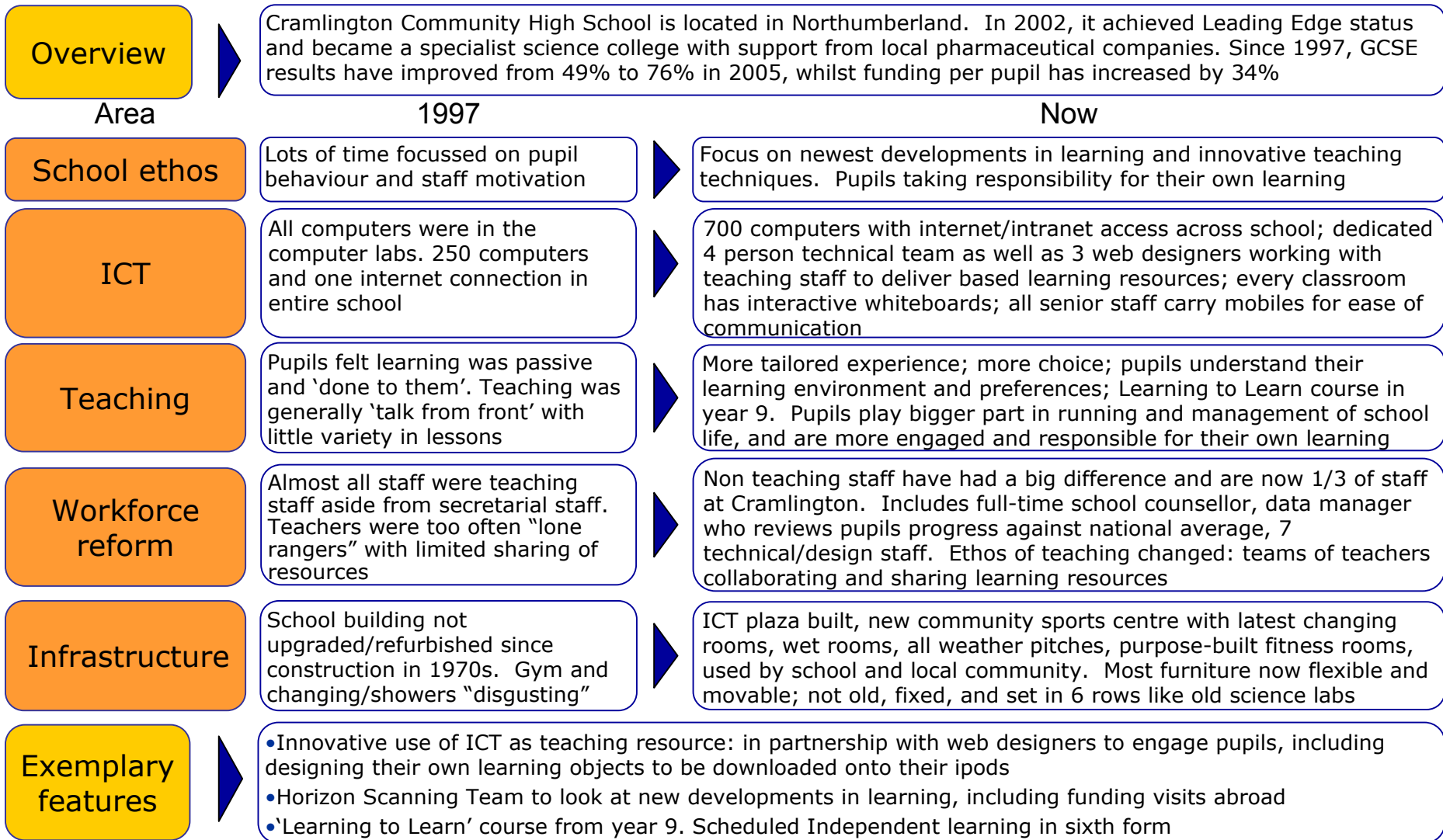
To deliver on these and other challenges we will continue to develop strong leadership in schools

- We know that strong leadership is key to success: In Ofsted judgements between 2005-06, 97% of 'outstanding' schools were led by 'outstanding' leadership and management teams. By contrast, all of the one third of schools that are 'unsatisfactory' or 'poor' have 'unsatisfactory'/'poor' leadership and management teams
- We should continue to develop skills in our leaders of the future, for example through accelerated development programmes for young, talented individuals
- We will support Heads to spread their responsibilities, both within their school and through encouraging new models of leadership across schools, for example:
 - School Business Managers, taking away head's direct responsibility for finances, health and safety
 - Chief Executives overseeing/playing consultative role for multiple schools – through federations or schemes like National Leaders of Education
 - Executive Director leading multi-agency school "campuses"¹

(1) For example, the Darlington Community Village

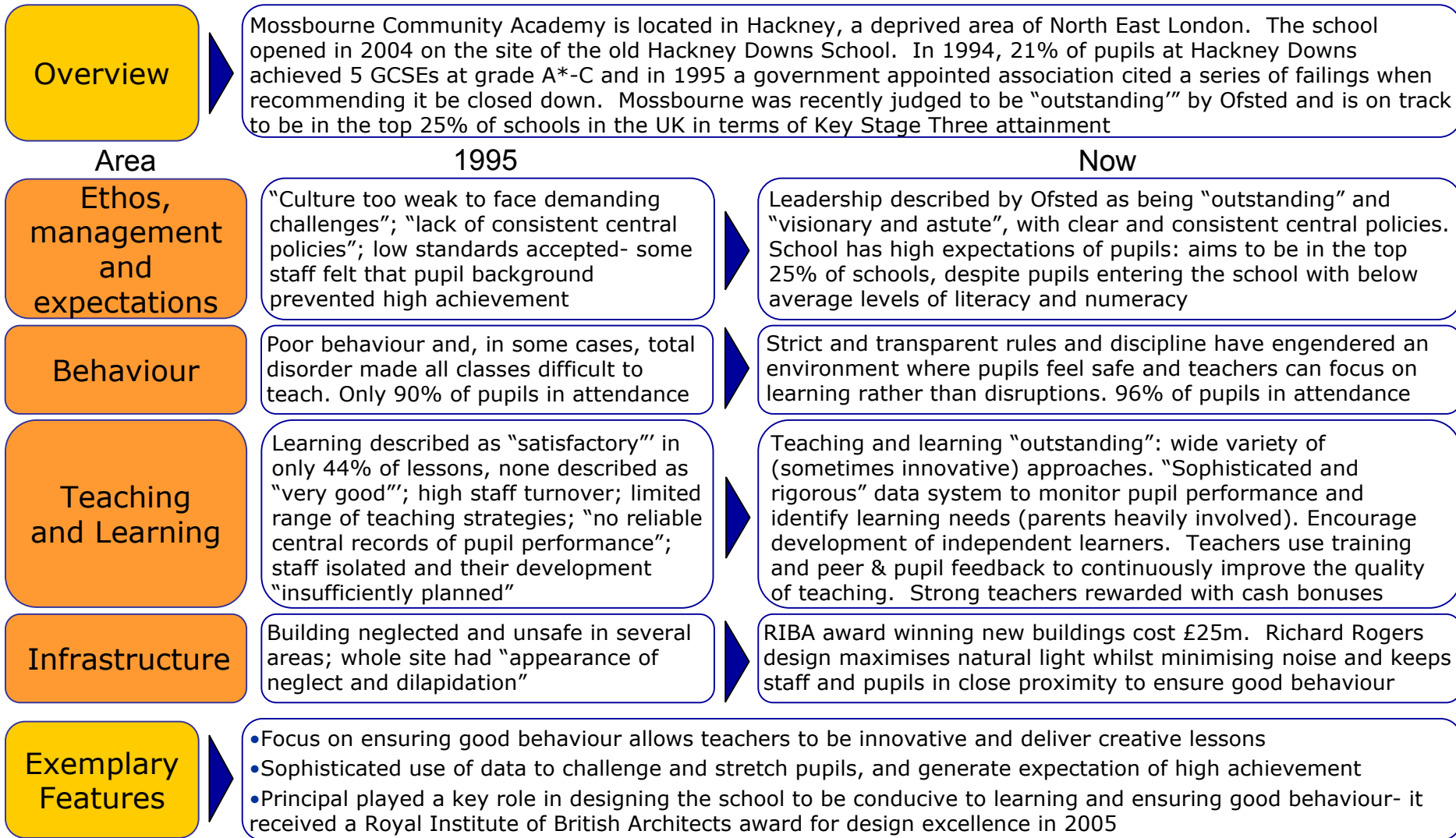
Cramlington Community High School has developed a strong ethos around allowing pupils to take responsibility for their own learning

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Mossbourne Academy, on the site of Hackney Downs School, has focussed on behaviour and raising expectations to increase attainment in a deprived area

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Pupils have access to award winning facilities at the new Mossbourne Community Academy in Hackney



Preston Manor High School has devised targeted approaches to ensuring all pupils reach their full potential, with a focus on literacy standards

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Overview

Preston Manor High School is a mixed, multi-racial comprehensive with around 1400 students. Pupils enter the school with average attainment, but a higher than average proportion are entitled to free school meals. The school acquired specialist status in Science and Maths in 2002, and Leading Edge status in 2003. In 1997, 43% of 15 year olds at Preston Manor achieved 5+ GCSEs at grade A*-C and Ofsted described the school as "very effective". In 2005, the school was judged to be "outstanding" and 71% of students achieved 5+ good GCSEs

Area

1997

Now

Focus and management

Some "complacency"; pupils not engaged in shaping school policies

School is accountable and more "reflective" as a result. Has a school council that has brought about significant changes and was involved in the recent process of recruiting a new head teacher

Personalising learning

Two years into the school's campaign to dramatically improve literacy: beginning to monitor standards and devise intervention strategies

Progress of pupils in all subjects monitored closely by data expert, used to determine where to devote resources. Most advanced in English: smaller classes, summer schools and reading clubs used to boost literacy skills for underperforming pupils. Detailed information stored on the needs of each SEN pupil. Focus on emotional literacy- use of trained psychotherapist

Staffing levels and workforce reform

Teachers and departments not accountable for their performance. Occasional external staff training. 84 teachers and 9 admin staff and teaching assistants

Individual departments put through "mini Ofsted inspections". Lessons monitored by peers and pupils, feedback linked into performance management and continual professional development. Regular sharing of knowledge between staff, aided by Advanced Skills Teachers. Number of teachers increased to 94 and number of admin staff and teaching assistants increased to over 50

Links with other schools

Rarely collaborated with other schools, especially other secondary schools

Gaining Specialist and Leading Edge status caused the school to become outward looking. The school now shares knowledge with a number of schools, including visits to demonstrate the school's successful practices

Exemplary Features

- Close monitoring of pupil performance AND novel approaches used to improve attainment. Specific strategies used to improve the attainment of certain groups, e.g. a series of structured programs throughout the year targeted at Black boys and their parents
- Whole school focus on literacy: weekly literacy classes in Year 7; weekly reading in registration with sixth formers; 6 week literacy intervention in years 8-10; extra classes and clubs for pupils with poor literacy skills

Serlby Park is a 3-18 through school that has built its ethos around smoothing the transition from primary to secondary phases

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Overview

In 2005 the Serlby Park Learning Community replaced what was previously three separate schools (a junior, infant and nursery, and secondary school) in Bircotes and Harworth, a socially deprived area. GCSE results in the Business and Enterprise specialist school have improved from 15% in 1997 to 50% in 2006, while the budget has more than doubled (in real terms) since 1997.

Area

1997

Now

ICT

ICT was not extensively used, and the school had few PCs

Extensive use of computers, wireless network, 25 interactive whiteboards, and use of data to track pupil progress against national expectations

Buildings and security

Persistent problem with burnt-out vehicles on the school field

Perimeter fence/CCTV prevents intruders entering by foot/joyriding and they have introduced CCTV

Workforce reform

Approximately 4 or 5 teaching assistants (TAs) in 1997

20-24 TAs who have developed new skills – e.g. one specialises in dyslexia and an ICT technician also gives classroom support

External Partners

In 1997 the school had no external partners

Close links to Exel Logistics and HSBC. Exel pay to use Serlby facilities and recently hired students to design cakes for a staff party

School Day

Arrive 8.40 (some not having had breakfast), and be gone by 3.20

Breakfast club with TA support from 8am and a homework club and sports/activities (e.g. Tae Kwan Do) till 5.30pm

Exemplary features

In 2005 Serlby replaced the three heads of the previous schools with one overarching, more strategic CEO leading separate heads for each of the phases (infant, junior and senior). This has given the school a new sense of mission, and the school argues it delivers a number of benefits:

- Reduces the cultural shock for pupils of moving schools, sustains teachers' personal knowledge of individual pupils, and helps to maintain parental involvement from primary to secondary phases
- Gives the opportunity for innovative schemes such as: secondary pupils mentoring younger pupils; a transitional, thematic curriculum for Year 7 students; progression based more on ability, less on age; specialist teachers deployed across age range (e.g. French from Year 3)

Seven Kings school identified the increased thought and planning that now goes into learning as the most important change compared with 1997

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Overview

Seven Kings is a mixed, multi-ethnic school in the London Borough of Redbridge. It is a specialist Science and Technology school with Leading Edge status, and has 1,350 students. The school was high performing in 1997 (56% of pupils gained 5 good GCSEs) but is now outstanding (92% 5 good GCSEs)

Area

1997

Now

School focus/ethos

Aspired to raise standards but admin took up time; no formal collaboration with schools; developing pupil involvement

Management free to focus on achieving exceptional standards and helping others schools to do so- collaborates with over 50 local secondary schools. Stronger pupil involvement

Teaching and learning

Focus on teaching; pioneering data based formative assessment and innovative teaching, but anxious for opportunities to develop further

Focus on learning; more opportunities to innovate; pupils better engaged in their education; smaller class sizes. Assessment for Learning program, using ICT and a range of classroom and formal assessments, to monitor and improve pupil performance

Infrastructure

Buildings "far from equipped to meet needs", 6-10 burglaries a year

New library, new 6th form centre, new science laboratories, major refurbishments, new CCTV system and perimeter fence reduced burglaries to zero

Staff

Recruitment a major problem. Training programmes in need of development for all staff

Eight new teachers and five new teaching assistants. Excellent candidates for new teaching positions. Increased numbers of non-teaching staff have freed up teacher time

ICT

150 computers in computer rooms, ICT use not integrated into lessons, teachers fearful of using ICT

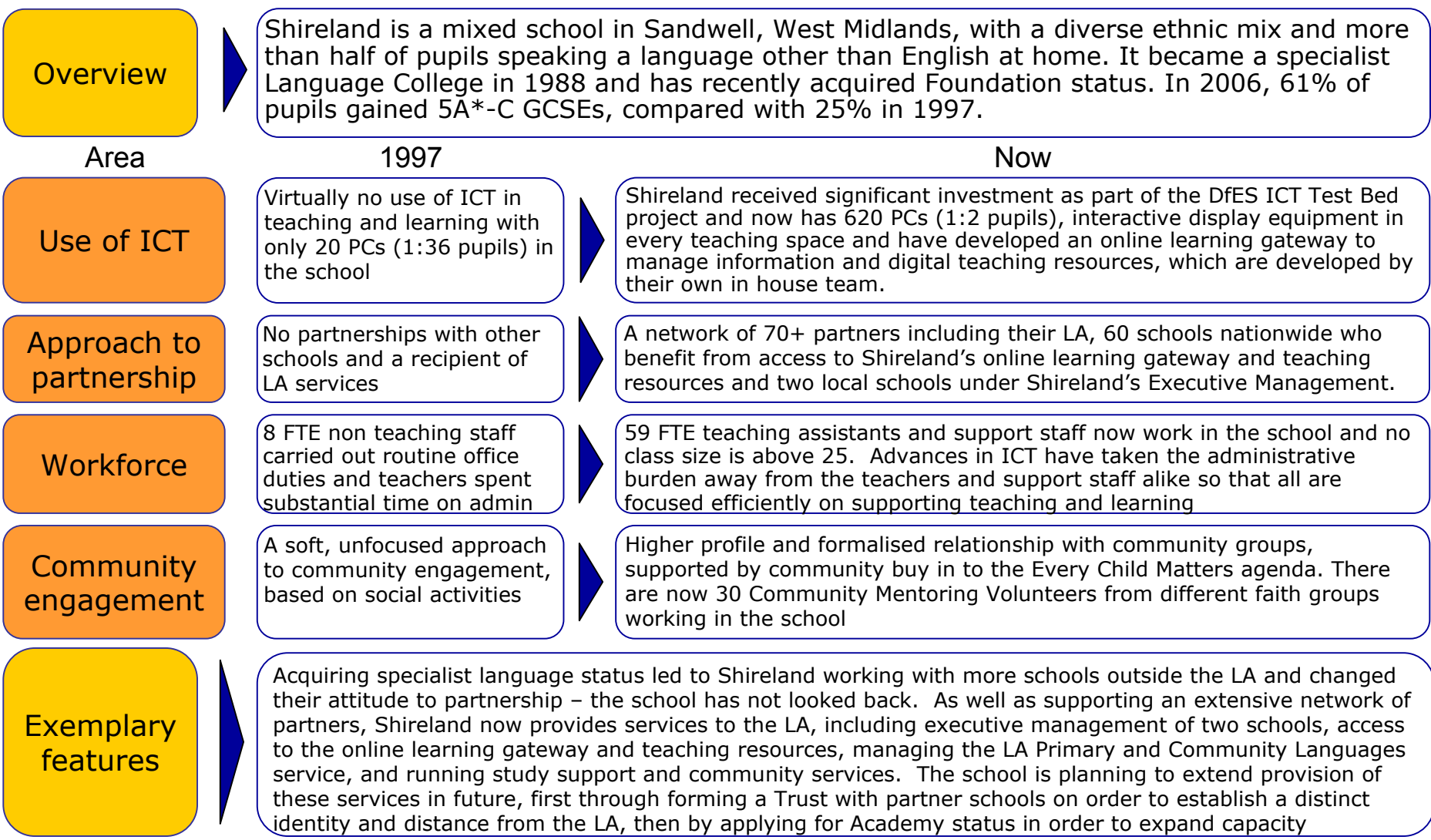
450 Computers. Wireless network- any class can use laptops, all teachers given laptops to increase their confidence in using ICT, remote access to information for pupils, parents and teachers

Exemplary features and practices

- The school has an inclusive and consistent ethos of high expectations and pupil engagement that has delivered excellent pupil behaviour and outstanding results
- Teaching and learning is placed at the heart of the school's approach- each pupil has a copy of the school's teaching and learning policy and it forms the basis for every lesson
- The school uses peer-, self- and staff-to-pupil assessments to identify performance needs, and pupils have an academic coordinators & 6th form mentors. Special policies have been devised for teaching gifted and talent pupils and those with special educational needs. Close links with Cambridge University's Maths Department.

Use of ICT and engagement with the community were identified as key changes and drivers of improved standards at **Shireland** Language College

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Teaching and learning has been transformed by the use of ICT at Shireland Language College

