



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

Consortia planning

Introduction

This guidance illustrates how consortia organise themselves and work together to bring Diploma learning to life. It shows how a range of consortia, each with individual approaches, planned different aspects of their Diploma provision. It is intended as guidance for local authority 14 to 19 strategic partnerships; 14 to 19 consortium managers; senior staff from schools, colleges and other organisations; and all staff involved with Diploma delivery. It is the seventh illustration in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) curriculum modelling publication *Design for success* (QCA/07/3313).

Collaborative curriculum planning is essential to maximise the quality of the experience for all learners studying for a Diploma. The Diploma is a new qualification with a number of features that make it different from other qualifications. It offers the opportunity for a different style of learning in different environments, such as school, college and the workplace, with an emphasis on applied learning and an integrated curriculum.

What are consortia?

Consortia are groups of partners, schools, colleges, work-based providers and employers that have come together to deliver the Diploma. Collaboration to deliver learning and support locally is at the heart of a consortium. To deliver Diploma lines of learning, each Diploma consortium must be approved through the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Diploma Gateway process. All centres in a consortium must work together to plan the curriculum and meet the needs of all learners studying for a Diploma. Consortia management groups focus on meeting the needs of learners by securing collaborative provision and developing the underpinning systems that will make the provision successful.

How can consortia work towards 2013?

The DCSF publication *Delivering 14–19 reform: Next steps* (DCSF-00805-2008) outlines an entitlement to the learning opportunities and support for young people aged 14 to 19. By 2013, all 14- to 16-year-olds have an entitlement to the first 14 Diplomas, and 16- to 18-year-olds have an entitlement to all 17 Diplomas. In planning ahead to meet the entitlement, consortia, 14 to 19 strategic partnerships and local authorities are working together to ensure successful local delivery. All learners and their parents or guardians must have access to high quality information, advice and guidance so that they can make informed decisions about the learner's future.

What does working within a consortium involve?

Partners working in a consortium need to have a shared commitment to improving the quality of the learner offer with a shared responsibility across all partners. Differences should be acknowledged, and individual institutional priorities respected.

To be successful, consortia need:

- joint strategic planning and shared objectives
- joint course planning and production of teaching resources
- willingness to receive learners from other centres, to enable learners to attend other centres and/or to share teaching of groups
- quality assurance principles and processes and other protocols that enable teaching and learning across centres
- arrangements for moderating and verifying assessment
- agreements on funding levels.

Collaborative planning of curriculum provision has developed over time. Consortia need robust arrangements for collaboratively assuring the quality of their Diploma provision. The detailed day-to-day arrangements will be based on an agreed quality assurance framework, a structure that sets out the principles and defines the ways the consortium will work. In some local authorities, a quality assurance framework may be established for local implementation. Further information on quality assurance frameworks is available on the DCSF website at www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19.

What are the delivery options within a consortium?

As centres work together, a number of delivery options can be explored. Delivery options include:

- moving learners between sites for whole or part of the course
- moving staff to where facilities and learners are; some staff can also work across a consortium
- establishing a skills centre
- moving equipment or resources used for specific units
- creating mobile facilities, such as workshops, that travel between sites
- developing a learning platform and creating e-learning resources
- bringing learners together to organised events for learners across a partnership, for example induction, employer links and higher education events.

In practice, consortia generally use a combination of these options, and they prove adept at considering the advantages of each in their own situations. Strategic planning needs to focus on the medium and long term to ensure the establishment of sustainable networks of provision.

What makes consortia successful?

Five consortia have been chosen as case study illustrations to show their Diploma provision. They operate in different parts of the country within different circumstances and organise themselves in different ways to deliver the Diploma, depending on geography, the number of learners, availability of expertise and facilities and employer support. They also have different starting points in preparing for Diploma introduction, depending on the history and nature of collaborative activity within the area.

The characteristics these consortia share include:

- supportive leadership and management structures with good communication between groups
- long-term planning towards 2013 and beyond
- innovative and entrepreneurial attitudes that make the most of local opportunities
- a firm focus on applied and work-related learning
- involvement of a wide range of partners and use of a range of specialist facilities
- successful negotiation of a curriculum model for Diploma delivery and of quality standards and protocols to support collaborative delivery
- effective use of Diploma funding to create new facilities
- planning in conjunction with other developments such as Building Schools for the Future, for example in supplementing rather than duplicating existing specialist provision.

Leadership is provided at several levels. These include the local authority, the 14 to 19 strategic partnership, the consortium (where these are different), the line of learning, the institution and departments involved, including functional skills departments and personal, social and health education.

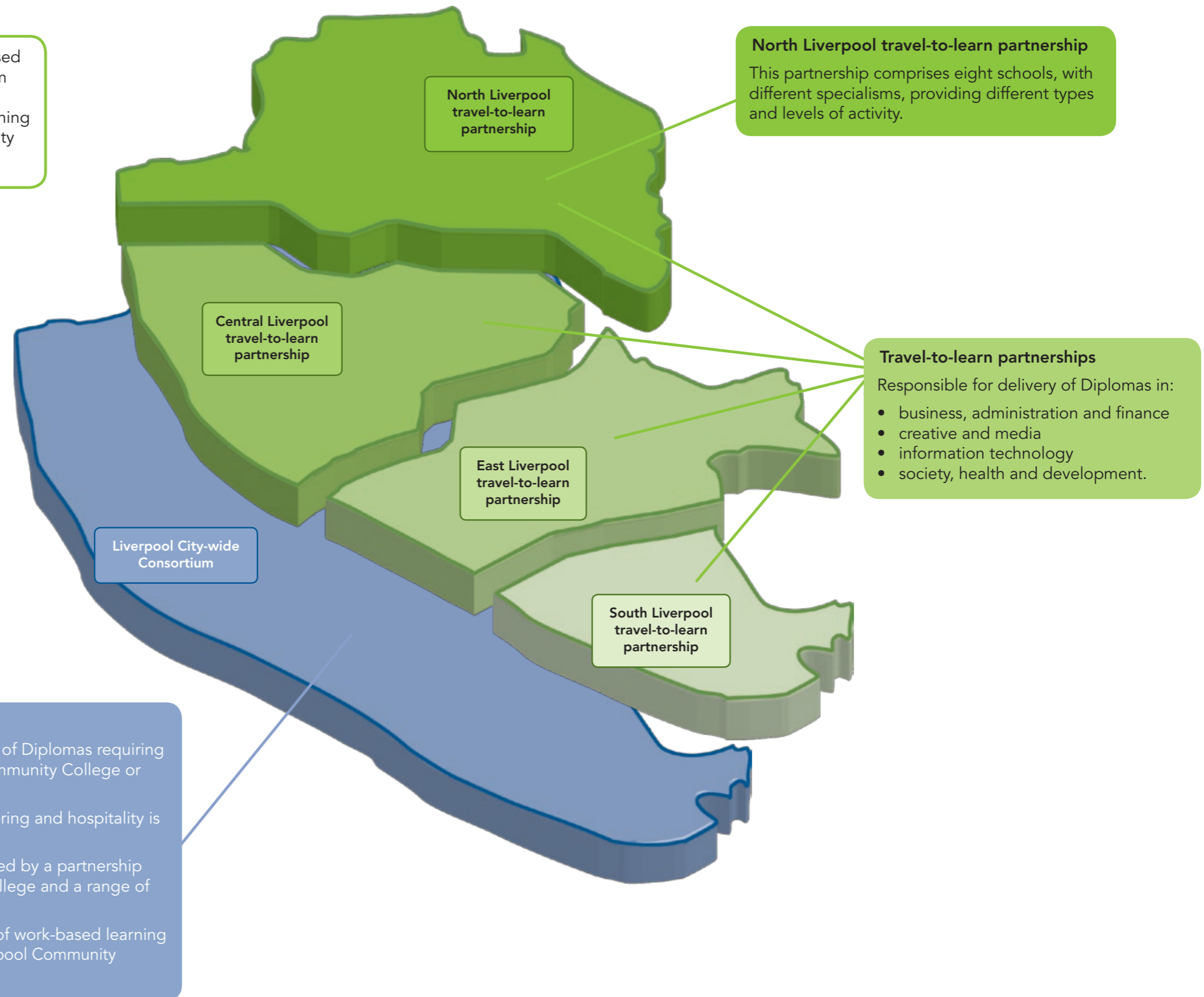
What do the illustrations show?

Each illustration briefly describes the context of the local area and the consortium. It provides information on the way consortia organise themselves in a collaborative way. One aspect of this collaborative provision is considered in more detail, illustrating how the particular consortium organises Diploma delivery. Each illustration focuses on a phase 1 line of learning within the consortium and includes extra detail of the preparation and delivery of that line. These examples show high quality personalised programmes of delivery that draw together the expertise of teachers, lecturers and employers in a new and exciting manner.

Individual consortia use a variety of terms to describe their activities. Terms such as partnerships, learning communities, alliances, travel-to-learn partnerships and line of learning partnerships are used by different consortia to describe activities that form part of their own distinct Diploma delivery structure.

Liverpool consortia

Delivery of nine Diploma lines of learning is organised into two types of consortium: a city-wide consortium (the blue map) and four travel-to-learn partnerships (the green map). Delivery involves schools, city learning centres, purpose-built facilities, Liverpool Community College and work-based learning providers.



Context

The Liverpool consortia represent a comprehensive pattern of urban provision. Diplomas are offered by both a city-wide consortium and smaller consortia called travel-to-learn partnerships within the local authority. All five phase 1 lines of learning are available in 2008, and a further four should be available in 2009. In addition, practitioners work within line of learning networks to develop schemes of work and teaching materials. The centres involved in delivery include Liverpool Community College, schools, city learning centres, purpose-built facilities and work-based learning providers.

Consortia organisation

Liverpool City-wide Consortium

Early in the planning process, it was agreed that some lines required expertise and equipment most likely to be located at Liverpool Community College and/or with work-based learning providers.

The Liverpool City-wide Consortium offer involves:

- Liverpool Community College as lead provider in construction and the built environment, engineering, and hospitality Diplomas
- a partnership between Liverpool Community College, Myerscroft College and a range of industry partners for delivery of the environmental and land-based studies Diploma
- a forum of work-based learning providers to lead the hair and beauty studies Diploma, with a significant contribution from Liverpool Community College.

Travel-to-learn partnerships

As well as the Liverpool City-wide Consortium, four other consortia, locally described as travel-to-learn partnerships, offer the Diploma in:

- business, administration and finance
- creative and media
- information technology (IT)
- society, health and development.

Liverpool Community College

Liverpool Community College is the main provider of the Liverpool City-wide Consortium offer. In 2008, on its own premises, Liverpool Community College delivered engineering and construction and the built environment at foundation, higher and advanced levels, and in 2009 it will deliver hospitality and hair and beauty studies also at foundation, higher and advanced levels.

Liverpool Community College also provides additional and specialist learning (ASL) and other options within Liverpool's common post-16 option block for learners across the city. It will have its own post-16 groups in most Diploma lines of learning.

Timetabling the Diploma curriculum

Diploma provision for key stage 4 takes place on two common days per week in each year.

- At foundation level, this time is used for principal learning, the project, ASL and functional skills.
- At higher level, this time is used for principal learning, the project and ASL.

Advanced level provision for each year takes place on three common days per week.

North Liverpool travel-to-learn partnership



The evolving pattern of provision in the partnership demonstrates the range of activity that schools involved in Diplomas may undertake. The eight schools in the North Liverpool travel-to-learn partnership cover a range of specialisms, and each is committing to a different type and level of activity.

The North Liverpool Diploma offer

In 2008 the consortium is offering:

- society, health and development; IT; and creative and media (at higher and advanced levels as part of the travel-to-learn partnership)
- construction and the built environment at foundation and higher levels; and engineering at foundation, higher and advanced level (as part of the city-wide offer).

North Liverpool: Planning and managing a line of learning

Information technology Diploma

The lead school for the IT Diploma is Alsop High School, a specialist school in technology and applied learning. The consortium has set up an applied learning centre to be used for the IT and business, administration and finance Diplomas. Enterprise is the underpinning theme of the approach to both Diplomas.

Diploma funding has been used to purchase a unit in a recently built business park that is being populated with businesses, some of them small, start-up companies. The applied learning centre has a range of rooms, kitchen area and industry standard hardware and software. In addition, central facilities, such as the boardroom and extra meeting rooms, can be hired when required.

In the first year, IT Higher and Advanced Diploma learners spend two days per week at the applied learning centre; thereafter it will be one day per week and one in their home centre. From 2009 it will also be used by learners taking the business, administration and finance Diploma, and the two groups will work together on some occasions.

The applied learning centre has a manager whose role is to generate business opportunities for the learners. For example, in an area with new, sometimes small, businesses, there may be a need for services such as advertising, web design, or goods, such as stationery or sandwiches for lunch. The businesses are expected to provide work experience placements on a regular basis or when they need additional staff for a project.

In addition to time within the applied learning centre, Advanced Diploma learners spend half a day at Campion City Learning Centre to complete the content related to networking. They have the opportunity to take vendor qualifications as ASL or as an outcome of the work they are covering.

Teaching the IT Higher Diploma

Teaching the IT Higher Diploma is based on assignments relating to real businesses. The first three assignments involve:

- setting up the applied learning centre, using the opportunity to investigate types of organisations and research target markets, competition and product range; generating ideas for the centre's company name, logo and organisation structure
- advising a local musician who wants to expand his fan base and decide on the way forward for his business
- setting up and marketing Alsop High School's annual fashion show at Aintree Racecourse.

As learners come from each school in approximately equal numbers, an element of competition will be engendered by some activities. Development of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) underpins the whole approach. Learners are taught to recognise their skills and expertise and how to practise and improve those skills within assignments.

There is a periodic check of learners' choices of assignments and how they are carried out, to ensure each learner has opportunities to cover each skill in sufficient depth.

Functional skills

Different arrangements are made for functional skills within each level of Diploma. Functional skills are taught by specialists and contextualised to each Diploma line. Schemes of work have been devised in liaison with school staff.

For functional skills within the Higher Diploma at key stage 4, teaching sets within each school are organised so that Diploma learners are together. One English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) lesson per week for these sets will be a specific functional skills lesson.

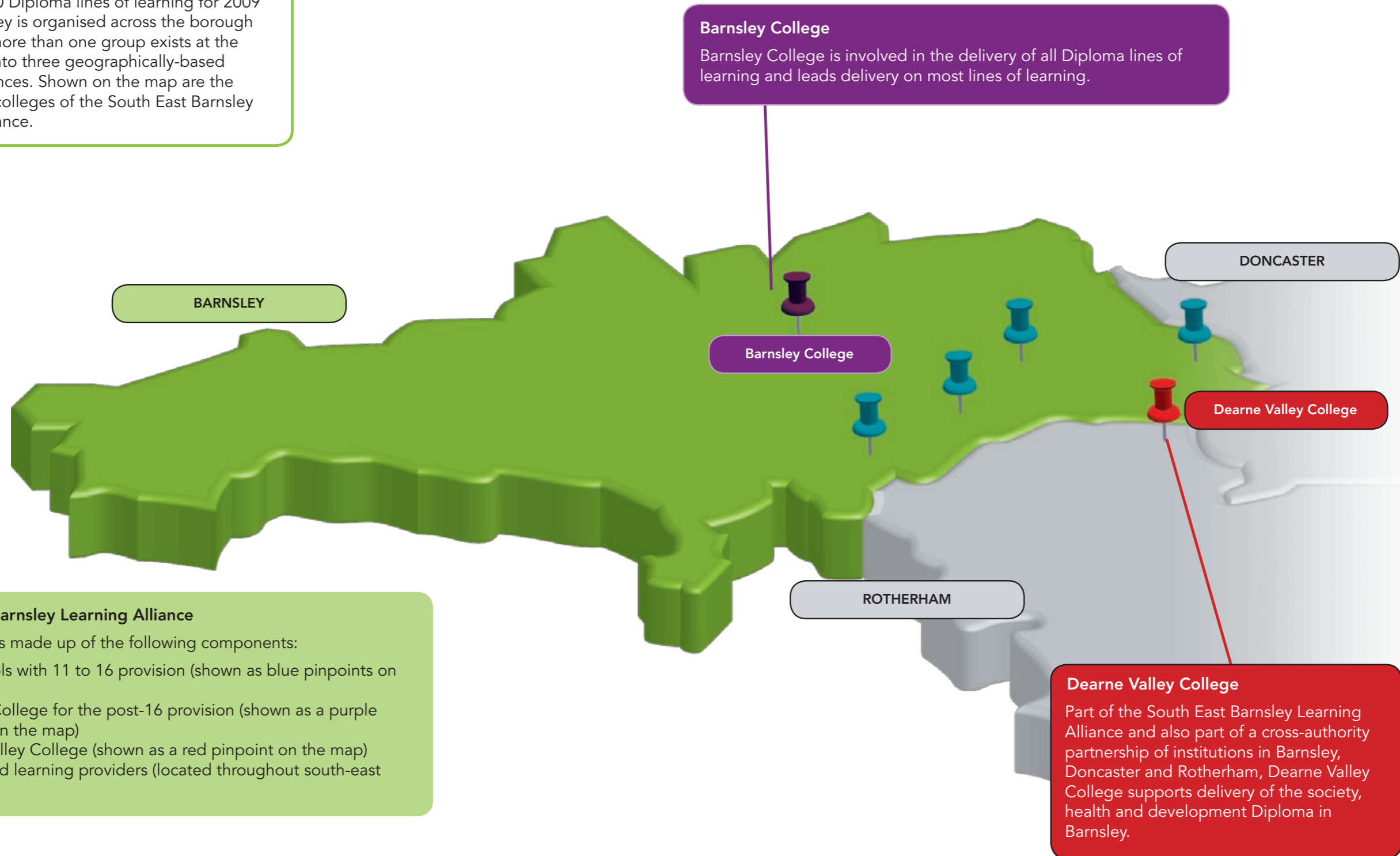
Within the Advanced Diploma, there is separate functional skills teaching in a 2.5-hour block once a week, with each skill being taught at a different school and learners moving each term. ICT is taught at Alsop High School, English at Notre Dame Catholic College and mathematics at North Liverpool Academy.

Work experience and the IT Diploma

All schools have a two-week block of time during key stage 4 for work experience. While this may be one approach, a more variable pattern of delivery may also be considered. When the teaching and learning approach is assignment-based, the learning programme is likely to be flexible enough to cope with a variable pattern of work experience delivery. Individual lines of learning are considering different approaches. Business, administration and finance learners will benefit from the involvement of a city-centre work-based learning provider. This organisation will provide, on a weekly basis for a period of time, simulated work experience in year 10 and work experience with employers in year 11.

Barnsley Diploma Consortium

Delivery of 10 Diploma lines of learning for 2009 within Barnsley is organised across the borough and, where more than one group exists at the same level, into three geographically-based learning alliances. Shown on the map are the schools and colleges of the South East Barnsley Learning Alliance.



South East Barnsley Learning Alliance

The alliance is made up of the following components:

- four schools with 11 to 16 provision (shown as blue pinpoints on the map)
- Barnsley College for the post-16 provision (shown as a purple pinpoint on the map)
- Dearne Valley College (shown as a red pinpoint on the map)
- work-based learning providers (located throughout south-east Barnsley).

Context

In 2009, Barnsley will offer all 10 lines of learning, beginning in 2008 with construction and the built environment and society, health and development. Barnsley is also underway with a major undertaking as part of the DCSF Building Schools for the Future initiative. Schools will be reorganised, and Barnsley College will have a major investment in its facilities.

Dearne Valley College is part of a cross-authority partnership that includes institutions in Rotherham and Doncaster, as well as Barnsley. This partnership will offer the IT and business, administration and finance Diplomas from 2009. The college has particular expertise in community justice and will support delivery of these aspects of society, health and development in Barnsley.

There will be some post-16 Diploma provision in designated advanced learning centres. This provides a great opportunity to plan collaboratively to create appropriate and cost-effective facilities, as well as providing a resource for Diploma learning.

Consortium organisation

Schools are organised into geographically-based learning alliances within the Barnsley Diploma Consortium, with approximately the same number of learners in each. The South East Barnsley Learning Alliance and the North East and Central Learning Alliance deliver Diplomas in 2008/9.

A crucial member of the consortium, Barnsley College is involved in each Diploma line of learning and leads on the majority of them. All post-16 provision is college-based.

Work-based learning providers are involved in the network of provision, as are a number of employers.

An overall delivery plan charts where and when each Diploma will be introduced and the contributory partners for each line of learning, culminating in the full entitlement in 2013.

Managing the collaborative offer

Barnsley has a history of collaborative provision that built the essential infrastructure for Diploma provision, including:

- common timetable arrangements
- transport links between centres
- service level agreements between providers
- a quality toolkit that sets out the principles and procedures underpinning collaboration.

Personnel include:

- a coordinator for 14 to 19 collaborative work, seconded for two days per week from one of the schools to work across each of the three learning alliances
- a key stage 4 Diploma coordinator for each line of learning at each level, with an hour a week to oversee curriculum development, organise delivery team meetings, and act as domain assessor, supervising internal assessment for principal learning and the project

- Diploma line of learning leaders, mainly from Barnsley College; remission time enables them to carry out a project management role, ensuring the elements for successful implementation are in place, for example workforce, facilities, teaching and assessment materials and quality control.

Barnsley curriculum model for key stage 4

The Barnsley curriculum model for key stage 4 provides weekly common time for collaborative provision, including the Diploma, during one morning and two afternoons for each year group. The morning session goes from 8.45 to 11.45, which allows learners to get back to their home schools for afternoon lessons. The two afternoons are used because they can be extended to meet curricular needs. Where ASL is included within common Diploma delivery, extended time is used.

South East Barnsley Learning Alliance

The South East Barnsley Learning Alliance (SEBLA) includes:

- four 11 to 16 schools
- Barnsley College and Dearne Valley College
- Take 2 Training
- Independent Training Services Ltd.

Specialist facilities

Diploma funding has been used to provide the Kendray Diploma Skills Centre, equipped for the first two lines of learning:

- the society, health and development area, which includes a 'ward' with hospital beds and mock patients, nursing station and a range of medical equipment; 'care home' setting with bedroom; fully-equipped kitchen; and bathroom
- the construction and the built environment facility, which has two workshops, one for services (plumbing and electrical) and a multipurpose one with a focus on joinery.

In addition to the Kendray Diploma Skills Centre, diploma funding also provides:

- three classrooms equipped with high specification information and communication technology (ICT) resources for use by each line of learning
- construction and the built environment teaching spaces at two schools, equipped with the IT and other equipment needed, such as AutoCAD Architecture, Microsoft Project and Adobe Premiere for video
- room at Dearne Valley College fitted out as a court, to enhance learning in the community justice aspect of the society, health and development Diploma
- two minibuses used to transport learners.

SEBLA: Planning and managing a line of learning

SEBLA offers:

- Higher Diplomas in construction and the built environment and society, health and development at key stage 4
- Advanced Diplomas in construction and the built environment and society, health and development at Barnsley College
- post-16 Foundation Diplomas in society, health and development delivered by Barnsley College in partnership with work-based learning providers and Dearne Valley College.

Construction and the built environment Diploma

At key stage 4, the Higher Diploma in construction and the built environment is delivered in two extended afternoons and one morning at Kirk Balk School – a specialist technology college. Teaching is based at the school as construction facilities have been provided onsite, including the IT needed for this line of learning.

The Advanced Diploma in construction and the built environment is delivered by Barnsley College, initially to two groups of learners. It is expected that a high proportion of learners taking construction and the built environment in key stage 4 will progress to an Advanced Diploma.

The Advanced Diploma course begins with a 20-week block of ASL. Learners then have a 10-week block for their Diploma project and complete their first year with a work experience placement. In the second year, they will complete the principal learning units, follow functional skills courses as required and take their functional skills assessments.

Learner support includes mathematics tutorials. Throughout the course learners have access to employers, companies working in the sector and building projects within the town and the regeneration area. Progression is likely to be to higher education and professional roles within the construction and the built environment sector.

Staff development

For each line of learning, an audit was carried out of staff knowledge, skills and experience, identifying individual development needs. The results were used by the local authority's 14 to 19 team to create a Barnsley-wide 14 to 19 workforce development strategy and associated workforce development programme. The initial aim is to build capacity in schools to deliver Foundation and Higher Diplomas.

In construction and the built environment, in addition to attending a range of national and local training events and those organised by their awarding body, teachers benefited from a considerable amount of training and planning time. They met together for two hours per week over the year they spent preparing for Diploma teaching, led by the curriculum quality leader at the college.

Teachers used the time to:

- select specifications and familiarise themselves with those details, particularly in terms of principal learning
- decide how best to ensure that applied learning is at the heart of delivery
- train on technical aspects of the specification with which school staff were less familiar
- consider the functional skills individually and decide how to develop each within every unit's teaching and assignments
- ensure that PLTS are embedded within the teaching methodology and learning process.

A bespoke computer-aided drafting and design training programme has been commissioned from the University of Huddersfield. All teachers delivering construction and the built environment in phase 1 will take this 12-week course, operating in the evening.

As part of their preparation, teachers have had an industrial placement on design and building projects, with Laing O'Rourke and Strata. Apart from updating their knowledge of the sector, they have made useful contacts and gathered learning resources. In addition, the companies involved in DCSF Building Schools for the Future and rebuilding the college will be providing medium-term sustainable support and resources to staff and learners.

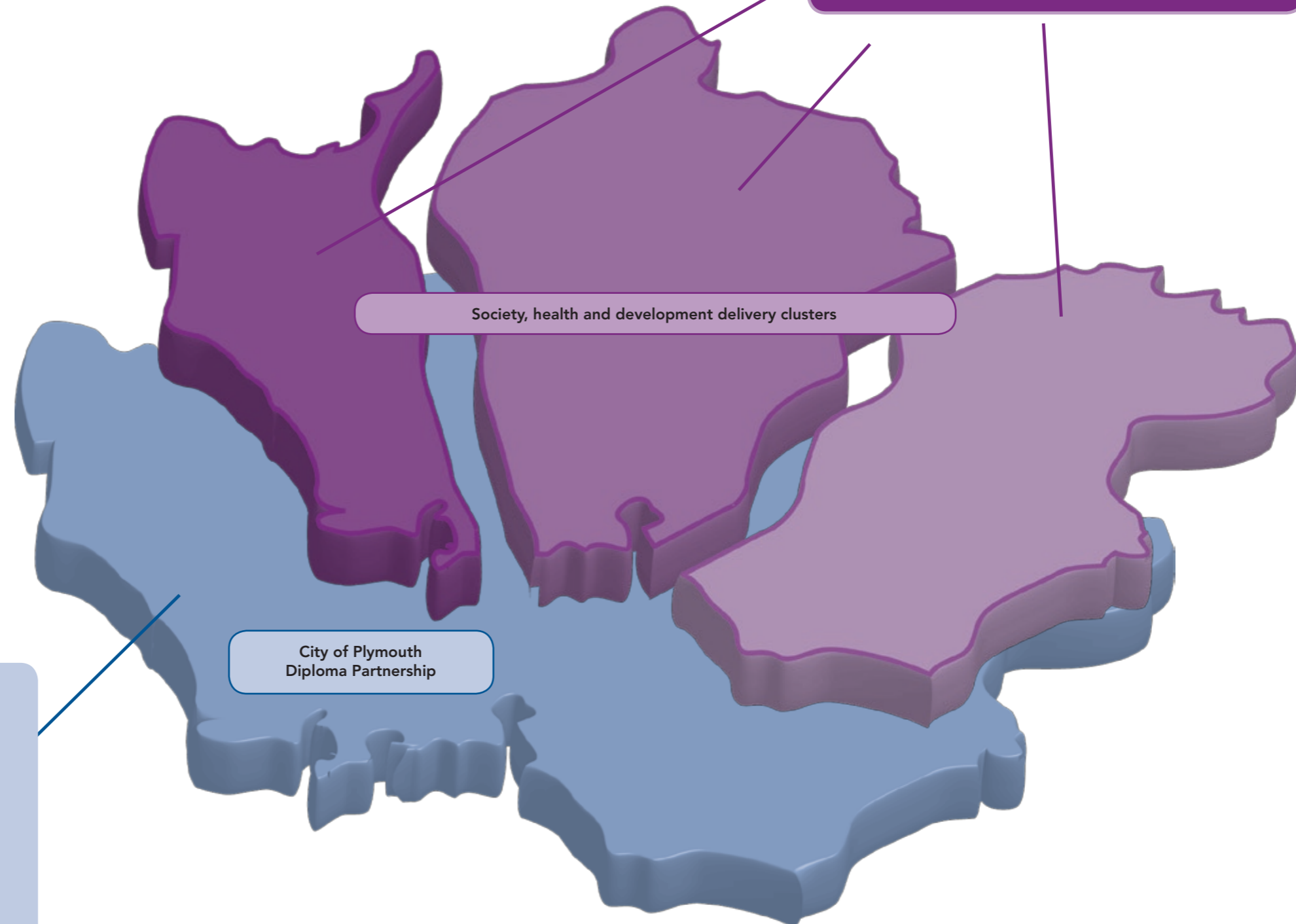
City of Plymouth Diploma Partnership

Within the City of Plymouth Diploma Partnership, the organising structure is based on line of learning partnerships – three in the first year (construction and the built environment; engineering; and society, health and development) and 10 line of learning partnerships for the second year.

Fourteen of Plymouth's schools are involved in some aspect of Diploma delivery in the three lines introduced in the first year.

Society, health and development delivery clusters

The partnership for the society, health and development Diploma operates as three delivery clusters. Induction and schemes of work are planned jointly across the three clusters.



City of Plymouth Diploma Partnership

This is a single consortium that will deliver 10 lines of learning in the second year. It consists of the following:

- 17 schools
- three colleges (one further education college, a specialist college of art and design and a specialist land-based college)
- a wide range of training providers, voluntary groups and employers.

There is a line of learning partnership for each line of learning, and providers may be involved in more than one partnership.

Context

Plymouth has a history of post-16 collaboration, and for the provision of vocational courses. The City of Plymouth entered its successful Diploma Gateway submissions as a single consortium. It comprises:

- 17 schools
- three colleges (one further education college, a specialist college of art and design and a specialist land-based college)
- a wide range of training providers, voluntary groups and employers.

Consortium organisation

Within the City of Plymouth Diploma Partnership, the organising structure is based on line of learning partnerships – three in the first year (construction and the built environment; engineering; and society, health and development) and 10 line of learning partnerships for the second year.

Fourteen of Plymouth's schools are involved in some aspect of Diploma delivery in the three lines introduced in the first year. A provider may be within more than one partnership – City of Plymouth College is involved with all the partnerships except for the environmental and land-based studies Diploma, where a specialist college is involved.

Line of learning partnerships

Line of learning partnerships have a good deal of autonomy to articulate their vision and develop delivery models appropriate to their line of learning and local circumstances. Within their line, the partnerships are responsible for:

- joint planning of provision
- preparation of schemes of work and materials
- learner recruitment
- appropriate employer engagement
- identification of staff development needs.

At the same time, they operate within the framework of a city-wide structure, ensuring consistency of approach across all Diploma lines of learning, for example on arrangements and timing of work experience.

Line by line leadership

In the first year, each line of learning partnership has an executive group and a curriculum planning group. The society, health and development executive group is chaired by one of the work-based learning providers. From January 2009, one city-wide executive group will be established, and the curriculum planning group for each line maintained. This is to anticipate the demands on the time of senior staff when 10 lines are being planned or operating.

In the first year of development for any line, there is a Diploma champion, seconded from a provider for two days per week to offer leadership for the development of the line of learning. The champions are managed by the senior adviser for secondary education through regular meetings of the group, again developing consistency of delivery across lines of learning. In the second year, leadership will be funded for a minimum of one day per week, using the DCSF grant allocated to each line of learning partnership. In the third year, partnerships will need to make their own arrangements for coordination, for example by drawing on the funding allocated for each Diploma learner to fund a coordinator.

The Plymouth curriculum model

The Plymouth common timetable framework divides the week into 10 sessions – five morning sessions of two hours each and five afternoon sessions of three hours each. The latter can be extended as necessary. There is a travel window between the two sessions each day.

Key stage 4 involves one whole day and a further half day for teaching principal learning and the project. This is the equivalent of three options. In the first instance, ASL is largely chosen from the schools' further options. ASL will be developed as the Diploma offer increases. Functional skills teaching falls within the core curriculum. Years 10 and 11 take place on different days.

Post-16 (Advanced Diploma) comprises two morning and two afternoon sessions for principal learning. This is the equivalent of two A level option blocks. ASL can come from any one of three further option blocks, though likely choices appropriate to the line are placed in a specific block within the common framework. Any separate functional skills teaching is the responsibility of the home centre, as is the project.

Higher education links in Plymouth

Each higher education institution operating in the Plymouth area has a Diploma advocate working with appropriate line of learning partnerships on progression issues. Undergraduate students in IT at the University of Plymouth undertaking a year in industry create case studies of the businesses with which they are working. A new module is being developed that requires them, on returning to the university, to deliver their case studies to IT Diploma learners. This will create a continuous supply of contemporary business problems. It also cements the links between Diploma learners, higher education and employers.

Delivery clusters: Planning and managing a line of learning



Society, health and development line of learning partnership

The society, health and development line of learning partnership operates as three delivery clusters because the line has proved so popular with learners. Each cluster has adopted a different delivery model according to learner numbers, staff expertise and facilities.

In cluster 1, post-16 learners will have the opportunity to take a wider choice of ASL and other level 3 qualifications. They can also have regular work experience.

In cluster 2, Higher and Advanced Diploma learners from the schools join together and are taught for specific units using the common timetable framework.

Specialist resources created within centres can be accessed by each delivery cluster. For example, Hele's School has a dedicated learning suite equipped with webcam/recording facilities that can be adapted for a range of purposes, such as an office and a court. Stoke Damerel Community College has a training crèche to support the aspects of the Diploma relating to early years.

The partnership:

- plans its schemes of work and induction jointly across the delivery clusters, while reflecting the individual nature of each cluster
- organises city-wide events involving learners from each cluster, for example providing two days to examine specific areas of a sector

- includes four work-based learning providers, each with a somewhat different profile and skill set
- has designated one lead practitioner for each of the four sectors involved in society, health and development – community justice, health, children and young people, and social care
- involves representatives from higher education and Aimhigher, who have in turn engaged admissions tutors and worked on progression to specific higher education courses
- employs two of the group to attend options evenings in the city's schools, to promote the society, health and development Diploma and provide consistent information about it
- uses a range of expertise within the schools' staffing and beyond
- participates in focused training that includes a practitioner justice day, led by a Specialist Schools and Academies Trust community justice specialist and the local criminal justice board.

Work-based learning providers' role in delivering the society, health and development Diploma

Four work-based learning providers have been involved from the beginning in planning for the society, health and development Diploma:

- Academy of Training
- Achievement Training Ltd
- GHQ Training Ltd
- Venus Training and Consultancy.

Each has areas of expertise appropriate to the line of learning. Together, the work-based learning providers considered where their experience and contacts could best enhance the quality of experience for learners. Their own trainers are all practitioners, well placed to help young people appreciate the applications of their learning.

Work-based learning providers' trainers will be used across the partnership for specific aspects of principal learning, for example the topic on protection of vulnerable adults within the Higher Diploma. Work-based learning providers have selected from the ASL catalogue a package of appropriate ASL qualifications that they can deliver. Initially this is mainly to post-16 learners, such as a group from Stoke Damerel Community College interested in the children and young people route and taking a certificate in health and social care as ASL. Their contribution to ASL delivery will increase as learner numbers grow.

Developing schemes of work for the society, health and development Diploma

Schemes of work for the society, health and development Diploma have major elements in common across the partnership. These include:

- a six-week introduction to the course, PLTS, the sectors, skills required, roles within the sectors, and other aspects

- an enquiry-led approach, with local relevance
- a blend of assignment-based and linear unit delivery
- a structure that builds understanding of the skills to enable learners to be increasingly self motivating and self supporting as the course progresses
- opportunities for stretch and challenge.

In addition, practitioners within the partnership have been asked to review the planned work for each unit to ensure that opportunities for the development of specific PLTS have been sufficiently identified. Each school will be responsible for its own projects.

Work-experience and the society, health and development Diploma

Work experience at key stage 4 is a one-week block, mainly where individual schools currently arrange it for all their learners, followed by five one-day placements with the same employer. Partners are working with the Tamar Education Business Partnership to develop a coordinated work experience programme across the city to ensure all the clusters are able to offer a worthwhile experience to their learners.

Employers involved include Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust, Plymouth Primary Care Trust, Devon and Cornwall Criminal Justice Board, Plymouth Youth Offending Team, Plymouth Youth Parliament, Adult Social Services, Plymouth Children's Services and private nurseries and social care providers, such as the Regard Partnership.

Learner support and induction in society, health and development

At the end of the summer term, each cluster runs an induction programme for students intending to study for a Diploma qualification. For example, one cluster organises two days of activities. One day is run by the University of Plymouth, with a focus on practical skills and progression. On another day, learners visit the sites where they will be taught, choose the colour of their 'team' sweatshirt, design a logo for it and take part in some team-building PLTS activities. Potentially vulnerable learners can receive specific support.

All society, health and development learners are given an induction pack that includes:

- a diary/calendar
- a journal to record achievements and progress, particularly in PLTS
- a memory stick to take work from place to place
- copies of necessary forms, code of conduct, and other important information
- materials to make an identification badge
- site maps and instructions about arrangements in host centres
- a set of frequently asked questions about working within a cluster and on a Diploma programme.

Early in the autumn term, there is a further four-day induction programme led by employers and involving the learners from each cluster. The aims include:

- demonstrating that this is a different type of qualification
- stressing the role of employers in its delivery
- raising aspirations and knowledge of opportunities.

Each of the four days focus on one of the sectors involved in the line. Follow-up activities focus on PLTS and aim to build rapport between learners, who come from different schools.

The induction days exemplify what the society, health and development partnership aims to achieve:

- bringing employers to learners whenever possible
- reinforcing the city-wide partnership underpinning the cluster delivery model.

The Kingswood Partnership Consortium

The Kingswood Partnership (KWP) Consortium in South Gloucestershire is offering all 10 Diploma lines of learning in 2009.

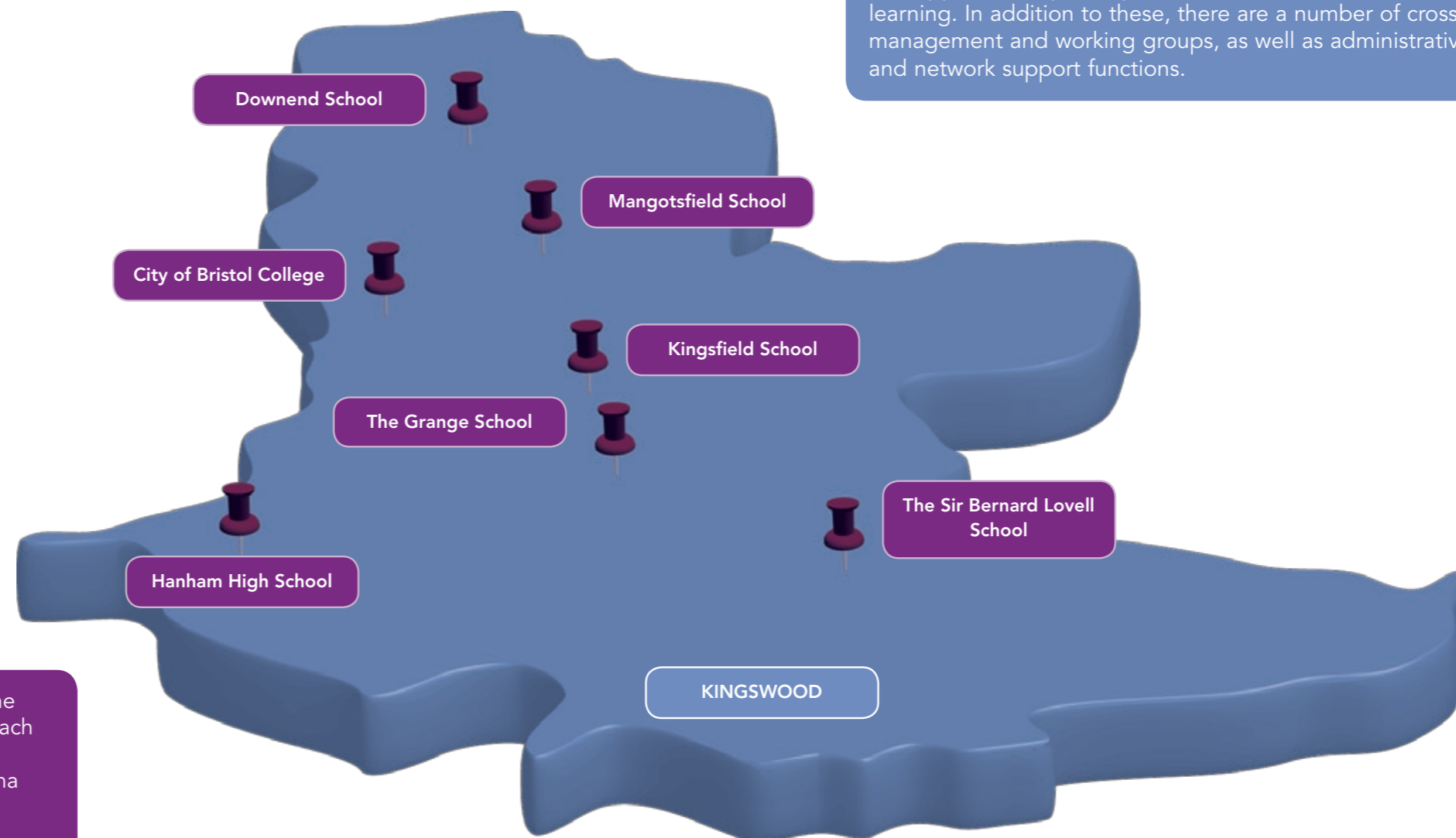
The KWP is made up of:

- six schools with 11 to 19 provision
- the City of Bristol College.

Each school delivers the creative and media Diploma and at least one other line of learning, and teaching groups are made up of learners from different schools.

The KWP Consortium comprises six schools in the 11 to 19 range and the City of Bristol College. Each school has a different specialism that influenced the development of its curriculum and its Diploma contribution:

- Downend School – technology
- The Grange School – sports
- Hanham High School – performing arts
- Kingsfield School – mathematics and computing
- Mangotsfield School – engineering and science
- The Sir Bernard Lovell School – languages.



The KWP Consortium team includes:

- 14 to 19 partnership coordinator and assistant*
- business links development manager*
- offsite student support manager* and assistant*
- personal development curriculum manager
- e-learning development, implementation and content managers and three e-learning resource designers
- partnership administrator.

Those marked with an asterisk (*) are full-time members of the partnership staff and comprise the 'core team'. City of Bristol College has also appointed Diploma programme coordinators for each line of learning. In addition to these, there are a number of cross-partnership management and working groups, as well as administrative, finance, data and network support functions.

Context

The Kingswood Partnership (KWP) Consortium in South Gloucestershire is offering all 10 Diploma lines of learning in 2009.

The KWP Consortium comprises six 11 to 19 schools and the City of Bristol College. Each school has a different specialism influencing the development of its curriculum and its Diploma contribution:

- Downend School – technology
- The Grange School – sports
- Hanham High School – performing arts
- Kingsfield School – mathematics and computing
- Mangotsfield School – engineering and science
- The Sir Bernard Lovell School – languages.

Consortium organisation

Managing and operating the partnership

There is significant investment in staff working for the KWP Consortium on a full-time, permanent, part-time, seconded or temporary basis. The KWP Consortium considers these 'outward-facing' roles to be significant to its success and to establishing joint ownership of developments.

The KWP Consortium team includes:

- 14 to 19 partnership coordinator and assistant*
- business links development manager*
- offsite student support manager* and assistant*
- personal development curriculum manager
- e-learning development, implementation and content managers and three e-learning resource designers
- partnership administrator.

Those marked with an asterisk (*) are full-time members of the partnership staff and comprise the 'core team'. City of Bristol College has also appointed Diploma programme coordinators for each line of learning. In addition to these, there are a number of cross-partnership management and working groups, as well as administrative, finance, data and network support functions.

Quality assuring collaborative learning

After extensive research carried out by the International Learning and Research Centre, KWP Consortium developed a set of quality assurance principles and procedures to guarantee that the Diploma offer will be comparable across partnership centres. These define and determine quality across seven areas of collaborative work:

- learning and teaching
- assessment
- achievement and retention
- shared professional learning and continuing professional development
- leadership and management
- information, advice and guidance
- employer engagement.

The quality assurance model adopted was that of the European Foundation for Quality Management. The content of the quality system comprises:

- description of minimum common standards
- criteria to measure them
- monitoring procedures to assure and report them
- triangulated analysis of staff views, student views and data.

The perceived strengths of the quality assurance system include that:

- it was developed and is owned by the partnership – there is a senior leadership team member from each partner on the quality assurance team
- it underlines the concept of learner entitlement
- the student voice plays an important part
- it is compatible with the cycles of school development planning and self evaluation.

The KWP Consortium learning platform

The learning platform needed for the partnership's purposes comprises:

- a new administrative system, based on a Schools Information Management System (SIMS) called Partnership Xchange
- a repository for partnership learning resources
- Studywiz 9.3, accessible to teachers, learners and parents via an extranet, which also enables the development of electronic portfolios, learning plans and personalised learning.

The e-learning development manager regards the following as critical success factors:

- accurate, real-time data transfer on, for example, attendance, duty of care issues and attainment
- a partnership team of SIMS administrators from each partner (compatibility with college systems is being sought)
- careful pacing and piloting of developments
- a clear expectation from senior leadership that the facility will be used
- the use of web authors (e-learning resource designers) for quality and consistency
- the ability for teachers to alter resources to suit their users.

The KWP Consortium year 9 pre-Diploma course

Following a pilot in 2007/8, The Sir Bernard Lovell School is moving towards a pre-Diploma course in year 9. It begins with a three-week skills immersion unit covering independent and collaborative learning skills, research, performance and ICT. The course has two strands – creative and media and personal development. Four hours per week are allocated for this course, and learners take each strand in turn, in six-week blocks. Teaching groups are kept small.

Creative and media

The course is a bridge between the approach taken in years 7 and 8 and the Diploma approach to learning. It provides a taster course for Diploma choice and includes five disciplines taught by specialists (performance, voice skills, music, film and animation) and multidisciplinary learning.

The focus is on equipping learners with skills in specific disciplines and giving them increasing freedom to choose, for example in choice of projects.

Personal development

The course aims to provide high quality preparation and guidance for key stage 4 options and progression. It focuses on information, advice and guidance and PLTS.

Each school will provide a minimum 12 hours' information, advice and guidance and use a common set of resources.

The course is planned in conjunction with Connexions staff, and student ambassadors for the University of the West of England work with year 9 learners.

The course will include a Diploma taster programme, using videos of learners and talks from Diploma teachers. Learners choose two Diploma areas to experience during the second term and go to the centre where those lines are offered.

Learner feedback on the pilot showed they appreciated being able to consider their options earlier and in more depth.

The KWP Consortium Diploma curriculum – key stage 4

The KWP Consortium's principal aims are to improve the quality of experience for learners and raise standards of attainment by creating a unified curriculum appropriate for all learners. Partnership provision means wider provision and, therefore, availability of appropriate courses for more learners.

The KWP Consortium operates a common 'principal learning day' of five hours for each year at key stage 4. Learners from each school choose options that provide a 'specialist' programme. Learners attend the centre (or centres) where their chosen programme is taught on the common day.

Programmes include five Diploma lines of learning. The project is completed within each school separately, as part of its personal development curriculum. PLTS are also a focus of the personal development curriculum.

Employer and higher education involvement

The KWP Consortium has a strategy to develop and maintain employer support for the Diploma that includes:

- professional development for teachers and employers/employees
- resource development
- work experience
- presentations, events and active workshops
- electronic mentoring of learners
- advising on industry standards.

Each line of learning has an employer consultative forum that meets periodically. During these forums, employers and teachers discuss units for the line concerned, learning outcomes from each unit and the employer support required to ensure the achievement of these outcomes.

Support for Diploma learners

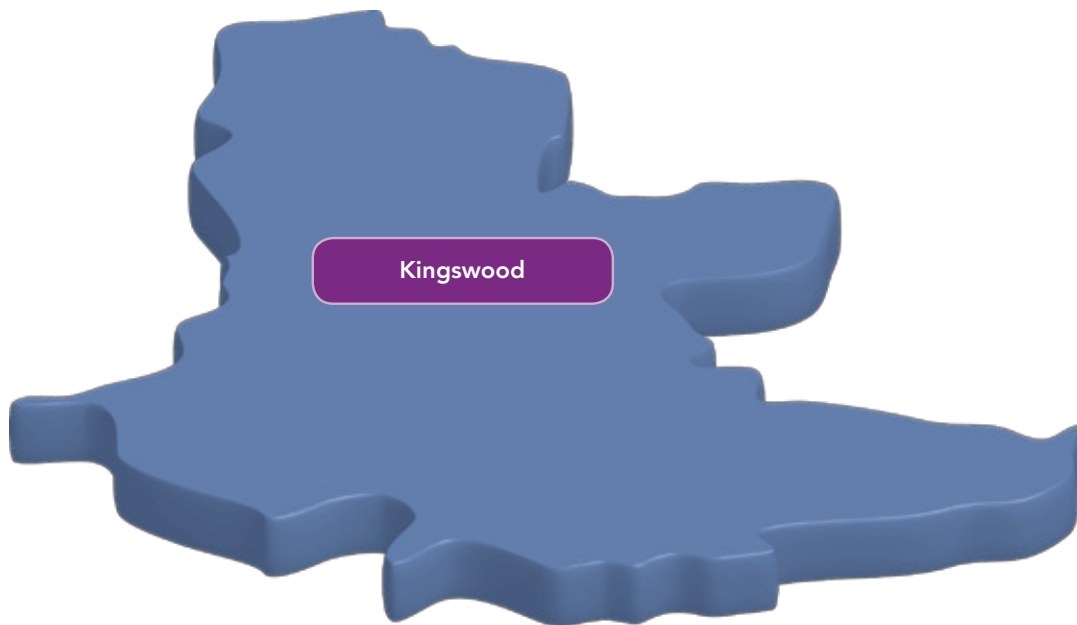
The offsite student support manager attends options evenings at each school within the partnership to tell learners about opportunities that involve offsite learning. Learners have taster sessions in advance of options choices and induction sessions following them. During these, they experience both practical and theory work to give them a sense of what Diploma learning will involve. They tour the site where they will be learning and find out about issues such as health and safety when away from their home centre.

During the summer holidays before key stage 4 begins, learners receive a letter confirming what they will be doing and where, setting out transport arrangements and any equipment or clothing needed.

Diploma key workers are available in each school, during the day, to deal with any questions or problems. They deal with issues of transport and attendance and ensure that learners on free school meals can access the system wherever they are. The 'personal touch', with staff knowing learners individually and being accessible, is important.

Good preparation has been the key to success. This includes ensuring that learners and courses are carefully matched, particularly where any issues of special educational needs exist. Communication with all involved is also a high priority. When teaching assistants are available, they tend to work with learners from across the partnership, being linked with a line of learning. Support activity, like much else, is evaluated by learners and is continually being improved as provision develops.

Creative and media: Planning and managing a line of learning



Each school within the partnership was enthusiastic about offering the creative and media Diploma. Delivery proposals were brought to the KWP Consortium's curriculum framework group, which decided to allow the Higher Diploma in creative and media to be delivered in each school. Planning is undertaken in partnership. Staff across the centres jointly decided which specification to follow, and each school is tailoring its delivery to the availability and expertise of staff for the specialist aspects.

Creative and media principal learning presents a wide range of options for learners. In each unit the learner is required to choose one or more disciplines from a wide but prescribed range. Among others, this includes 2-D and 3-D visual art, craft, graphic design, product design, dance, music, interactive media, animation, advertising, drama, and creative writing. Diploma programmes offered to learners can be multidisciplinary or more specialised.

As all principal learning takes place on one day, learners across centres can be brought together for specific events, such as visiting performances, workshops, talks from employers or artists, or to work together on a major performance or project. A media specialist from City of Bristol College is available on that day to support teachers and learners or to deliver specialist sessions. The two domain assessors are also available for support, and they check each assignment that is set.

Employer involvement includes setting briefs such as designing a page for a magazine describing the local creative and media scene. The best will be published. Employers pointed out that they have standard ways of setting out briefs and planning and evaluating activities, and these templates have been adapted for use by learners.

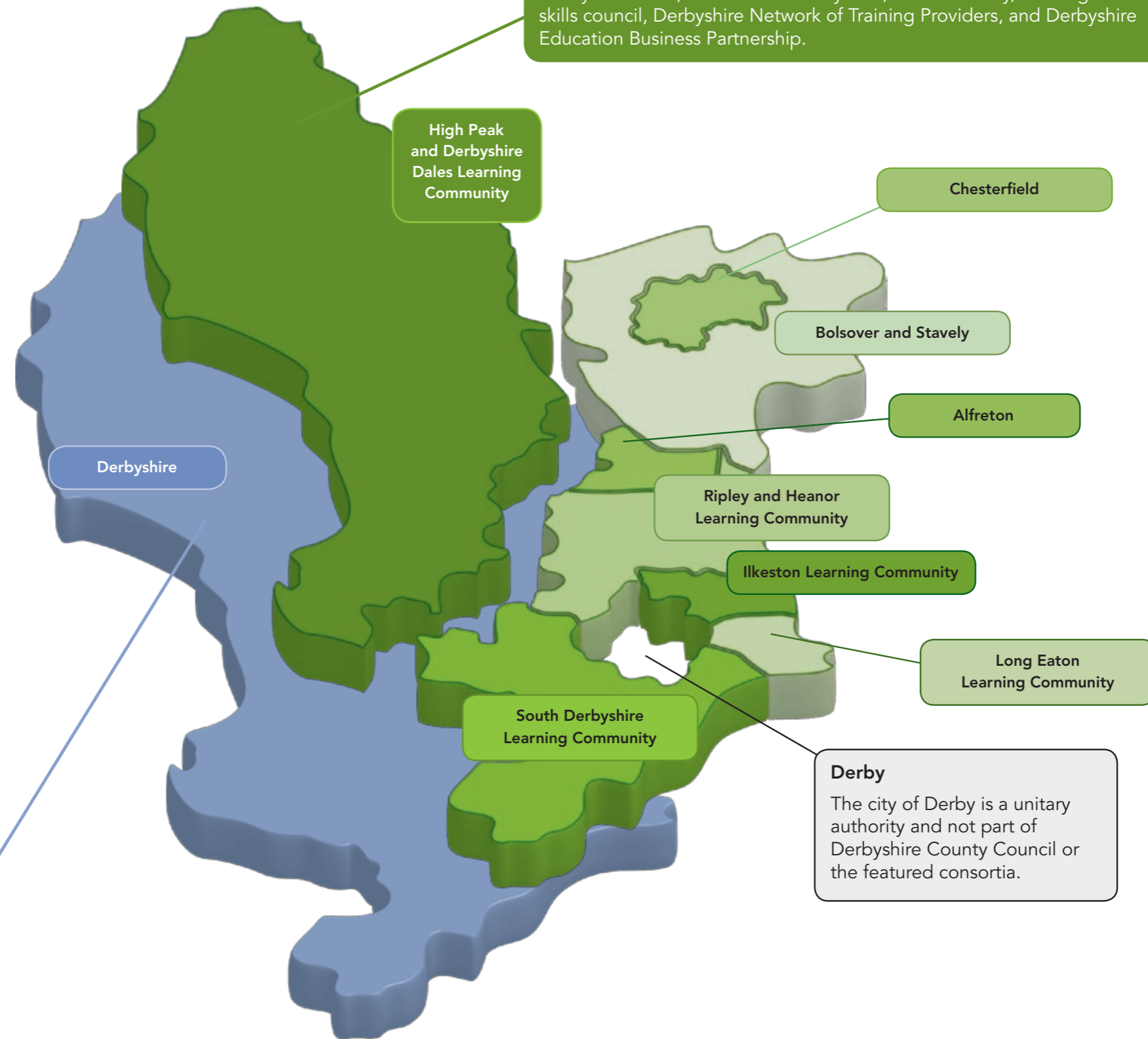
Derbyshire consortia

Each of Derbyshire's learning communities plans to offer certain Diplomas, as follows:

- Alfreton has submitted two bids to the Gateway 3 process
- Bolsover and Staveley will offer business, administration and finance from September 2009
- Chesterfield Learning Community will offer creative and media; hospitality; and IT from September 2009
- High Peak and Derbyshire Dales Learning Community will offer construction and the built environment; creative and media; engineering; and hospitality from September 2009
- Ilkeston Learning Community will offer creative and media from September 2009 and hair and beauty studies from September 2010; it will merge with the Long Eaton Learning Community for Gateway 3
- Long Eaton Learning Community will offer construction and the built environment from September 2009 and hair and beauty studies from September 2010; it will merge with Ilkeston Learning Community for Gateway 3
- Ripley and Heanor Learning Community have offered IT since September 2008 and will offer business, administration and finance; engineering; and hair and beauty studies from September 2009
- South Derbyshire Learning Community will offer engineering and IT from September 2009 and have a joint offer with East Staffordshire of creative and media also from September 2009.

In addition, a further 23 bids by the Derbyshire consortia have been submitted to the Gateway 3 process.

As the Derbyshire Consortium covers a large, mainly rural area, Diploma delivery is organised to minimise travel time between providers. The consortium is divided into eight learning communities, and the learning communities are overseen by a strategic partnership group. The delivery of lines of learning is organised within each learning community, but there is a lead practitioner for each line of learning who works across the whole consortium.



Context

Because it is a large, mainly rural area, Derbyshire had to devise ways of delivering Diplomas that involve a minimum amount of travel time between providers who are often a considerable distance apart. The first stage was to develop a geographically devolved model of eight 14 to 19 partnerships, or learning communities. The second stage was to invite partners to bid for leadership of particular Diploma lines of learning and the delivery of particular units according to the expertise and facilities each partner possessed.

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The city of Derby is a unitary authority and not part of Derbyshire County Council.

Consortia organisation

The eight learning communities are overseen at county level by a 14 to 19 strategic partnership group. It is chaired by the local authority, and each learning community is represented by its chair and a further education college principal.

Each learning community is managed by its own strategic group, which comprises headteachers and representatives from the further education college, the University of Derby, Aimhigher, Connexions, the education business partnership, training providers, the local authority and learning and skills council.

Each strategic group has three sub-groups that focus on the curriculum; information, advice and guidance; and pastoral/inclusion issues. Below the sub-groups are lines of learning development groups that deal with the detail of delivering each line. For each line there is also a lead practitioner who works across Derbyshire as a whole.

The High Peak and Derbyshire Dales Learning Community



This learning community comprises the following organisations (the representatives at its strategic group meetings are shown in parentheses):

- 11 secondary schools (headteachers)
- University of Derby at Buxton (executive dean and head of further education)
- Connexions Derbyshire
- local authority (14 to 19 manager for High Peak and Derbyshire Dales and the district manager for children and young people 11 to 19)
- learning and skills council (partnership manager for High Peak and Derbyshire Dales)
- Derbyshire Network of Training Providers
- Derbyshire Education Business Partnership.

In the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales Learning Community:

- nine out of the 11 secondary schools and the University of Derby at Buxton are taking part in the Diploma in 2009
- all 11 schools expect to be involved in the Diplomas by 2010.

The engineering Diploma partnership: Planning and managing a line of learning

The engineering Diploma partnership consists of:

- four schools
- one further education college
- one university
- employers, including JCB, Balfour Beatty, Rolls Royce and Tarmac.

The curriculum model

At key stage 4, the model is based on staff expertise. Following an audit of skills and experience, partners were able to 'bid' to deliver units appropriate to expertise and specialism. This means that units are delivered on different sites.

Learners work on at least two units at a time to allow all learners at each level to use specialist equipment in rotation.

Diploma teaching is organised in whole days. There are two common days per week for principal learning and the project (and functional skills for Foundation Diploma learners). This time includes attending Burton College on alternate weeks and the University of Derby at Buxton once each half term.

Work-related learning will also be provided during these days, and employers such as Balfour Beatty and JCB will contribute. Work-based learning will occur at various times throughout the year to enable learners from different cohorts to access specialist provision.

For example, *Unit 1: Introduction to the world of engineering* will be taught by Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School with Burton College's support. For the topic of transport, Peak Rail (a line built by Stephenson to Whitworth's factory), Wyvern Rail (an example of a heritage railway), Rolls Royce (home of the jet engine) and Bombardier (a multinational transportation company) supply enhancements and specialist support and host visits.

At post-16 the Advanced Diploma occupies the whole week.

Work experience in the engineering Diploma partnership

Work experience is organised by the lead school, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School. The school has a careers officer, in a post specially created for the purpose, who looks after all the work experience arrangements.

The placements are in one-week blocks because the partnership has found that this is what the industry requires. The employers offer a work experience programme for a specified number of learners at a particular time. The programmes are well organised experiences with visits, talks and placements in different parts of the company.

Each learner will have two separate weeks of work experience, each one in a different company.

Employer engagement in the engineering Diploma partnership

In a rural authority like Derbyshire, employer engagement presents significant challenges. The partnership has been able to secure extensive involvement from engineering employers, both in planning the bids and delivering the Diploma.

For example, a staff member from JCB helps with the Diploma for approximately 14 weeks from October onwards. He gives individual tuition to learners in the use of specialist equipment, such as lathes and milling machines. This is very valuable because it is a kind of specialist knowledge that teachers may not possess, yet learners need the information to be able to access a number of the units in the Diploma.

As part of one of the units, he gives the learners a real-life JCB design task: to design an oil-filter crusher. He also helps the learners work on a manufacturing brief set by Peak Rail, which requires them to set up a production line and manufacture 200 components.

JCB provides work experience for learners as well as work-based learning for them at the JCB headquarters. The work-based learning covers health and safety training, team-building exercises and an introduction to the production cycle.



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