

14-19 Reform



Functional skills

Nuts and Bolts series

Contents

Introduction	3
Functional skills	4
Functional skills and Diplomas	5
Roles and responsibilities	11
Key challenges and how to meet them	15
Action plan	18
Further resources	21

Introduction

What is this guide?

This is one of a series of guides to support the delivery of Diplomas. It looks at the role of functional skills as a key component of Diplomas.

The guide gives an overview of how consortia can fully contextualise functional skills into Diploma delivery, and outlines key challenges and how you can meet them. As well as an action plan and useful resources, it includes real examples of how consortia are incorporating functional skills into the teaching and learning of Diplomas.

Who is it for?

This guide is primarily for functional skills leads whose responsibilities include the delivery of functional skills as part of Diplomas. It will also be useful for senior leaders, managers, functional skills practitioners, skills specialists, principal learning practitioners, line of learning leads, and English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) subject leads.

What other guides are available?

Other guides in the Nuts and Bolts series are available from www.diploma-support.org/nutsandboltsguides.

Share your experiences

If you are aware of emerging practice or experience on functional skills or other aspects of consortium work that you would like to share, please feed these through your local consortium adviser. Their contact details can be found at <http://lmdp.14-19support.org/consortiumadvisers>. You can also join discussions on www.diploma-support.org.



Functional skills

Functional skills are essential to all our lives, which is why they are a key part of the Government's changes to 14–19 and adult education in England.

Functional skills will feature within each of the four qualification routes for 14–19-year-olds – GCSEs, Apprenticeships, Diplomas and Foundation Learning – and will be available as qualifications for adults. Underpinning functional skills for all England's young people is their inclusion within the secondary curriculum.

Employers and universities want reassurance that, whichever learning route learners choose, they will leave education with the skills to apply what they know. Better functional skills will help to raise standards in schools and colleges and improve employment prospects and further learning for all learners, regardless of age or ability.

What are functional skills?

Functional skills are practical skills in English, mathematics and ICT, which allow individuals to work confidently, effectively and independently in life.

Functional skills are not simply about knowledge in these subjects but about knowing when and how to use this knowledge and these skills in real-life contexts. In developing functional skills, learners can adapt and apply what they

have learned to suit different situations that they face. They reinforce skills in communication, problem solving, listening and time management.

Qualifications and assessment

Functional skills qualifications will be available in England to all learners at any age from 2010. Learners will be assessed at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2. The qualifications have been designed so that, at Level 2, learners are able to apply their skills confidently in a range of different contexts. That is why there will be an entitlement to develop functional skills to age 19 or until the learner has achieved their skills.

The Diploma, Apprenticeships and Foundation Learning will all reward achievement of a full programme of individual components, including functional skills qualifications. There are no alternative qualifications for functional skills in these qualification routes. For now, GCSE grades will not depend on a separate functional skills test. However, the increased functional content in the new English, mathematics and ICT GCSEs being taught from September 2010 means that learners will need good functional skills if they are to achieve higher grades.

Functional skills and Diplomas

Consortia will be at different stages when it comes to teaching functional skills as part of the Diploma. Some are just starting to deliver functional skills or contextualising them into new lines of learning.

Others may be moving from the discrete teaching of small cohorts of learners to the contextualised teaching of larger cohorts. Whatever stage you are at, your delivery of functional skills will probably need to change as your consortium introduces more lines of learning and moves towards the 2013 Diploma Entitlement.

A functional skills strategy

Your Diploma consortium needs to develop a strategy for functional skills which is shared across all the schools, colleges and work-based learning providers within your consortium. This will include a model and protocols to make sure that functional skills can be consistently taught and applied across all Diploma lines and all institutions delivering or accessing Diploma programmes within your consortium. It should also cover issues such as workforce development, quality assurance and how functional skills will be fully contextualised into new lines of learning as your consortium works towards full entitlement.

Your strategy could be part of your consortium's implementation plan or a separate strategy that feeds into this plan. Below is some guidance on what your strategy should cover. As functional skills are a core component of all four learning pathways, you will need to take into account work to contextualise functional skills into GCSEs and A levels, Apprenticeships and Foundation Learning. A functional skills strategy for Diplomas will also need to be coherent with each institution's delivery of functional skills within the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

What will your functional skills strategy look like?

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) provides guidance on how to document plans and strategies using the seven steps that are described below. Different organisations have their own processes and formats for planning, so this is guidance only.

- 1. Objectives:** What are your objectives to ensure the learners in your consortium develop functional skills? How do these relate to the objectives which individual institutions in your consortium might have on functional skills?
- 2. Actions:** What specific actions does your consortium need to take to ensure that these objectives are met? You will need to consider the extent to which these actions are informed by, or have an impact on, broader functional skills activity in each institution.

- 3. Responsibility:** Who is responsible for carrying out these actions and who will they in turn need to communicate with? This might be quite complex as individual institutions within your consortium might be identified as taking responsibility for different stages in the development of functional skills. All consortium members must fully understand their responsibility for functional skills delivery and the actions they must take. Effective joint planning and ongoing communication will be key.
- 4. Timescales:** While timelines for these actions must be realistic and achievable for staff, they will need to allow time for planning, resource development, workforce development etc. well in advance of first teaching.
- 5. Resources:** Staff time will be a major resource to achieve the necessary actions and this will have to be carefully costed and appropriately prioritised. This may be for continuing professional development (CPD) for key staff or for joint planning, for example, between principal learning practitioners and English, mathematics and ICT specialists who want to ensure that functional skills are taught to a consistently high standard across the consortium. Resources might be needed to develop materials.
- 6. Monitoring arrangements:** You will need to monitor progress against specific actions in your plan, and you will need to articulate the mechanisms for doing this. Each of the partner institutions in your consortium will need to work closely

together if all Diploma learners are to be equally prepared to apply their functional skills successfully in their Diploma programmes, and for final assessment.

- 7. Outcomes:** What success will look like for functional skills delivery in Diplomas will determine the outcomes you want to achieve for your consortium. These may be both quantitative and qualitative but must be measurable.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning of functional skills can be through a range of models, from discrete lessons to fully contextualised teaching and learning. It is expected that in the long term, functional skills will remain the responsibility of core subject teachers but will be reinforced throughout the rest of the curriculum in every lesson. Integrating functional skills in the context of the Diploma programme can be very motivating for learners as they recognise the relevance of these skills and how they contribute to learning and achievement.

Collaborative teaching models

In some consortia, functional skills teaching is still delivered by home institutions. However, you should now be moving towards an integrated and cross-consortium teaching model for functional skills, fully contextualising functional skills in the teaching of principal learning. This may take a couple of years to achieve and you may have to try different delivery models before you achieve cross-consortium teaching. For example, the Stoke-on-Trent consortium

has found that the best approach is one in which all three functional skills are taught in combination so that they can be better integrated into Diplomas. See the Case Study **Stoke-on-Trent: delivering city-wide functional skills** for more details.

The Functional Skills Support Programme, offered by National Strategies and the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), offers support for developing a collaborative approach. For more resources, go to www.fssupport.org.

Timetabling

Case studies show that at Key Stage 4, the principal learning and project for the Foundation Diploma could be delivered in the equivalent of one day a week over two years. For the Higher Diploma, this would require the equivalent of at least one and a half days over two years. Your consortium needs to link functional skills and personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS) closely to principal learning and other opportunities across the Key Stage 4 curriculum and work towards integrating these.

Timetabling of the Diploma in general has a big impact on how functional skills are taught. Consortia using a one-day Diploma delivery model tend to teach functional skills in individual centres. Consortia using a two-day model tend to teach functional skills centrally, which allows learners to have a more embedded or contextualised programme of study. Evaluation of functional skills pilot centres shows that this approach is the most effective.

Assessing learners' functional skills

Your consortium needs to assess learners' existing levels of functional skills and identify any weaknesses that need to be addressed. For guidance on how to do this, your practitioners can contact their regional facilitators – see www.fssupport.org for contact details.

This information should be shared with information, advice and guidance (IAG) staff so that they can provide ongoing IAG and help to develop personalised learning programmes. It should also be shared with practitioners to inform teaching and identify where further support and resources are needed to help learners to apply functional skills successfully. Functional skills specialists will be able to use the same information to build the skills that learners will need in their Diploma programmes. These assessments also give learners a benchmark to measure their progress against.

Assessment tools

Diagnostic tools to assess learners can be expensive but your further education (FE) and work-based providers should already have processes for assessing learners' literacy and numeracy. These can be adapted to take on board functional skills standards and learners' independent problem-solving skills. Your consortium may need to develop electronic individual learning plans (ILPs) further so that information about the progress of functional skills can be shared.

Stoke-on-Trent consortium: delivering city-wide functional skills

The Stoke-on-Trent consortium is responsible for Diploma delivery across all schools and colleges in the city. In terms of Diploma delivery, 36 partners are already involved including 15 Stoke schools, 2 Newcastle-under-Lyme schools, both city colleges, 2 universities and a range of employment and alternative providers. More are expected to get involved as Diploma lines increase.

As well as integrating the development of functional skills within principal learning and the wider Diploma programme, the consortium is responsible for implementing functional skills at Key Stage 4. This has meant that, rather than being a whole organisational cross-curriculum approach, Diploma practitioners support the development of skills application and mastery beyond English, mathematics and ICT subject areas.

The consortium faces a number of challenges, such as bringing together and supporting practitioners and overcoming organisational barriers. Another challenge is the Diploma delivery model in Stoke where units of principal learning are planned together by the delivery partners but are then delivered simultaneously in different institutions. This means that learners move round, studying different units in a different order, making it more difficult to plan for progression. Below are some of the ways that they have addressed these challenges.

Collaborative working

There are functional skills leads in each partner institution across the consortium. Functional skills is also a standing item on the college's curriculum and quality board so progress is reported regularly, raising the awareness of senior managers to the importance of specific and detailed reference to functional skills in Self Evaluation Frameworks (SEFs) and Self-Assessment Reports (SARs) and in progress reports.

A functional skills strategy group has been established which has representation from all providers (including alternative provision, special schools and higher education) and is the focus for all issues across the local authority. The local authority team also has access to the headteachers' forum where senior leaders are updated regularly on issues such as functional skills delivery models.

As a result, a greater understanding of the consortium's collaborative responsibility for functional skills is developing. To address this at practitioner level, one school has brought together functional skills specialists, Diploma deliverers and the exams officer to discuss how to establish ongoing assessment models and the importance of planning functional skills early into Diploma programmes. Initiatives such as this can then influence the rest of the consortium and improve partners' overall understanding of their role in functional skills.

Workforce development

In Stoke-on-Trent FE College, all staff without Level 2 qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT are required to undertake functional skills qualifications themselves. All faculties in the college now have a functional skills co-ordinator who is responsible for employing their own functional skills specialist in each programme area, with the functional skills team involved in the selection process.

To upskill all school staff who are working with functional skills both at Key Stage 3 and in Diplomas, the local authority has designed a functional skills CPD menu. This is focused on different aspects of functional skills and is tailored for specific target groups, for example special educational needs co-ordinators, teaching assistants and Diploma leads. To overcome the problem of staff release, these sessions are mainly delivered as twilight sessions but, in addition, local authority officers go in to work with individual institutions and across clusters. This opt-in model is additional to a rolling programme of support which focuses on individual schools or colleges. The National Strategies training modules are offered alongside this local authority support by the local authority National Strategies consultants.

more...

Resources to support integration

Ten schools, two special schools, the colleges and two alternative providers are piloting specific resources to support diagnostic assessment, skills building and contextualisation. It is hoped that the diagnostic tool will identify patterns of functional skills weakness across a group so that Diploma providers can build additional reinforcement into their schemes of work. Skill-building resources could also be made available via the staff intranet for learners to use independently to address a specific skills gap. Pilot centres are being encouraged to use the diagnostic information to support IAG for enrolment on the Diplomas. Functional skills weaknesses mean that schools will need to identify and plan for additional support.

Sharing information

Birches Head High School has developed an electronic tracking tool for the whole curriculum which could be used to allow all Diploma delivery partners to share information about learner progress in functional skills with the consortium. It could also enable both learners and teachers to engage in the formative assessment process by recording and comparing judgements against performance statements.

Reporting on functional skills performance

Tracking pupil progress where learners are taught outside their home centre has been a challenge for the consortium, not least because there has been some lack of clarity over responsibility for reporting on learner performance. To solve this, a number of centres within the consortium are hoping to develop tracking systems to record learner progress and assessment achievement in functional skills, allowing this information to be fed back to the home institution to inform personalised planning and target setting. This will also enable the functional skills lead to monitor overall progress and address any emerging issues with individuals or groups of learners.

Quality assurance

The consortium has a quality assurance system which picks up functional skills in lesson observations and ensures consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the consortium as well as standardised assessment needs. This system has been included in the 14–19 Stoke protocol document. It refers to the LSIS model of identifying a lead across a Diploma line who quality assures what is going on across institutions. All Diploma lines are being encouraged to follow this model.

Roles and responsibilities

The following section outlines how responsibility for delivering functional skills can be shared across a consortium. This may vary from consortium to consortium, depending on local circumstances.

Consortium leaders and managers

The responsibility for contextualising functional skills into Diplomas lies with your consortium not individual schools, colleges and work-based learning providers. This means that your consortium leads or managers are ultimately responsible, along with other managers across the consortium, for your strategy for functional skills delivery. They will be responsible for appointing a functional skills lead or leads (see below) and workforce development, making sure that staff have the opportunities for training and support that they need to deliver functional skills.

Senior leaders in schools and colleges

Headteachers, principals, deputies and other senior leaders from individual schools and colleges within your consortium will have a role to play in functional skills delivery. Although your consortium should be working towards the cross-consortium delivery of functional skills, home

institutions may still have responsibility for the quality assurance and planning of functional skills.

Functional skills lead(s)

Ideally, there will be a functional skills lead who co-ordinates functional skills delivery and planning across your consortium. This is particularly useful if functional skills are taught in home institutions within a consortium. The functional skills lead should make sure that Diploma students get high-quality learning, are prepared for assessment and get the opportunity to develop functional skills in a Diploma context.

Your consortium may prefer to have a number of senior leaders who are responsible for functional skills, but it is helpful to have one named contact who can disseminate information and materials to other senior leaders.

Line of learning leads

Line of learning leads need to make sure that functional skills are fully contextualised into the Diploma curriculum. To do this effectively, they will need to have the authority to include functional skills specialists in their planning sessions. They will also need to work collaboratively with functional skills specialists and practitioners across the consortium.

Functional skills specialists

The role of functional skills specialists will vary depending on the learning pathways that are offered in their institutions.

Functional skills specialists will need to work collaboratively with other practitioners to make sure that functional skills are given real, relevant and purposeful contexts within Diploma lines. They also need to understand the differences between functional skills and other skills qualifications such as key skills and, to a lesser extent, Skills for Life qualifications.

Practitioners

Within schools, it is likely that English, mathematics and ICT subject leads will teach functional skills. In colleges, functional skills specialists may teach functional skills, often alongside Skills for Life or key skills. But effective integration across the curriculum requires every practitioner to be able to recognise and provide opportunities for learners to develop their functionality. Your functional skills strategy should outline the workforce development needs of practitioners so that they can do this. (See *Assessing learners' functional skills*, page 7.)

Making functional skills a key component of Diploma programmes

The Birmingham Central consortium for Creative and Media consists of two schools, one sixth form college and two FE colleges. The consortium recognises that functional skills are a key component of the Diploma, as significant to student achievement as any other component of Diploma learning. Diplomas are informing functional skills development when they start at Key Stage 3.

Responsibility for functional skills

The responsibility for functional skills sits within the Diploma team, not in the English, mathematics and ICT departments in the Diploma learners' home institutions. A functional skills lead in the consortium makes sure that functional skills are integrated across Diploma learning. The lead has the status, authority and senior management support to make sure that all partners take responsibility for reinforcing functional skills. As functional skills are essential for GCSE as well as Diploma attainment, they inform whole-school cross-curricular policy.

The English functional skills consortium lead, also a member of the Creative and Media Diploma delivery team, is an English advanced skills teacher (AST) from one of the partner schools, Golden Hillock. The school's deputy head provides the strategic view which reinforces the importance of functional skills across the consortium as part of a coherent vision of the Diploma.

The functional skills lead and consortium leads for mathematics and ICT have had extensive training and are involved in the delivery of CPD across the consortium within all lines of learning. Some of the schools receiving training are not actually delivering Diplomas yet but this means that they will be prepared well in advance.

Embedding functional skills into the curriculum

The consortium's approach encourages the delivery team to use effective teaching strategies by adapting their tasks and projects to incorporate functional skills.

Each unit that is developed is given a different functional skills focus and every Diploma session has not only a specified principal learning outcome, but also functional skills and PLTS outcomes.

Collaborative working

In the Creative and Media Diploma, there is an emphasis on functional English and ICT skills. The lead teacher has sought collaboration with a mathematics colleague to maximise further functional mathematics learning opportunities into the course. This has proved an effective solution and one that has quickly provided consolidated outcomes.

Outcomes

- Learners' development and use of functional skills have improved.
- Opportunities for further functional skills development in core lessons have been identified.
- Principal learning practitioners are more aware of their responsibility for supporting functional skills in Diplomas.
- The kudos of Diplomas has been increased even further by the installation of a new dedicated Apple Mac studio which has encouraged ICT skills development through practice and the philosophy that 'you can't break a skill through trying!'
- Results are expected to be boosted and to have a knock-on effect in discrete English, mathematics and ICT lessons in schools.

Key challenges and how to meet them

Collaboration

There needs to be collaborative working by functional skills specialists and subject practitioners from schools and colleges across your consortium. In some consortia, functional skills specialists are already part of the Diploma delivery team, but often this is only in their home institution. For functional skills to be fully contextualised into Diplomas, staff from across the different institutions within your consortium need to work closely together. This helps practitioners have a better understanding of how functional skills contribute to Diploma learning and achievement. It also gives them an awareness of sector-related contexts in which functional skills might be applied.

One of the benefits of collaborative working is that expertise from across the consortium can be used. FE and work-based partners within your consortium will have extensive experience of integrating literacy, numeracy and ICT skills within vocational and occupational programmes. This knowledge and experience can be used to inform functional skills delivery within Diplomas.

Central to the success of collaborative working is good communication of your overall strategy. All partners need to be clear about what is expected of them and each other.

Resources

You will need to think about the resources that you need to contextualise functional skills fully into Diploma delivery. This could include both staff time and financial costs at both centre level and consortium level. The resources needed at each level will depend on whether Diploma students are taught functional skills centrally or in their home institutions.

Integrating teaching

There can be barriers to integrated teaching that encourage the discrete teaching of functional skills within a learner's home institution.

In some schools and colleges, isolated specialists may be teaching a single functional skill without any knowledge of what is happening within Diplomas in their own school, or across the consortium. A way of addressing this is to make guided learning hours available to line of learning leads. This can give them the flexibility to co-ordinate the different roles and responsibilities for functional skills across the consortium.

Another barrier to integrated teaching is that English, mathematics and ICT practitioners might be reluctant to share the responsibility for functional skills with non-specialist teachers because they are concerned that learners won't acquire functional skills to a high enough standard. Line of learning leads and functional skills specialists need to help practitioners work with each other and resolve any issues

or concerns. Resources to support non-specialist practitioners are available from www.fssupport.org.

As with other elements of the Diploma, parents may have concerns if functional skills are being taught elsewhere in an institution that they are not familiar with. Good communication is needed to explain how and where functional skills are going to be taught and to address any concerns that parents may have.

Workforce

You need to make sure that practitioners across your consortium have the skills to teach functional skills to Diploma students. Your workforce development plan should include plans to identify where there are skills gaps and any professional development that is needed. You should think about how you can make sure that staff can be released to take training and to work collaboratively with other practitioners, leaders and managers.

LSIS provides support delivering functional skills in Diplomas and post-16 institutions and National Strategies provides support for practitioners in schools. Go to www.fssupport.org for more information.

Within your consortium, there will be in-house expertise and experience from embedding functional skills into other learning pathways. This local knowledge can be used to supplement external training.

It may also be necessary to make sure that practitioners themselves have functional skills. Some consortia are encouraging practitioners to undertake functional skills qualifications if they do not already hold Level 2 qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT.

For further guidance about the support that is available, go to www.fssupport.org.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance processes need to be applied consistently across your consortium to assess the teaching and learning of functional skills in all the consortium's institutions. Individual schools and colleges within your consortium may have their own quality assurance processes for functional skills. You will need to bring these together and ensure that there are protocols that apply to all schools and colleges. For more guidance, see the Nuts and Bolts guide on quality assurance.

Dudley North consortium: building on collaboration

Dudley North consortium is at the planning stages for the delivery of its first Diploma line in 2009. It is building on successful collaboration with its FE partners to integrate functional skills within the Engineering Diploma.

The consortium is basing its work on its experience of BTEC Engineering, which High Arcal School delivers in partnership with Dudley College. This means that the cultural changes and shared protocols for collaborative provision are already in place.

Identifying roles and responsibilities

Each of the partner schools has an identified functional skills lead in their English, mathematics and ICT departments. An Engineering Diploma delivery plan has been submitted to the consortium's strategic group and the principal learning delivery team is now working with a mathematics specialist in High Arcal to identify the functional mathematics skills that are needed. The guided learning hours for functional skills within the Diploma programme will be used. This way, the specialist can give additional functional mathematics teaching to Diploma students to ensure that these skills are secure and can be applied in principal learning.

The ICT demands in principal learning have also been identified – even though the lead school is confident that there is sufficient existing capacity within the ICT department to deliver this support to learners. So far, the same process has not been worked through for functional English, but the literacy specialists from the college who have a history of successful delivery of key skills in vocational areas will shortly take on responsibility for this.

Training and development

Training and development plans have been submitted to the strategic group. All schools in the consortium have accessed functional skills CPD from the local authority's National Strategies team. At the same time, the college has had a training programme delivered by the LSIS Functional Skills Support Programme. These will prepare teachers for their role in supporting learners on the Engineering Diploma to develop and apply their functional skills.

Action plan

There is no single model for embedding functional skills into Diploma delivery but the following is a guide to the actions you might want to take.

1. Identify who is responsible for functional skills at both strategic and delivery levels. This should include how your consortium will work collaboratively to make sure that functional skills are consistently delivered.
2. Develop a functional skills strategy that outlines your objectives, approach, evaluation and risk. This may be part of your consortium's overall implementation plan. See page 5 for more details on the implementation plan.
3. You may need a functional skills steering group to take this work forward. They will need to collaborate with senior leaders and other steering groups responsible for areas such as workforce development.
4. Evaluate your current functional skills provision within Diplomas. Identify what can be learnt from the application of functional skills into other learning pathways.
5. Evaluate your workforce development needs and identify where there are gaps and what training and support is needed to meet them.
6. Identify how functional skills will be fully contextualised into future lines of learning.
7. Use quality assurance protocols to evaluate functional skills provision on an ongoing basis.
8. Consider what is needed to ensure that individual schools and colleges are prepared for full roll-out.



Overhauling functional skills delivery across the City of Wolverhampton College

The Wolverhampton Consortium is made up of 18 schools and one FE college, the City of Wolverhampton College. The college is responsible for Level 2 functional skills for all post-16 learners who are taking one of the three Gateway 1 Advanced Diploma programmes.

In the first assessment round, the results were mixed, with a 70% pass rate for functional English, 50% for functional mathematics and 30% for functional ICT. These results did not always correlate with other achievements in these subjects. There were a number of reasons for the results, including staff feeling isolated in what they were teaching and students not seeing functional skills as relevant to their Diploma programme.

To address this, the college took the following actions:

- Skills for Life, key skills and functional skills were merged into one skills team with identified management responsibilities for distinct strands of development such as functional skills in Diplomas. Qualified staff from the skills team will be embedded in programme areas and the workforce planning cycle will highlight the need for functional skills staff. Appointments of all functional skills staff will come through the skills team and they will be involved in the selection process.
- There is a dedicated functional skills co-ordinator who is directly involved in functional skills delivery and responsible for making sure that there is a consistent approach.
- A whole consortium management forum day was held to identify specific responsibility for leading on functional skills in each school. They have also drawn up CPD programmes and established clear communication plans for their area.

more...

- A functional skills strategy has been developed, which will use Diploma funding to map the functional skills that contribute to the outcomes of each unit of principal learning. Resources that blend functional skills and principal learning are being produced for tutors. The Diploma operational group is working to share electronically key documents and training materials. It is hoped that attendance and progress reports will be shared on a consortium internet.
- An extensive CPD programme was delivered by LSIS and there will be additional support activity. Frameworks have been developed to help staff personalise learning. Staff are becoming more positive and have a greater understanding of their role in delivering functional skills.
- The college is looking at how functional skills are delivered. A 36-week, 1-hour-per-week delivery strategy has proved to have no 'street cred' with learners and has been found to lead to underperformance. Already, there have been major successes where key skills have been delivered as very focused sessions over six to ten weeks. Another option might also be to co-timetable 20 hours of functional skills delivery together with other programmes to allow greater flexibility.
- The college aims to share its approach as a best practice guide with its consortium partners. It also hopes to apply its approach to other learning programmes.

Further resources

Functional skills support programme (FSSP)

The FSSP supports the delivery of functional skills in schools and colleges and their website includes a range of resources and guidance, including the Functional Skills in Diploma series.

www.fssupport.org

Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency functional skills website

This website has resources for practitioners and organisations that are involved in delivering functional skills, including schools, colleges and work-based learning providers, awarding bodies and employers. The site has information about functional skills qualifications, the functional skills regulatory criteria and pilot activity.

www.qcda.gov.uk/6062.aspx

DCSF website

For the latest policy information and updates about Diplomas.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19



© Crown copyright 2009

Published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families

DCSF-01023-2009

Extracts from this document may be reproduced for noncommercial research, education or training purposes on the condition that the source is acknowledged. For any other use please contact **licensing@opsi.gsi.gov.uk**