

National Council for Educational Excellence: Progress Report

Foreword



We want the United Kingdom to be a place where children go as far as their talents will take them, and where background is no barrier to a young person's future success. This was the vision for British education that inspired the creation of the National Council for Educational Excellence and the recommendations it published last year.

At the centre of the Council's work is developing ways in which business, Higher Education, schools and colleges can collaborate to mutual advantage, especially in widening participation, and raising standards and transparency for partnerships between education and business. As a part of this work, employers themselves have now set up the Education & Employers Task Force as a company and charitable trust. The task force was formally launched on 15th October to coordinate, mobilise and promote partnerships between business and education.

The NCEE has also supported the creation of the Institute for Education Business Excellence which has introduced a new standard for education business brokerage. Any education business brokerage organisation that wishes to receive public funding will now have to hold the new standard or be working toward achieving it by 2011. The NCEE has also launched campaigns to promote science education, to expand outreach activities and to modernise Information, Advice and Guidance for prospective students.

The engagement of parents and carers in their child's learning and development is one of the key drivers of children's attainment and development. The NCEE played an important role in the creation of the *Your child, your schools, our future* White Paper which emphasised the importance and benefits of schools working together in partnership to offer more to their pupils. The NCEE also helped shape the strategy to improve parental engagement outlined in the *Children's Plan: One Year On* which included innovative approaches to the use of social marketing techniques for communicating with parents about the ways in which they can and should support their child's learning and development. The NCEE was a strong advocate of the Government's commitment to legislate to place a new requirement on local authorities to gather parents' views on the secondary schools available in their area and to act on their views.

We would like to thank all Council members, particularly Dame Julia Cleverdon, Professor Steve Smith, Felicity Martin and Ed Mayo for their work and dedication in driving forward progress. Their work is already making a positive impact on outcomes for children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Balls'.

Rt. Hon Ed Balls
November 2009

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Mandelson'.

Lord Mandelson PC

Business Strand

Introduction to the Business strand – Dame Julia Cleverdon

As Chair of the Business strand of NCEE our challenge was to identify what needed to be done to achieve real impact and scale in what is a gloriously simple proposition – employers working in partnership with schools and colleges can help to raise the aspirations and achievement of young people.

Complexity and complacency has hindered progress in the past but there is now a real and proven business case for engagement by employers and evidence of clear benefits and impacts on the life chances of young people in both primary and secondary schools and colleges. The recession makes the situation even more urgent particularly in schools facing the greatest challenges. Encouragingly the CBI's 2009 education and skills survey *'Emerging stronger: the value of education and skills in turbulent times'* found that levels of employer engagement with both primary and secondary schools had gone up.

What will success look like for our recommendations? The new National Framework achieved and business mobilised in its support, a welcome mat out in all schools for employers, clarity of accountability in schools for business relationships and brilliant brokerage to support delivery of the framework in every school and college. The early signs of progress and success are encouraging. Business also increasingly recognises that it needs to play a role and so a new employer-led taskforce, supported by the DCSF and senior levels of business and education, has already convened the strategic partnership to mobilise business support behind the National Framework. This defines where business can contribute most to raising the aspirations and achievement of young people and encompasses:

- School leadership (including governance teacher professional development)
- Basic literacy, numeracy and life skills encompassing knowledge of the world of work
- Science, technology, engineering and maths
- Enterprise and employability.

Steps already taken in the White Paper have put in place accountability within schools for business relationships in both governing bodies and senior leadership teams – this will give structure and clarity to what employers need in schools if they are to make a valuable contribution. However mobilising thousands of smaller businesses to give and gain from education-business partnerships also needs a step change in what I have termed “brilliant brokerage”, so I was delighted in June to attend the launch of the new Institute for Education Business Excellence, a professional body for the people and organisations that contribute clarity and scale to the space between business and education. Their task with local authorities is to raise the professionalism and quality of education business partnerships and help develop the innovative and cost effective approaches to work-related learning. The new standard – the Award for Education Business Excellence – should be the starting point for brokerage organisations in receipt of public or private funding.

Throughout the last two years I have been in awe of the energy and drive of the business work stream – Richard Lambert of the CBI, Sir John Rose of Rolls Royce, Damon Buffini of Permira and Bob Wigley, formerly of Merrill Lynch and now Chairman of Yell Group, who is now co-chairing the new Education and Employers Taskforce together with Anthony Salz of NM Rothschild, and would like to thank them all as well as Business in the Community for their unstinting support to me as Vice President. The DCSF staff team and the NCEE secretariat have been of the greatest help.

The recession has put an even sharper focus on the employability of the next generation and all of us need to redouble our efforts to achieve a new scale of employer engagement and value-creating partnerships if we are to shape a successful future for us all.



Dame Julia Cleverdon
Vice-President, Business in the Community

Progress Against Recommendations

Cross Cutting Action

'Building Stronger Partnerships' supports the five NCEE business strand recommendations. A hugely successful employer engagement event was held on 15 October 2009, at which updated briefing materials were made available together with the first screening of a new 'Building Stronger Partnerships' DVD, available to see on the DCSF website.

On the same day the new Education and Employers Taskforce was launched at Loughborough School in Lambeth by Ed Balls, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Lord Mandelson, the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and Iain Wright, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for 14-19 Reform and Apprenticeships; together with Bob Wigley of the NCEE, Co-chair of the Taskforce with Anthony Salz of NM Rothschild. The Taskforce is a key element of the drive to deliver each of the NCEE recommendations. It will inspire, motivate, communicate and co-ordinate employer engagement activities together with its partners from the world of business and education.

DCSF has supported the creation and launch of the Institute for Education Business Excellence (IEBE) to drive quality in employer engagement. While its main focus is 'brilliant brokerage' the IEBE is helping drive delivery of them all. We believe the

IEBE is the first professional body in the world for organisations and people that work between education and business, and at the time of writing around 1250 individuals and 200 organisations including schools, colleges and businesses and a wide range of Education Business Partnership Organisations (EBPOs) had joined the IEBE since its launch on 1 June 2009.

Recommendation 1:

Employers should support the delivery of a new National Framework for business education partnership so that by 2010, every primary and secondary school and college should have an effective relationship with business.

The National Framework defines where business can contribute most to raising the aspirations and achievements of young people, and covers:

- *School leadership, including governance and teacher professional development*
- *Basic literacy, numeracy and life skills including knowledge of the world of work*
- *Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths*
- *Enterprise education and employability skills*

The Education and Employers Taskforce has developed new on-line guides for employers and teachers about the benefits of education employer partnership working and where to get advice and

guidance, (www.the-guides.org). The on-line Talentmap, launched in July 2009, and campaign delivered by UK Commission for Employment is now helping guide employers through all aspects of the education and training system and steering them to NCEE priorities for supporting schools. DCSF is working with the Education and Employers Taskforce and other partners to put in place a nationally available web-based service for matching employers and schools, based on the “business in schools” website which the Edge Foundation have completed testing and linking with EBPOs. Work to develop a new employer languages champions network has been started, aiming for 500 employer languages champions by 2011.

Recommendation 2:

Schools and colleges should identify a member of the leadership team to be responsible for creating, managing and developing relationships with business. This should deliver the business contributions to the National Framework clearly linked into the school or college’s policy on Economic Well-Being in the curriculum.

Schools and colleges across the country are taking forward this recommendation. The White Paper *Your child, your schools, our future*, published in June 2009, set out a clear expectation that the leadership team of every school should have someone who leads on business relations. The White Paper went further than the recommendation and included that the governing body of every school should have a governor responsible for business relations.

Recommendation 3:

Business support should be mobilised to deliver all the areas of the National Framework in every school, and in order to put greatest effort into schools that need it most there should be a particular focus on schools in the National Challenge.

Support for the National Challenge schools is in place via the National Challenge Advisers as part of ‘the offer’ to National Challenge schools. Requests are routed to the Education and Employers Taskforce and its partners who will deliver a solution that meets the needs of each school. Key partners include the IEBE, HTI, and the School Governors’ One Stop Shop together with local support from Education Business Partnership Organisations. In addition, employer engagement consultancy support is also available through IEBE, similar to that offered to Diploma Consortia. We have said in the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) strategy that we will build on the success of Business in the Community’s ‘Big Conversation’ national event held on 15 September 2009 to expand and improve work experience. DCSF is committed to leading the way to engage the public sector, and the Department of Health have joined the Education and Employers Taskforce Board of Trustees.

Recommendation 4:

That good practice in partnerships between education and business should be identified, promoted and celebrated by Ofsted, Government, business and intermediaries.

DCSF and the Education and Employers Taskforce are identifying and defining what effective

education employer partnership working looks like. School Improvement Advisers have commenced work, to report in Spring 2010, identifying good practice in Primary Schools. Diploma Development Partnerships are actively collecting new case studies and there are over 100 examples of the 14-19 reforms in action already gathered. The Education and Employers Taskforce will run a communications campaign, promoting case studies and building on the good practice that already exists in School / Business partnerships. Ofsted has commenced a thematic survey of good practice in school partnership working with higher education and employers reporting in 2010. DCSF is working with inspectors on this. DCSF and the Education and Employers Taskforce will use and disseminate the findings widely. The IAG strategy includes a commitment to raise the profile of the IEBE's annual employer awards scheme.

expect all EBPOs that wish to receive public funding to either hold or demonstrate that they are working toward and can achieve this new Award. As of October 2009, 74 organisations were registered for the AEBE, exceeding the target of 60 by September, and 10 had already achieved the Award. We want all local authorities to have access to a high quality EBPO by 2011. The Education and Employers Taskforce will work with the Edge Foundation and the IEBE on a survey of the quality of education business brokerage and of EBPOs in England.

Recommendation 5:

The Government and local authorities should ensure that there is universal access to high quality education business brokerage in every area to support the delivery of the National Framework in every school and college. This should be included in every Local Authority's next Children and Young People's Plan and business should be an equal partner.

DCSF has put in place, through a contract with the Institute for Education Business Excellence (IEBE) an accreditation process against the new DCSF standard for Education Business Partnership Organisations (EBPOs) leading to a new Award for Education Business Excellence (AEBE). In time we

Case Study One: IBM

IBM believes they have a significant role to play in promoting the value of education and key skills to children and young people. As a provider of business services and technology solutions their knowledge based business depends for its sustainability on access to well educated individuals – who might either become employees, clients or users of products and services. Within this broad context they attach particular importance to the development of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths knowledge and skills. Key education programmes, delivered globally, include the following:

- **IBM KidSmart** supports learning in early years through donations of computers in purpose-designed units, with educational software, to state nurseries serving disadvantage communities.
- **IBM Reading Companion** is a web-based computer programme which supports the teaching of reading to children and adults. The sophisticated software “listens” to readers and provides feedback to the reader on their pronunciation, as well as detailed diagnostic reports for teachers on individual student performance.
- **TryScience** is a science and technology website (www.tryscience.org) which aims to engage the interest of 8 –12 year old children in exploring science & technology. The site offers a host of interactive experiments, adventures and activities which can be completed both online or offline.
- **MentorPlace** is an e-mentoring programme, partnering IBM employees with students in selected schools to provide them with study support, information on careers, and an opportunity to find out what it is really like in the workplace.
- **School Governors** – IBM encourages its employees to become school governors – around 250 employees are currently school governors.
- **Diplomas** – IBM is supporting the development of the new Science Diploma and the delivery of the IT Diploma

“IBM fundamentally values the importance good education has in creating the foundations of success – for us, for our clients and for the communities and societies of which we are a part. None of us can be successful if we work in isolation. Supporting young people’s learning cannot be the sole responsibility of governments – as individuals and as institutions we all share the responsibility for creating the conditions for success. We are fully committed to using our knowledge, our skills and our expertise to work with the Government and other institutions to improve educational outcomes for young people.” – Mark Wakefield, Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs Manager, IBM UK.

Case Study Two: Cecil Jones College, Southend-on-Sea

Cecil Jones College is a business and enterprise college for 1500 students from 11-18. Stephen Cook, Director of Community Development, has led and driven a rich programme of employer engagement. Having started his career in industry with ITV, Stephen could bring a different perspective to employer engagement. Working together with his local Business Link he has used his resources to help local businesses. One example was a small 'niche' hair salon 'Raw Hair' that wanted a poster designed that was top quality but which lacked the resources to do it directly. This provided a real commission for the students and something for their portfolios. Stephen has developed relationships with the Essex Chambers of Commerce and ensured the college's support of the Southend Business Awards to celebrate success, reward good practice and raise the business and enterprise profile of the college in the local community.

Higher Education Strand

Introduction to the Higher Education strand – Professor Steve Smith

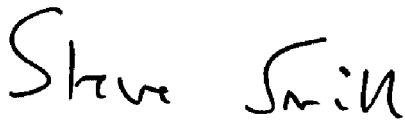
I am delighted by the progress we have made since our recommendations were accepted by the Government last year. In a number of instances we can report that our recommendation has already been substantially delivered. Some recommendations, of necessity, are longer term ambitions. But even here we must lay claim to good progress, and I detect both in the education world and in Government a real determination to succeed by building ever more effective partnerships between schools, colleges and universities.

As can be seen in the more detailed commentary in the following pages, there is no aspect of our recommendations where there has been no progress. That is a significant achievement in itself given the consensus that is required in many of these areas before they can truly become embedded.

Highlights I would draw from the progress made so far include the introduction, this year, for all universities to produce Widening Participation Strategic Assessments. These will be important documents going forward that will bring real coherence to the full range of an institution's activities to promote broader access to higher education, including the important work that universities are doing with schools and colleges. This recommendation and others relating to the use of predicted A* grades and the publication of admissions processes are essentially complete.

I would also highlight the support the recommendations on information, advice and guidance (IAG) have received from DCSF and Ofsted. The IAG strategy has put in place significant accountability and monitoring measures to support delivery of high quality and independent information, advice and guidance services, alongside a clear statement of the provision that young people and their parents have a right to receive. We are also making significant progress on the other recommendations and I cannot fail to mention the range of programmes that have been established by BIS and DCSF to promote participation in science, technology, engineering, maths and modern foreign languages.

I wish to put on record my gratitude to the Ambassadors Group which came together late last year to help with implementing the recommendations. The collaboration between the Group – opinion formers and leaders from across education – and Government has worked exceptionally well in driving forward implementation. I am extremely heartened that the Group has agreed to continue for a further period to ensure that the momentum we have established continues and that our recommendations and ambitions are fully realised. I am also pleased that Government Ministers in BIS and DCSF have supported our work throughout.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Smith". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Professor Steve Smith
Vice-Chancellor, University of Exeter

Progress Against Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

It is important that schools and colleges offer the fullest possible support and advice to students with the ability to enter higher education, including appropriate advice for those with the ability to apply for the most selective institutions. Our recommendation on Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) will go some way to address this issue. In addition we believe the Government should consider asking Ofsted to make the quality of this support an explicit and published part of the inspection process. We also believe Government should consider what information could usefully be made available to schools and colleges to enable them to benchmark their performance with others.

The recently published IAG strategy announced a guarantee to all young people and their parents, which clearly set out the provision that young people and their parents have a right to receive, enabling them to challenge providers if their services fall short of what they have a reasonable right to expect. The strategy puts in place significant accountability and monitoring measures to support delivery of high quality and independent information, advice and guidance services. As was made clear in the White Paper *Your child, your schools, our future*, IAG is included in the new Pupil and Parent Guarantees (to be introduced Sept 2010),¹ with clear routes of redress

for parents to the Local Government Ombudsman if they or their child are not receiving any aspect of the guarantee.

In addition, the focus on IAG has been strengthened in Ofsted's new, revised school inspection evaluation schedule. The schedule, which sets out what inspectors evaluate, and the school 'self-evaluation' form, which helps schools to self-evaluate their work and is used as a basis for inspection, have both been revised so that careers education and IAG now influence a range of issues on which inspectors are required to form judgements. Post-16 learning providers are already assessed on the IAG they provide through Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework. And the Framework for Excellence also provides a basis for assessing their performance, including on IAG.

A number of actions have been agreed by BIS and DCSF to support benchmarking in schools and colleges and from 2011 the School Report Card will report annually on outcomes across the breadth of school performance. DCSF are currently consulting on the design of the School Report Card, including on the inclusion of a post-16 progression measure, which would give a good indication of the impact of IAG, and on parental feedback on the quality of IAG received by their children.

1 Subject to the 5th Session schools Bill being approved by Parliament

Recommendation 2:

Every primary school should devote time to work on raising student aspirations to take up a place in higher education. Schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) should try to ensure that every pupil visits a higher education campus either during primary or early secondary education, concentrating initially on schools in low participation or deprived areas.

The new Primary curriculum includes an emphasis on raising aspirations within a new Area of Learning – Understanding Physical Development, Health and Well-Being with the requirement that ‘children should be encouraged to learn about the pathways they might take in their future education through secondary, further and higher education’. Pathfinder pilots at Key Stage 2 (7 to 11), to run from September 2009 to July 2010, will explore the impact of career-related learning in extending horizons and raising aspirations in around 30 schools, the majority of which will be in socio-economic disadvantaged areas. Evaluation will inform effective practice guidance and support the introduction of the new Primary curriculum in 2011. In addition, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is piloting in this academic year, two brokerage models linking primary schools with higher education institutions. One model provides direct links through Aimhigher partnerships; the other is examining how partnerships’ existing links with secondary schools can be effectively used to deliver activity indirectly to their feeder primary schools. The pilots will report in May 2010.

Recommendation 3:

Government should ensure that primary, secondary schools and colleges are enabled to provide better Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills (especially Maths) to pupils to ensure that take-up of STEM courses at a higher level is not constrained by lack of capacity or inappropriate IAG. Schools should continue to develop dedicated activities to promote participation in STEM subjects and modern foreign languages and HEI links with schools and colleges should support this.

Government have appointed a National STEM Director with the aim of leading the STEM programme to rationalise and improve the provision of support for students. This includes involving HEIs to support schools through a number of programmes such as the triple science support programme. The UK Science and Society Strategy was launched in May with five expert groups established to develop actions in key areas that will help create renewed vigour and enhanced interest in science.

HEFCE launched a national HE STEM programme in August. Running for three years, the programme will build on the activity, experience and expertise developed within four pilot projects. As well as increasing and widening participation in the key STEM disciplines, the national programme will address the needs of employers through helping to develop more responsive and flexible curricula in the STEM disciplines and upskilling the current workforce.

The BIS-funded *Science: So What! So Everything* Campaign is continuing to provide more information about science as a subject and career.

Universities UK has commissioned a report to examine the contribution made by departments of education, particularly through their research, on raising attainment and participation in STEM subjects at schools and colleges.

There is also a wide range of activities in place to promote participation in languages. The DCSF is funding a communications campaign to promote the value of learning a language. The joint HEFCE and DCSF Routes into Languages programme, is investing £8 million between 2008 and 2011 to establish consortia of HEI to work with schools to encourage languages take-up at Key Stage 4 and beyond. Early signs are that the National Networks for Translation and Interpreting strands are encouraging young people to consider interpreting and translation as a career.

Recommendation 4:

Significant improvements are needed in the information, advice and guidance (IAG) provided in secondary schools: Schools should appoint a senior member of staff with responsibility for careers and education guidance, ensure that all staff have dedicated time to undertake HE-related Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, and ensure that up to date HE related information, advice and guidance is provided.

- *HEIs should ensure that the provision of timely advice and guidance to young people and teachers is incorporated in all strands of engagement with schools from primary school onwards.*

- *Schools should encourage ambition in students from lower socio-economic groups to study at the most selective HEIs, and should significantly improve the advice given to students about their 14-19 curriculum choices. The continuity and progression of IAG and support across the school-HEI interface is of critical importance.*
- *Government should work to promote within schools better IAG for students in order to help them make better choices (particularly of A level and Diploma subjects) and to inform them that if they get good grades then they can and will be considered by selecting HEIs, and for the most selective courses. Web-based mechanisms of offering IAG should be examined as complementary forms of delivery.*
- *There should be a stronger national publicity campaign, accurately targeted at under-represented groups of students, and funded by Government. The campaign should seek to highlight the financial and other benefits of higher education (including differential returns), the various routes into it, and the financial support packages on offer to support participation.*

The Government's new IAG strategy has set out a wide range of actions to improve the quality of careers education and personalised information, advice and guidance for young people. The DCSF has also published statutory guidance setting out the Government's expectations of schools when discharging their duty to provide impartial careers education. Amongst other things this emphasises the importance of senior leadership. The strategy

has set a clear expectation that talented young people from all backgrounds need to be encouraged to consider the most selective institutions and courses where that is a viable option for them.

Higher Ambitions: The future of universities in a knowledge economy published by BIS in November 2009, also focuses on measures to help students set their sights on university, emphasising raising aspirations amongst young people with the talent to achieve at the highest levels, but who, because of their background, lack the opportunities.

UCAS (with NUS support) have completed their review of national websites and a sample of HEI websites and confirm the finding of the National Student Forum that, although there is a good deal of web-based information available, applicants need more help in navigating their way through the system. BIS will be working with UCAS and Directgov from October 2009 to identify areas for improved signposting for potential HE students. HEFCE with the HE sector and NUS are researching into what it is that prospective students need to know as they consider entering higher education, and how to enhance transparency around the higher education offer.

Year on year, BIS delivers an extensive student finance information campaign through Student Finance England, aimed at potential students in England, their parents and advisers. Information is made available to advisers in schools, colleges and through local careers advisors, and via the Aimhigher Roadshow.

Recommendation 5:

Building on the speech by the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills on 8 April 2008, all HEIs should produce for HEFCE comprehensive strategies for their widening participation work. HEIs should support schools, including arrangements for improving school performance in the light of the National Challenge, and be involved with supporting Academies, Trusts or other mechanisms for working with schools. HEIs should consider how best to balance their investments in widening participation and ensuring fair access according to their specific institutional missions. The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) should acknowledge the full range of contributions made by HEIs in support of widening participation, particularly in relation to IAG, curriculum support/enrichment, student mentors, involvement with Trusts and Academies, and Governor engagement.

Recommendation 6:

HEIs should continue to use, and where possible expand the range of, all the information available to them to identify the best students with the greatest potential and ability to reach the highest academic achievement. In the interests of openness and fairness, institutions should publish their admissions policies and make them easily accessible to applicants, and equip all those involved in admissions to implement the policy consistently.

These two recommendations are inter-linked and an area where the Ambassadors Group can continue to support embedding. For the first time, HEFCE required all HEIs to submit Widening Participation Strategic Assessments (WPSA) by the

end of June. These Assessments are a condition of the continued receipt of the HEFCE widening participation allocation. They bring together institutions' widening participation and fair access policies with their OFFA Access Agreements and published admissions policies. The WPSA also set out the processes by which the institution will assure itself that its policies are being rigorously and fairly implemented. HEIs will report progress with their WPSA annually to HEFCE.

Separately, a recent assessment by DCSF was that well over half of the universities in England are now involved in the Academies programme, and the number continues to increase. And in the Trust Schools programme, more than 200 partnerships with universities are being developed by schools.

The report from Alan Milburn's Panel on Fair Access to the Professions in the summer gave clear and strong support for universities using data that take account of the educational and social context of pupils' achievement in their admissions process. In a speech in July, Lord Mandelson, Secretary of State for BIS, gave backing from Government to institutions taking broad and innovative approaches to identifying talent. This was also a theme highlighted in *Higher Ambitions: The future of universities in a knowledge economy* (BIS, 2009).

BIS has also been working with a group of research intensive universities that intend through their collaborative 'Realising Opportunities' project to pilot ways of identifying and supporting particularly talented young people from under-represented groups who have the potential to flourish within a research-intensive university.

Recommendation 7:

Government should look to establish base data on the predictability of the new A level and Diploma A grade prior to predicted A* grades being used in the higher education applications and offers processes. We fully support the introduction of greater stretch and challenge within the A2 syllabus and in order to achieve an A* award, candidates will need to demonstrate much greater depth, breadth and understanding of the subject in their answers. We are concerned that there is no evidence yet upon which to assess whether the new A* grade can be predicted with accuracy. Government should collect and review data on predictability over the first few years of A* being awarded before it enters use in the HE applications process.*

BIS has commissioned UCAS to carry out analyses of predictions of A* achievement versus actual grades attained. UCAS will begin collecting data in September 2009 when the first predictions of A* are received and undertake the work over three application years. Reports will be available in early 2011, 2012 and 2013 for each of the three datasets. Current indications are that the majority of institutions are not intending to use the A* grade in their applications and offers processes at this stage, in line with the recommendation, although a small number will.

Case Study One: Leeds Metropolitan University

Nearly 1,000 youngsters from Leeds 'graduated' a decade early at a special ceremony at Leeds Metropolitan University.

The 10 and 11-year-olds are all part of the Kids@Uni scheme which is run in partnership with the university and Aimhigher Leeds. The prestigious Aimhigher graduation day marked the end of a two-year programme where Year 6 pupils from across the city have taken part in different activities to help them discover what life could be like as a university student.

Yvonne Rayner, Activities Manager for Widening Participation at Leeds Metropolitan University, explained: "At the start of Kids@Uni the university visits schools to answer questions about being a student and encourages the young people to make an 'application'.

"Then the schools visit the university and enjoy a day of activities around higher education, including team challenges, a lecture, a campus tour and a budgeting exercise. Each school then returns to graduate, donning the impressive mortar boards they have made themselves!"

Mohsin Zulfiqar, head of Aimhigher Leeds, said: "We know that many pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds suffer from low aspirations by the time they get to secondary school and that they already see university as out of their reach.

"The Kids@Uni programme educates primary school pupils about university life and all the benefits it can bring and gets parents and carers involved too. The Kids@Uni programme gives pupils the incentive to aim high, fulfil their potential and link their dreams to university."

Case Study Two: Little Ilford School, Newham

Little Ilford School is a large comprehensive school in Manor Park, Newham with over 1,300 pupils aged 11 to 16. For over a year, the school has been working with the London Engineering Project (LEP), which illustrates and demonstrates the advantages of a career in engineering, and the advantages of studying in higher education. The school has been involved in the majority of activities offered: these include the Engineering Islam event, the IStructE Challenge, the Trebuchet Challenge and its grand finale at the House of Commons. From the various challenges to the STEM days and Year 7 taster days, Little Ilford has always been out in force.

Also popular with Little Ilford pupils have been the yearly Smallpeice Trust residential courses run for Years 9, 10 and 11 students. These residential courses have even been incorporated into the school's science teaching, and the feedback from the students is that the course activities have helped them to understand difficult science concepts.

"Joining the LEP has enabled our students to incorporate their curricular skills into practical tasks as well as becoming independent learners. They also got the chance to learn about career choices and help with planning their futures," says a teacher at the school.

"Many of our students would not have had the opportunities provided by the LEP like the engineering club and the various activity days. The students have become more confident as a result of their LEP experiences and their interaction with LEP staff and the older students at London South Bank University. They are more positive about the future and have realised that a great career is possible and available to them.

"The LEP programme has also helped us as a school to plan for future activities and we have plans to create an introduction to engineering for new pupils joining Year 7. It has also added a beneficial new dimension to the school which has historically been focused on literacy."

Partnerships Strand

Introduction to the Partnerships strand – Felicity Martin

Our vision is one of an education system in which every school, children's centre, early years provider, and college is focused on high and improving standards for every individual child and young person in an area, and where purposeful partnerships and collaboration to achieve these aims is a consistent expectation.

This vision is now close to reality. Collaboration is a key part of the work of most schools, early years providers and colleges, and we now have an established pattern of head teachers working together in local areas and a number of new and developing system leadership roles.

Excellent progress has been made against each of the recommendations made by the Partnerships working group. The recently published White Paper, *'Your child, your schools, our future'*, now requires every school to work in partnership with other schools, and with wider children's services in order to offer more by working together than any one partner could alone.

A growing number of schools are now working in formal local clusters which means that they can effectively commission a range of services for children and young people in their area. To support this model, where local partners are in agreement, some of the Department's delivery partners will identify and spread effective practice to help build the capacity of schools as commissioners. Legislation to strengthen Children's Trusts will support these developments, and will also promote more effective engagement with schools.

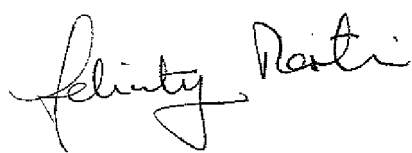
Specialist School partnership work has been strengthened. All specialist schools must now develop plans for working with partner schools and the wider community, identifying which schools they will work with and specifying learning outcomes from their partnership work. New rigorous arrangements for the designation and redesignation of Specialist Schools will involve School Improvement Partners taking decisions about schools' specialist status, taking account of their performance, including their work with partner schools.

There are a number of new and developing system leadership roles. Identifying and supporting the best school leaders to lead the way in forming effective partnerships and to lead improvements and development across all schools is a priority for the 21st Century School and is encouraged and recognised in the White Paper.

Inspection and accountability arrangements for schools have been strengthened to recognise the importance of partnership working. Ofsted is introducing a revised partnership grade and is moving towards more aligned inspections for federations. And partnership working will now have greater prominence in the school Self Evaluation Form.

And as a way to encourage further sectoral partnerships between state funded schools and the independent sector, access to leadership training for independent schools is encouraged by offering membership of the NCSL Leadership Network (at no cost) which provides access to a wide range of resources and information and an on-line community.

In summary – a huge amount of work has been done to develop pro-active partnerships between education providers. However there is still more to do to formalise partnerships and develop suitable accountability for these partnerships. I look forward to continuing to be involved in the further development of this work as the White Paper commitments are implemented and in consultation with DCSF colleagues.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Felicity Martin'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'F' and 'M'.

Felicity Martin
Headteacher, Eggar's School

Progress Against Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

High performing institutions should expect to play a role in supporting others (particularly the National Challenge schools) and every early years provider, school and/or college should have at least one partnership with the explicit aim of improving quality and raising attainment.

The White Paper *Your child, your schools, our future* puts strong emphasis on the importance of schools working in partnership with other schools and with wider children's services to tackle underperformance and extend the reach of the best leaders. The National Leaders in Education programme which recruits high-performing schools to support National Challenge schools has demonstrated a high level of success in improved pupil outcomes.

The DCSF funded Nursery School Project has supported early years schools and individuals involved in local authority partnerships and buddying models to ensure that those with best practice are matched with others who can learn from them.

DCSF will now establish a system for accrediting high-quality education providers who wish to run Accredited Schools Groups and require local authorities to consider the use of these providers to tackle underperforming schools. A new *Good and Great Schools* programme will include a visits

programme so that schools can learn from others with leading practice – from extended services to parental engagement or for example building an excellent mathematics department.

Recommendation 2:

The Specialist Schools network should strengthen its focus on partnerships between schools and colleges to raise standards by sharing good practice and subject expertise.

The role of Specialist Schools as centres of excellence and the importance of sharing specialist expertise and facilities with other schools is recognised in the White Paper. All Specialist Schools must develop plans for working with partner schools and the wider community; identify which schools they will work with and the specific learning outcomes from partnership work. Local partnerships between schools and colleges are key to ensuring all young people have access to the full range of Diplomas.

New rigorous arrangements for the designation and redesignation of Specialist Schools will involve School Improvement Partners (SIPs) taking decisions about schools' specialist status taking account of their performance, including their work with partner schools.

DCSF will develop proposals to build on the success of the High Performing Specialist Schools

programme to identify the best schools and reward them for supporting improvement across the system. The Department will consult on these proposals in autumn 2009.

Recommendation 3:

Outstanding leaders should be able to develop their careers by supporting other schools and/or leading more than one institution; leaders taking on this role should be offered leadership training and development to help them make this transition.

Identifying and supporting the best school leaders to lead the way in forming effective partnerships and to lead improvements and development across all schools is a White Paper priority. Federation and other partnerships solutions will transfer excellence and extend the reach of the best leaders so they can run more than one school and take on system leadership roles.

The 2009 School Teacher's Pay and Conditions Document recognises that there are already a number of new and developing leadership roles and provides interim arrangements to reward successful leaders of more than one school and head teachers who take on system leader roles such as National Leader of Education and School Improvement Partner. Further work to recognise, support and develop these roles is underway.

The Training and Development Agency for Schools and the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services² (the National College) have developed an approach to accrediting and supporting local consortia of schools to carry out professional and leadership development.

DCSF will continue to invest significantly in the recruitment, development and deployment of school leaders, for example through: the investment of £30m over three years in the National College's succession planning strategy.

Recommendation 4:

DCSF should (with Ofsted) improve the inspection and accountability system so that it can better reflect partnership work – both where partnership is essential to offering the full range of provision (e.g. 14-19) and where high performing institutions are supporting each other.

To recognise the importance of partnership working Ofsted is introducing a revised grade for partnership working from September 2009 and is already moving to introduce more streamlined and co-ordinated or joint inspections for federations.

Partnership working will also have greater prominence in the Self Evaluation Form and schools working in federations will, as far as possible, have single or common School Improvement Partners.

In parallel with the White Paper, DCSF is jointly launching with Ofsted a prospectus for the next stage of development of the School Report Card (SRC) including consideration of whether the SRC or elements of it could be aggregated to recognise formal partnerships.

Recommendation 5:

Independent and maintained schools should work together on issues of mutual benefit, and local

2 Formally the National College for School Leadership, NCSL

authorities should actively consider local independent schools when planning local provision and partnerships. The Government should consider how independent schools could join the Specialist Schools programme, and (with NCSL) should consider offering independent schools more access to leadership training.

DCSF has appointed the Chair of the new Independent and Specialist Schools Programme (ISSP) Forum and issued invitations to individuals to join the new ISSP groups and for organisations to nominate representatives.

Independent schools are encouraged to join the National College's³ Leadership Network (at no cost) which provides access to a wide range of resources and information and an on-line community.

In relation to making provision for integrated early learning and childcare within Sure Start Children's Centres, DCSF have also made it a condition of grant that authorities consider and consult all local providers before they decide how this provision will be delivered. A DCSF survey of around 1,100 children's centres in summer 2007 showed around 58 per cent of childcare provision in children's centres is provided by the private, voluntary and independent sector.

DCSF will explore ways to extend the benefits of formal shared governance arrangements to include the full range of educational establishments including independent schools.

3 Formally the National College for School Leadership, NCSL

Case Study One: Horsforth School

As a science College, Horsforth school, has been directly involved in a programme to coordinate a local network involving teachers from 4 other Leeds schools to develop teaching resources in partnership with real scientists with the aim to making the teaching of triple science more contextualised and engaging. This network has now been expanded to include 16 schools in the local authority with a key focus of developing links with HE providers to offer an extension to the classroom-based work covered in triple Physics. Also, as part of the Triple Science Support Programme, the director of science specialism has been appointed as a lead practitioner to develop training modules for raising attainment and exemplar lessons relating to contemporary triple science topics. She has also co-ordinated and delivered a full day CPD event held at Horsforth in which 22 teachers from the Yorkshire and Humber region attended a variety of pedagogical workshops intended to raise the standard of teaching of triple science. Furthermore, the school had a lead role in promoting the Institute of Physics 'Stimulating Physics' programme using a variety of initiatives including industry visits, post graduate student mentors and a 'Girls into Physics' careers day to engage students both at Horsforth and partner schools delivering triple for the first time.

As a result of this work, a steady increase of intake has been observed in both GCSE physics and GCE physics students over the past 3 years. Uptake for extra-curricular events centred around physics and triple science, are also rapidly increasing. Physics is also seeing the most rapid and expansive school-wide increase in numbers of students opting to participate at some level and Horsforth is now considered across the region as a school that delivers triple science and GCE physics in a dynamic and successful way.

Case Study Two: Chudleigh Knighton Primary School

In May 2006 Chudleigh Knighton Primary School was issued a 'notice to improve'. The following September, the school entered into a federation with a nearby larger school, Blackpool Primary School.

This involved the creation of a single governance body, the appointment of an executive Headteacher and the creation of a head of teaching and learning post at Chudleigh Knighton. Since federating Chudleigh has flourished. Ofsted's June 2007 inspection report found 'rapid improvements' and that:

- 'the visionary decision by the governors to enter a federation with another school has led to major improvements in the quality of teaching;
- outstanding use has been made of the extensive range of skills and experience that exists within the staff of the two schools. In particular the leadership of English, mathematics and science across the school is leading to a rapid rise in standards in these subjects;
- very good use has been made of the expertise of external partners such as local businesses and the local authority.'

The report also notes a typical comment from parents is that 'every area within the school has improved one hundred percent.' Overall Ofsted rated the school as a 'good school which had made improvement rapidly' and said that 'this rapid improvement has occurred because of the outstanding leadership and management resulting from the federation'.

Other benefits include a shared special needs teacher, which is something small schools often find difficult to provide. The federation has given this member of staff greater influence across the schools and created the freedom to deal with various external agencies single-handedly. Residential trips which were prohibitively expensive for one school with a small Year 6 are now more viable and have the added benefit of allowing the children to get to know each other before they moved on to secondary school.

Parental Engagement Strand

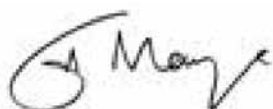
Introduction to the Parental Engagement strand – Ed Mayo

It is an easy mistake to make to see educational excellence as about how people are educated rather than how they learn. When you start from the people that are in education, you see more than the quality of institutions and professional staff. You see the central importance of the support that they have from parents and family and the co-operation and interaction they have with their peers.

At the very first meeting of the NCEE, I argued and we agreed that parental engagement was one of the fundamental building blocks of a world class education system. We had good evidence that it worked. But parental engagement had really not been looked at systematically before – if anything we had a culture in which parents were sometimes seen as the problem rather than as a partner.

Since the NCEE took up this strand, I can honestly say that I have seen a remarkable step change by Government in relation to parents and education. There is work to understand and segment families, so that we recognise that there is not just one public but many different publics. There are experiments in reaching out to parents, using both social media and traditional networks. There is more of an emphasis on understanding parents' views (including fathers) and an attempt to spell out the rights that parents and learners have.

There is more work to do in future to embed this in the systems and culture of education. In particular, we have had far less influence on bringing this into professional development than I would have liked. But the momentum and the logic now seems to me to be unstoppable. People learn better with the support of their parents and, given the opportunity, parents welcome the chance to help their children in this way.



Ed Mayo

Chief Executive, Co-operatives UK

Progress Against Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

Communication – the Government should:

- *actively engage individuals and communities;*
- *focus on changing behaviours using an applied 'segmentation' approach;*

As part of the parental engagement strategy the Government is commissioning further communications analysis of the segmentation of data on parents' attitudes to generate targeted messages for parents and create tools to support local understanding of, and communication with, parents.

Communications will include messages for all parents that can be disseminated through routes including schools and settings as well as existing government channels. Materials and messages will also be targeted at parents who face greater barriers to engaging. Materials already available include the *Everyday Adventures* videos produced under the Parent Know How Programme to encourage parents facing particular barriers including deaf parents and parents who don't speak English to engage.

Recommendation 2:

Services – the Government should:

- *use longer-term multiple interventions and combined approaches that join up for greatest possible synergies;*
- *place high quality 'parental engagement' at the heart of the system through effective support for professionals;*
- *integrate national and local approaches and build on multi-sector working; and*
- *base services around reflective practice and a learning culture.*

The parental engagement strategy balances a broad set of activities and changes designed to promote cultural and behavioural change amongst professionals and organisations with targeted communications and support for parents to shift attitudes, understanding and habits. Together these are intended to support the development of a shared understanding about the partnership between parents and professionals around the learning and development of each child and put support for parental engagement at the heart of the education system.

For the early years, Ministers have initiated further research into the provider interactions with parents which positively influence the home learning environment and thereby improve

children's outcomes. For the parents of school-aged children the Government will carry out a large scale exercise to identify, gather, analyse and disseminate best practice and materials in supporting parental engagement.

Ministers also outlined plans to work with Ofsted and other organisations to ensure that the importance of parental engagement is recognised through early years setting and school accountability and improvement mechanisms and through training for the children's workforce. Ofsted's new Self Evaluation Framework and inspection guidance already place greater emphasis on effective support for parental engagement and the Government will continue to work with Ofsted to develop the accountability framework to place support for parental engagement at the heart of the system.

Recommendation 3:

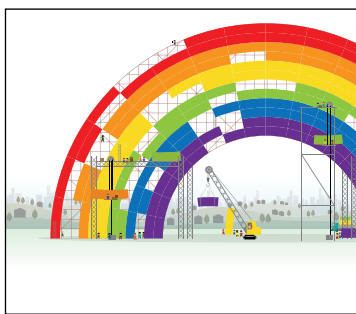
Policies to bring about the changes that are needed should include:

- social marketing and interventions informed by segmenting parents by attitudes and behaviours;
- support for the development of face-to-face networks of parents and online social networks based around schools;
- the better use of customer satisfaction information throughout the system;
- improving continuous professional development for the children's workforce to ensure professionals have the right skills for effective interaction and communication with parents;
- moving from isolated good practice to common excellent practice by recognising and celebrating success for example through awards; and
- the development of tools to give parents confidence, for example playing cards with questions they can use with schools.

The approach outlined under recommendations includes strands of work to meet these recommendations including:

- Further analysis of the segmentation study of parents' attitudes to shape communications.
- The Parents' School Networks DCSF funded pilot project being taken forward by Netmums and DadTalk to promote community networks to parents in three pilot areas: Southwark, Hillingdon and North Herts.
- The Government committed in the *Your child, your schools, our future* White Paper to legislate to place a new requirement on local authorities to gather parents' views on the secondary school places available in their area and to act on their views.
- Parental engagement is one of the aspects of practice that will be covered in the new Masters in Teaching and Learning and will be strengthened through materials being developed to support other professional development.
- Plans to strengthen practice including new research to inform guidance are outlined above.

- Communications to parents directly and through intermediaries will include materials to address the particular problems, such as low confidence, faced by parents.



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