



NATIONAL LEARNING TARGETS
ANNUAL REPORT 1998/99

Introduction and Overview of Progress

The National Learning Targets were launched in October 1998 to underpin departmental priorities: a globally competitive economy, with successful firms operating in a fair and efficient labour market, and a society where everyone has an equal chance to realise their potential.

The deadline for reaching the targets is December 2002 and progress is being measured annually in December of each year so this report reflects the progress made up to December 1999 (the Labour Force Survey (LFS) measured targets - attainment targets for young people and adults - use the Autumn quarter data). There are eleven targets covering the main stages in people's lives at ages 11, 16, 19, 21 and on into adulthood. The table below shows what the targets are, the baselines we started from and progress made to the end of 1999.

Target group	Target for December 2002	Baseline at October 1998	Progress at December 1999
Schools Targets	See page 4	-	-
11-year-olds **	80% reaching the expected standard for their age in literacy	65%	71%
11-year-olds **	75% reaching the standard in numeracy	59%	69%
16-year-olds	50% getting 5 higher grade GCSEs	46.3%	47.9%
16-year-olds	95% getting at least 1 GCSE	93.4%	94%
Targets for Young People	See page 8	-	-
19-year-olds	85% with a level 2 qualification	73.9%	74.9%
21-year-olds	60% with a level 3 qualification	52.2%	53.2%
Targets for Adults	See page 10	-	-
	50% with a level 3 qualification	45.1%	46.2%
	28% with a level 4 qualification	26.1%	26.6%
the Learning Participation target	a 7% reduction in non-learners	74%	Available December 2000
Targets for organisations	See page 15	-	-
medium-sized and large organisations	45% recognised as Investors in People	40% of Target (Aug 98)	57.9% of the Target
small organisations	10,000 recognised as Investors in People	22% of the Target (Aug 98)	47% of the Target

Notes:

- ** Baseline for 11 year olds only was set May 1997 at 54% for literacy and 57% for numeracy.
- The Learning Participation Target = participation in a broad range of taught and untaught learning and embracing everybody between the ages of 16 and 69, whether or not economically active, except those in continuous full-time education.
- adults = everyone in employment or actively seeking employment between the ages of 18 and 59/64
- medium-sized and large organisations = with 50 or more employees
- small organisations = with between 10 and 49 employees

In March 1999, the National Action Plan was launched. This sets out the actions, programmes and initiatives taken by Government to drive up attainment in education and training nationally. The targets underpin these activities and provide a focus for achievement. As can be seen from the above table, steady progress has been made towards the targets although in the case of the two young people's targets, current trends suggest that we will get close but narrowly miss them. All the other targets should be achieved providing momentum is maintained and resources targeted at overcoming barriers to achievement.

Schools Targets

Targets for 11-year-olds

- **80% of 11-year-olds reaching the standard expected for their age in literacy**
- **75% of 11-year-olds reaching the standard in numeracy.**

Progress to date and supporting policies

The National Literacy Strategy started in schools in September 1998 and the National Numeracy Strategy followed a year later. The Strategies provide a comprehensive programme of support to schools as they work towards the national targets.

Last year's National Curriculum test results for 11-year-olds showed a 6% point improvement in English to 71% and a 10% point improvement in mathematics to 69%. The 2000 results, which have just been published, show further progress to 75% in English and 72% in Mathematics, confirming that we are on track to achieve the 2002 targets.

The Strategies provide:

- training for both headteachers and teachers. Schools needing additional support also benefit from more intensive training for teachers;
- Frameworks for teaching Literacy and Mathematics providing teaching objectives and planning grids;
- local consultants to support schools as they implement the Strategies;
- training supported by national training materials;
- booster classes for pupils in Year 6 as they approach their Key Stage (KS) 2 tests and training for Year 5 and 6 teachers to help them to prepare their pupils for the tests; and
- 'leading teachers' schemes to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to see an experienced teacher give a demonstration lesson.

Future plans to maintain progress and/or make good any problem areas

- Our delivery mechanism for the Strategies ensures that we are constantly receiving feedback on their implementation through Regional Directors, Ofsted and an international research team. We are able to identify at an early stage areas where schools need extra support and respond quickly to meet those needs.
- For example, this year's test results in English showed that, although there were significant gains in reading, writing continued to be a problem. This issue had already been picked up, and training developed in teaching effective writing which was delivered last autumn to schools in most need of help, and to all Year 5 and 6 teachers through the Booster programme.

- We have already planned the next phase of development of the Strategies. Our funding plans for literacy and numeracy for 2000-01 total around £200 million under the Standards Fund and include support for:
 - increased numbers of literacy and numeracy consultants to provide specialised support to more schools;
 - supply cover for expert teachers to provide and observe demonstration lessons;
 - training for intensive support schools on the National Numeracy Strategy and areas of the National Literacy Strategy identified by Ofsted as needing more work e.g. phonics and writing;
 - Booster classes for Year 6 pupils who need extra help;
 - Summer schools.

Next steps

- LEAs have now negotiated their 2001 targets as part of the Education Development Plan (EDP) process. In order to build on last year's gains, we have agreed challenging targets with LEAs.
- The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies continue to reinforce each other and provide teachers with a coherent package of training and support.
- Tackling the gender gap is a key priority for the Literacy Strategy and guidance for primary schools on issues relating to boys' literacy will be available this year.
- Following the successful introduction of Booster classes for Year 6 pupils in the last academic year, the Booster programme is planned to continue at least until 2002. It will be targeted specifically at those pupils who, with extra help, might reach Level 4 at KS2, and was extended to run from November last year through to this April.

Targets for 16-year-olds

- **50% of pupils aged 16 will achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or the**

equivalent); and

- **95% of pupils aged 16 will achieve 1 or more GCSEs at grades A*-G (or the equivalent)**

These targets are intended to be challenging but realistic. They were designed to maintain a focus of improvement up to the end of Key Stage (KS) 4 whilst not distracting attention and resources from our key goal of achieving the stretching targets for KS 2 (literacy and numeracy for 11 year olds).

Current achievements_

- achievements were in line with projections:
 - **47.9 %** of 15-year-olds (53.4% of girls, 42.8% of boys) achieved **5 or more** GCSEs at grades A*-C (or the equivalent) - an increase of 1.6% on 1998; and
 - **94.0%** of 15-year-olds (95.0% girls, 93.0% boys) achieved **1 or more** GCSEs at grades A*-G (or the equivalent) - an increase of 0.6% on 1998.

Progress to date

- KS4 results improved in 1999 for the sixth successive year and indicate that we are on course to achieve the national targets in 2002. Our projections suggest that the 2002 target for 5+ A* -C grades or equivalent could well exceeded by 1.8%. Clearly the 2002 GCSE results will depend on the performance of the pupils taking KS3 tests in 2000. Following the introduction of the GCSE in the 1980s, percentages reaching the A*-C threshold increased by about 3-5 percentage points per year for the first few years. Much of this progress was achieved by tightening up on the use of time, on teaching quality and on pupil monitoring in KS 4. More recent progress has typically been between 1 and 1.5 percentage points a year. For boys and girls separately, the 1999 achievements topped trends which had risen steadily since 1992-93, although girls have made faster progress.

Current issues

- We cannot be complacent about the achievement of the 2002 targets by the current Y9 cohort. A recent paper identified 16% of schools in which less than 25% of 15-year-olds achieved 5 or more A*-Cs (based on provisional school level data).
- Although the proportion of pupils achieving no GCSEs/equivalents at KS4 reduced to 6% in 1999, this is still an unacceptable proportion. Achieving the 2002 target for 1 A-G would still mean that 5% of pupils in the current Y9 cohort would achieve no qualifications. This is the area where there has been the slowest progress to date; but the residual percentage (7% of boys, 5% of girls in the 1999 cohort) includes those pupils hardest to capture, e.g. those affected by factors of high mobility, socio-economic disadvantage and learning difficulties.

Maintaining Progress

- We need to assess whether any interventions, with pupils, schools or Local Education Authorities (LEAs), could make a usefully significant and rapid impact. Many of the lowest performing will of course already be engaged with targeted initiatives such as Employment

Action Zones. Some further possibilities, nationally or selectively focused, would be to:

- actively encourage schools to make more rigorous use of data (e.g. the Autumn Package chances graphs) and testing in 2000 for the current Y9, to predict GSCE outcomes and track/monitor/intervene in pupil progress more effectively;
- actively encourage schools to take up GSCE-equivalent qualifications and market them with pupils, parents and employers, as a more appropriate qualifications route for more pupils. Changes have been announced which will provide a clear route for young people wanting to pursue vocational learning from school into further education or to move into work-based learning, for example a Foundation Modern Apprenticeship. Vocational GCSEs will be introduced in September 2002 to replace existing Foundation, Intermediate and Part One GNVQs. They will provide a vocational option for Key Stage 4 pupils in schools alongside National Curriculum subjects, which are attractive to students and credible to employers. We also need to consider whether take up of NVQs can contribute;
- encourage schools to run booster classes in organisation/study/revision/exam skills at Easter 2001 (Y10) and 2002 (Y9); and to step up individual pupil mentoring schemes;
- promote strategies to address boys' underachievement, in particular, through training and/or dissemination of best practice examples (planned via the Standards Site in March) and
- focus on those schools and LEAs in which less than 25% of 15-year-olds achieve 5 or more A*-Cs; and/or in which truancy and exclusion rates are highest.

Of the possibilities outlined, the first, third and fifth bullet points might have the greatest impact on results in 2002. But they would have significant resource implications for SEU personnel and for direct funding of new initiatives. For later cohorts, we could consider broader strategies such as collecting nationally and disseminating through the Standards Site examples of best practice in school self-improvement; encouraging twinning/mentoring between heads/benchmarked schools; and encouraging workshops/exchanges/booster classes between independent and maintained schools, particularly on exam preparation.

Targets for Young People

The National Learning Targets for Young People in England for 2002

- **85% of 19-year-olds with a 'level 2' qualification**
- **60% of 21-year-olds with a 'level 3' qualification**

Progress towards the targets is measured at the end of each year, and the tables below show the position at the end of 1999. Steady progress has been made on the achievement of level 2 for 19-year-olds and level 3 for 21-year-olds since 1995. However, while we are confident we will get close to the 2002 targets, on current trends we cannot be sure we will meet them.

The targets were always meant to be stretching. The young people in the level 2 target cohort who will be 19 in 2002 are now 17 and many of them have left learning altogether. In 1998, when the targets were set, they were already 15. We are making progress in tackling participation and achievement for this group, with a slight rise in participation for 16 year-olds following a decline between 1994-98. We have also seen a significant decline in the number of 16-18 year-olds who are not in education, employment or training.

The cohort for the level 3 target are 19 this year - three years out of compulsory schooling. Most of them will already have left education and training.

Government and partners are taking a range of steps (detailed below) to drive forward action towards the Targets.

Learning Partnerships have responsibility for achievement of local targets in line with the National Learning Targets for young people. They have now agreed their own local targets for increased numbers of young people in the cohort achieving level 2 and level 3 qualifications.

Target for 19-Year-Olds

Progress Towards the Labour Force Survey Measured National Learning Targets for Young People, England, 1995 - 1999 (Percentage)

19-year-olds at level 2

Target for 2002	85
1995	67.3
1996	69.7
1997	72.3
1998	73.9
1999	74.9
change from previous year	+1.0

The Connexions strategy was announced in February this year. It brings together four key themes: a flexible curriculum that engages different young people and leads to the relevant, sought after qualifications; ensuring high-quality provision in school sixth forms, Further Education colleges and work-based learning; targeting financial support for those in learning; and outreach, information, advice, support and guidance (the Connexions Service).

The following are the main initiatives contributing to the target:

- Initiatives to help young people engage in learning, such as New Start and more recently the Learning Gateway, are contributing to the reduction in the number of young people not engaged in education, employment or training. The Learning Gateway was introduced in September 1999 and targets 16 and 17 year olds at risk from dropping out. The Learning Gateway will have a key role in the new Connexions Service;
- The Right to Time Off for Study or Training introduced in September 1999 gives 16 and 17 year-olds in employment a right to study up to level 2 and directly affects our target cohort;
- Since September 1999 Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) have been piloted in 15 Local Education Authority areas (extended to an additional 40 areas in September 2000). EMAs offer a financial incentive for staying in learning and are linked to attendance. Early evidence indicated that the EMA was generating improvements in two key areas: improved attendance and coursework completion, and higher than average increase in participation figures: a 5% increase in participation in the pilot areas against a 2% increase nationally;
- The Don't Quit Now campaign is running over Summer 2000 aimed at persuading 16 and 17 year-olds to stay in learning;
- National Traineeships, now renamed as Foundation Modern Apprenticeships, were introduced in 1997. The Department set itself a target of 100,000 starts on Foundation Modern Apprenticeships by March 2000. This target was exceeded and by March 2000 120,000 young people had started their training;
- Area Based Inspections are looking at all 16-19 provision in local areas. They are focusing on urban areas where the challenge to raise achievement and participation is particularly acute. The first inspection was in Hackney and Islington and immediate improvements to post 16 provision are being implemented as a result.

For the future, we are planning unprecedented levels of investment beyond 2001. A range of initiatives - the Connexions Service, the extension of the Education Maintenance Allowance pilot, the Connexions Card and Modern Apprenticeship reforms, for example, will all start to impact on attainment from 2003.

Target for 21-Year-Olds

Progress Towards the Labour Force Survey Measured National Learning Targets for Young People, England, 1995 - 1999 (Percentage)

21year olds at level 3

Target for 2002	60
1995	44.0
1996	45.9
1997	48.1
1998	52.2
1999	53.2
change from previous year	+1.0

The following are the main initiatives that contribute to achieving the target:

- improving retention and attainment through driving up standards in FE and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships;
- quality improvements in FE and work-based training for young people;
- widening participation in FE;
- a planned increase in 19+ Advanced Modern Apprenticeships;
- action by National Training Organisations (NTOs) to set sector targets to underpin this and the other post-16 targets.

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Targets for Adults

50% of adults with a 'level 3' qualification

This target is also measured by the Labour Force Survey. In autumn 1999, the proportion of economically active adults qualified to at least NVQ level 3 or equivalent was 46.2%. Over the last three years the average annual increase has been 1.5 percentage points, and our modelling suggests that this target will be achieved.

The initiatives which are supporting achievement of this target are part of the major programme of development and reform across the lifelong learning agenda. The key policies include:

- working with employers and trade unions to promote workforce development - helping organisations, particularly *small* firms, achieve the Investors in People standard; building on local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) Integrated Workforce Development Plans and working with NTOs to produce sector workforce development plans; linking in with Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) initiatives and the Small Business Service; enhancing the *Bargaining for Skills* projects and supporting workplace partnerships through the £12m Union Learning Fund; and ensuring that individuals and employers get quality advice on how to gain access to the most suitable courses;
- generous discounts and incentives through the one million learning accounts we are aiming to establish by 2002. For individuals there are £150 for the 1st million accounts opened, 20% off a wide range of courses and 80% off more specific learning, such as computer literacy.
- '*learndirect*' due to be launched in autumn 2000, which is developing innovative, high quality on-line learning materials and support a nationwide network of up to 1000 learning centres, to make learning more relevant and accessible to a new audience of businesses and individuals. The free '*learndirect*' helpline, which gives impartial information about local learning opportunities, has already received over 1.5m calls;
- provision for an additional 800,000 places in further and higher education by 2002.

We are also enhancing the Labour Force Survey (LFS) so that local Learning Partnerships will have better information to support local target setting and assessment of progress

28% of adults with a 'level 4' qualification.

- The latest (Autumn 1999 - Labour Force Survey [LFS]) England figure for economically active adults qualified to Level 4 is: **26.6%**
- From the same group of economically active adults as measured for the Level 3 target, the proportion qualified to at least NVQ level 4 or equivalent was 26.6%. This represents just over 6.25 million adults and is 0.5 percentage points ahead of the Autumn 1998 figure. The gap between current attainment and the Target for the year 2002 (28%) is 1.4 percentage points or approximately 325,000 people. An average annual increase of 0.5 percentage points is required over the next 3 years to meet this target.

There are some very important aspects to this target for which the Department has no control :

- number of people achieving a level 4 qualification through the non-HE route. Analytical Services have been unable to estimate (using the LFS) how many people obtain a level 4 equivalent professional qualification via their workplace. More will be known from the Spring 2000 LFS results. Forecasting this will prove more difficult.
- number of people achieving a level 4 equivalent qualification outside of the UK who then migrate into the country to take up employment. Analytical Services (ASD) could estimate how many people this represents (using the LFS) but forecasting this would depend on the fluctuations of our own and other country's economies.
- the economically active working age population (denominator). Whilst ASD can see how this has changed in the past the Government does not forecast this with any degree of accuracy into the future. Whilst DfEE provides initiatives (such as the New Deal and Welfare to Work Agenda) it does not go as far as producing projections or targets for the economically active workforce. It is important to note that if the growth in level 4 qualified people is matched by the growth in the population, the target percentage will remain the same (this has been the case recently).

Learning Participation Target

Background

- The purpose of the Learning Participation Target is to stimulate and measure action towards widening participation in learning. The Government's vision, initially set out in the *Learning Age Green Paper* and running through the White Paper *Learning to Succeed*, is of a learning society in which people from all walks of life routinely expect to learn and upgrade their skills throughout life. The Participation Target is a milestone on the way to making a reality of this.
- The objective is to achieve a 7% reduction in non-learners by 2002 - about 500,000 people. The target covers everybody aged between 16 and 69, except those in full-time continuous education, regardless of economic status

Definitions of Learning

In line with this broad-based, inclusive vision of learning a definition was adopted for the purposes of the target which was first developed for the Department's National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) 1997. By this definition a learner has undertaken **any** of the following activities during the last three years (it is important to note the deliberate nature of the informal learning included within the definition):

Taught learning:

- any taught courses that were meant to lead to qualifications;
- any taught courses designed to help you develop skills that you might use in a job;
- any courses, instruction or tuition in driving, in playing a musical instrument, in an art or craft, in a sport or in any practical skill;
- evening classes;
- learning which has involved working on your own from a package of materials provided by an employer, college, commercial organisation or other training provider;
- any other taught course, instruction or tuition.

Non-taught learning:

- studying for qualifications without taking part in a taught course;
- supervised training while you were actually doing a job (i.e. when a manager or experienced colleague has spent time with you helping you learn or develop skills as you do specific tasks at work);
- time spent keeping up to date with developments in the type of work you do without taking part in a taught course - for example, by reading books, manuals or journals or attending seminars;
- deliberately trying to improve your knowledge about anything or teach yourself a skill without taking part in a taught course.

Achieving the Target

DfEE and our partners are making determined efforts to help achieve the participation target and more generally progress the widening participation agenda. Initiative taken include:

- the expansion of further and higher education by 800,000 extra places to create many more places for part-time and mature students and those from disadvantaged areas;
- **learndirect** - a national on-line and distributed learning network for individuals and businesses - on course for launch in autumn 2000, with plans for up to 1000 local learning centres by 2001;
- a series of specific family and community learning initiatives to encourage adults back into learning - the Adult and Community Learning Fund for innovative local projects, the New Deal, lottery funding through the New Opportunities Fund, and a boost for LEA adult education in 2000-2001;
- £252m over 3 years to fund around 700 ICT learning centres in England to improve access to ICT for all. 6 Pioneer centres launched in October 1999 to test various aspects: 13 more Pathfinder projects launched in January 2000. Prospectus inviting bids for rollout starting in September 2000 published January;
- help with basic skills for 500,000 people a year by 2002, including free tuition, through the New Deal, FE and University for Industry (Ufi). £37m investment as first phase of a drive to improve quality and access to adult basic skills;
- Skills PAT (one of 18 Policy Action Teams set up by Social Exclusion Unit to make recommendations on tackling deprivation); report published in December 1999 and recommendations being taken forward. Skills PAT made a number of recommendations about engaging the most socially disadvantaged adults in learning, which will need to be taken forward by the LSC and reflected in its planning and funding regimes.
- £54m investment over three years in local information, advice and guidance for adults: 6 current 'pathfinder' projects to help inform national delivery specification for April 2000 onwards. Some 70 development contracts covering the rest of England focus on improving access to services and raising the quality of provision.
- joint work with broadcasters and other partners including Ufi, NIACE at national, regional and local level to promote lifelong learning, including BBC History 2000, Adult Learners Week etc.
- £47m budget for Access Funds, childcare and residential support this year (compared with £12.7m last year). Also we are testing approaches to improve transport and childcare arrangements. Level of funding etc are under regular review and subject to evaluation.

Progress

Progress towards the target will be assessed in December this year when the results of the

National Adult Learning Survey 2000 are available. In addition, to provide data for measuring progress at regional, Learning Partnership and, in due course, local Learning and Skills Council level, the Department is funding an enhanced Labour Force Survey (LFS) which from 2001 will provide local data on participation.

Targets for Organisations

- **45% of medium sized or large organisations; and**
- **10,000 small organisations**

to be recognised as Investors in People by December 2002

Progress to Date

- 9,075 medium sized or large organisations were recognised as Investors in People and a further 8,683 medium sized or large organisations are committed to achieving the Standard. This means that 26% of the baseline have achieved recognition and 51% of the baseline are currently working with the Standard -57.9% of the target has been achieved.
- 4,098 small organisations were recognised as Investors in People and a further 8318 small organisations are committed to achieving the Standard. This means that 12,416 small organisations are currently working with the Standard - 47% of the target has been achieved.

Maintaining Progress

- The Secretary of State recently approved a revised version of the Standard, which will be launched in April 2000. In the short term, this may help to bring some recognitions forward for those organisations to be assessed against the old version of the Standard by December 2002. After this the rate of recognitions may slow down as practitioners and employers begin to familiarise themselves with the new version of the Standard.
- TECs are currently the main delivery agents for Investors in People. The rate of progress is expected to be affected by the transition to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Small Business Service from April 2001. TECs will concentrate their efforts on those organisations that are likely to be ready for assessment by the end of March 2001.
- The Department has recently developed new arrangements to monitor performance of TECs including progress towards the Targets. Through monthly meetings with the Government Office Contract Managers the Department will be able to address problems at an early stage and maintain progress during transition to the LSC.

Disaggregation of the post-16 targets for individuals.

- In April 1999 Learning Partnerships came on stream; their aim being to improve the coherence and quality of post-16 learning provision at local level and drive up attainment towards the national targets. To this end post-16 targets contributing towards the national targets have been developed at regional and local levels, Government Offices owning the regional targets and Learning Partnerships the local targets.
- The targets involved are those for young people at levels 2 and 3, and the attainment targets for adults at levels 3 and 4. The labour force Survey is not robust enough below national level for it to be of use in setting regional and local targets so it was decided to use administrative data, obtained from various data bases tracking and recording awards at levels 2, 3 and 4. This was the first time this exercise had ever been undertaken and the process of combining different databases while eliminating double counting proved complex but achievable.
- It was also agreed that, because population flows between local areas in post-16 education and training were very fluid, that we should produce straight numerical targets. This was preferable to expressing targets as percentages of local populations which would tend to provide very skewed and misleading results.
- At the end of 1999 data was made available down to local level for all 4 targets and we have now reached the stage where all Government Office regions and Learning Partnership areas have young people's targets contributing towards the national targets.
- All regions now have in place regional adult targets. A little more work remains to be done before the adult targets are fully disaggregated down to local level but progress is being maintained and there should be a full set of sub-national targets in place soon.
- By July 2000 the majority of Learning Partnerships had submitted Learning Plans and very soon all will be in place. These Learning Plans set out the actions individual Learning Partnerships intend to take between now and 2002 to help drive up local attainment levels. The local targets underpin and provide a focal point to these actions and enable Learning Partnerships not only to measure progress, but to review the effectiveness of their plans at regular intervals, and take corrective action as, and when, necessary

Further Information

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