



Excellence in Cities

Managing associated initiatives to raise standards

**Better
education
and care**

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Executive summary

The Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative, together with associated programmes, has contributed significantly to raising standards and improving social inclusion. There has been a steady improvement in results. The proportion of pupils in EiC partnership schools achieving five or more A*–C GCSE grades or their equivalent has increased by 5.2 percentage points over the last 3 years, narrowing the gap to other schools from 10.4 percentage points to 7.8 percentage points.

Crucial to the success of raising attainment and improving provision in schools in the EiC programme are highly effective **leadership and management**. The majority of headteachers provide committed, enterprising and long-term strategic leadership in the schools visited. They are clear about what they want to achieve in relation to school improvement and they fully involve others, especially senior and middle managers, in enabling this vision to be realised. There is a clear and shared focus on raising attainment, a relentless drive to improve teaching and learning and a constant push to improve pupils' attendance, attitudes and behaviour. These headteachers have used the additional funding well, and have often supplemented it from other sources to ensure that provision is improved. Management structures are strong, initiatives are clearly interlinked and accountability is built into the system. In such schools the effect of EiC initiatives, regardless of which funding has been used, has had a positive impact. A momentum for improvement has been generated within the schools and sustained over time.

However, in a small minority of schools, leadership and management are not as good, leading to a piecemeal approach to improvement. The planning and co-ordination of EiC programmes are weak, and there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the activities against the outcomes. This weakness makes planning for sustained progress difficult once funding transfers directly to schools rather than the partnership. Collaboration with other partners is limited, with inadequate sharing of good practice. In a few of the schools which have received the funding for several years there has been no noticeable improvement in the pupils' attainment or their progress.

In a few schools, circumstances have conspired to delay or hinder improvements. These include high staff turnover, significant changes in the leadership team, or where the headteacher has inherited weaknesses in provision from a previous regime. In addition, split sites sometimes two to three miles apart put additional demands on the leadership and management.

Overall, the **Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG)** has had a major impact, enabling schools to implement initiatives more rapidly than would have been the case otherwise. These schools are generally collaborating well with each other in trying to improve provision. However, there are a few areas where

partnership working between the schools is not developed well enough, or is almost non-existent.

The provision for gifted and talented pupils, and the use and deployment of **learning mentors**, are mostly good. Nevertheless, the range in quality varies considerably from excellent to inadequate. Where practice is the most effective, both strands have successfully been integrated into the implementation of the school improvement plan. Pupils have been appropriately identified and their needs met. In the case of gifted and talented pupils, good enrichment activities are organised. Pupils value the additional provision and feel they are making academic, social and, sometimes, emotional progress.

Where the provision is unsatisfactory, the work has not been embedded into the mainstream curriculum. The pupils are not properly identified and teachers do not plan and teach lessons with their needs in mind. There is insufficient liaison between the gifted and talented co-ordinator and teachers, or between learning mentors and teachers.

The **Learning support units (LSUs)** are usually effective and their provision mostly good but there are instances where the teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. When senior managers have a clear view of the purpose of LSUs and know how to use them most effectively for the benefit of pupils, there is greater beneficial impact. In the best schools, parents and external agencies are fully involved in the work of the unit. Learning mentors and other support staff work closely with educational psychologists and education social workers. They liaise well with teachers and pastoral staff and ensure that the needs of the pupils are met. Exit strategies with further monitoring when pupils are reintegrated into mainstream lessons are understood by all. Pupils report how they valued the help and support they were given. However, in a small minority of schools the provision is inadequate. This is due mainly to a narrow curriculum that relies too heavily on literacy and numeracy; insufficient liaison between subject teachers and unit staff; and a haphazard approach to ensuring that all pupils make progress.

The **Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP)** has generally had a good impact in schools. The more dynamic headteachers have used additional funding, together with other sources, as an important vehicle to help carry out their vision for wider school improvements.

City Learning Centres (CLCs) have mostly good provision and there is some excellent practice. They have very good accommodation and resources, and most have developed good links with schools. There are instances where they have contributed markedly to pupils' attainment, especially in the GCSE examinations. However, in a small number of cases their relationships with local secondary schools are weak. On the whole, **local authorities (LAs)** have provided mostly good support in helping their schools to implement EiC and other related initiatives. This includes the planning of the introduction and extension of the EiC initiative into primary schools. However, not all of the LAs

have well developed networks to help and guide schools, or to support the dissemination of good practice more widely.

Key findings

- ❑ The EiC initiatives have proved highly successful in the schools inspected in this survey, with instances of excellent practice. Results at Key Stages 3 and 4 suggest that EiC is making a difference.
- ❑ In eight out of ten of the schools, leadership and management are highly effective, with headteachers providing far-sighted, innovative and strategic leadership; they use the additional funding well, often weaving it with other sources to enhance provision. In these schools, significant improvements in teaching and learning have led to better achievement of the pupils.
- ❑ In the few schools where leadership and management are weak there is poor planning and coordination of EiC programmes, insufficient monitoring and evaluation, and limited collaboration with other partners. In a few schools, the additional funding has not had a noticeable effect on pupils' attainment and progress over several years.
- ❑ The use of the LIG is mostly good and sometimes it is excellent. The funding has had a significant impact enabling schools to implement initiatives more rapidly than would otherwise have been the case. On the whole, the schools are working well in partnership with each other and with external bodies.
- ❑ The provision for gifted and talented pupils in these schools is mostly good. The strand has been integrated well into the school improvement plan, the pupils are appropriately identified and their needs met. A weakness in the gifted and talented provision occurs when work is not embedded into the mainstream curriculum and teaching and learning are not adjusted to improve their attainment.
- ❑ The use and deployment of learning mentors are mostly good. Their work is usually integrated effectively into the main school's provision and there are clear lines of accountability. Pupils report they value the support to help them make good progress, both academically and socially.
- ❑ The work of learning mentors has less impact when it is not fully integrated into school life and when there is insufficient liaison with teachers.
- ❑ The provision in the LSU is usually good but occasionally teaching and learning are inadequate. LSUs are more successful when senior managers have a clear view of their purpose, when they support its work on a day-

to-day basis, where there is good leadership and management of the units, and where parents are fully involved and supportive of the unit's work.

- ❑ Pupils interviewed valued the help and support they were given. However, sometimes the curriculum offered is narrow, relying largely on literacy and numeracy, and there is inadequate liaison between teachers and unit staff to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress.
- ❑ The impact of the BIP has been generally good. The additional funding has been targeted appropriately to improve attendance and punctuality, and to reduce misbehaviour and exclusions.
- ❑ Overall, the CLCs visited have very good accommodation and resources and most are managed well. They have developed good links with schools and some have made a significant contribution to the pupils' attainment and progress. In some cases, however, relationships with local secondary schools are limited and therefore an expensive resource is not used fully.
- ❑ LAs have generally provided good support to schools in the management of EiC and other related activities. However, a small number of LAs have not created robust support structures to help and guide the schools to work in collaboration, good practice has not been shared, and wider use of CLCs by pupils has not been encouraged.

Recommendations

In order to build upon the good practice that has already been established, schools and LAs, with support from the Department for Education and Skills, should ensure:

- that procedures for monitoring and evaluation in schools are more fully developed
- that success is measured against planned outcomes and contributes to progress that can be sustained once funding transfers directly to schools
- that schools work in greater collaboration with each other and that good practice is more widely shared
- that the CLCs are used more consistently to benefit a greater number of pupils.

Excellence in Cities: managing associated initiatives to raise standards

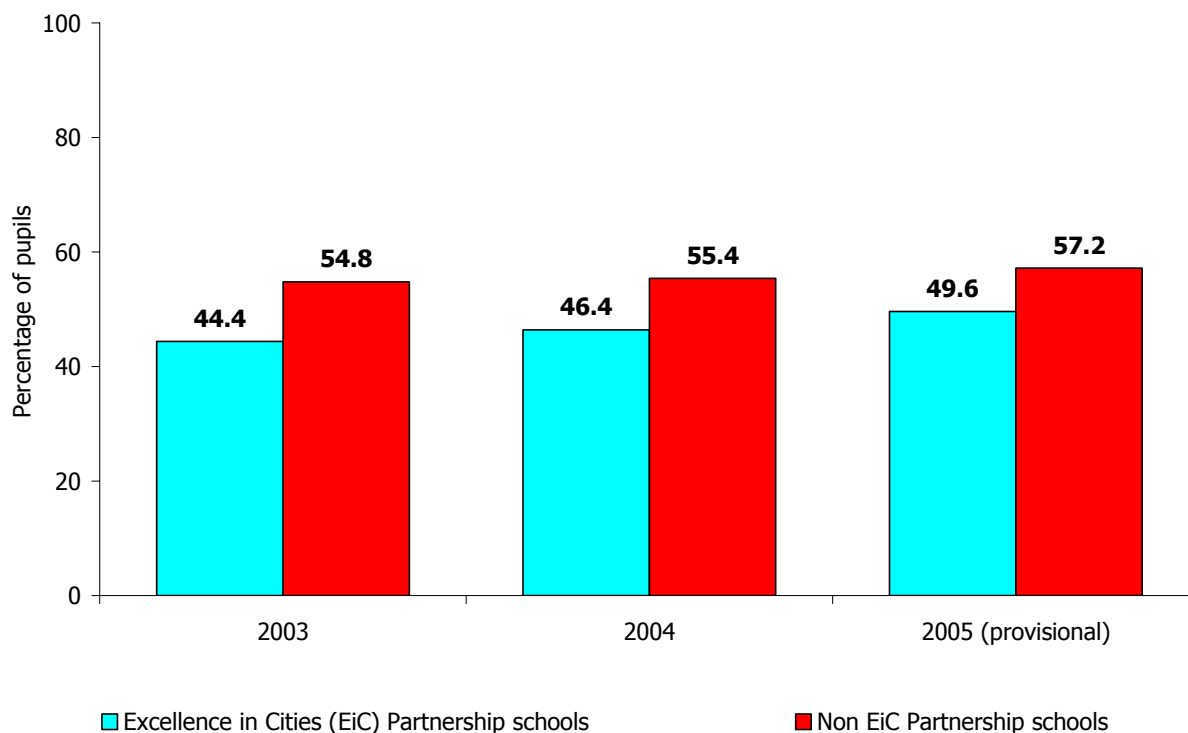
Primary schools

1. Work on extending EiC initiatives in primary schools has commenced recently. Many of the schools visited were enthusiastic about implementing the initiatives and, in a few cases, some excellent work was seen. Successful features included:
 - a strong commitment from the headteacher with a clear vision for improvement shared by the staff and the governors
 - strategic planning and school development helping to extend a schools capacity to cater for a wider diversity of pupils
 - effective team work with good understanding between staff and a shared desire to succeed
 - policies and plans which are understood by all
 - a clear process for the identification of needs within the school, based on thorough self-evaluation and appropriate targeting of the funding
 - a senior manager with overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the initiative and clear lines of accountability for strand leaders and other staff.
2. When the practice was weaker the following features were apparent:
 - a lack of careful planning and the need for more rigorous management of the individual strands
 - unsystematic monitoring and evaluation of outcomes that did not inform how practice could be improved
 - insufficient focus within the strands on the need to raise standards
 - the initiatives were not fully embedded into planning for whole school improvement.

Secondary schools

3. The overall effectiveness of EiC initiatives in the schools visited is generally good with examples of excellent practice; these have the same successful features as those noted for primary schools. However, in a very few cases the impact of such initiatives was limited.
4. Results at Key Stage 4 show that EiC appears to be making a difference. In the 2002/03 academic year the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*–C GCSE grades or their equivalent in non-EiC partnership schools was 10.4 percentage points higher than in EiC partnership schools. Comparison of these data with provisional 2005 figures show a 5.2 percentage point increase in the number of pupils achieving five or more A*–C GCSE grades or equivalents in EiC partnership schools; the gap to other schools narrowed to 7.8 percentage points.

Figure 1: Percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*–C GCSE grades or their equivalent (maintained secondary schools).¹



5. Where there is a significant impact on improving the quality of provision and enhancing pupils' learning, schools have successfully integrated EiC and LIG initiatives into a holistic strategy for raising standards and promoting the inclusion of all pupils. This is a result of highly effective leadership and management in the schools, sometimes with good support from the LA.
6. The more effective leadership and management in schools is far-sighted, innovative, inclusive and strategic, and as a consequence:
 - initiatives are well managed and woven into the various EiC strands, making them into a coherent whole
 - funding is channelled thoughtfully, is routinely tracked and outcomes are monitored and evaluated regularly to demonstrate the impact of the various initiatives
 - the curriculum is inclusive, with sufficient flexibility to enable all pupils to succeed, and is subject to regular review
 - there are ongoing initiatives to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and a strong commitment to the professional development of all staff
 - staff are aware of, and sensitive to, diverse cultures and the individual needs of pupils, which promotes inclusion

¹ Pupils aged 15 at the start of 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05 academic years. Source DfES SFR23/2004, SFR25/2005 and SFR46/2005.

- there are good role models for pupils in the ethnic diversity of the school's staffing, particularly at senior level
 - good links have been established with parents, other schools and other partners, and these are seen as important to enhancing the provision for all pupils.
7. The following features are apparent in schools where the leadership and management of the initiatives are weaker:
- lack of a strategic overview of the role of EiC and other initiatives within school improvement
 - additional funding from EiC and LIG, has not led to a sustained improvement in the pupils' attainment, in some cases since funding became available in the year 2000
 - inadequate tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress over time
 - weak co-ordination and evaluation of EiC programmes, resulting in a piecemeal approach to school improvement
 - lack of a systematic and detailed approach to evaluation, inhibiting the school's ability to make accurate judgements about the effectiveness of the programmes
 - where CLCs exist, some of the host schools do not involve other schools sufficiently and therefore they do not benefit from the resources of the CLC
 - In some schools, the high staff turnover weakens the leadership, management and continuity of the initiatives.

Leadership Incentive Grant

8. The leadership and management of the LIG are mostly good within the schools visited, with a few examples of excellent practice. In the better practice, the use of the funding has had a significant impact in enabling schools to implement developments more rapidly than would have been the case otherwise. On the whole, the schools are working well in partnership with each other and with external partners, for example LAs, although some difficulties in collaboration have been encountered. The additional funding has typically enabled schools to restructure and strengthen staffing. In addition, the funding has allowed for the appointment of administrative assistants, allowing teachers to focus more on improving teaching and learning, or to use expert staff to analyse data on performance.
9. The following features are common when LIG funding is used successfully:
- the headteacher and senior managers are clear about the needs of the school and how the LIG can be applied creatively to address those needs
 - leadership promotes high quality teaching and learning, assessment data is used thoroughly to track and promote pupils' progress, and underachievement is identified and challenged

- there is a strong link between the LIG and other school improvement programmes
 - strategic planning is measured, detailed, regularly evaluated and its cost is calculated
 - well thought out strategies are used to ensure that the opportunities provided through the LIG funding help to secure and sustain improvements in teaching and learning
 - there is well designed training for middle managers to make them more effective as leaders
 - strategies are devised and extended to improve the rate of attendance and to reduce unauthorised absence.
10. Where the use of the LIG has not been as effective, limiting factors include:
- a rapid staff turnover, hampering developments
 - inconsistent collaboration between schools in developing self-evaluation processes or extending best practice in individual schools
 - overlapping initiatives reflect a lack of clarity of purpose and make evaluation more difficult
 - poor coordination of the planning in schools for the LIG with other EIC strands
 - unsuccessful use of internal consultants in a collaborative partnership and a perception by some headteachers of a lack of openness about weaknesses in other schools where they are providing advice
 - inconsistent collaboration between senior and middle managers, even when headteachers offer a good role model
 - insufficient evaluation of the impact on standards and the quality of provision so schools are not in a position to show how additional funding has made a difference to their pupils.
11. The use of the LIG has enabled the implementation of initiatives that would, arguably, not have taken place otherwise. However, the sustainability of these initiatives once the funding ceases is a major issue in some schools. A few have planned well to embed the initiatives and to ensure that provision carries on beyond the lifetime of the additional funding. However, others cannot readily see how they can be carried forward in the future

Provision for gifted and talented pupils

12. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is mostly good with some practice that is excellent. The initiative has been promoted and developed well in a large majority of the schools visited. In some, it has been supplemented in the sixth form by 'Aim Higher' which encourages young people to aspire to further and higher education.
13. In the best practice, the following features are common:

- the effective integration of the gifted and talented strand into the school's plans for improvement, based on a well understood policy
 - a clear and shared vision within the school of the role of this strand in raising attainment for all
 - the effective coordination and management of the strand with leadership from the top but delegation to faculties and departments
 - an effective process for identifying gifted and talented pupils including the use of Key Stage 2 data, internal assessments, referral by staff and the criteria provided by the National Academy for Gifted and Talented
 - effective allocation of funds to improve teaching and learning and to develop the curriculum for the benefit of these pupils
 - good use of in-service training for staff
 - a good programme of enrichment activities that is valued by the pupils
 - the targeted deployment of learning mentors to support gifted and talented pupils who are underachieving
 - good support from the LA which coordinates and disseminates the good practice in schools
 - adoption of the initiatives on 'Aim Higher' and 'Aiming High' leading to good collaborative work between schools, colleges and universities.
14. In the small number of cases where the provision for gifted and talented pupils is weaker or inadequate the following is apparent:
- the gifted and talented strand is not embedded within the school improvement plan, and is perceived by staff as an 'add on'. Delegating such work to departments, with inadequate monitoring and evaluation by senior managers, has not improved pupils' attainment and progress
 - the planning of lessons does not meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils. Strategies to extend and challenge them are not indicated. As a result, teaching and learning for such pupils are poor
 - the school's evaluation of the strand is unsatisfactory. For example, the available data on attainment is not analysed properly and the effectiveness of the provision is not monitored by managers.
 - the measures taken by the LA to ensure that there is constructive work across the schools are ineffective
 - some pupils were not aware that they had been identified as gifted and talented, and neither were their parents informed.

Learning mentors

15. The use and deployment of learning mentors are mostly good, with occasional examples of excellent practice. Their work is directly focused on raising pupils' attainment and removing barriers to their learning. However, in a very few cases the quality of provision is weak or inadequate.
16. The schools have used learning mentors in a variety of ways to meet the needs of the schools. The approach taken ranges from the appointment of an individual who focuses on underachieving pupils in Key Stage 4 to the

appointment of a team of about four or five mentors managed by a lead learning mentor. Mentors have been appointed from a wide range of backgrounds and previous experience; some are highly qualified and offer a lot to the schools based on their knowledge, skills and experience. Sometimes learning mentors work effectively in the feeder primary schools and help to ease pupils' transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

17. The target group for learning mentors is usually pupils who are disaffected with school or are underachieving. Typically they work with pupils in small withdrawal groups or on a one-to-one basis. Where a school has a learning support unit, there is usually close cooperation with its staff. Learning mentors' involvement with pupils is usually time limited. Overall, they undertake valuable work in schools and their intervention has led to more positive attitudes, better behaviour and academic progress from the pupils they support. Many mentors feel they have been trained effectively, and feel well supported by both the school and by the LA. The pupils interviewed in schools almost always praised the work of learning mentors.
18. Where the practice is most effective:
 - there are clear line management arrangements with well specified job descriptions. Where there is a team of learning mentors, a lead learning mentor has usually been appointed to manage the work of the others, and is often managed in turn by a senior manager in the school
 - learning mentors are usually integrated carefully into the school's support services and their deployment has a clear rationale
 - the referral system is rigorous and involves other professionals who might have an interest in the welfare of the child
 - other adult volunteer mentors are sometimes used, for example through the Education Business Partnership, local universities and local businesses
 - assessment data and target levels are used well to monitor progress. Often this is supported by an action plan for each pupil. Exit strategies are clearly identified and there is follow-up after a few weeks to check on the pupils' progress
 - there is regular, formal monitoring and evaluation of the work of the learning mentors, and their impact on the progress of individual pupils
 - learning mentors share good practice through attendance at cluster meetings and LA meetings
 - good links have been developed with parents and outside agencies, including social services and education welfare services
 - learning mentors are involved in a wide range of activities in schools including: study support clubs; recruiting and training pupils to be peer mentors
 - they take initiatives in providing for the pupils they are mentoring, such as leading development of the Key Stage 4 vocational curriculum.
19. Where the effectiveness of the learning mentors is weak it is because:

- their work has not been fully integrated with the rest of the school
- teachers do not take into account the targets for pupils set by learning mentors
- the work of learning mentors is limited to helping a few pupils only; it focuses unduly on behaviour and their role is not clear to the teachers in school.

Learning support units

20. Overall, the work of the LSUs visited, is having an important effect on ensuring that pupils remain in school and are making the progress expected of them. The provision in the LSU is usually good but, occasionally, the teaching and learning is less than adequate. LSUs are normally staffed by teachers and senior managers, learning mentors and learning support assistants. The special needs department is usually involved in helping to meet the needs of the pupils referred. Pupils are normally referred to the unit for a range of needs including behaviour, the development of social skills, reintegration after exclusion or a last stop before exclusion from school. Sometimes pupils refer themselves either to the unit or to a learning mentor. Their involvement in the unit is time-limited. In most schools, the criteria for referral are generally known to teachers. Provision varies in schools from having separate units for Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 pupils, or a combination of both.
21. Practice is most effective when:
- the strategy for the unit is well conceived and the provision is successfully integrated with the rest of the school
 - senior managers provide good leadership and support which sometimes involves teaching in the unit for parts of the week
 - the work of the unit is well managed on a day-to-day basis and there is good long-term leadership
 - criteria for referral are known and pupils have an action plan which is jointly negotiated by the staff, the pupil and parent/carer; exit procedures are clearly understood by all
 - parents are fully involved and supportive of the unit's work; they are involved in initial discussions at referral and kept regularly informed of their child's progress
 - the unit provides a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that the pupils continue to make academic progress and can reintegrate into mainstream where appropriate
 - there is good communication between the unit and staff, including pastoral staff, about the progress of individual pupils and record keeping is of a good standard
 - the needs of each pupil are discussed regularly by staff
 - there is regular monitoring of the use of the unit, including an analysis of the pupils' ethnicity and gender
 - the work of the unit is reviewed and evaluated regularly, sometimes by outside consultants, including LA coordinators for the BIP

- pupils value the support they have received.
22. Where the provision is weak or inadequate:
- the teaching and learning are not related to the mainstream curriculum and rely too heavily on the core areas of literacy and numeracy
 - there is not enough interaction between the staff of the unit and teachers to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress
 - too much emphasis is placed on meeting the pupils' emotional, social and behavioural needs, and not enough on their academic needs.

Behaviour Improvement Programme

23. In two LAs the focus of the school visits was on the BIP. This initiative has provided significant additional funding to schools and LAs to improve behaviour and attendance in schools facing challenging circumstances. Key objectives include reduction in exclusions, increase in attendance and the provision of full-time education for excluded pupils.
24. In the two LAs the impact of the BIP has been generally good. The additional funding has been targeted appropriately to improve attendance and punctuality and to reduce instances of misbehaviour and exclusions. Additionally, when the BIP has been effectively integrated with other strategies, the impact on pupil achievement has been greater.

City Learning Centres

25. On the whole in the areas visited, CLCs have good provision, with a few aspects that are excellent. In the better provision the CLCs have been established within a clear and shared philosophy that is understood by all the partners. The leadership and management of the centres are good, with unambiguous lines of accountability. Their overall framework has been laid down by regular management or partnership board meetings and their work is underpinned by a purposeful development plan. Individual centres are usually managed extremely well by the centre managers. Most centres have very good accommodation, with high quality hardware and software. Teaching and learning is good. The provision is shared well with partner secondary schools. The relevance and usefulness of the provision are constantly evaluated through formal feedback from the pupils and other users.
26. The CLCs have worked hard to develop expertise that pupils would find exciting, challenging and stimulating, for example in one CLC, undertaking innovative work with digital arts, music and radio.
27. Where the provision is effective, there is a beneficial effect on the pupils' attainment. Thus, for example in one CLC, pupils undertaking the GCSE in performing arts gained an average of a grade on their expected results in the six months that they used the CLC for the subject.

28. The sharing of CLC provision with partner secondary schools is an important but complex area. The host schools for the CLCs are working hard to extend provision to other stakeholders but with varying degrees of success. Usually host schools are the main beneficiaries, although CLCs are acutely aware of the need to resource a wider range of local secondary schools. Some CLCs are supporting their partner secondary schools better than others, for example by meeting transport costs and by allocating resources to schools. However, some schools do not make better use of CLCs because of timetable difficulties, geographical location, transport costs and time, disruption to the timetable, the need for 'cover' staff, and poor relations between the schools and the CLC.
29. Overall, the CLCs are responding well to the needs of partner secondary schools. They have a sharper understanding of the need to focus on raising attainment, particularly at Key Stage 4. There is a perceptible impact on pupils' attainment in some schools but the effectiveness of this varies. They are generally responsive to the needs of schools, but there is no evidence of CLCs concentrating on the needs of the weakest schools. There is an awareness of the need to raise attainment at Key Stage 3. The community element has a lower profile in the work of the CLCs: although it is still an important dimension in some centres, it is non-existent in others.
30. CLCs have continued to develop expertise and practice in a range of areas to a level beyond that which is normally found in schools, for example digital art and photography, computer assisted design, and music. Good use has been made of CLCs for the professional development of staff, for example in the use of interactive whiteboards. The use of CLCs to further challenge gifted and talented pupils is limited.

The role of the LA

31. Overall, the 8 LAs visited have provided good support to schools in the management of EIC and other related activities. There are some good examples of the work of LAs in enabling schools to develop successful provision for the gifted and talented programme, and the learning mentors' strand. For example in one LA learning mentors have been trained effectively and they feel supported both by the schools and the LA inclusion team. In addition, the LA has supported collaboration between schools well for the LIG initiatives.
32. In many LAs, the coordination of initiatives is effective. For example, in one LA there has been effective working with schools to develop strong links between strands, leading to increased opportunities for inclusion and improved attainment. Training led by the LA's staff and the implementation of rigorous evaluation exercises have contributed to the good quality of work seen in some learning support units in this LA.

33. There are instances of good strategic leadership provided by the LA for collaborative work between schools. In one LA, for example, a better sense of common purpose and more effective teamwork have been developed in one LIG collaborative. In another, the responsiveness of the LA's officers to the needs of headteachers has resulted in stronger relationships between schools and the LA. Some LAs have started planning effectively for the extension of the various initiatives into primary schools and some good preliminary work on this was seen.
34. In the very few instances where the LA does not play a leading or more effective role, the following features are apparent:
- the support structures and other networks established by the LA are not sufficiently influential in informing and guiding the schools
 - the LA does not take a lead role in ensuring that good practice in schools is more widely shared
 - the LA has not led adequate debate with schools about how the key successes within the strands can be sustained once funding ceases.

Notes

35. The EiC initiative was launched by central government in 1999, originally covering 25 LAs. It is now in its third phase and partnerships are running in 57 local authorities, with a further 34 involved in Excellence Clusters. Originally, the programme was aimed at secondary schools but this has been extended to primary schools. About 1,000 secondary schools and over 1,000 primary schools are currently involved in EiC.
36. The aims of the initiative are to raise standards and to promote social inclusion in major cities and in areas that face similar problems to those faced by the inner cities. This programme is intended to work alongside other initiatives, including the LIG and the BIP. The EiC initiative aims to tackle underachievement in schools through the implementation of strands including those of learning mentors, learning support units, provision for gifted and talented pupils and the creation of City Learning Centres.
37. During the autumn term 2004 and spring term 2005, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) visited eight LAs: 50 secondary schools, 14 primary schools and eight CLCs. Lessons were inspected, other work was observed and documentation scrutinised. Interviews were held with pupils, parents and a wide range of professionals, including headteachers, teachers, LA officers, managers of CLCs, learning mentors and learning support assistants.

Further information

HMI have undertaken various evaluations of the Excellence in Cities initiatives since they were first launched. Publications include:

Excellence Clusters: the first ten inspections (HMI 1732), 2003.

Education Action Zones: tackling difficult issues in round 2 zones (HMI 1711), 2003.

Excellence in Cities: City Learning Centres, an evaluation of the first year (HMI 1655), 2003.

These and other relevant publications can be found on www.ofsted.gov.uk
Comprehensive information on the initiatives can also be found on the website for the Department for Education and Skills at www.dfes.gov.uk