

Secondary National Strategy

Study Plus pilot

Final evaluation report

Contents

Summary of main findings	3
Background	5
The impact of Study Plus on pupils' achievement	7
Features of provision where impact was high	11
Features that limit the impact of Study Plus	14
Implementing Study Plus effectively	15
Barriers to success	17
The response to the Study Plus guidance and resources	18
The role of the TA in Study Plus	20
LA support for the pilot	22
Lessons from the pilot project	23
In conclusion	24
Appendix: Study Plus curriculum models	25

Summary of main findings

The evidence for this evaluation is from these sources:

- Evaluation evidence submitted by schools and LAs in response to surveys
- Evidence from visits by National Strategies' staff to pilot schools and LAs.

Evidence based on pupils' actual GCSE attainment will be published later when results are finalised.

The main findings reported here focus on the impact of Study Plus on the learning of pupils and what has been learnt about the effective implementation of the approach.

1. Study Plus has made a positive impact on the majority of pilot pupils.

In English:

- Over half of pupils made better-than-expected progress¹ in 78% of the schools
- Over three-quarters of pupils made better-than-expected progress in 26% of the schools
- 52% of Study Plus English pupils are predicted to gain grade C or better at GCSE.

In mathematics:

- Over half of pupils made better-than-expected progress in 69% of schools
- Over three-quarters of pupils made better-than-expected progress in 21% of schools
- 44% of Study Plus mathematics pupils are predicted to gain grade C or better at GCSE.

In the wider curriculum:

- Over half of the pupils made better-than-expected progress in 57% of schools
- Over three-quarters of pupils made better-than-expected progress in 5% of schools
- 29% of Study Plus pupils are predicted to gain 5 GCSEs at A*–C including English and mathematics.

¹ This is based on school judgements about whether pupils had achieved more highly than could have been predicted based on their attainment and progress up to and including Year 9.

Secondary National Strategy

These are very positive outcomes for a group of pupils who participated in Study Plus because they were not making adequate progress and were not predicted to gain good GCSE results.

2. Study Plus is most effective when implemented following the guidelines.

For a range of reasons the quality of implementation of the pilot has varied in schools. Where, as in most cases, the pilot was implemented following the guidelines and was not disrupted because of unforeseen circumstances such as staffing issues, the response from teachers and pupils was overwhelmingly positive.

The crucial keys to success are:

- effective targeting of the appropriate pupil group
- provision of sufficient curriculum time
- deployment of appropriate staff
- the use of curricular targets
- TAs having a planned role in every lesson
- pupils being engaged in learning that is perceived as different from English and mathematics lessons and can be applied more widely across the curriculum
- all staff in the school being informed of the purpose and principles of Study Plus.

Background

What is Study Plus?

Study Plus is the name of an approach that has been developed by the Secondary National Strategy for pupils at Key Stage 4 who are achieving below national expectations in English and/or mathematics but who have the potential to make better progress with some additional support. A key feature of any Study Plus course is that it does not follow a set syllabus/specification but is designed specifically for a particular group of pupils whose learning needs have been identified. In this respect Study Plus might be better described as an approach rather than a course.

The Study Plus approach is designed for:

- pupils who end Key Stage 3 on level 4 or level 5 in English and/or mathematics
- pupils who when in Year 9 are predicted by teachers to attain D or E grades at GCSE but have the potential to do better (as indicated, for example, by predictive data based on prior attainment).

The aims are to:

- accelerate the progress of these pupils in English and/or mathematics so that they have a better chance of achieving a grade C
- strengthen key areas of weakness in literacy and numeracy
- support pupils' learning and motivation in relation to English, mathematics and other subjects
- have a positive impact on attainment in two or three additional GCSE subjects through the application of literacy, numeracy and general learning skills in context.

Study Plus pupils' academic achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 is demonstrated through their GCSE results in a range of subjects. By strengthening crucial skills in English and/or mathematics, Study Plus aims to help pupils learn better in their GCSE subject lessons and gain better results at the end of the course. This connection will be particularly strong in the case of English and mathematics, but it is also expected that improving literacy and numeracy, together with improved learning skills, will have an impact on the wider curriculum.

The Study Plus approach is flexible so that provision can be designed by teachers to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils in their own school context. However, a Study Plus course will have six essential features.

Secondary National Strategy

Six essential features of Study Plus	
1	Study Plus is a 5–6 term programme that is timetabled during the school day for at least two lessons a week – typically pupils opt for it as part of the school's option programme.
2	Study Plus is planned as a sequence of around 20 English or mathematics units or a mixture of the two – each unit lasting 3–4 weeks.
3	Teaching in each unit is focused by a cluster of curricular targets that have been identified as relevant to the group and individuals by using the English and mathematics progression maps.
4	There is support for the Study Plus teacher through training and materials.
5	Pupils' learning is supported by another adult, e.g. a teaching assistant or learning mentor who is attached to the group.
6	Close links to the main learning in English and mathematics lessons.

It is these essential features that define the Study Plus approach, not a specified content.

The Study Plus pilot programme

The Study Plus approach was developed in 2005/2006 by a project team of Secondary National Strategy advisers, LA consultants and teachers. The two-year pilot project was started in 2006 with 27 LAs and just over 100 schools. The LAs, chosen to represent every region in the country, were:

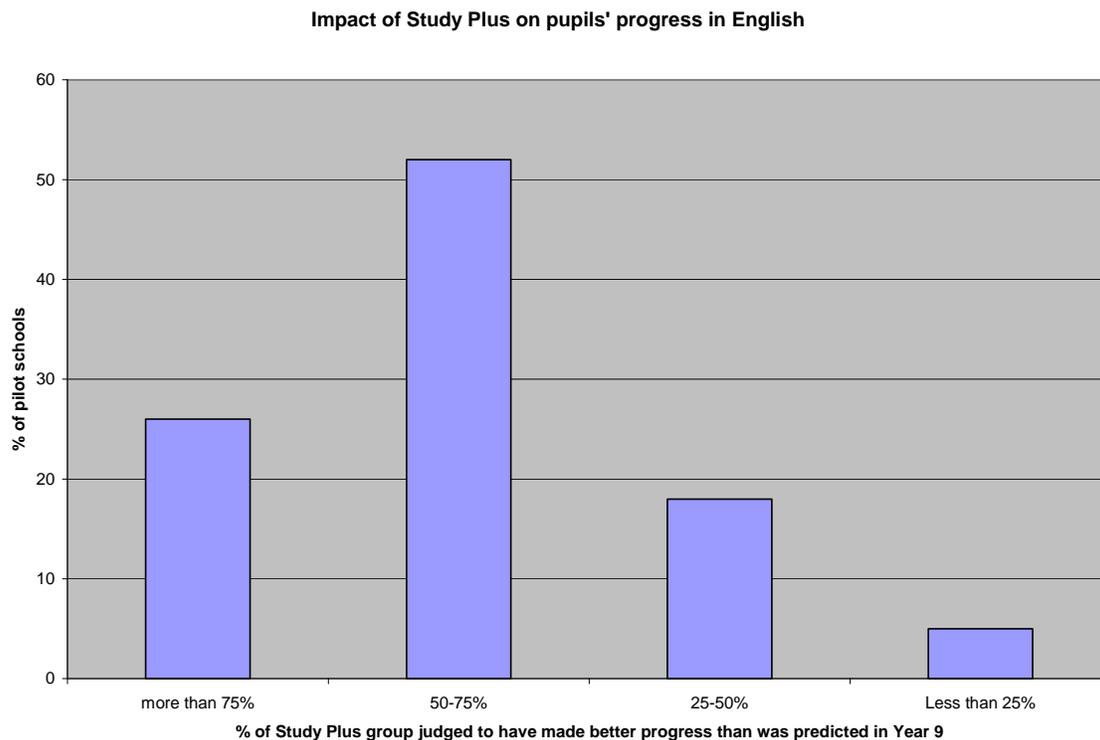
Bedfordshire	Oldham
Birmingham	Rotherham
Bradford	Shropshire
Bromley	Slough
Cornwall	Solihull
Dorset	Southwark
Enfield	Staffordshire
Gateshead	Sunderland
Hounslow	Telford and Wrekin
Kent	Tower Hamlets
Lancashire	Waltham Forest
Middlesbrough	Wigan
Milton Keynes	Wiltshire
Norfolk	

The impact of Study Plus on pupils' achievement

24 out of 27 pilot LAs submitted evaluation evidence collected from their pilot schools:

- 66 schools provided evidence on Study Plus English (1135 pupils)
- 67 schools provided evidence on Study Plus mathematics (1089 pupils)
- 72 schools provided evidence on the impact of Study Plus on pupils' work beyond English and mathematics (1504 pupils)
- 44 schools provided evidence on the impact of Study Plus on pupils' performance in other areas such as attendance, behaviour and learning skills (441 pupils)

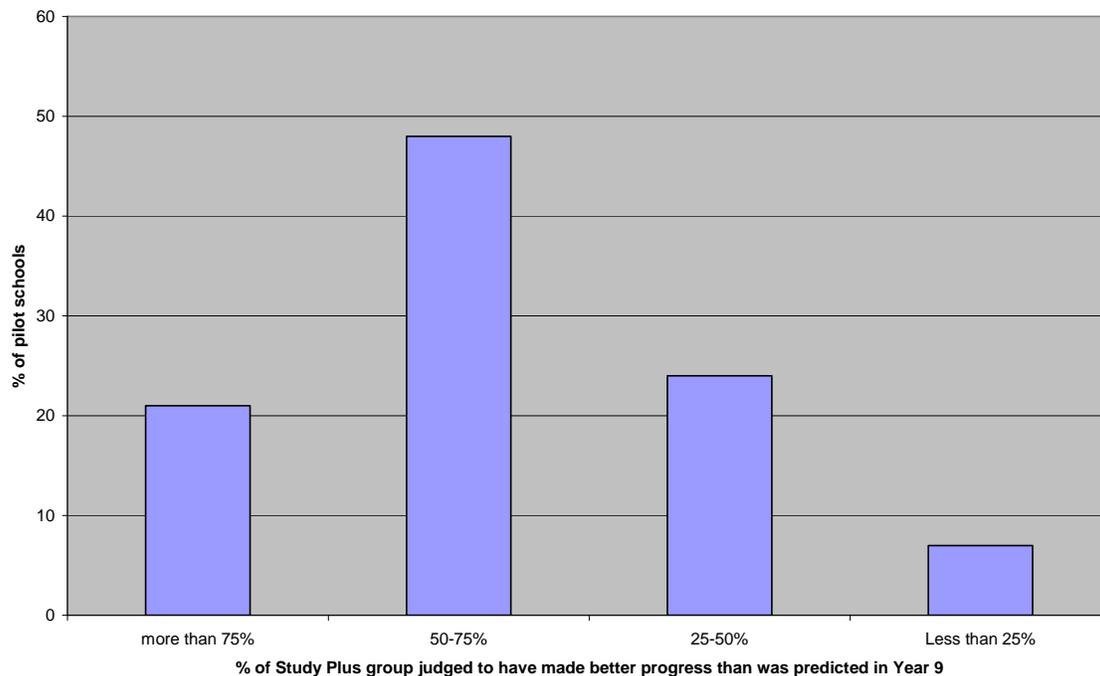
English



Participation in Study Plus was judged to have had a good or very good impact on pupils' progress in 78% of the schools. In these schools over half the pupils exceeded what had been predicted for them in Year 9 when they were targeted for the course. The outcome is that 585 pupils (52% of the total) are now predicted to gain GCSE English at grade C or better.

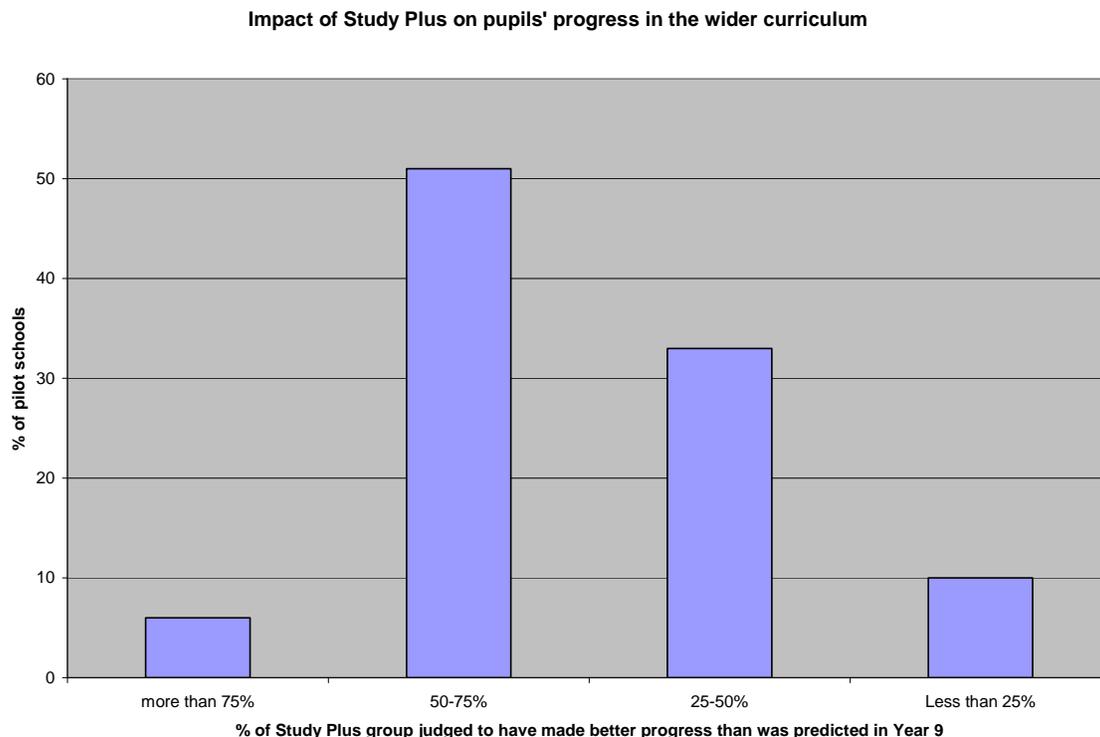
Mathematics

Impact of Study Plus on pupils' progress in mathematics



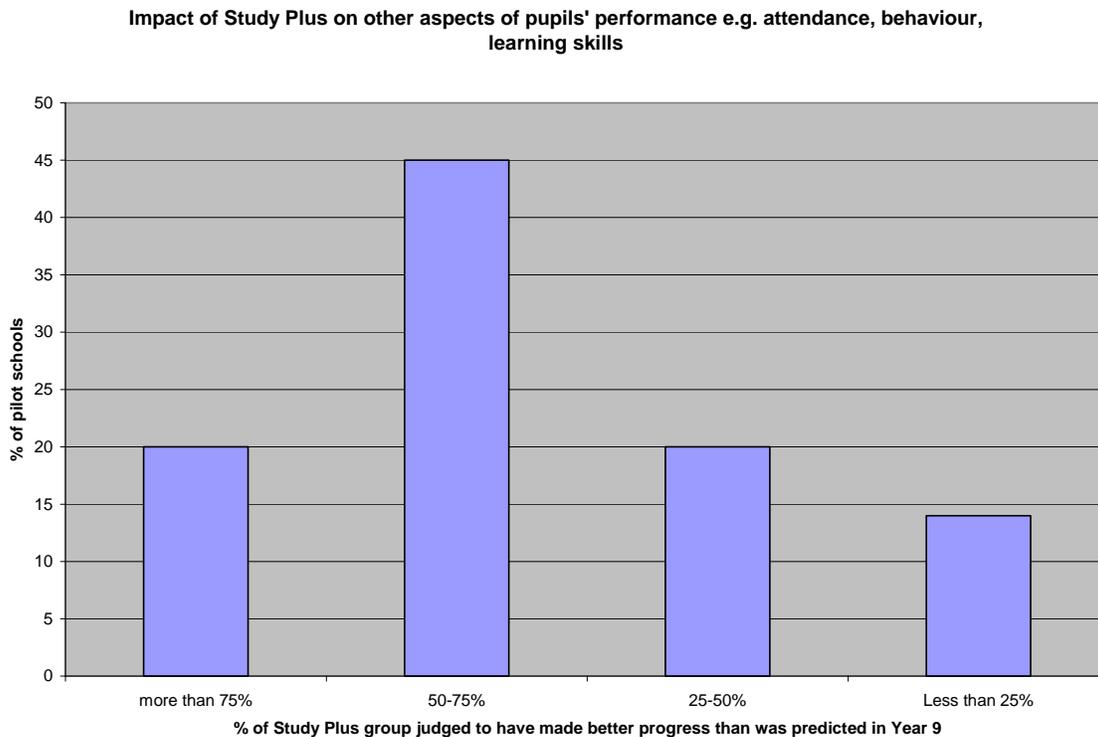
Participation in Study Plus was judged to have had a good or very good impact on pupils' progress in 69% of the schools. In these schools over half the pupils exceeded what had been predicted for them in Year 9 when they were targeted for the course. The outcome is that 484 pupils (44% of the total) are now predicted to gain GCSE mathematics at grade C or better.

Impact on pupils' progress in other curriculum areas



One important aim of Study Plus is to influence pupils' learning and attainment in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils apply their improved literacy, numeracy and general learning skills across the curriculum and, by doing so, improve their chances of gaining 5 GCSEs at A*–C including English and mathematics. Participation in Study Plus was judged to have had a good or very good impact on pupils' progress in other curriculum areas in 57% of the schools. In these schools over half the pupils exceeded what had been predicted for them in Year 9 when they were targeted for the course. The outcome is that 441 pupils (29% of the total) are now predicted to gain 5 GCSEs at A*–C including English and mathematics.

Impact on other aspects of pupils' performance



In the evaluation of the first year of the pilot, some schools reported that Study Plus was not only having an impact on pupils as learners but was improving the behaviour and attendance of some pupils. A relatively small number of schools were able to submit evidence on this point for the evaluation but, of those that were, 65% reported good or very good impact.

Features of provision where impact was high

In the evaluation process, schools were asked to comment on the features of their Study Plus provision that they considered had made the most difference to pupils' attainment.

Impact on English

The features most commonly mentioned by teachers when accounting for the positive impact of Study Plus English are:

- the use of personal curricular targets that pupils understand
- increased use of effective group work
- use of information technology
- use of interactive teaching techniques that improve levels of pupil participation
- the support from a TA
- smaller group size
- the involvement of parents
- freedom from the constraints of a GCSE syllabus
- increased use of learning through talk.

Impact on mathematics

The features most commonly mentioned by teachers when accounting for the positive impact of Study Plus mathematics are:

- use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies
- regular verbal feedback to pupils
- the role of the TA
- use of oral and group work
- pupils becoming more independent through increased confidence
- use of information technology
- use of personal targets
- cross-curricular approaches incorporated into units
- linking mathematics to real-life situations and problems
- smaller group size

Secondary National Strategy

- greater enjoyment of mathematics by pupils
- the quality of materials including those produced in local networks
- good links with main mathematics lessons.

Impact on the wider curriculum

The features most commonly mentioned by teachers when accounting for the positive impact of Study Plus on the wider curriculum are:

- improved attitudes to learning on the part of the pupils
- transfer of improved literacy and numeracy skills
- role of the TA in making links to other subject areas
- improved ICT skills
- support for coursework assignments
- improved confidence and oral skills.

The subject areas most commonly mentioned as benefiting from the pupils' involvement with Study Plus were:

- History
- Geography
- Science
- PE
- Food technology

In these subjects it was mainly the pupils' improved writing skills including a greater ability to structure extended writing that made a difference, but pupils' improved ability to interpret graphs was also highlighted.

Impact on other aspects of pupil performance

The features most commonly mentioned by teachers when accounting for the positive impact of Study Plus on pupils' general behaviour were:

- improved levels of attendance, although this effect did not usually apply to very persistent absentees, nor did it always transfer beyond the Study Plus lessons

Secondary National Strategy

- improved confidence and communication skills including the willingness to ask questions
- improved motivation and higher aspirations for their future education
- improved ability to learn collaboratively and cooperate with others
- pupils feeling valued and special
- in the case of some individual pupils, a notable reduction in serious bad behaviour (as evidenced by reduced number of exclusions).

Features that limit the impact of Study Plus

Schools that reported lower impact of Study Plus accounted for this by mentioning these difficulties:

- Problems with the way the pilot was initially set up
- Selection of pupils not suited to Study Plus (ability too low, too many pupils with behaviour and attendance problems)
- Last minute allocation of pupils to the Study Plus group leading to resentment by pupils who felt they were missing out on another lesson
- Group size too large
- Poor accommodation and resourcing
- Staffing difficulties:
 - Allocation of teaching staff who were unsympathetic to the Study Plus approach or who lacked confidence in the subject (usually mathematics) or who lacked the techniques for more interactive teaching
 - Staff changes and gaps
 - Failure to allocate a TA as required by the Study Plus model
- General difficulties affecting the whole school
- Lack of support from other staff in the school, usually through lack of knowledge and understanding of Study Plus but occasionally as a result of resentment at the perceived unfair allocation of resources to Study Plus
- Lack of communication between English and mathematics staff teaching the course
- Difficult pupils being placed into the Study Plus group part way through the course which disrupted the group identity.

Implementing Study Plus effectively

From their experience of supporting the pilot in four or in some cases more schools, local authorities were asked to identify the key factors that helped to make implementation of the approach successful. The same themes recurred in all the LA responses.

The first factor identified is that the senior leadership team in a school needs to fully understand and support the purposes and principles of Study Plus. Only then will the other key factors be possible.

The most crucial decisions that the SLT in a school needs to make relate to people. In simple terms this means involving the right staff and selecting the right pupils. Specialist teachers are preferable but specialist knowledge is not essential if the teacher has significant strengths in generic teaching skills and the ability to build positive relationships with pupils of this age and ability. The allocation of a TA to the Study Plus group is essential to the extent that, judging from the evidence, it is pointless trying to run Study Plus without this feature. Last but not least, the targeting of the pupils who are most likely to benefit from Study Plus is crucial. Where schools use a combination of prior attainment data and teacher assessment to choose a group who are underperforming but who have the potential to make more progress as a result of focused teaching and improved motivation, the results can be transformational. Where groups of low-attaining and/or disaffected and badly-behaved pupils are assembled, the results are predictably disappointing. The timely involvement of pupils and their parents constructively in the choice of Study Plus is also crucial to success.

The next set of decisions relates to resourcing the course. Giving Study Plus sufficient time (at least two lessons a week) is essential if there is to be a significant impact on pupils' learning. There is broad agreement that the availability of the following resources also help to make Study Plus effective:

- Planning time for the teacher and the TA to work together
- Good accommodation with access to ICT
- Some funding for visits particularly at the start when it is important to forge group identity.

In relation to the quality of lessons, LAs believe that Study Plus is implemented most effectively where teaching and learning is planned to include:

- 'Real' contexts for learning
- Units of work that complement teaching in main English and mathematics lessons but are clearly different in style and content
- Opportunities for pupils to have a say in the work and participate in the process of assessment

Secondary National Strategy

- Use of topics and materials that are adapted to suit the interests of the specific group of pupils
- Use of extra-curricular and enrichment activities
- Learning conversations and mentoring of students, either by teacher or TA
- The use of curricular targets.

Other points seen as important by LAs are:

- The need to inform and, where possible, involve other members of the school staff
- The provision of a local network that allows teachers to undertake planning collaboratively and share resources.

Barriers to success

As might be expected, the barriers to success that are reported by LAs are to a great extent the lack of some or all of those success factors described in the paragraph above. LA judgements reinforce the key importance of identifying the right target group of pupils for Study Plus and point out how the failure to achieve this in some schools has exposed weaknesses in assessment and tracking in Key Stage 3. Assigning the right staff is also critical. Clearly, weak teaching is a barrier to success, but the pilot has also revealed that experienced and capable teachers can be less effective if they are unwilling to be flexible and adopt approaches that are different from their normal practice. Schools need to be prepared to release staff for training and attendance at network meetings, and this has been a negative factor in a small number of schools.

Curriculum decisions such as requiring pupils to choose between Study Plus and popular option subjects such as PE and drama can make it difficult to motivate pupils in the early stages. While some LAs have reported that a lack of accreditation for Study Plus has caused problems, others suggest that the attempt to link Study Plus to various kinds of accreditation schemes has caused difficulties, so there is no clear consensus on this issue. Not designing and promoting Study Plus as something 'different' (i.e. something not perceived by pupils as just extra English and maths) is, however, clearly a barrier to success.

The response to the Study Plus guidance and resources

LAs generally judged the Study Plus handbook to provide good, clear guidance to schools and teachers and often registered frustration that it was not always followed. A number of respondents commented on how some schools that did not follow the guidance soon realised their mistake and had to make inconvenient changes to compensate.

Schools' response to the sample Study Plus units varied and demonstrated clearly that different teachers will respond very differently to the same materials. For instance, certain units that were highly praised by some teachers were condemned as 'boring' or even 'unteachable' by others. The planning format of the English units was praised for 'clarity and consistency' by one school but also condemned as 'perplexing and prescriptive' by another. Nevertheless, the responses overall showed that the units clearly fulfilled their two main purposes, which were:

- to exemplify how to plan a unit of work that followed the pedagogical principles of Study Plus;
- to give teachers a starting point which they could adapt to match the needs of their class.

On the whole, English teachers were more ready to see the units as exemplification and some used them as a model to develop their own units from the start. Teachers of mathematics were more likely to want to use the units with less adaptation and to call for the provision of more units.

The most effective responses to the sample units were where teachers used a sample unit with minor adaptations to start with (and in doing so became familiar with the underlying principles of Study Plus planning), then went on to adapt further units more radically, and finally began to develop their own material. This last stage was most effective when supported by LA network meetings that allowed teachers to work together and share ideas and resources. Where teachers developed their own material right from the start there was a risk that they missed some of the underlying principles such as basing the units around a small number of clear curricular targets. Where teachers wanted to teach the units 'from the book' the risk was that the material did not really match the needs of their class or their own teaching style.

Many teachers commented that planning for Study Plus was time consuming. This was particularly the case where the pupil group was not chosen according to guidance and the teacher had to adapt the materials radically from the start. The positive side to this is that LA consultants judge that many teachers have learnt from the process of planning for Study Plus and have expanded their teaching repertoires as a consequence. Other teachers welcomed the opportunity to plan lessons that are not constrained by examination syllabuses and worked very creatively and with much job satisfaction. Some LAs have been particularly

Secondary National Strategy

effective in supporting the development of new resources for their teachers to use.

One key lesson learnt from the pilot is that where Study Plus is timetabled in such a way that there is one English and one mathematics lesson a week, the units have to be adapted and made shorter. This is because it is very difficult to sustain interest and continuity over a period of many weeks.

Some schools have adapted the materials so that the work becomes more clearly a preparation for the GCSE examinations in English and mathematics rather than generally building skills that can be applied widely across the curriculum. This strategy may prove effective in improving GCSE grades but could run the risk of Study Plus being perceived by pupils as merely extra English and mathematics. Some of the wider benefits of Study Plus may also not be achieved under this model.

The role of the TA in Study Plus

Two of the basic principles of Study Plus are that Study Plus groups should always have the support of a TA and that the TA should have a planned role in every lesson (i.e. not just support individual pupils in an ad hoc way).

LA evaluations come to two very clear conclusions about the role of the TA:

- Study Plus was less effective where schools were unable to provide a TA for part or all of the time;
- Where the TA's role was developed in line with the guidance, the positive impact on pupils' learning was very significant.

The TA's role is likely to be most effective where they are allowed planning time with the teacher and where they attend training with the teacher. In the best cases TAs were so fully integrated into the learning and teaching that pupils did not distinguish between the role of the TA and the teacher. Pupils consistently cite support from the TA as one reason why they like Study Plus. TAs carried out a wide range of planned roles in Study Plus including:

- leading guided group work
- monitoring opportunities for cross-curricular skill transfer and making these explicit with pupils
- taking the lead for some starter and plenary activities
- providing targeted support for individuals
- assessment analysis to identify curricular targets
- developing resources
- acting as a mentor for pupils
- supporting pupil self-assessment
- carrying out learning conversations
- participating in role play
- being available at lunchtime to host Study Plus pupils' 'informal study/homework' sessions.

Many LAs have reported on the powerful professional development that TAs experienced through Study Plus and the impact it has had on their job satisfaction and aspirations.

Where, in a minority of cases, the TA role did not develop so effectively, this was because:

- the lessons planned did not provide sufficient opportunity for the TA to develop the role (e.g. infrequent use of guided group work)
- the TA had no involvement in planning

Secondary National Strategy

- the TA found it difficult to move beyond the role of giving ad hoc support around the classroom.

In most schools the TA was judged to have had a very positive impact on pupils' learning. This happened in a range of ways including:

- support for the pupils in transferring skills into other curriculum areas
- boosting pupils' confidence and general learning skills
- explaining to pupils as a 'non-expert'
- making a link between English and mathematics
- setting targets with pupils
- one-to-one support in difficult times
- increasing the amount of oral participation
- ensuring a greater focus on the task
- building less formal adult/pupil relationships.

LA support for the pilot

There was some outstanding practice in the support for the Study Plus pilot by LAs. Some LAs and individual schools within them were also effective ambassadors for Study Plus helping to provide training for non-pilot LAs and welcoming visitors to observe Study Plus in action.

Apart from providing initial training, LAs have found it valuable to support schools through:

- network meetings to support the development of good practice and the writing of new materials
- producing materials
- setting up a VLE for teachers to share materials
- supporting the gathering and evaluation of pupil voice
- organising events to celebrate the achievements of Study Plus pupils and generate parental involvement
- modelling teaching approaches
- supporting the development of tracking and progress-review systems
- regular monitoring and support visits, including lesson observation, feedback and discussion with students
- providing additional funds to support specific developments.

In London, LAs were able to work together linking schools across LA boundaries.

Where LA support was less effective:

- some LAs were unable to exert sufficient influence on schools when early decisions about setting up the Study Plus pilot were made;
- some LAs have not had the capacity to provide as much in-school support to teachers as was expected by the project.

Lessons from the pilot project

The Study Plus pilot project has been a learning experience for all those involved. Many of the pilot schools have already made changes to the way they provide Study Plus because of their own evaluations. Schools planning to adopt Study Plus should consider the main lessons learnt during the pilot period:

- Select the target group of pupils with care using the guidelines in the Study Plus handbook and involve parents from the start
- Study Plus should be regarded as a whole-school initiative and all staff should be made aware of the approach and its relationship with the wider curriculum
- Full commitment to Study Plus from the school's SLT is essential as the approach only works if implemented within the parameters of the guidance with sufficient time and resources
- Commitment and flexibility on the part of teachers is very important – including an understanding that Study Plus is not a ready-made package and that they will have the freedom and the responsibility to make the course their own
- The role of the TA is crucial to success
- Within the context of clear curricular targets, pupils should be engaged in learning that is perceived as different from English and mathematics lessons and can be applied more widely across the curriculum.

Some specific advice on curriculum models for Study Plus is given in Appendix 1.

In conclusion

Study Plus is not a magic formula that guarantees success. Study Plus is, however, a clearly-defined approach that, when it is well planned and implemented, has a strong impact on learners who have not made sufficient progress in their first three years in secondary school. Study Plus raises pupils' aspirations and improves their chances of making two levels of progress and attaining good grades at GCSE.

Study Plus has not been a success in every pilot school, but it is notable just how strong the enthusiasm for it is in the schools where it has worked well.

One subject leader wrote:

'One of the most important strategies to come into teaching in 30 years.'

One Year 11 pupil wrote:

'I think that Study Plus has been a great extra lesson that has enabled me to gain more confidence and knowledge in maths and English. I have really enjoyed these lessons and think that anyone who is given the opportunity to be involved with such a great programme should grab it in the grasp of their hand. All teachers have given something extra to their lessons and I feel that not only are they my teachers but also a friend. I have really enjoyed Study Plus and I am very grateful for being included in this and given the chance to improve. Thank you also for the trips that have been organised and the sweets and biscuits. I am actually quite sad that there will be no more Study Plus.'

One LA wrote:

'SNS consultants and school improvement officers have been impressed by the quality of learning in many Study Plus groups. The pupils have talked about their learning in a very positive way. Personalisation is evident in most Study Plus lessons. Positive and enthusiastic feedback and evaluation from Study Plus teachers has encouraged other schools to adopt it.'

Another LA wrote:

'Teachers commented on how being part of the pilot has developed their own personal understanding of learning. Many have tried new ways of teaching and, as it has been successful, have then transferred these ideas to their other classes. Study Plus has focused teachers on designing learning with clear curricular targets. The simplicity of the design has focused teachers on learning rather than on tasks. All schools involved in the pilot have begun the course again in Y10 and in some schools two groups are planned for next year due to the popularity of the course. Pupils and parents have been overwhelmingly positive about the whole experience.'

Appendix (extract from the evaluation of Year 1 of the pilot)

Study Plus curriculum models

One essential feature of Study Plus is that it is part of the school's regular timetable. Schools in the pilot incorporated Study Plus into their curriculum plan and timetable in different ways and much has been learnt about the relative advantages and disadvantages of the various models. Interestingly, factors that some LAs and schools saw as disadvantages were seen as advantages by others, and there is a genuine sense that, as long as schools understand the potential disadvantages of the approach they choose and seek to minimise them, they can be successful.

Although there are many individual differences, there are basically four ways of offering Study Plus:

- As an option subject
- As part of English and mathematics lessons for a targeted group of pupils
- As part of the non-optional Key Stage 4 curriculum by saving time from other curriculum areas
- Other provision in non-curriculum time.

The table below shows the relative popularity of these approaches with the pilot schools.

Curriculum model chosen by pilot schools (as a percentage)

Option subject	55%
As part of English and mathematics lessons for a targeted group of pupils	11%
As part of the non-optional KS4 curriculum by saving time from other curriculum areas	30%
Other provision in non-curriculum time	4%

Study Plus as an option

This was the most popular model with schools and has the obvious advantage of ensuring that sufficient time is available for Study Plus to make a real impact on pupils' learning. There are three issues that schools should be aware of when choosing this model: status, selection, and coordination with the rest of the curriculum.

While making Study Plus an option gives clear status to it as a separate subject choice, it can initially be perceived negatively by pupils and parents for these reasons:

- 'Special' provision is often associated with low ability and learning difficulties and carries a stigma;
- Pupils will study for one less GCSE.

Many schools have overcome this initial perception by working closely with parents and pupils to explain the aims of the course. Also, where pupils quickly come to appreciate the quality of the support they receive and recognise the progress they are making, any lingering negativity soon disappears. Studying for one less GCSE is seen as a positive feature by many parents and pupils as long as the trade-off is for a chance of better grades in the remaining GCSEs. Some schools have been so successful in raising the status of Study Plus that pupils selected for the Study Plus option are now perceived as the 'lucky ones' by their peers.

Selecting the appropriate pupils is a key factor in the success of Study Plus so it is important that the school guides a target group to consider opting for Study Plus. The advantage of allowing targeted pupils to opt for Study Plus is that both they and their parents have 'bought into' the course and have an initial commitment. The disadvantages are:

- the school has less control over the number of pupils following Study Plus;
- some pupils may not be able to select Study Plus as it clashes with a favourite subject;
- the Study Plus group may include pupils with differing levels of attainment in English and mathematics.

As an option subject, pupils will often be taught by someone other than their usual English or mathematics teachers. The challenge here is to ensure that there is coordination so that Study Plus complements rather than repeats the main GCSE teaching. If this coordination is managed, however, the great benefit

Secondary National Strategy

is that it is easier for the option teacher to create Study Plus as something that is not perceived as 'just more English and mathematics'.

Study Plus within English and mathematics

This model was popular with schools that had already allocated an extra lesson to English and mathematics in their curriculum plans.

The main advantages of this model are:

- pupils usually have the same teacher as for English and mathematics, which aids group identity, continuity and coordination;
- it is easier to select the Study Plus group(s) and control how many pupils are in it (them);
- the number of GCSEs may not be reduced;
- some LAs report a positive impact on the quality of learning and teaching in English and mathematics as teachers extend the Study Plus practice into their other lessons.

The main disadvantages are:

- it is harder to make Study Plus feel different and special to the pupils.
- there is often less time allocated under this model. If Study Plus is one lesson of English and one lesson of mathematics a week, then it is hard to maintain continuity and pace through a unit of work as one unit may have to be sustained over six to eight weeks;
- pupils may miss aspects of English and mathematics, e.g. English Literature GCSE, statistics GCSE.

Study Plus as part of non-optional Key Stage 4 time

This was the second most common model with schools finding a wide range of areas in the curriculum from which they could take some time. This included GCSE subject time (e.g. science and MFL) and non-GCSE time.

The advantages are:

- it is the school's own tailored solution;
- no reduction in option choice and pupils may not 'lose' a GCSE;
- the school has more control over selection.

Secondary National Strategy

The disadvantages are:

- pupils may resent being selected for Study Plus and there may be an element of perceived stigma;
- pupils may have to sacrifice lessons they find attractive;
- pupils can be poorly motivated if they have not actively chosen Study Plus and the lessons may be perceived as unaccredited timetable fillers;
- other subject areas may resent having time taken from them;
- there is usually less time allocated under this model than if it is an option.

Other provision in non-curriculum time

One of the essential features of Study Plus is that it is provided within main curriculum time. A small number of pilot schools – usually those entering the pilot at late notice – did however resort to this model. No successful evaluations of this model have been reported.

The main disadvantages are:

- using tutor time is ineffective because too little time is available, there is a lack of continuity and other priorities intrude;
- out-of-hours provision is adversely affected by poor attendance;
- these models usually provide too little reliable time to make an impact on pupils' progress.