



**OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION**

**INSPECTION OF
GRIMSBY
EDUCATION ACTION ZONE**

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OFFICE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

1. The first 25 Education Action Zones (EAZs) were designated by the government to begin in September 1998, although their activity often did not start until January 1999. EAZs are partnerships which are intended to tackle entrenched problems of underachievement and social exclusion in disadvantaged areas.
2. First-round zones were funded for three years in the first instance, extended to five years if their forward plans were judged adequate. They receive a grant from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) of £750,000 per year and are expected to raise a further £250,000 per year from private sources.
3. Grimsby, a first-round zone, was inspected using the Framework for the Inspection of Education Action Zones, published in December 2000. The inspection was based on data, some of which was provided by the zone, on school inspection information, and on documents provided by the zone. Discussions were held with zone staff, with schools in the zone, with the local education authority (LEA), with forum members and with other partners. All schools in the zone were invited to complete a questionnaire about the zone's management and initiatives: all did so. Partners nominated by the zone were also invited to comment on the zone's activities. Three of the zone's activities were studied in detail. These were: raising attainment in literacy; improving information and communications technology (ICT) capability; alternative curriculum provision in secondary schools.
4. Visits were made to primary and secondary schools within the zone to provide evidence of the impact of these and other initiatives. Visits incorporated discussions with headteachers, staff, parents and pupils as well as observation of lessons.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- ❑ Grimsby EAZ is now well led and managed. Its activities are well planned and linked clearly to its aims of raising attainment and promoting inclusion. Its progress towards meeting these aims, however, has been restricted by poor initial planning, which set unrealistic targets and established programmes that did not match its aims or the schools' needs well enough. Poor quality computer equipment wasted time and resources in the first two years. Since then, there has been a dramatic improvement in planning and management. The zone is now firmly back on track.
- ❑ The zone enjoys good working relationships with its schools and a close and productive partnership with the LEA. Valuable links have also been established with other partners in both public and private sectors.
- ❑ Primary schools in the zone receive excellent support for literacy. Careful data analysis and close target-setting have led to well structured support for each school. This, together with improvements in the quality of teaching, has produced a particularly rapid rise in attainment at Key Stage 1.
- ❑ Practical initiatives aimed at tackling disaffection in secondary schools have reduced permanent exclusions and improved motivation, but they have not had a significant impact on low attendance. Alternative approaches to the curriculum and the provision of out-of-school activities have increased opportunities for pupils.
- ❑ Whilst most of the zone's initiatives are having a positive impact on its core aims, not enough has been done to raise standards in Key Stage 3, improve numeracy, or develop school leadership and management, including self-evaluation. Although standards have improved in Key Stages 2 and 4, they remain well below the national average.
- ❑ The zone's resources are now mostly well used. It has established clear procedures for monitoring its initiatives, but needs to improve the consistency and quality of evaluation in order to gain a better picture of the success and cost-effectiveness of its work. Plans have not yet taken full account of how the valuable work that has been done in the zone will be sustained by schools when the funding ends.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ZONE

Context

5. Grimsby EAZ, known as the 'Next Step EAZ', was established in September 1998. The original bid was a joint proposal involving three business partners and North East Lincolnshire LEA. All the schools involved supported the initiative. At the outset the zone consisted of 17 schools but the amalgamation of a number of infant and junior schools has reduced this figure to 14 LEA maintained schools, comprising one nursery school, two infant schools, two junior schools, six primary schools and three 11-16 secondary schools. Currently the zone includes just over 5,000 pupils.

6. The area served by the zone has high levels of unemployment and a low proportion of adults with higher education qualifications. There are high levels of crime and vandalism and high levels of teenage pregnancy. The zone's schools are located in two distinct areas of Grimsby. Four are situated in a pocket of pre-war housing and the other ten are located amongst a series of post-war council estates. All but two are located in wards which fall into the ten per cent most deprived in England. Over 45 per cent of the pupils in the zone are eligible for free school meals, significantly above the LEA and national averages. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs in the zone is also above the national average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and very few for whom English is an additional language.

7. When the zone started, levels of attainment were well below the LEA and national averages for pupils of all ages. Attendance rates in zone primary schools were similar to the national average, but they were considerably worse in the secondary schools. Exclusion rates were well above the national average.

8. OFSTED reports on zone schools identified a number of common strengths. These included the quality of care and support for pupils, teaching and management. However there were weaknesses in standards of attainment, particularly in reading, writing and numeracy, in pupils' attendance, and in curriculum planning and assessment. When the zone started one school was in special measures and another had serious weaknesses.

Structure

9. The zone is managed by a board which has 15 members and meets half-termly. The board is responsible for the work of the zone, including strategic direction, decision-making and monitoring. It consists of representatives from schools, the LEA, local businesses and sponsors; a small group of board members form an executive committee which meets monthly. Financial management is delegated to a separate finance sub-committee. Zone partners are consulted through a new standing conference which meets twice a year to consider zone initiatives.

10. A headteachers' committee meets monthly to advise the board on the implementation of its initiatives. There are also a number of working groups of zone

staff and teachers to promote specific programmes, for example in ICT and for the zone's early years' work.

11. The zone is led by a project director, who has been in post since July 2000, assisted by a recently appointed deputy Director and an office manager. The zone also employs a literacy consultant, an ICT co-ordinator, two ICT technicians and 40 classroom support assistants (CSAs) who work in zone schools.

Planning

12. The zone's priority objectives for 2001-02 are to:

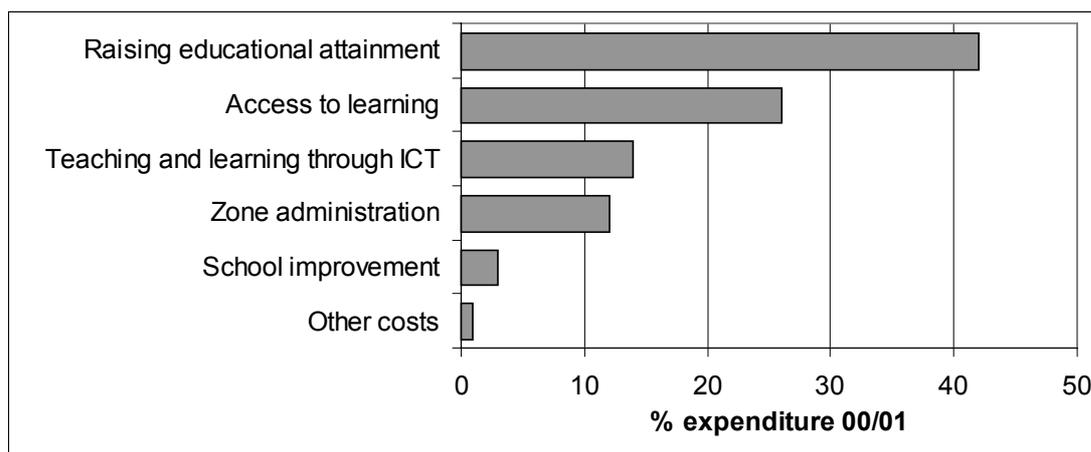
- disseminate and adopt good practice originating in schools, 'Sure Start' and the Early Excellence Centre across the zone;
- raise attainment in literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 2, particularly in schools requiring additional support;
- raise attainment in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3;
- raise standards, promote inclusion and tackle disaffection by providing an enhanced and differentiated curriculum at Key Stage 4;
- raise ICT capability in both pupils and teachers and to develop new teaching and learning strategies through the innovative use of ICT;
- enrich the curriculum at all key stages by supporting a broad range of opportunities, including music, performing arts, sport, adventurous activities, residential experiences, after school clubs and summer schools;
- improve the use of pupil performance data and the setting of individual attainment targets;
- develop school self-review, evaluation and improvement planning;
- develop the EAZ by harnessing the contribution of schools, teachers, local business, industries and other partners.

13. The action plan for the current year specifies initiatives within four areas: raising attainment; enhancing teaching and learning through ICT; ensuring access to learning; securing school improvement.

Income and expenditure

14. The zone's income for the year 2000-01 was £1,037,000: £800,000 of this came from the DfES grant, £60,000 from other DfES grants and £177,000 from private sector sponsorship, mainly in kind. Thus there was £195 of additional funding for each pupil in the zone. Of this, £27 per pupil was spent on management and administration, which is within the guidelines set by the DfES.

15. The allocation of funding to the zone's various programmes for the year 2000-01 is shown below.



16. In the current financial year the director has increased the zone's business sponsorship, for which the target was £450,000. This sum is sufficient for all planned expenditure to go ahead. The zone confidently expects to exceed the matched funding target for future years of £250,000.

Partnerships

17. The zone works in partnership with the LEA and others in the public sector such as Grimsby College, Franklin College, the early excellence centre, the health authority and the youth service.

18. Its partners in the private sector include the media company Immage Studios, the Open School Network, NTL and World Challenge Expeditions. Further sponsorship, including help on careers guidance and assistance in planning school visits and work placements, is received from Young's Bluecrest, Huntsman Tioxide, Millennium Inorganic Chemicals, Powergen and Grimsby and Scunthorpe Newspapers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ZONE MANAGEMENT

The quality of planning, ways of working and the use of resources

19. Current planning is very good, although a legacy of poorly co-ordinated activities from the zone's original plans has restricted its capacity to respond in full to some important needs in the schools. Most of the objectives are now likely to be achieved through the proposed programmes. The activities are clear, have specific success criteria, realistic proposals for monitoring and evaluation and are linked to appropriate resource allocations.

20. The inadequacies of the zone's original plans hindered progress in the first two years of the zone's life. They set out laudable aspirations for the zone but the targets, in most cases, were unrealistic. It was not clear what each school's part in achieving them was, nor was it obvious how the programme of activities would contribute to meeting the targets. Some activities were not well matched to schools' most immediate needs, and success criteria, monitoring and evaluation of the

activities were all ill-defined. There has been a dramatic improvement. For example, target-setting is now a strength. The basis for setting targets is clear and is well co-ordinated with the LEA's target-setting procedures. Targets are based on individual pupil data, and are therefore specific to each school. They also reflect the additional expectations arising from the zone's work in each school.

21. Relationships with the schools and the LEA in the early period of the zone were not effective. The zone's only employees were a director and his administrative assistant. Resources were dispensed to schools, but these were not always well-linked to their needs nor to the zone's objectives. Despite worthy ambitions, there was insufficient focus on improving standards and encouraging collaboration between schools. Leadership is now much improved. The new director has revised the zone's programmes, focused them more sharply on standards, and insisted on accountability for the use of zone resources. He gets very good support from the board, particularly the chairman, and from the LEA. Firm direction was required and has been provided to get the zone back on track.

22. In the first two years some of the zone's resources were wasted. Substantial sums were invested in computer hardware which did not work. This situation has been costly to rectify. Other projects, such as international expeditions, were on too small a scale to benefit the majority of pupils. Now, in its third year, and within the constraints of existing financial commitments, the zone has linked its resources much more closely to activities that will raise standards. It allocates funds to the schools that need them most. However, some gaps remain. For example, little work has been done so far to raise standards in Key Stage 3, an area of low performance within the zone, to improve numeracy, or to promote school management and self-evaluation. Insufficient resources have been directed towards these areas.

23. Schools' commitment to the zone has increased as the zone's management has become more purposeful. Most viewed the zone during its first two years of operation merely as a source of funds. Although schools now have opportunities to bid for specific, school-based initiatives, there is scope to involve them more closely in determining the strategic shape and direction of the zone.

24. Plans are beginning to take account of how activities can be sustained when the zone's funding comes to an end, but the previous focus on giving resources to schools has made it difficult to adapt programmes sufficiently quickly. Some schools which have less income and falling rolls cannot plan with certainty to keep staff or to meet the maintenance costs of ICT when the funding ends, and the zone should consider how best it can support these schools so that they do not lose out. In the time remaining, activities need to be increasingly aimed at giving schools and teachers long-term skills, as happens in the excellent literacy work. The zone is already making moves in this direction and now has the capacity to make a significant impact on educational provision in this part of Grimsby.

The value of partnerships

25. The zone's partnerships have started to grow in scope, significance and diversity. There are good working relationships between the zone and its schools. Headteachers meet regularly with the zone director but, as yet, these meetings do

not involve strategic planning of the zone's work. Over the last twelve months schools have developed a much clearer sense of the zone's focus and direction; some useful joint initiatives between schools and local stakeholders are beginning to strengthen partnerships at all levels.

26. One of the strengths of the zone is the productive and close relationship it now enjoys with the LEA. Both have a shared focus on securing greater inclusion in learning and raising standards of achievement. This close partnership is exemplified in a number of ways; for example, the action plans to support schools causing concern are seen as a joint responsibility between the LEA and the zone. The zone provides financial assistance to help teacher recruitment and training. Other initiatives with the LEA's educational development services, including those in the performing arts, have produced very positive responses from the schools.

27. There are now several useful links with a range of other partners. The adventure activity programme is co-ordinated by a zone youth worker who liaises with the youth service. Grimsby College runs vocational courses for some of the older pupils, and Franklin College hosts the summer school for the gifted and talented. A wide range of partners, including NHS primary care groups, social services, Choices and Connexions contribute to the sexual health and parenting initiative. The zone also works in partnership with the early excellence centre and the Sure Start initiative.

28. The zone's initial links with business were difficult and less productive than was hoped. The current action plan emphasises the importance of developing and strengthening links, particularly with local businesses. The last 12 months have seen a redefinition and regeneration of those links, which are now having a more direct impact on schools. The work being undertaken with Immage Studios and the Open School Network is providing valuable opportunities to explore alternative learning strategies. The links with Young's Bluecrest and Powergen usefully support work experience and curriculum work in science respectively. The proposed joint working with Hull and Withernsea EAZs will also broaden and extend the range of the zone's partnerships.

Monitoring and evaluation

29. In the first two years of its life the zone gave insufficient attention to monitoring the impact of its initiatives, with the result that evaluation reports, including most of those produced by external consultants, were of little value in judging the zone's effectiveness. This is no longer the case. The zone now has a clear strategy for monitoring its initiatives and measuring their success. Furthermore, there are now established procedures for reviewing progress and reporting it to the partners, including the board and school governors.

30. The zone has worked hard to establish secure baseline data from which to measure the success of its programmes. To do so, it has undertaken a rigorous critical analysis of performance indicators and used this to set targets for individual schools and pupils, and to establish spending priorities and introduce new initiatives which match schools' needs. Zone staff monitor progress and improvement against targets closely.

31. Schools are well involved in monitoring the impact of the zone's work, and project leaders have established clear guidance for teachers. This is a good step towards ensuring consistency, although there is still wide variation in the extent to which the work supported by the zone is monitored effectively in schools.

32. There are appropriate mechanisms for taking account of the views of teachers and other staff, parents and pupils. Programme managers are quick to act on feedback to secure improvement. The zone is also developing some innovative approaches to monitoring. These include the preparation by pupils taking part in the Pennine Challenge of video diaries, from which it is hoped to demonstrate improvements in their confidence.

33. As monitoring procedures have only improved comparatively recently, few evaluation reports of good quality exist. An exception is the report on in-school inclusion centres, which draws informed conclusions about the quality and impact of this provision, based on a range of qualitative and quantitative data. Other evaluation reports lack clear analysis of data and cost-effectiveness.

Dissemination

34. The dissemination and adoption of good practice originating in schools, Sure Start and the early excellence centre are one of the priority objectives in the current action plan. To date, dissemination of the zone's work has been satisfactory. Over the past year the zone's activities have begun to receive wider and more public attention. The work undertaken with Immage resulted in a series of programmes broadcast on the local Channel 7 television about school and zone initiatives. More recently a supplement in the local newspaper raised further the profile of the zone in Grimsby. A conference on 'Investing in Learning' earlier this year attracted over 100 delegates from schools, the LEA, community groups and local businesses.

35. Within the zone a number of groups have been established to share and disseminate effective practice; these include ICT, personal, social and health education, literacy, alternative curricula at Key Stage 4, inclusion and early years. The zone's regular update for governors provides a helpful overview of work and progress in each of the four programme areas. A good example was observed during the inspection of the dissemination of work on setting targets in literacy. Staff from a zone school shared their practice with their counterparts from a school outside the zone at a meeting arranged by the literacy strategy manager and two headteachers. There are a number of opportunities for sharing effective practice, but a coherent plan for the dissemination of its work will enable the zone to meet the aims outlined in its action plan.

THE QUALITY AND IMPACT OF ZONE ACTIVITIES

Overview

36. To exemplify the zone's work, three of the zone's activities were studied in detail. These are assessed below. The impact of other zone activities is included

where pertinent evidence was obtained during the inspection. The three activities were: raising attainment in literacy; improving ICT capability; and alternative curriculum provision in secondary schools.

37. Zone activities were judged by the extent to which they:

- meet or are likely to meet the objectives set by the zone, through innovative approaches or otherwise;
- connect with and enhance other improvement work;
- contribute to raising standards and promoting social inclusion among the groups targeted;
- are cost-effective and sustainable.

38. The match between the zone's programmes and its objectives, a significant weakness in its first two years of operation, is now good. Many of the initial programmes were poorly linked to schools' needs and were unlikely to result in significant improvements in standards. Most of the objectives for this year are now linked to effective activities on a suitable scale. Particular strengths are the work in literacy, the development of the Key Stage 4 curriculum and the enrichment of pupils' experiences through activities which include artistic and adventurous pursuits. There is also some innovative work in partnership with the media, which is designed to raise standards through a revision programme and to improve pupils' motivation and self-esteem. However, some objectives, although well-judged, have not yet received sufficient attention. These include support for the core subjects in Key Stage 3 and the development of school self-review.

39. The connection between the zone's work and other strategies is now good. The support for literacy and for ICT is very well co-ordinated with the work of the LEA. The zone's activities complement those of the LEA, are differentiated according to need and add value to other strategies. In ICT, good account is taken of schools' involvement in New Opportunities Funding (NOF) training. Useful help has been given to schools which have specific weaknesses, although the LEA invariably takes the lead in these circumstances.

40. There have been significant improvements in standards of literacy in Key Stage 1 and in the number of pupils achieving one or more grades in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in the zone. The work done to support literacy in primary schools and to extend the curriculum in secondary schools has contributed to this improvement. Standards in other areas are less encouraging. Results are below the national average in Key Stage 2 and improvement is limited. In Key Stage 3, and in the average points score per pupil in Key Stage 4, the zone is well below the national average and progress is very slow. The zone has devoted few resources to these areas of weakness, other than to support literacy in Year 6 and to provide revision programmes in Key Stages 3 and 4.

41. Attendance has improved in primary schools and is approaching the national average. However, despite the zone's inclusion work, it has deteriorated in the secondary schools. Permanent exclusions have significantly reduced, supported by

the zone's funding of in-school inclusion centres which provide educational alternatives for highly disaffected pupils.

42. Although some resources were wasted in the first two years, many of the zone's programmes are now cost-effective and some will be sustained by schools when the funding ends. Elements of the work provide very good value for money: for example, the work in the arts and the extended work placements for Key Stage 4 pupils. Early investments were mixed in impact. The substantial expenditure on classroom support assistants in schools has proved valuable, but would have been more productive with better co-ordination and monitoring. In-school centres for disruptive pupils have been expensive to establish and run, but they have proved beneficial and schools are likely to continue this provision from their own funds. However, although expenditure on providing courses at college leading to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) for Key Stage 4 pupils has raised the aspirations of those who have participated, the programme has been very expensive, and the initiative is unlikely to be sustained. The ICT programme also represents a substantial investment but, because of equipment problems and delays in providing support to improve teaching, is only just beginning to be reflected in better skills.

43. The zone is beginning to consider sustainability, but has been slow in transferring responsibility for the more expensive activities to schools. Although some activities, for example the literacy programme, develop skills in teachers which will have long-term benefits, it is not the main focus of many programmes at present. There are encouraging signs that schools are beginning to consider collaboration to fund those activities which they value. The zone needs to ensure that its activities are sustainable when the funding ends.

Support for literacy

44. Schools in the zone receive excellent support for literacy. The zone and the LEA literacy team work very effectively together to deliver a well targeted and carefully differentiated programme. The support which schools receive reflects both local and national priorities, particularly the work to raise attainment in writing and the use of performance data to set targets for improvement.

45. Schools are very positive about the range and quality of support which they receive. The LEA literacy team is highly skilled, resourceful and innovative, and the appointment of a zone literacy consultant, just over twelve months ago, has brought additional expertise to the support and development of literacy in schools. The consultant, together with the literacy team, has undertaken a very good range of work including training, use of demonstration lessons, paired teaching, after-school surgeries, provision of resources and support with planning. A consequence of this carefully directed work has been that schools have clear and individual action plans for improving literacy.

46. The zone's funding of classroom assistants to help raise attainment in literacy has been well judged and positively received. Classroom assistants provide effective help for targeted pupils in literacy lessons. The provision of funding for specific school-based initiatives have in some cases aligned well with the main literacy programme; three schools, for example, share a home-school worker who

focuses on promoting links with parents. Another primary school used the purchase of play equipment to stimulate boys' interest in writing. A promising start has been made with the 'Teacher as Researcher' programme with a Year 3 teacher focusing work on improving writing.

47. Schools in the zone have been very well served to date by the literacy team and in the last twelve months by the zone consultant. Some excellent practice has emerged in data analysis and target-setting; the process of sharing this work has begun. It deserves the widest dissemination.

Enhancing teaching and learning through ICT

48. The zone's initial activity provided all its schools with a computer suite and substantial software, but serious problems with connection and reliability of the equipment hindered progress. In the light of these problems, the zone took fast and direct remedial action, so that this year the use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning has improved significantly.

49. All the schools' ICT infrastructure has now been upgraded and is being well maintained. Schools have Internet access and e-mail facilities for all pupils. Curriculum development is supported by a focus group and a school-based user group. An ICT consultant, funded by the EAZ, has been in place for a year and has provided clear and much needed direction. He has undertaken an audit of teachers' ICT skills and provided them with training based on their needs. He has also provided guidance on curriculum planning and assessment linked to QCA schemes of work, in addition to giving support to classes, learning assistants and groups of teachers when they need it.

50. The zone has part-funded interactive digital whiteboards for all its schools, providing training in their use and advice on curriculum planning. The use of the whiteboards is still in its early stages and as yet limited in effect, although its ability to engage pupils and aid teachers' lesson planning is being developed with enthusiasm.

51. Some lessons seen using ICT were very effective. In a literacy lesson the teacher used the interactive whiteboard well to involve the whole class in a story. Networked pages provided additional support for a small group. Some teachers use whiteboards confidently by employing a variety of activities to explain, clarify and develop pupils' understanding. In one computer suite, the ICT consultant set up an e-mail link between two schools to enable pupils in a Year 3 class to find, read and reply to personalised messages.

52. The zone aims to use ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum, initially in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, and for revision at Key Stage 4. There are clear monitoring strategies in place, but the extent to which pupils are benefiting from ICT provision is not yet fully established. With guidance from the zone and LEA, schools are beginning to assess pupils' capabilities, but there is no clear link between the use of ICT and raising attainment. Pupils do not always have equal access to the benefits of ICT.

53. In collaboration with its partners, the zone has developed innovative support for teaching and learning, and plans are in place to enhance it. The Open School Network has developed the 'Make the Grade' GCSE revision software, available in school and at home through the work of Immage Studios and the local television station. The link also broadcasts sample lessons and zone learning materials into homes three times a day. The zone and school websites are developing home-school links.

54. Problems during the first two years of the zone have led to a slower development than expected from such a heavy capital investment. The zone plans to maintain its current increased momentum but there are areas which still need attention. Schools vary in their perception of and ability to maintain ICT provision, and to provide effective and secure access for pupils. Although there are plans to help sustain ICT provision, the long-term strategy for its development is not sufficiently detailed.

Alternative curriculum provision in secondary schools

55. The zone has successfully introduced a number of initiatives aimed at tackling disaffection and promoting inclusion in secondary schools.

56. The on-site inclusion centres in each of the three secondary schools form the zone's major strategy for reducing exclusions and improving attendance, behaviour and standards at Key Stage 3. These centres are well managed, and staffed by professionals with relevant experience and expertise. The way they operate varies between the schools they serve, but they all have clear procedures by which pupils are referred to them and later reintegrated into mainstream classes. Whilst there, pupils are given effective pastoral support tailored to individual needs, and this enables them, in many cases, to modify their behaviour and acquire social skills. Their academic progress is less secure, because this frequently relies on the involvement of subject teachers, which is variable. Recording of pupils' academic progress in some centres is poor.

57. The zone has monitored closely the impact of its on-site inclusion centres. They have made a significant difference to some severely disaffected or disruptive pupils and have also, reportedly, raised teachers' morale. Overall, the number of permanent exclusions and unauthorised absences at Key Stage 3 has been reduced, but there has been little impact from the centres on pupils' attainment or on attendance overall. Schools value the centres highly and, although they are expensive to maintain, they plan to use other sources of funding to sustain them beyond the life of the zone.

58. The zone has made a very good impact on the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Alternative provision includes the introduction of GNVQ courses and the ASDAN award scheme into schools, the provision of off-site NVQ courses at Grimsby College, a programme of enhanced work experience, and the appointment of a youth worker to lead a range of challenging out-of-school activities involving a large number of pupils. These projects have been very successful in improving students' motivation, confidence and self-esteem. Furthermore, some of the most disaffected students have been re-engaged by the opportunities for purposeful activity and

qualifications leading to future employment. A very good example of the zone's initiative is the opportunity for some Year 11 students to work for two days each week in the local Young's Bluecrest factory. This provides students not only with work experience and an NVQ in food handling, but also, on successful completion of the project, with a guaranteed job.

59. The zone uses its network of partners particularly well to support its initiatives and make a difference to pupils' lives. During the inspection, for example, pupils were seen recording video diaries as part of their preparation for the 'Pennine Challenge' at the Image, whilst acquiring media skills and also learning about leadership and teamwork.

60. The Key Stage 4 initiatives are valued highly by schools. As most of them are relatively inexpensive, they are readily sustainable when the zone ends, and there are encouraging discussions between schools on collaborative ways of working to share the costs of sustaining the outdoor activities. The NVQ provision at Grimsby College, however, is expensive, and there are no current plans to train teachers to deliver some of these courses in school.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

61. In the first two years of its life Grimsby EAZ made limited headway in raising attainment and tackling disaffection in its schools. This was due to a lack of effective long-term planning and poorly co-ordinated activities which did not focus on the most important needs of schools. Some of the resources were wasted, most notably on equipment that did not work.

62. In the last year, with the appointment of a new zone Director, this situation has been rectified swiftly and effectively. New sponsorship has been raised, the zone is well led and managed, and it is now in a strong position to move forward.

63. The quality of planning is very good. The zone's activities and programmes are linked firmly to its aims, and are designed to make tangible improvements where they are needed. The allocation of resources to programmes is generally appropriate, but not enough has been done to raise attainment at Key Stage 3, in numeracy, or to improve the quality of school leadership, management and self-review. The proposal to work together with two other EAZs to raise standards in Key Stage 3 is timely. Although improving steadily, standards are still too low for pupils at Key Stages 2 and 4.

64. The zone has been highly successful in supporting the teaching of literacy in primary schools, setting realistic targets for individuals and schools, and in raising the attainment of seven year olds in reading and writing.

65. The zone has provided a broad range of opportunities and experiences to enrich pupils' lives beyond the classroom, including enhanced vocational opportunities, work in the arts and with industry, through visits and outdoor education. These initiatives have been successful in promoting inclusion, improving behaviour and tackling disaffection.

66. The zone enjoys good working relationships with its partners and collaborates effectively with the LEA. It works well with schools, although they are not sufficiently involved in the zone's strategic planning. Further consideration is needed to ensure that the good work of the zone is sustained when funding ends.

67. Clear strategies for monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives are in place, but the zone needs to improve the overall coherence and consistency with which it evaluates its work. A coherent plan for the dissemination of effective practice is also called for.

Recommendations

1. In order to increase the effectiveness of its programmes the zone should:

- develop strategies to raise the attainment of 11, 14 and 16 year olds more quickly, concentrating particularly on numeracy and support for Key Stage 3, where standards are weakest;
- provide focused support for school leadership and management, including self-evaluation;
- develop a coherent approach to the evaluation and dissemination of its work.

2. In order to improve partnerships the zone should:

- involve schools more fully in its planning.

3. In order to sustain the benefits of its work, the zone should ensure that:

- the skills of teachers and headteachers are developed through its initiatives wherever possible;
- responsibility for its more expensive initiatives is increasingly transferred to schools.

APPENDIX

Attainment

KS1		Grimsby EAZ	England ¹	Difference	Zone Targets
Reading - % Level 2 and above	1998	56%	80%	-25%	
	1999	59%	82%	-23%	
	2000	71%	84%	-12%	
	2001	74%	84%	-10%	
Writing - % Level 2 and above	1998	59%	81%	-22%	
	1999	62%	83%	-22%	
	2000	74%	85%	-11%	
	2001	74%	86%	-12%	
Mathematics - % Level 2 and above	1998	63%	85%	-22%	
	1999	66%	87%	-21%	
	2000	79%	90%	-11%	
	2001	86%	91%	-6%	
KS2		Grimsby EAZ	England ¹	Difference	Zone Targets
English - % Level 4 and above	1998	39%	65%	-26%	
	1999	42%	70%	-28%	
	2000	48%	75%	-27%	
	2001	50%	75%	-25%	62%
Mathematics - % Level 4 and above	1998	28%	59%	-30%	
	1999	46%	69%	-23%	
	2000	46%	72%	-26%	
	2001	46%	71%	-25%	66%
KS3		Grimsby EAZ	England ¹	Difference	Zone Targets
English - % Level 5 and above	1998	41%	65%	-24%	
	1999	40%	64%	-24%	
	2000	37%	64%	-27%	
	2001	40%	65%	-25%	
Mathematics - % Level 5 and above	1998	37%	60%	-23%	
	1999	38%	63%	-25%	
	2000	36%	65%	-29%	
	2001	43%	67%	-24%	
GCSE		Grimsby EAZ	England ¹	Difference	Zone Targets
% 5A*-C	1998	14%	45%	-31%	
	1999	17%	47%	-29%	
	2000	18%	47%	-29%	
	2001	21%	48%	-27%	24%
% 1A*-G	1998	84%	95%	-11%	
	1999	86%	96%	-10%	
	2000	90%	96%	-6%	
	2001	91%	96%	-5%	89%
Average Points Score	1998	21.5	36.7	-15.3	
	1999	23.1	38.0	-14.9	
	2000	23.5	38.3	-14.8	
	2001	23.7	38.9	-15.2	27.0

1. Figures are given only for maintained primary and secondary schools.

Attendance

Primary Schools		Grimsby EAZ	England	Difference	Zone Targets
Attendance Rate (%)	1998	92.2%	93.8%	-1.6%	
	1999	92.1%	94.1%	-2.0%	
	2000	93.1%	94.3%	-1.3%	
Secondary Schools		Grimsby EAZ	England	Difference	Zone Targets
Attendance Rate (%)	1998	85.6%	90.7%	-5.1%	
	1999	86.5%	91.0%	-4.5%	
	2000	86.2%	91.3%	-5.1%	

Source: DfES Annual School's Census Form

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