

A New Specialist System: Transforming Secondary Education

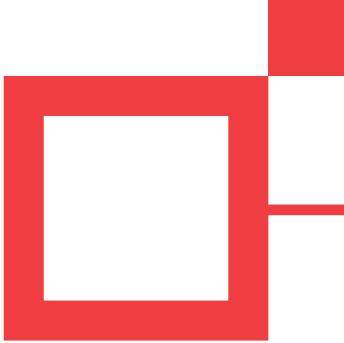
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Foreword

by Charles Clarke, Secretary of State
for Education and Skills



One of my first duties as Secretary of State was to go to some of the conferences we held last autumn for head teachers of secondary schools. In all over 2,000 head teachers attended these events. I was impressed by their commitment, both to raising educational standards and to creating an environment where every pupil could enjoy learning and achieve their potential. I and my colleagues listened carefully to the messages from head teachers at those conferences and this document builds on many of the points they made.

It sets out our strategy for working together to transform secondary education. There is much to celebrate about our secondary schools – improving results, good teaching and committed staff. But there is still a lot to do before we can truly say that our secondary education system is among the best in the world.

OUR STRATEGY IS BASED AROUND FOUR KEY AREAS:

- creating a new specialist system;
- building strong leadership teams;
- reforming the school workforce;
- developing partnerships beyond the classroom.

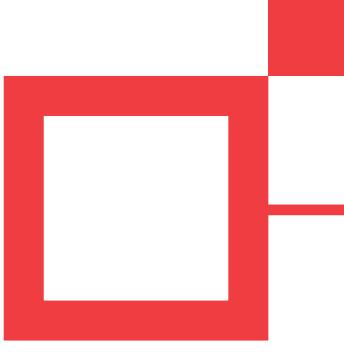
These strands will support the central focus of our efforts which is to maintain a clear focus on teaching and learning so that every teacher is equipped to teach their subject effectively and to inspire a desire to learn.

To help deliver this agenda we are increasing the funding for schools over and above inflation by an average of 6% over the next three years. More of this funding is now going directly to LEAs and schools and the amount we keep for central initiatives is reducing. However, resources are finite and I recognise that schools will always need to set priorities and pace the reforms to reflect their particular circumstances.

This document is not designed to be one that you read and then put to one side. It is meant for action. We hope particularly that it will motivate school leadership teams and governors to plot the onward course of their school in pursuing higher standards. I look forward to continuing the dialogue with schools as we work towards the common goal of achieving the best for every child.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "charles clarke".

Charles Clarke



Executive Summary

This document sets out the Government's agenda for transforming secondary education. It builds on discussion with over 2000 secondary head teachers at a series of conferences in late 2002.

It sets out our aim for a dynamic and diverse education system, built on high expectations and a commitment to meet the needs of every child. We intend to transform educational achievement, with year on year increases in overall attainment and above average improvement for under-achieving groups.

We are seeking to build a new relationship with schools, head teachers and governors where:

- schools have more freedom and flexibility in the way they use their resources, in the way they design the curriculum and in the teaching methods they use, but work within a framework in which they are accountable for their performance;
- schools use their knowledge and expertise to lead transformation and the Government supports schools in improving teaching and learning;
- the Government recognises success and encourages successful schools, departments and teachers to innovate and lead change throughout the school system, and schools understand that the Government has a duty to intervene where there is serious underperformance or chronic failure.

Four key reforms are needed to deliver the Government's vision:

1. We will create a new specialist system where every school has its own specialist ethos and works with others to spread best practice and raise standards:

- all schools will be encouraged to innovate in the way they teach and in their internal organisation;
- a further 217 specialist schools will be created from September 2003 bringing the total to at least 1209 (more designations will be announced in July);
- there will be at least 2000 specialist schools by 2006, with specialist school status guaranteed for all schools that meet the standard;

- new specialisms will be created in music and humanities (history, geography, English) and a rural dimension introduced for relevant specialisms;
 - popular schools will be given more freedom to expand; and competitions, open to new and existing education providers, will take place for all new schools;
 - schools will have opportunities to develop their expertise and to work with other schools to lead transformation through the new Leading Edge Programme (formerly the Advanced Schools programme);
 - independent schools will be invited to participate in the Leading Edge Programme;
 - 60 more training schools will be established in September 2003 with further expansion planned in the future.
- 2. We will develop strong leadership teams to lead school improvement:**
- the National College for School Leadership will provide a wide range of programmes for middle leaders through to experienced head teachers;
 - schools will be encouraged to make greater use of existing flexibilities; with increased freedoms around the curriculum and teachers' pay and conditions for high performing schools;
 - the 1400 secondary schools in the toughest areas will get a grant of £125,000 per year to improve leadership at all levels;
 - we will continue action to deal with – and where necessary close – the poorest schools and replace the weakest heads.
- 3. We will create partnerships beyond the classroom to enhance the quality of teaching and learning within the classroom:**
- we will support ways for all schools to work with parents, communities, employers and other agencies;
 - by 2006 all schools will provide some study support such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, homework clubs, summer schools or access to ICT for families;
 - over the next three years we will work with 240 schools to develop them as 'community hubs' offering family learning, childcare, sport and other services;
 - we will offer intensive support to 400 schools in targeted areas to address behaviour and attendance;
 - we will establish new measures to tackle truancy including new legislation to reinforce parental responsibility for attendance.

4. We will reform the way the school team works to allow teachers more time to teach and schools to use a wider range of skilled staff:

- we have concluded a new national agreement on workforce reform;
- we are recruiting more well trained support staff including administrative assistants, cover supervisors and high level teaching assistants;
- we will reduce bureaucracy; for example we aim to cut mailings to schools by a further 50% in 2002/03;
- head teachers will play a leading role in advising ministers on implementing new policies.

Reforms in these areas will support our central drive for higher standards through:

IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- we continue to build a large scale programme of professional development and curriculum materials within the key stage 3 strategy (age 11-14);
- key stage 3 results will be published separately;
- we will create greater curriculum flexibility at key stage 4 (when pupils sit their GCSEs) and more vocational options;

- we will create a new requirement for all pupils to undertake some work-related and enterprise learning;
- we will maximise the potential of ICT to engage pupils in all parts of the curriculum;
- we will work with subject associations and others to fuel teachers' and pupils' passion for their subjects and to ensure that learning is enjoyable.

Our Aim

We start from a belief that all children are capable of attaining high standards and should leave school with the knowledge, qualifications and life skills that enable them to play their full part in society.

In the 21st century, it will be crucial for children to develop a capacity to go on learning throughout their lives.

We aim to transform educational achievement in this country, with year on year increases in overall attainment and above average improvement for under-achieving groups. All children should attend schools where the environment is safe and conducive to learning, where children enjoy being taught and the quality of teaching is good.

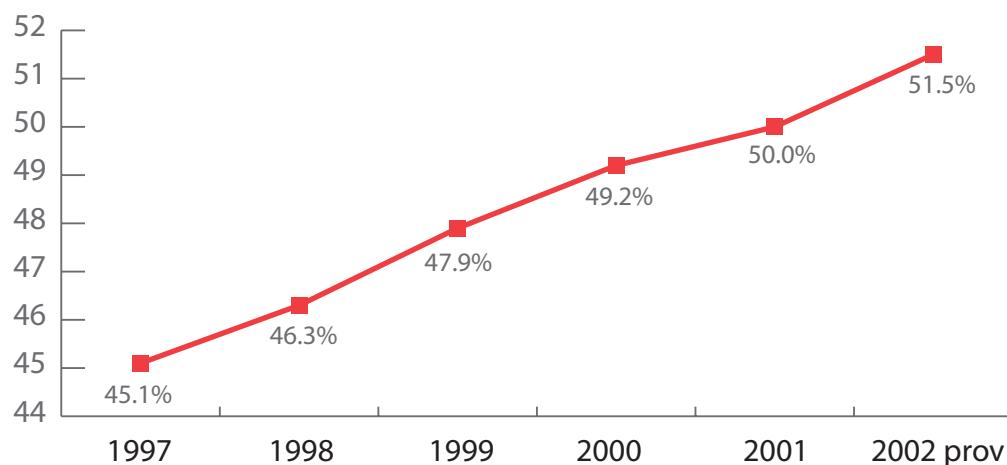
To achieve this, we aim to create a coherent secondary education system marked by high aspirations and diverse centres of excellence in every school. We want all schools to be successful, so that all parents and pupils can choose an excellent local school.

The Story so Far

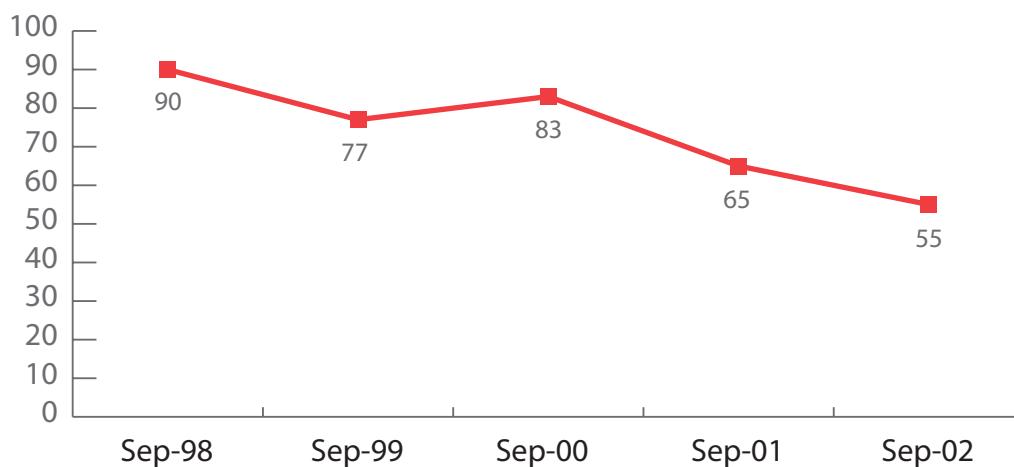
The English education system has many successes and it is improving:

- the percentage of children getting five or more GCSEs at grade A*-C has been steadily improving;
- the number of failing schools in "special measures" has fallen dramatically;

GCSE: PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS ACHIEVING 5+ A*-C GRADES



NUMBER OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SPECIAL MEASURES



- the quality of teaching and learning – according to the Chief Inspector's latest annual report – is the best it has ever been, with 96% of lessons observed considered satisfactory or better.
- and yet there is four times as much variation in pupil attainment *within* schools as there is *between* schools, and some groups of children are not being well served by the current system:

The Challenges Ahead

These achievements give a strong foundation for progress. The key stage 3 strategy for teaching and learning in the middle years is now well established but we should not under-estimate the degree of challenge ahead of us:

- the key stage 3 targets are stretching, but meeting them is essential if pupils are to fulfil their potential and secure success at GCSE and beyond. Progress this year was disappointing;
- almost half of all pupils still do not leave school with five GCSEs A*–C, a level of qualification that will be necessary for 80% of the new jobs predicted to be created to 2010;
- there is a great deal of variation in pupil attainment depending on which school they attend: some schools are far more effective than others in helping their pupils make progress. Performance tables published in January showed that during the early secondary years, pupils in the most effective schools made over 2 terms more progress than pupils in the least effective schools;
- **boys:** in the 2002 key stage 3 English tests, 59% of boys achieved level 5 or above compared to 76% of girls;
- **children from poorer backgrounds:** in 2002 25% of pupils receiving free school meals achieved 5 grades A*–C or more, compared to 55% for pupils not in receipt of free school meals;
- **children from some ethnic minority backgrounds:** in 2002, 30% of Black Caribbean and 40% of Pakistani pupils who were entered for GCSEs in maintained schools achieved 5 grades A*–C or more, compared to 51% for White, 73% for Chinese and 64% for Indian pupils;
- **children in care:** in 2001, 50% of 15 year olds who had been in care continuously for 12 months failed to gain even one grade A*–G or equivalent (compared to 5% for all children);
- there are still over 50 schools where less than 15% of pupils gain 5 GCSE grades A*–C, more than 200 where the outcome is 15%–25% and over 800 schools achieving 25%–40% 5 GCSE grades A*–C;

- in some schools, teaching staff face such a difficult combination of behaviour, social and educational challenges that it is difficult to recruit and retain suitably qualified teaching staff and to make real educational headway;
- vocational provision and pathways are not as strong as they need to be – only three quarters of young people stay on in education after the age of 16.

A New Phase of Reform

We recognise that in order to achieve a step change in the standards achieved in our secondary schools we need to build a new relationship with schools, head teachers and governors where:

- schools have more freedom and flexibility in the way they use their resources, in the way they design the curriculum and in the teaching methods they use, but recognise that they work within a framework where they are accountable for their standards and performance;
- schools use their knowledge and expertise to lead transformation and the Government supports schools in improving teaching and learning;
- the Government recognises success and encourages successful schools, departments and teachers to innovate and lead change throughout the school system, and schools understand that the Government has a duty to intervene

where there is serious underperformance or chronic failure.

Reform is therefore a shared endeavour. It cannot be done “to” schools but equally schools cannot do it on their own. We believe that excellence and innovation do exist in many schools, but too often good practice is not shared. The Government’s job is to create the capacity to drive school improvement at school level and then create structures that break down isolation and promote collaboration.

SO OUR APPROACH IS TO:

- create a secondary system that is marked by high aspirations, where each school has its own specialism and ethos, and works in partnership with other schools to create a culture of learning;
- develop strong leadership teams that focus on leading school improvement;
- support partnerships beyond the classroom that promote learning in its widest sense;
- reform the school workforce in support of better quality teaching and learning.

A New Specialist System

The comprehensive system of the past 30 years has achieved great things through its focus on equality. The spectacular progress

of girls' attainment over this period is a particular example of how far we have travelled, but schools and teachers have to meet the diverse needs of individual pupils. Centres of excellence have to be actively promoted to encourage change across the system.

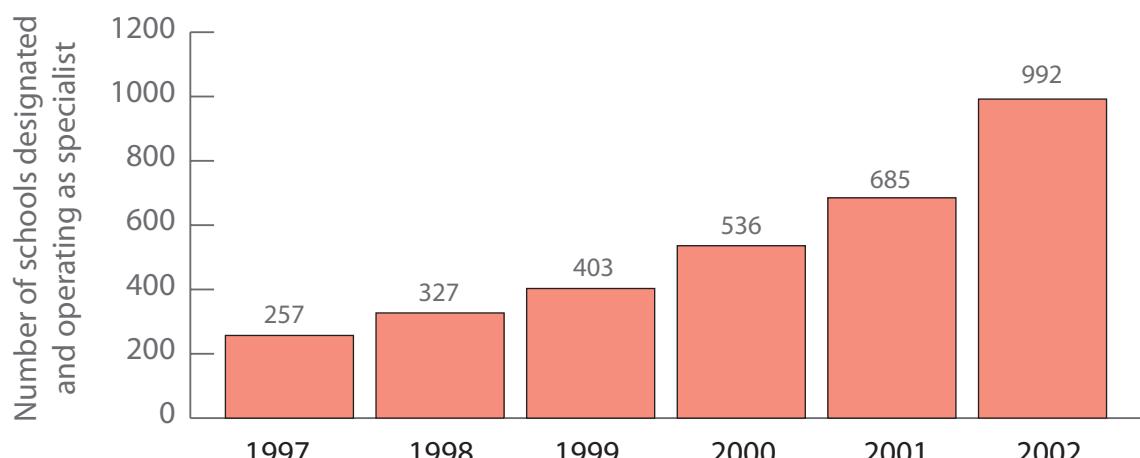
We can see from many examples across the country that when schools are given encouragement and support, they can and do achieve great things for their schools and communities. We must achieve this for all children and we believe that a new approach is necessary. We believe that excellence is a spur to equality and not its enemy. We want a system that is committed to the pursuit of excellence, with the dynamism, innovation and challenge that comes from encouraging schools to build on their distinctiveness and their strengths.

Specialist schools, city technology colleges, many faith schools and the best of our non-specialist schools have been part of a drive

to engender greater diversity in the provision of schooling. Specialist schools have been successful first and foremost because they have provided a means for inspirational head teachers to forge a distinctive mission and ethos which is right for their school. They have used additional investment and support to enhance their specialist facilities, to develop excellence in their specialist subjects and to extend the insight it gives to best practice in teaching and learning to other areas of the curriculum. They have used their specialist status to raise standards across the board.

Through these mechanisms we have seen performance in specialist schools improve at a faster rate than other maintained schools. Specialist schools have a higher proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C than non-specialist schools (55% compared to 49%). More significantly, on measures of value-added performance, which allow comparisons to be made between schools with different

NUMBER OF SPECIALIST SCHOOLS AS AT SEPTEMBER OF EACH YEAR



pupil intakes, specialist schools continue to outperform non-specialist schools. We have seen some genuinely innovative approaches to teaching and learning, to curriculum development, school organisation and workforce reform. This is why we want every school to have the opportunity to become a specialist school.

This broad direction of travel was charted in *Investment for Reform*. During the autumn term we held conferences for secondary heads across the country about the opportunities this new system offers for schools and pupils. We have responded to fears that funding limits would restrict the designation of specialist schools and lead to a two-tier system by lifting the funding cap, so that specialist status is now a real possibility for every secondary school.

...COLLABORATING

Benefits to individual schools are important. But there are much greater system wide benefits to be had where specialist schools work in partnership with one another and with colleges, special schools, pupil referral units, primary schools, middle schools, universities and the independent sector. We have to create a learning community with the learner right at its heart. In some parts of the country schools are already sharing teaching staff and undertaking joint professional development. Excellence in one school is being cultivated and improved through collaboration with others and then spread for the benefit of all.

...WITH GREATER FREEDOMS AND FLEXIBILITIES

Trusting in the professionalism of the school workforce means giving schools greater scope to achieve the best outcomes for their pupils. We therefore propose significant de-regulation of the secondary system, to generate real freedoms for all schools. Some of our most successful and well led schools will be supported to pioneer innovative work through even greater flexibilities, but with the very clear intent that this will be a testing ground for flexibilities right across the system.

Our responsibility to pupils means that we will continue to tackle persistent failure. We will work closely with LEAs to consider options such as closure, federation with another school, creating an academy or a new school. Our aim is to develop a system that is much more responsive to the needs of parents, local communities and the ideas of school promoters, who wish to take action to tackle failure or sub-standard provision. When new schools are being proposed, a range of providers will have the opportunity to put forward proposals and we will encourage LEAs to think about opportunities for new providers in other cases too. Where failure becomes endemic, radical and innovative solutions have to be found.

...AND A MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE

Modern school buildings and good facilities help children to learn better; for example, schools where there has been substantial capital investment have

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improved their A level performance by 26%, compared to 17% in schools where there has not. Specialist schools enjoy extra capital investment to support their particular area of expertise, but the new specialist system is not only about specialist facilities. We want to see all schools with modern buildings, an impressive ICT infrastructure and excellent teaching and learning facilities. We will therefore continue to provide capital funding for schools and LEAs to use on locally agreed priorities. We will be announcing shortly how we propose to use the additional capital resources available in 2005–06 to start the strategic renewal of our secondary school estate.

Our strategy is therefore to modernise completely the structure and environment of secondary education to create a new innovative, specialist system focused on collaboration for excellence, with schools being given very substantial freedoms to operate within a clear accountability framework with targeted intervention to deal with failure.

Strong Leadership Teams

Excellent schools have excellent leaders. Our vision for a new specialist system depends on the development of strong leadership teams in all schools – leaders who are able to shape the vision for their schools; to identify and develop strengths and weaknesses; to chart a course for school improvement and to engage the whole

school and its community in a concerted effort to raise standards of attainment.

At our conferences, there was enthusiasm for the provision of high quality training opportunities that will help head teachers develop as leaders but also help their departmental heads, heads of years and other members of the leadership team.

The National College for School Leadership is at the centre of this support framework, providing a range of programmes for leaders at all stages of their careers – from those just about to enter a position of leadership within their school to experienced consultant leaders looking to provide support and advice to other schools.

1400 qualifying schools will be supported through a new Leadership Incentive Grant of £125,000 per year. The grant is designed to support schools in strengthening leadership, whether that be through re-structuring of leadership teams, through professional development and collaboration or through good leaders working with neighbouring schools.

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A particular focus of our efforts to support school leadership will be leadership of teaching and learning. This is essential if we are to transform the standards achieved in our schools.

Partnerships Beyond the Classroom

Discussion at our conferences acknowledged that schools that work in partnership with parents, the community and employers bring enormous benefits to their pupils and communities. It allows them to learn from one another, share expertise and facilities and to focus on specific issues that help or hinder children's educational achievement. Dealing with behaviour is a particular example; the positive engagement of children through *Playing for Success* is another. We also know that close relationships between schools and the local community can be enormously beneficial for children from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Parents' encouragement and support for their own children, at home and through regular contact with school and teachers provides a strong foundation for children's learning. Where they can also be involved in the day to day life of schools, they are able to make a powerful contribution to school development. We are therefore committed to developing this partnership in whatever way we can.

Schools are increasingly developing partnerships with their local communities more broadly, offering a range of extra services for them and for pupils. Study support for pupils outside normal school hours can help them achieve higher standards. Extended schools – opening up their sports and other facilities to community groups, encouraging family learning, allowing premises to be used to deliver childcare or health services – will add value to local public services and regenerate and promote learning across communities.

It is also important to develop links with local employers, in order to implement the 14–19 reforms we have announced. Specialist schools produce a community plan that demonstrates how they will work with their local communities, including business. Many are building closer relationships that provide work experience and work place learning opportunities, and that also bring some of the ideas and experience of the business community into our schools.

Developing partnerships in these ways means we are better able to address specific issues such as behaviour. We will ensure that head teachers have the expert support they need to implement effective behaviour policies, and help teachers and other staff to develop their behaviour management skills.

Reform of the School Workforce

The final and essential component of our reform agenda is transformation of the school workforce. Ofsted evidence is clear that we have the best generation of head teachers and teachers. They are aided by rapidly expanding numbers of highly effective support staff. But the scale of the reform agenda means we cannot afford to stand still. We believe that a high quality, well motivated, flexibly deployed team ensures the most effective approach to teaching and learning.

In this next phase of raising standards, we need to help teachers develop teaching strategies which cater for individual pupils' aspirations, learning styles and progress. That is why we have concluded a national agreement with most unions and the local authorities. The agreement will lead to reductions in excessive workload for teachers and spearhead a concerted attack on bureaucracy. It will give teachers more time to cater for the needs of every pupil. And it will create expanded roles for high level support staff, who will be trained to

make a greater direct contribution to raising standards of pupil achievement, working in teams with teachers.

Head teachers will shape the 21st century school through remodelling of the school workforce. They will increasingly use the full range of tools within performance management to make the critical link between teacher performance, professional development and pupil standards.

Ultimately, high quality teaching and learning depends on the expertise and commitment of well trained, appropriately qualified head teachers, teachers and support staff. That is why our spending plans will support school workforce remodelling, allowing for at least an extra 10,000 teachers and at least an extra 50,000 support staff in this Parliament.

A Focus on Teaching and Learning

Our goal is to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the system and the above reforms will help us do that. The demands on young people and the demands of young people are changing, so that teaching in the 21st century needs to embrace not only the transfer of knowledge but also culture, the broadening of children's horizons and the development of skills that will enable them to go on learning in the future.

Our key stage 3 strategy is central to our approach to teaching and learning. Good results in the middle years are crucial in determining children's success at later stages. It is here that children's own expectations are developed and where their futures begin to be mapped out. It is an important stage because of adolescence and transition.

The strategy for key stage 3 establishes high expectations for all pupils and promotes teaching and learning which engages and motivates pupils, securing their active engagement. It is backed by substantial investment to provide a wide range of support and professional development for teachers and school management teams. Early evidence suggests that where implemented well, the strategy is already improving the quality of teaching and learning.

We have recently set out our long-term vision for later secondary years in *14–19 opportunity and excellence*. It is an exciting agenda that will transform the learning experience of young people, allowing many more of them to identify more flexible learning routes, including vocational, applied and workplace learning, which enable them to succeed.

Enjoyment of their subjects and the opportunity to engage with experts and subject leaders is something that can ignite the enthusiasm of both teachers and learners. Writers, musicians and scientists from outside the school can play an important role. We have begun to explore ways of engaging subject associations and other partners to develop ways of supporting teachers better and inspiring the children in our secondary schools.

Following significant investment in ICT infrastructure in recent years, schools are just beginning to exploit ICT more fully to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. ICT provides tremendous opportunities to engage young people and to meet their individual learning needs. Many schools are using ICT to extend learning beyond the classroom, by providing access to teaching and learning materials and to assessment and attendance data from the home. The launch of Curriculum Online and the purchase of high quality digital curriculum materials will bring teaching and learning truly into the 21st century, within the context of a modernised and diverse secondary education system.

“A much more positive note than we have had, and gave us a feeling of being trusted”

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David Miliband, Minister of State for School Standards

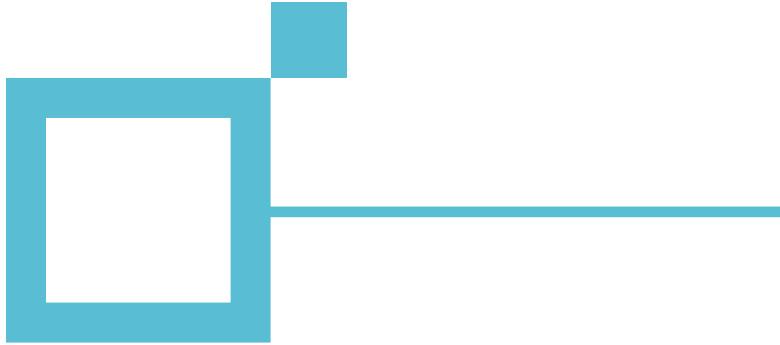
Conclusion

The head teacher conferences began a process of dialogue with the profession about how to implement this new direction in an accountable, energising manner that recreates the excitement and pride of the teaching profession. We have been listening to what head teachers told us and the remainder of this document describes how we think we can best help schools achieve our common objectives.

We have tried to set out a clear explanation of our approach to reform, balancing empowerment and accountability, strengthening collaboration between schools and showing how the different opportunities we are offering can link and support the reform agenda.

We set out in this document a series of principles that will inform our approach to school improvement and to teaching and learning. These principles can be used to inform both policy and practice.

We look forward to discussing these matters with schools in the coming year and to hearing your thoughts on specific issues raised throughout this document. We will report back within the next 12 months with an assessment of how transformation is being shaped in schools across the country.



Schools Specialising

Specialist status provides an incentive for a school to develop its own character and mission. It acts as a spur to improve standards and aim for excellence, not just in one particular subject, but across the whole curriculum. The specialist system is also encouraging schools to innovate and work with their local communities.

There are now 992 specialist schools and at least a further 217 will be in operation from September this year. By 2006 we expect there will be at least 2000 specialist schools. As the programme has grown we have extended the range of specialisms. The addition of the new specialisms described below now covers all main areas of the curriculum.

Head teachers at our conferences told us they supported the expansion of the programme but were concerned that the policy could be divisive if the number of schools that could become specialist were limited by funding restrictions. They were also concerned about the difficulty some schools experience finding sponsorship.

We have responded to both these issues. From now on all schools applying to be specialist will be designated as such provided they meet the standards we set. Moreover from October a partnership fund will provide support to schools that can demonstrate that they have made serious

efforts to find sponsorship but have not been able to raise the full amount.

Specialist schools are creating a more diverse secondary education sector which offers both excellence and choice. We aim to encourage more diversity and to make it easier for schools to expand and for groups to set up new schools, such as academies. The result will be a more dynamic system of schooling with more choice and variety for parents and pupils and, at the same time, more collaboration between schools so that the benefits of diversity are spread.

Specialist Schools

At the end of November 2002 the Government lifted the cap on national funding so that any school which meets the required standard in its application can now become a specialist school.

We want all secondary schools that are ready to join the programme to apply and **in the long term we hope that all schools will be specialist schools.** Of course, we

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"Specialising has been brilliant for us; it has enabled us to offer pupils better choices to suit their needs"

will continue to be rigorous in maintaining the standards of the programme, and will de-designate schools which fail to make the progress required of them.

SPECIALIST SCHOOLS:

- bring about whole school improvement through rigorous planning, excellence in teaching and learning, development of their strengths in particular areas of the curriculum and involvement in initial teacher training;
- work with partner schools and the wider community to spread the benefits of their specialism with other schools and beyond;
- receive a one-off capital grant of £100,000 in addition to £123 per pupil per year over a four year period.

Schools can currently choose one of eight specialisms in:

- arts;
- languages;
- sport;
- technology;
- science;
- engineering;
- business and enterprise;
- mathematics and computing.

Schools can also combine any two specialisms.

New Specialisms

From October we will offer two new specialisms. Firstly we will allow schools to develop a **humanities** specialism, based around the key subjects of history, geography or English. Taking at least one of these as core subjects, schools will be able to add subjects such as citizenship, or religious education, to develop exciting combinations of specialist subjects. Secondly we will introduce a new specialism in **music**.

In order to reflect the particular interests of rural communities, we will allow schools to incorporate a **rural dimension** into the appropriate specialisms (such as science, geography, business and enterprise).

Becoming a specialist school is the beginning, not the end, of a process of school improvement. We want to explore further how successful specialist schools might be encouraged to extend the range of their specialist activity through the arrangements for combined specialisms. The Leading Edge Programme, described on page 25, provides another opportunity for specialist schools to develop their centre of excellence.

A New Opportunity for Special Schools

Special schools are already eligible for the Specialist Schools Programme, but many have said they would prefer instead to share their particular expertise as a special school with mainstream schools. We want to explore ways in which special schools can do this within the programme.

Sponsorship

The Government is introducing a new partnership fund available for schools applying for specialist school status from October 2003 onwards.

This new fund of £3 million in 2003-04 is designed specifically to help schools which can demonstrate that they have made sustained efforts to raise sponsorship but have still been unable to meet the full £50,000 requirement. It will be administered by the Specialist Schools Trust (formerly the Technology Colleges Trust) in accordance with DfES guidelines.

Information and guidance are available on the specialist schools web site.

The Specialist Schools Trust and The Youth Sport Trust offer guidance and support to schools preparing specialist school applications. They also provide a range of subject based and regional networks that help specialist schools to share best practice and innovation.

The 2003/04 edition of the specialist schools application guidance is due to be published at the end of May 2003.

New Schools and Expanding Existing Successful and Popular Schools

Our ambitions for higher standards for all and for more diversity in the system depend not only on making the most effective use of our existing schools but also on encouraging new providers to offer new types of schools as they are needed. This is particularly important in areas where there is underachievement.

We are keen to encourage the widest possible range of new and existing promoters to come forward – including parent and community groups, private and charitable companies, voluntary groups including church and faith communities, those offering distinctive educational philosophies, and existing schools or consortia of schools. We also want to make it easier for successful and popular schools to expand.

PROPOSING A NEW SCHOOL:

From June 2003, where an LEA decides that an additional, wholly new secondary school is needed, the LEA will have to publish a notice inviting other interested parties to bring forward proposals for the new school before publishing any proposals of its own. The final decision will be made by the Secretary of State, in the light of any comments by the School Organisation Committee following local consultation.

In order to extend school diversity and raise standards, we will encourage LEAs to hold similar competitions when new schools are needed to replace existing schools, especially in areas with few existing successful and popular schools, or where standards of achievement are low.

EXPANDING A SUCCESSFUL AND POPULAR SCHOOL:

The Education Act 2002 allows all schools, including for the first time community schools, to publish their own proposals to expand. Guidance will favour plans for expansion put forward by successful and popular schools, and these schools will be able to appeal to the Adjudicator if their proposals to expand are rejected by the School Organisation Committee.

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Capital City Academy

Academies

Academies are a new type of school being established to raise standards of education in the most difficult and challenging areas. They are state-funded independent schools that work with other local schools to provide a first-rate, free education for pupils of all abilities. Their independent status allows them the flexibility to be creative and innovative in their management, governance, teaching and curriculum, and to find innovative solutions to meet local needs.

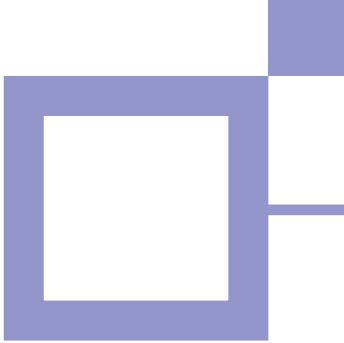
AN ACADEMY HAS:

- the support and leadership of sponsors, who may be individual benefactors or from business, faith or voluntary groups, and provide up to 20% or £2 million of the capital costs. The balance and all recurrent costs are funded by the Government. Sponsors play a leading role in the governance of the academy in partnership with parents and other local stakeholders;

The Capital City Academy in Willesden will open in September 2003. It will specialise in sport with state of the art sports facilities in a brand new building designed by architects Foster and Partners.

- the support of its LEA and close partnerships with its community and other local schools;
- a special curriculum emphasis: early examples include business and enterprise; performing arts; sport; technology; and ICT;
- state of the art facilities, provided by the Government and sponsors in partnership;
- continuing funding on the same basis that they would receive if maintained by the local LEA.

The first three academies opened in September 2002. We expect at least 33 to be open by 2006 and further academies to be opened beyond that. We are talking to a number of city technology colleges about becoming academies.



Collaborating and Innovating

The individual ethos and specialism of a school is vital but the benefits of specialising are multiplied when schools collaborate and share their expertise and experience. The potential to build capacity for improvement in all schools is immense when schools collaborate to extend good practice, share specialist resources and expertise, and take collective responsibility for tackling poor performance.

Head teachers at our conferences agreed that such collaboration offers tremendous scope for teacher, pupil and community learning. They were positive about supporting greater collaboration but expressed concern that if exam results and inspections were only reported on an individual school basis it would cut across rather than reinforce joint working.

As a result we have decided to publish test and exam results for federations of schools alongside the results of individual schools. In addition Ofsted has agreed to work with us to trial coordinated inspection for schools that are members of federations.

One of the ways we will encourage collaboration is to identify schools that are at the very leading edge of educational performance and practice and support them to work with other schools to

develop and share their skills and knowledge. We have also introduced new powers that enable schools to think more boldly and imaginatively about how they can raise standards. As the results of their innovation come through we will help others to learn from the best examples.

Federations

Federations enable groups of schools to work in close collaboration under a range of different possible arrangements – from employing chief executives, sharing governing bodies and/or governing body committees, to establishing formal or semi-formal contracts to raise standards.

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"Working with the other local schools in our area has meant we can offer our students the chance to study minority subjects"

WE ARE KEEN TO ENCOURAGE FEDERATIONS

SO THAT:

- schools work together to raise standards for pupils more effectively than they would as individual institutions;
- schools are able to plan local education provision together, with each school contributing its individual strengths;
- good leaders at all levels are extended and developed by having the chance to lead learning across the federation;
- staff are offered wider career opportunities, such as the chance to work with colleagues in other schools;
- students are offered more curriculum opportunities more cost effectively, including the chance to study minority subjects (such as Russian or classics);
- poor performance is tackled in a supportive environment, through schools developing shared performance indicators and supporting each other to improve;

- issues such as exclusion, behaviour, special education needs and community cohesion are the collective concerns of the federation, for example schools might have a mutual agreement to manage the placement of excluded students;
- schools can collaborate to provide a wider range of extended services for their pupils, families and the community;
- a sound basis is established for greater cross-phase and community partnerships, for example for 14–19 education, community services and links with business;
- schools share good practice, particularly to improve teaching and learning.

Some pump-priming funding is available to help establish federations. Schools can find more information on the web site.

Leading Edge Programme

If we want to transform secondary education it means doing everything possible to accelerate the pace of change and improvement. We need our very best schools and departments to play a leading role in this process: to encourage excellence, to develop curriculum expertise and to work with other schools to raise standards through improved teaching and learning.

In the autumn we published criteria for schools to apply to become advanced schools, a new programme to replace beacon schools at secondary level. They had to demonstrate that they were high performers with a recognised specialism, working at the cutting edge of pedagogical or other developments and with a track record of working with other schools to raise standards. Over 300 schools have applied.

Head teachers told us that they supported the idea behind the programme but thought that the 'advanced school' badge was unhelpful to them and their partner schools in developing collaboration. They also said it was important to allow joint bids. We have accepted both points.

The current selection process to be part of what we are now calling the Leading Edge Programme will continue using the published selection criteria. In future we will look favourably at applications that come in as joint bids. The names of

successful applicants will be announced shortly and those schools not in receipt of the Leadership Incentive Grant will qualify for funding at a level of £60,000 per year to support them and their partners.

We will invite a further round of applications later this year. As part of this round we will consider joint bids and we will include an invitation to independent schools to participate in the programme where they meet the criteria and are willing and able to work with schools in the maintained sector.

We will also consider how we can recognise excellent departments within schools, including giving consideration to a beacon department scheme.

Unlocking Innovation

The introduction of the National Curriculum, and initiatives such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in primary schools, have brought huge benefits. But one side effect has been that teachers have at times felt constrained from teaching in the way they considered was right for their particular students. Some have felt that their professionalism was insufficiently recognised. There has also been a perception that innovation and change was frowned upon. But improvement can only come through change. We want to encourage teachers

to develop new ways of teaching. We positively want head teachers to review the way their school and timetable is organised. We want to develop an innovative and confident education system in which energetic professionals lead the way in removing barriers to learning and finding solutions to learning challenges.

There are some outstanding examples of schools that have led innovation and change, but too often only a very few other schools know about them. We have set up an Innovation Unit to spread this knowledge widely. The Unit will also help schools make use of the new power to innovate which enables the secretary of state to sweep away particular rules and barriers which are getting in the way of what schools want to do to improve standards.

Early enquiries to use the power to innovate have included examples of schools that want to:

- split a large secondary school into two smaller schools;
- increase the school day by 30 minutes so that Friday afternoons can be an 'enrichment session' for pupils, allowing teachers to undertake other non-teaching activities;
- use ICT to drive innovation in the way the curriculum is delivered;
- introduce a local system for pay and conditions for teachers to allow more

flexibility and improve partnership arrangements with other learning institutions.

In fact schools already have the power to make many changes and the Innovation Unit will advise schools on the freedoms they already have (see table below) and the areas where the power to innovate is really necessary.

Training Schools

Training schools are helping to raise the quality of initial teacher training, enabling schools to be innovative in their approach to training teachers of the future. We are expanding the number of training schools (including primary schools) from September 2003 to around 140, with further expansion planned. Successful secondary training schools qualify for funding of up to £55,000 per year to support their training activities.

Schools will build on the collaborative and innovative approaches already developed and demonstrated by existing training schools, for example the use of classroom observatories, video and CD Rom technology, e-learning and interactive headset technology.

EXISTING AND PLANNED FREEDOMS

Schools have more freedom than they sometimes realise. Existing flexibilities or those planned for the future include freedom:

around teacher workforce, pay and conditions

- to shape their workforce in accordance with current and planned flexibilities offered in the national agreement between the Government, employers and school workforce unions;
- to make use of available national pay flexibilities by giving additional main scale points for excellence, or offering recruitment and retention allowances;
- to develop models for the most effective use of teaching assistants under current and planned regulations;
- to employ teachers without qualified teacher status in some circumstances;

around the curriculum

- to allow pupils the choice of subject options at key stage 4, including whether to pursue art and design, music, history and geography at key stage 4;
- to extend curriculum flexibilities further at key stage 4 so that pupils have more choice in future to study subjects that meet their needs, interests and aptitudes;
- to decide when and how national curriculum programmes of study are taught within each key stage;
- to be flexible in the way they use national strategies to raise standards;
- to test new ways of collaborating with schools, colleges, training providers and employers to provide a more coherent phase of 14–19 education and training;
- to develop new programmes of vocational opportunities at key stage 4;
- to enable pupils to learn at a pace appropriate to their needs rather than in line with age related expectations;

around governance and school organisation

- to vary, from September 2003, the number of school governors on the governing body;
- to change school session times, subject to appropriate notice;

around funding

- to use their budget share for provision for pupils registered at another school;
- to fund school federations as if they were a single institution;
- to use their annual devolved formula capital grant to invest in their school buildings, including carrying over three years' worth of grant to do larger capital projects.

If schools are unsure about any of these freedoms or want to talk about others, they can contact the Innovation Unit.

Our aim is to ensure that schools in every area have access to at least one training school. In future we propose to require all secondary training schools to meet the same minimum performance threshold as is required for schools wanting to be considered for specialist status.

There are more details on the website.

Networked Learning Communities

The Networked Learning Communities Programme has been developed by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). It brings together networks of schools which are committed to raising standards of pupil achievement by working together to strengthen learning at several different levels – pupils, staff, school, between schools and between networks. The networks have a strong emphasis on using ICT as a vehicle for collaboration.

The first 48 networks, encompassing over 500 schools, began in September 2002, with a further 40 networks starting in January 2003. Networks vary widely in size, composition and focus, depending on the participating schools, though most contain between 6 and 16 schools. Each network receives funding from NCSL, which they match, plus support from facilitators and a national support team.

The College is planning to expand the programme further from September 2003. More information can be found on the NCSL website.

Excellence in Cities

The Excellence in Cities programme builds collaboration between schools and strengthens school capacity in areas where a lack of educational aspiration and low achievement are most widespread and severe. It provides extra resources that are managed by partnerships of schools and LEAs to operate a number of strands of activity in almost 2400 schools. These are helping to raise standards by:

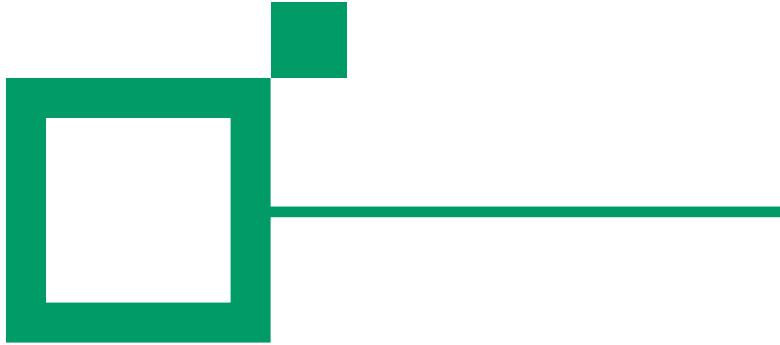
- tackling individual pupils' barriers to learning;
- extending learning opportunities, with a strong focus on gifted and talented children.

Excellence in Cities is contributing to raising standards across London Schools and will be critical to the effective delivery of the London Challenge Strategy.

OUR PLANS FOR EXCELLENCE IN CITIES

ARE:

- to extend it to more areas of deprivation. 14 new Excellence Clusters (which bring the benefits of EiC partnerships to smaller towns) will start in September 2003, and we will go further as resources allow;
- 41 Education Action Zones will become Excellence Clusters as they reach the end of their statutory life between now and 2006. We will also bring more primary schools into the EiC partnership;
- to develop the capacity and ambition of EiC partnerships. The Leadership Incentive Grant (see leadership section) will provide the stimulus for a much greater level of collaboration, building on the partnerships that have already proved their worth;
- to pool funding streams to city schools under the EiC umbrella, so that the partnerships can decide for themselves how to make the best use of their resources.



Developing Leadership at all Levels

Excellent leaders create excellent schools. Secondary schools need strong leaders at all levels, enabling them to provide a rich and diverse curriculum taught by professionals committed to success for every learner.

The quality of school leadership continues to improve every year. In its latest report, Ofsted judged leadership and management to be good or very good in **84%** of schools, up from **54%** in 1997/98.

The growing strength of school leadership and the commitment from the Government in partnership with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) to provide significant and on-going professional development for school leaders at all levels is pivotal to achieving the vision of a transformed education system.

Head teachers at the conferences saw investment in middle management, such as deputy and assistant heads and heads of departments, as integral to school and system improvement. Many gave feedback about the importance of the support of other head teachers and wanted to see a

deeper level of collaboration between school leaders at all levels so that not only could good practice be shared, but underperformance tackled in a climate of trust.

We are investing in programmes to strengthen leadership at all levels in secondary schools. We recognise that it takes time, effort and energy to lead, whatever the leadership role, which is why there are extra resources being offered to enable leaders to be freed up to support others.

Just as excellent leaders create excellent schools, poor leaders rob their pupils and teachers of the chance to excel. We will continue to tackle problems of poor leadership wherever it is identified.

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"We need systematic and deliberate training for all team leaders, especially middle managers"

The following core principles of school improvement are helping inform developing strategies to strengthen and support school leadership.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:

- **create a dominant focus for improvement:** select key priorities for improving teaching and learning to concentrate effort and build experience of success;
- **agree clear and unifying goals:** ground goals for teachers and students in evidence, including performance data and benchmarks;
- **build collective ownership of the development work:** engage staff across the school in a school improvement group;
- **enhance knowledge and teaching skills through focused professional development:** create time for staff to learn together;
- **embed the development work:** reinforce it to make the results part of normal school practice;
- **collaborate with other schools:** widen the vision and create opportunities for joint development.

National College for School Leadership

The newly established NCSL is set to provide world class leadership training for school leaders at all levels. It is working to achieve a step change in the quality of leadership in a number of ways: through developing an integrated, evidence-based approach to leadership transformation; and being at the cutting edge on thinking about leadership and its

development. The College was established in November 2000 and is based on the campus of Nottingham University.

The College's programmes cover leaders at every stage of their careers – aiming to influence the school system simultaneously at many different points by widening their vision, challenging them with high expectations of what their effective leadership could achieve for their schools, building their confidence to take risks and empower other leaders within their schools, and creating networks for support and challenge.

The programmes are designed to develop leaders' skills in three areas: leading teaching and learning, personal and interpersonal skills, and organisational and strategic management. These skills underpin the five stages of school leadership training provided by the College:

- **Emergent Leadership:** for people beginning to take on leadership roles in their schools;
- **Established Leadership:** development programmes for experienced assistant and deputy heads;

"Focus on middle management, encourage them to set a vision, ask the challenging questions"

- **Entry to Headship:** the key programmes are the *National Professional Qualification for Headship* and the *Head Teacher Induction Programme*;
- **Advanced Leadership:** programmes for head teachers with at least four years' experience – such as the *Leadership Programme for Serving Head Teachers*;
- **Consultant Leadership:** a new programme to train consultant leaders – head teachers who can help others to develop through support and challenge.

Details of the full range of NCSL programmes, and information about their availability, are on the College website.

Leadership Incentive Grant

The Leadership Incentive Grant is designed to secure and embed a transformation in the leadership and management of 1400 secondary schools in cities and in challenging circumstances elsewhere. It will do this by strengthening senior leadership teams through professional development and collaboration. Schools will receive £125,000 a year. Those in challenging circumstances outside Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zones will receive a further £50,000 a year.

THE LEADERSHIP INCENTIVE GRANT WILL SUPPORT SCHOOLS TO:

- stimulate collaboration: for instance, groups of schools tackling management problems together, making joint appointments or improving teaching;
- strengthen leadership at all levels: for instance by restructuring the management team or tackling weak or uncommitted leadership;
- raise pupil attainment: perhaps by integrating a range of different reforms that schools are making to the workforce, curriculum, or teaching practices;
- pay for a strong head of department to help work with colleagues in a neighbouring school.

Information and guidance on the grant can be viewed on the DfES Standards website.

In September Ofsted will be implementing a new inspection framework, which will include a new look at the way leadership is inspected.

See also the national standards used by NCSL as a basis for training prospective school leaders, available on their website.

School Governors

School governors are key members of the school leadership team and take decisions on staffing, finance and a wide range of strategic issues. Many of the reforms in this document require their advice, support and encouragement.

Too often they receive insufficient training to help them in their role. The best LEAs provide high quality training and support services. We will continue to encourage all LEAs to do so.

Greater Freedoms and Flexibilities through Earned Autonomy

We are committed to offering greater freedom for all schools and will be consulting shortly on the kinds of freedoms and flexibilities that would enable them to do their jobs more easily and effectively.

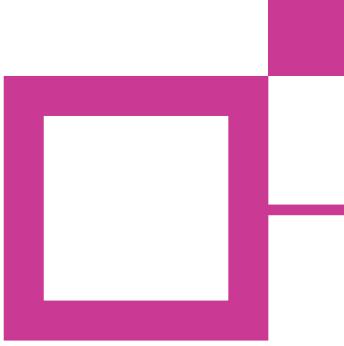
In addition, earned autonomy is a new entitlement that will offer well led and well

managed schools the opportunity to apply for greater freedoms and flexibilities within certain aspects of the National Curriculum and teachers' pay and conditions.

We will look carefully at the results of these changes and wherever possible extend flexibilities to all schools.

The new inspection framework being introduced by Ofsted will also differentiate between schools. It will mean that the best schools will be inspected less frequently.

There will be more details about how the earned autonomy proposals can benefit qualifying schools in a consultation document to be published shortly.



Partnerships Beyond the Classroom

Helping children to learn is not a job for schools and teachers alone. Educating young people is also the responsibility of parents and the wider community. Schools in which parents and communities play an active part stand a far better chance of teaching pupils who are ready and willing to learn.

Raising attainment and narrowing the achievement gap means using these partnerships actively.

Schools and LEAs in many parts of the country have developed excellent and imaginative ways of working in local partnerships to put schools at the heart of their communities, for example, opening out of hours to extend learning opportunities, providing for adult learners and offering a range of other services such as health and childcare.

We are keen to support schools to strengthen their relationships with parents and forge closer links with their communities. All schools should have an active and effective relationship with local employers, who can make a positive contribution to young people's educational experience.

These partnerships will help provide not just a better learning environment but a

strong basis for dealing with attendance and behaviour issues.

Working in Partnership with Parents

Children are primarily the responsibility of their parents, who have a duty to ensure that their children attend school prepared to learn. The involvement of parents in their children's learning and behaviour is vital. Working with parents to set attainment targets, involving them in school events and doing everything possible to ensure they attend parent/teacher interviews all help support learning.

THE HOME-SCHOOL AGREEMENT

The two way partnership between schools and parents is reflected in the home-school agreement, which sets out the expectations and responsibilities of each.

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More information on this is available on the website.

We will continue to support parental involvement through information and advice for parents (by publications, websites and helplines) and good practice guidance for schools. See the website for more details.

SEN PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

For parents of children with special educational needs, SEN parent partnership services provide an expert source of advice and support.

Working in Partnership with the Community

Extended Schools

Wider partnerships through schools offering services and facilities at the hub of their communities not only directly benefit pupils, their families and other people, but also revitalise neighbourhoods and sow the seeds of lifelong learning.

We are keen to support all LEAs and schools to plan, set up and manage extended services so that all schools can offer services such as childcare, study support, adult and family learning, access to computers and ICT training, health and social care, and sports and arts facilities.

Over the next three years we will work closely with 240 schools to enable them to provide a more comprehensive range of extended services for their communities. We will shortly be inviting the first group of LEAs and Excellence in Cities partnerships to nominate a secondary, primary or special school to pilot this work.

More information on funding available for extended schools and support for other schools wanting to develop some extended services can be found on the extended schools website, which also has practical guidance.

Opportunities to Change the School Day – with more Out of School Hours Learning

- Over the next three years, funding will be available to provide study support, which encompasses a wide range of learning activities outside normal lesson time in which young people participate voluntarily. By 2006 we hope that all schools will

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- provide some study support, such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, homework clubs, summer schools or access to ICT for families;
- all secondary schools will benefit from new money to promote out of school hours learning for 11-14 year olds as part of our strategy to raise standards in key stage 3. For schools in Excellence in Cities areas, extra money will boost these opportunities through an expanded EiC programme;
 - we will expand the Playing for Success scheme for study support centres within top football and other sports clubs where under-achieving 10-14 year old pupils can get extra help with their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. 64 existing centres throughout England are already making a big impact on improving these skills. More are signed up to participate and by 2006 we hope there will be at least 100 centres across the country.

skills and economic and enterprise awareness that business brings.

The Government's intention is that all young people undertake some work-related learning at key stage 4, which should not be treated as a separate subject but should offer a range of suitable experiences across the curriculum. The development of enterprise is central to our future prosperity as individuals, as communities and as a nation. We will ensure that by 2006 every secondary school can offer 5 days enterprise activity to pupils.

Schools can seek advice from both LEAs and their Local Learning and Skills Council which have considerable scope to support them with work-based learning arrangements.

Working in Partnership with Employers

Strong links between schools and employers are vital if we are to prepare young people for adult and working life and contribute to the overall drive to raise standards in schools. Effective partnerships with employers have many potential benefits. Schools gain from the resources,

National Behaviour and Attendance Strategy

We are committed to addressing the issue of truancy and poor behaviour. Every day around 50,000 pupils miss school without

good reason. According to a recent DfES survey of children and young people, 80% of secondary pupils say some of their classmates regularly try to disrupt lessons. Teachers find bad behaviour particularly stressful; 45% of teachers leaving the profession gave bad behaviour as one of the main reasons for deciding to go.

**A PLAN TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES IS
UNDER WAY, WHICH INCLUDES:**

- strengthening partnerships between schools and parents, so that parents accept and act on their responsibilities;
- strengthening partnerships between schools and their communities, including employers;
- a National Behaviour and Attendance Strategy for schools.

This year we have invested £66 million in Behaviour Improvement Projects (BIPs) in the 34 LEAs with the highest rates of truancy and street crime. These are targeted to schools where behaviour and truancy are particularly intractable issues and create serious barriers to learning.

**IN ADDITION TO THIS INITIAL SUPPORT,
A NATIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE
STRATEGY IS BEING IMPLEMENTED WHICH
INCLUDES:**

- audit and training materials for all secondary schools to help schools manage behaviour and attendance more effectively, supported by expert advisers

at regional and LEA level as part of the Key Stage 3 Strategy;

- the greater involvement and visibility of police officers in schools, for example in some areas where there is a high level of crime police officers patrol within and around the school grounds. They organise diversionary activities, resolve conflicts and help to reduce anti-social behaviour;
- BIP packages for many more LEAs and schools, delivered as a new strand of Excellence in Cities. Intensive support will be offered to around 400 secondary schools in EiC areas and excellence clusters.

NEW MEASURES ON EXCLUSIONS:

- we have reformed exclusion appeal panels so that the people who understand the realities of dealing with school discipline, i.e. head teachers and governors, play a major part on the panel. The panel has to balance the interests of the excluded pupil against the interests of the whole school community and cannot overturn decisions solely on a technicality. The panel can also rule that, while the original exclusion might have been flawed, the pupil should not return to that school;
- the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill will introduce measures to reinforce parents' responsibility for their children's behaviour in school. This will give LEAs

and schools a statutory power to arrange parenting contracts with parents whose children have been excluded for serious misbehaviour and also enable LEAs to apply for court-imposed parenting orders in these circumstances.

TACKLING TRUANCY

We also have a range of new measures to help schools tackle truancy. These include:

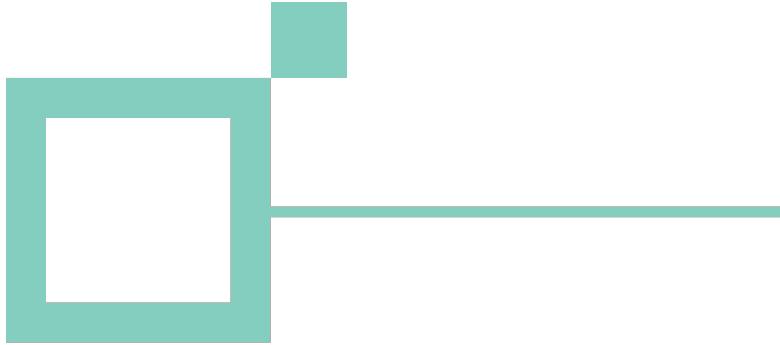
- electronic registration systems for more schools;
- regular national truancy sweeps;
- the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill which includes new legislation to reinforce parental responsibility for school attendance, including parenting contracts and fixed penalty notices.

More information can be found on the website.

The Role of Connexions Partnerships

Supporting the improvement of attendance and participation in learning is a priority area for Connexions partnerships. As part of its role, Connexions works with each school to identify, assess, guide, mentor and support 'at risk' pupils, to help them get the most from their education.

More information on Connexions can be found on the website.



Reform of the School Workforce

We are convinced that teachers, like other professionals, must be able to get on with the work they are trained to do unburdened by routine administration and with a skilled support team to back them up. We want teachers to be free to concentrate on teaching with adequate time to plan, review, give their students individualised learning and take good care of their own professional development.

On 15 January 2003, the Government, employers and school workforce unions signed a national agreement that paves the way for radical reforms of the school workforce.

These have been welcomed by head teachers, non-teaching and most teaching unions, although they recognise that the transition to a new system will be challenging. Concerns about training and pay for support staff, ICT provision, lack of office space and car parks were raised by head teachers during our conferences. Some head teachers were worried that support staff would not have the respect of pupils and parents. Others did not want the important pastoral role of teachers to be lost through the reforms.

In response to the detailed concerns that have been raised, we have ensured that the national agreement allows sufficient flexibility to enable school leaders and teachers themselves to decide how best to reform their workplaces.

The amount spent on the school workforce will rise by over 20% over the next three years. With less ring-fenced funding and more being devolved direct to schools and LEAs, head teachers will have more flexibility than ever before to make decisions in the light of their own circumstances and priorities.

National Agreement on Workforce Reform

THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

- changes to the teachers' contract, to enable teachers and head teachers to focus on their professional responsibilities;
- more support staff in extended roles, including personal administrative assistants for teachers, cover supervisors and high level teaching assistants;
- reducing the bureaucratic burden on schools.

We believe that head teachers, in consultation with their governing bodies, teachers and support staff, know best what their school needs, and it is up to them to determine the priorities in their schools. The contractual changes provide a minimum that schools will be expected to achieve; many will be able to go further and faster.

WE WILL SUPPORT SCHOOLS THROUGH:

- a national change management programme so that schools will have access to local support, advice, guidance and case studies to help them develop a 'change plan' which reflects their particular needs;
- training for support staff in their new roles, including:

- induction training for all, including in behaviour management;
- high level teaching assistants;
- guidance and supervisory roles;
- school bursars.

You can find out more about how this will benefit your school by viewing the website.

Reducing Bureaucracy

THE NEW INDEPENDENT IMPLEMENTATION

REVIEW UNIT WILL START WORK FROM APRIL TO:

- consider the workload impact of existing policy and new initiatives, and address issues of excessive bureaucracy;
- focus beyond the DfES to cover all bodies which impact upon schools, including national agencies such as Ofsted, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Teacher Training Agency, as well as LEAs and the Learning and Skills Council;
- feature an independent panel of practitioners, who are almost all serving head teachers;
- consider representations from all parts of the education system, including unions and employers as well as head teachers, teachers and other members of the school workforce;
- meet with DfES ministers, and publish its own annual report, including details of both successful and unsuccessful recommendations;

"To find that none of my preparation and marking periods has been allocated for cover is magic. I can plan my work schedule much more easily"

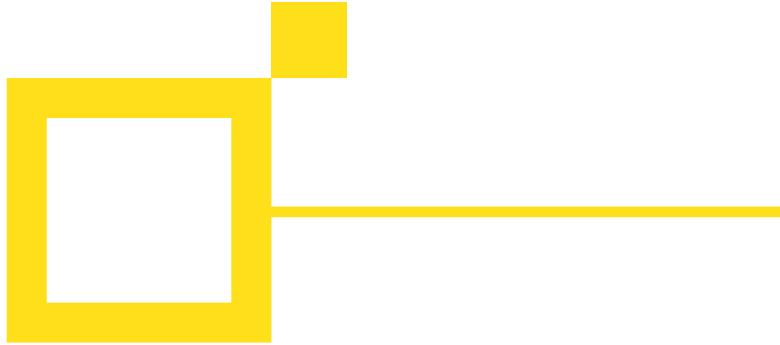
- follow up actions from a joint "red tape" report about to be published with the Cabinet Office, and develop its own work programme.

We are committed to sustained improvements in communications with schools to help tackle information overload. We will become more customer focused, delivering information and services in an accessible format using the most appropriate vehicles available (internet, TV, print, events).

We aim to cut mailings to schools by a further 50% in 2002/03 (building on the reductions achieved in 2001/02). Meanwhile, access to best practice and the development of materials that will help save time and increase the effectiveness of people who work in schools will be substantially increased.

IN THE PAST YEAR THE DEPARTMENT HAS:

- rationalised its internet provision of information for the school workforce, including lesson plans, into one electronic gateway – TeacherNet (which now has more than 67,000 registered users);
- ensured that all paper documents including those mailed to schools are also available electronically;
- begun work on an email alternative to paper-based mailings (including an online ordering system that would enable schools to choose which documents they were mailed and in what multiples). We will shortly set a date by which we will end all paper based mailings to schools;
- established a governors newsletter;
- introduced a tracking study that captures some of the perceptions of head teachers, teachers, support staff and governors to help determine what is working well, what is not and how things can be further improved.



Teaching and Learning

The transformation of secondary education ultimately depends on good teachers who teach well. The programme of reform set out in this document has one aim: to provide the necessary conditions for teachers to focus on their teaching and continue to extend their skills.

We will continue to focus intensively on raising standards at each stage of children's learning, with a particular emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools at key stage 3 (age 11-14).

The challenges at key stage 3 are particularly demanding. These are vitally important years, which lay the foundations for life-long learning and influence crucial decisions pupils will make at age 14. Losing learners at this stage can result in a downward spiral of lost opportunities. Motivating them to learn can set them up for success in the rest of their lives, which is why we have invested so heavily in a national strategy for key stage 3.

Success is much more likely if pupils enjoy learning and if the curriculum and the way lessons are taught stimulates students and fires their imagination; e-learning and the appropriate use of ICT is key to this. We believe that one of the ways of motivating pupils is to give more emphasis to supporting subject teachers and helping them and their specialist associations to make subjects come alive. Specialist schools, advanced skills teachers and a more imaginative use of ICT will help make the learning experience more enjoyable for students and more rewarding for teachers.

We intend to underpin our approach to teaching and learning with principles such as these:

CORE PRINCIPLES – TEACHING AND LEARNING

- **ensure every child succeeds:** provide an inclusive education within a culture of high expectations;
- **build on what learners already know:** structure and pace teaching so that students know what is to be learnt and how;
- **make learning vivid and real:** develop understanding through enquiry, e-learning and group problem solving;
- **make learning an enjoyable and challenging experience:** stimulate learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to a range of learning styles;
- **enrich the learning experience:** infuse learning skills across the curriculum;
- **promote assessment for learning:** make children partners in their learning.

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy

The targets for key stage 3 are very challenging. We hope that the support being offered by the Key Stage 3 Strategy will help schools improve learning outcomes for their pupils.

We have designed and are now providing a large-scale programme of professional development to support teachers in raising the expectations of pupils, in managing the transition into secondary school, in motivating and engaging learners and in strengthening learning and teaching practice.

We will continue to support schools and LEAs to manage the transfer from primary to secondary at age 11. We offer funding and materials to support a range of transition activities which they can tailor to best meet the needs of the schools and their pupils.

The Key Stage 3 Strategy offers:

- continuous professional development for teachers;
- trained consultants providing targeted help to schools in need ;
- an established collaborative relationship between schools, LEAs and the Government in order to raise standards;
- high quality curriculum materials spanning English, mathematics, science, ICT and other foundation subjects;
- a range of audit and training materials, and expert support for senior managers and other school staff, including those designed to improve behaviour management in and out of the classroom.

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But the Key Stage 3 Strategy is not about uniformity. It is about focusing interventions on pupils who need additional support to reach their full potential through:

- activities designed to improve the move from primary to secondary education;
- 'catch up' programmes specifically designed to help those pupils below the expected standard at age 11;
- mentoring and holiday schools for pupils still falling behind;
- booster programmes designed to help year 9 pupils consolidate their learning and improve their chances of obtaining level 5 in the tests at age 14;
- working with specific groups of pupils, offering materials designed for ethnic minority, gifted and talented pupils or pupils with special educational needs.

Looking forward, we are introducing a number of measures to help schools develop a whole school approach to the Strategy including a pedagogical package initially focused on Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances and literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

Improving Teaching and Learning for 14–19 year olds

The 14–19 policy document, *14–19 opportunity and excellence*, published in January, sets out the Government's strategy for reforming the 14–19 phase. Its purpose is to transform the learning experience of young people so that they have a commitment to continued learning, whether in school, college or the workplace, so that all young people can fulfil their potential.

IN THE SHORT TERM:

We will act on the conclusions of the inquiry by the former Ofsted Chief Inspector, Mike Tomlinson, so that those taking or coming up to A levels can be confident that their work will be properly marked and graded. Mike Tomlinson himself will monitor the awarding and marking process to assure students that it is fair and rigorous.

IN THE MEDIUM TERM:

- we will reduce the compulsory curriculum at key stage 4 to provide greater flexibility for students to follow programmes that better meet their needs;
- we will provide more opportunities for young people to progress at a pace that best suits their abilities. This might include taking a GCSE early or taking a slower approach to it;
- all pupils will include some work-related and enterprise learning in their programmes;
- we will give every student the right to study a modern foreign language, a humanities subject (such as history or geography), an arts subject and design and technology if they wish to do so.

These changes will begin to be introduced from the academic year 2004/5. In the meantime we will amend and simplify arrangements at key stage 4 which allow schools to exempt students from learning some national curriculum subjects.

We will also introduce improved vocational options, encouraging the spread of GCSEs in vocational subjects, and developing new types of GCSEs which combine both academic and applied options. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is working with the awarding bodies on piloting these new forms of GCSE in science and geography.

IN THE LONGER TERM:

A working group for 14–19 reform, led by Mike Tomlinson, is addressing the need for further long term reform. The group is considering the design of:

- coherent, high quality learning programmes for 14–19 year olds, especially those who wish to follow vocational courses;
- assessment arrangements that are manageable and fit-for-purpose;
- a unified qualifications framework to recognise in a common format the achievements of all young people of this age group.

Pathfinder projects will help identify and spread good practice and assess the scale and costs of new patterns of 14–19 provision. Using Learning and Skills Council's matched funding we will fund pathfinder development over the 3 years to 2004–05 with further funding in 2005–06 to kick-start national roll out. The growing provision of e-learning will assume a new significance, not least in its capacity to reach new kinds of students in new ways and with new materials. Schools will be able to contribute and learn from good practice through the 14–19 Pathfinder website.

“Too many pupils become disillusioned with progress and with education, and too many drop out of education and training at 16”

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Schools will be offered opportunities to contribute their views on these issues as the 14–19 working group’s work progresses.

16–19 PROVISION

Our expectation that staying-on rates will increase means that there will be a need for more high-quality provision for 16–19 year olds. This will best be secured by a mixed economy of good school and college provision.

We expect follow up from area inspections and the Learning and Skills Council strategic area reviews to strengthen opportunities and standards for 16–19 year olds, whether they attend school sixth forms, colleges or are in work-based learning.

Exploiting e-learning

Perhaps the most telling contribution of e-learning is the individual empowerment it offers when properly integrated with other forms of learning and teaching.

Teachers have always sought ways to

encourage active, independent learning, but the traditional tools at their disposal have limited them to the physical environment in which they teach.

Interactive learning and communication technologies bring a wealth of new opportunities within their range.

ICT has the potential to engage disaffected pupils, to allow them to take control of their own learning by enabling interactive, individualised learning at the pace and level appropriate for them, and to give pupils and teachers new ways of being creative.

We want schools to use ICT to develop more individualised learning and assessment programmes for every child, with specialist schools playing a leading role in this.

Networking makes cross-institutional collaboration possible, and takes learning beyond the classroom into the home, into local community organisations, and into partnerships with local businesses.

- The Department is working through the key stage 3 and 14–19 strategies, and with LEAs and others, to ensure that schools have the leadership, support and materials they need.
- Schools will have e-learning credits worth £100m a year for each of the next three years to purchase innovative and professional digital resources via the newly launched Curriculum Online.
- We will work in partnership with the ICT industry to improve the quality of educational software.

Further information about the support available for schools in using ICT can be found on the website.

Subject Specialism

We know that most teachers have real passion and enthusiasm for their subjects and can translate that enthusiasm into the classroom and make school an exciting and fun environment. We want to support teachers to enhance their subject specialism and professionalism in a variety of ways which meet their needs, through:

- developing the best teaching methods for using ICT at particular stages of the curriculum;

- establishing national networks of specialist schools in particular subjects;
- together with the Wellcome Trust, establishing a network of centres to promote and support excellence in science teaching;
- establishing partnerships with university departments researching a particular subject, for example the Millennium Maths Project in Cambridge which promotes the development of mathematical skills and understanding through enrichment beyond the curriculum;
- establishing partnerships with local and national employers with a particular interest in a subject;
- developing partnerships with relevant individuals and organisations either locally or nationally, for example the Poet Laureate will be developing an on-line Poetry Archive with poets making recordings of their own work for use in schools;
- focusing national initiatives on particular subjects, for example an ambitious target has been set to increase the percentage of 5–16 year olds who spend at least two hours each week on high quality PE and sport, from 25% in 2002 to 75% in 2006.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Children with special educational needs and their families are likely to need extra support in order to learn effectively and make good progress. Schools also need access to expert advice and help.

We are developing a new SEN Programme of Action to help schools enable children with SEN to achieve their full potential. It will focus on practical measures to tackle underachievement, promote better sharing of expertise between special schools and mainstream and improve outcomes for all children with SEN.

Vulnerable Children and Young People

We will provide additional support to LEAs so they can help schools meet the needs of young people most at risk. These include looked after children, children who are unable to attend school because of medical needs, Gypsy/Traveller children, asylum seekers, young carers, school refusers and teenage parents.

Gifted and Talented Programme

Our teaching and learning programmes are designed to ensure that gifted and talented pupils are supported at every

stage of their learning. There is a range of resources available to schools for these pupils, which are also designed to help provide continuity and progression through to higher education.

RESOURCES INCLUDE:

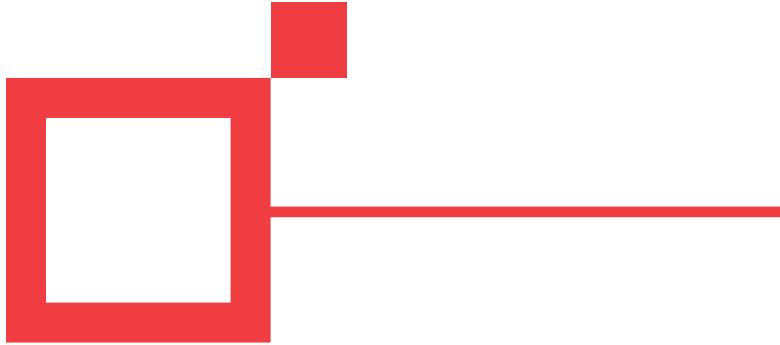
- the Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth;
- 500 summer schools for 10-14 year-olds;
- World Class Arena; maths and problem solving for pupils aged up to 13;
- Xcalibre, a web-based directory of resources designed to complement curriculum and assessment guidance;
- conferences every term and an annual national conference for the full range of interested stakeholders.

FOR SCHOOLS IN EXCELLENCE IN CITIES

AREAS AND EXCELLENCE CLUSTERS:

- up to 10% of 11-16 year olds in every school and up to 20% of 16-19 year olds in every post-16 institution can benefit from targeted support.

Advice, support and information can be accessed via the website.



Moving Forward Together

This document sets out a clear strategy for reform, along with some tools and opportunities for schools to consider as they implement reform in their own institutions. We will come back to you within the next 12 months with a view from the profession of how transformation is beginning to take place both in individual schools and in groups of schools.

We would welcome your contribution to an ongoing discussion. You can contact us either using the email address below or through the Innovation Unit which will provide the link between the DfES and the profession – between policy and practice – to support our shared agenda for transformation.

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Quoting DfES/0173/2003

ISBN No. 1 84185 895 1

D16/PP93/S4538/0203/24