Annual curriculum report

2002–3

QCA

First published2004

Printed in Great Britain.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is an exempt charity under Schedule 2 of the Charities Act 1993.

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1. Introduction

QCA has a remit to keep under review all aspects of the national curriculum and to advise the Secretary of State on matters concerned with the curriculum.

(Education Act 1997)

To do this effectively, QCA has a programme of monitoring and evaluation, which ensures that:

- QCA's advice on the curriculum is based on sound evidence including a balance of quantitative and qualitative information;
- QCA's work on developing the curriculum framework and on producing information, support and guidance is based on sound knowledge of current practice and curriculum innovation, the effectiveness of recent changes, an understanding of needs and a critical evaluation of current policies and initiatives.

QCA's subject teams (English, mathematics, science, design and technology, ICT, history, geography, MFL, art and design, music, PE, citizenship and PSHE, RE and equal opportunities) and phase teams (3–14 years and 14–19 years) are involved in monitoring and evaluation. Each team has a responsibility to keep its phase, area or subject under review and, as part of this, undertakes an annual cycle of monitoring activities.

Teams gather information on their area using a range of strategies, including:

- drawing on existing information collected by in QCA (eg the School Sampling Project, the International Review of Curriculum and Assessment frameworks database (INCA), Pupils' Experiences and Perspectives of the national curriculum: Research Review);
- drawing on existing information available from other sources (eg analysis of initiatives, reports and research from central agencies, research and literature, and educational resources, etc);
- gathering new information from practitioners and key players (eg through conferences with LEAs and LSCs, informal liaison, questionnaire surveys, meetings, focus groups, using case study centres, case study visits, etc).

The School Sampling Project (SSP) is a longitudinal study of both curriculum and assessment issues. Every year a nationally representative sample of schools is asked to complete a questionnaire on the curriculum and provide item responses to the national curriculum tests. Schools with key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils are sent a questionnaire investigating whole school issues, to be completed by the headteacher. Secondary schools are also sent a questionnaire investigating whole school issues, to be completed by the headteacher, and a series of subject-specific questionnaires to be completed by the relevant head of department. This year, for the first time (following the extension of the national curriculum to include the foundation stage), questionnaires were also sent to a sample of schools and settings with 3–5 year olds.

1 In the academic year 2003–4, SSP has been renamed the Monitoring Curriculum and Assessment project (MCA)

14–19 curriculum monitoring also drew evidence from QCA's joint work with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS) in the form of a postal questionnaire survey on Curriculum 2000 qualifications, provision and student programmes. Responses on their 2002/3 curriculum from 1,164 schools and colleges were analysed. The profile of centre types in the respondent sample was not representative of national distribution, with independent schools and sixth form colleges being over-represented and FE colleges being under-represented. QCA's research team analysed the data and produced a weighted data report, in order to make the results more representative of centre types and numbers nationally. We have cited the weighted data in this report. Analysis of earlier surveys has made comparative data 2001–3 available.

This report

This report sets out the main findings of the QCA monitoring and evaluation programme for the academic year 2002–2003. It is structured around the following sixteen questions, each of which is a separate section in the report.

1 How manageable are schools and settings finding the programmes of study (and the areas of learning in the foundation stage)?
2 What evidence is there that the use of ICT has enhanced pupils' learning experience across all phases and subjects?
3 What impact have the primary strategies had on the teaching and learning of all subjects in schools?
4 What have been the implications for schools and settings of the new statutory nature of the foundation stage curriculum?
5 What impact has the Key Stage 3 Strategy had on the teaching and learning of all subjects in schools?
6 Across all phases and subjects, how widely are schools interpreting the inclusion statement? What evidence for this is there?
7 What measures are schools and settings taking to:
   - set suitable learning challenges for all;
   - respond to pupils' diverse learning needs;
   - overcome potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups of pupils?
8 Across all phases and subjects, what use are schools making of the level descriptions?
9 Do schools and settings think the expectations set out in the level descriptions and early learning goals are realistic in all subjects/areas of learning?
10 How are schools reacting to developments at key stage 4, including the introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects?
11 In all subjects, what has been the impact of the revised GCSE specifications?
12 To what extent are the Curriculum 2000 changes becoming embedded?
13 In all subjects, what use is made of transfer data within and between key stages?
14 In all subjects, what impact, whether positive or negative, does transfer data have on teaching and learning?
15 Has awareness of QCA's support and guidance materials increased since last year?
16 Where schools and settings are using QCA's support and guidance materials, how useful do they find them?

2. Executive summary

QCA's Monitoring and Evaluation Programme in 2002–3 generated evidence for the following conclusions:

2.1 The programmes of study

Evidence from SSP and seminars shows that schools at key stages 1 and 2 are experiencing difficulties in covering all aspects of the programmes of study across the full range of foundation subjects and PSHE and citizenship. At key stage 3 manageability is less of an issue although many schools are experiencing difficulty in providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

2.2 The use of ICT to enhance learning was growing ...

... but continued to be limited by difficulties in accessing the equipment, by teachers' understanding of its use and by technical problems and issues in primary schools. ICT enhanced learning because pupils enjoyed the ICT-based aspects of subjects, it could make subjects clearer to understand and it helped teachers to produce better teaching materials.

2.3 The impact of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies ...

... was extensive in that almost all primary schools were implementing them. Many teachers continued to express concern that the breadth and balance of the curriculum suffered as a result of the emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but they also acknowledged beneficial effects including higher standards of children's achievement across the curriculum, improved confidence amongst the children, and improved teaching.

2.4 The transition between the foundation stage and key stage 1 ...

... arose frequently as an area of concern. At the root of this was the contrast between the teaching approaches that typify the two phases. This was often attributed to the fact that children move from six areas of learning, delivered through play and exploration, to 11 subjects and prescribed programmes of study. Significant numbers of practitioners called for a reappraisal of the key stage 1 curriculum.

2.5 The impact of the Key Stage 3 Strategy

There was significant agreement, through both SSP returns and seminar findings, that greater curriculum coherence has been encouraged by the strategy, particularly where unified management structures are in place.

2.6 The inclusion statement

Awareness of the inclusion statement and QCA's supporting material was limited, at least in some quarters, however most schools felt that they were fully or largely meeting the needs of the groups of pupils specified in the School Sampling Project questionnaires. However, there were some difficulties in providing adequately for pupils with disabilities, the gifted and talented, those with special educational needs and those newly arrived in the education system.

2.7 Inclusion measures ...

... of many different types were employed to meet the needs of boys and girls, pupils with English as an additional language, ethnic minority groups, and gifted and talented pupils. The most common were giving pupils differentiated activities, grouping or setting pupils in various ways, providing additional teacher or teaching assistant support, and providing extra lessons at lunchtime, after school or in the summer holidays.

2.8 Level descriptions were used, ...

... in some subjects, for providing information about a pupil's performance on entry to secondary school, and, in almost all subjects, for planning targets, for end-of-year assessments and for statutory teacher assessment. In some subjects (history, design and technology, geography, and PE) teachers sometimes re-wrote or sub-divided them to make them more useful, and employed a variety of methods to standardise their use in assessment.

2.9 The expectations in the level descriptions and the early learning goals ...

... were generally seen as satisfactory, although there was some evidence to the contrary in science. Some LEA advisers felt that a statement of national expectations was needed in PSHE.

2.10 Key stage 4 developments ...

... included curriculum planning to meet forthcoming changes to statutory requirements and changes to disapplication arrangements. There was significant and planned use of GCSEs in vocational subjects.

2.11 The revised GCSE specifications ...

... had made little impact where the revisions had been minor. In five subjects (mathematics, science, history, art and design, and music), there were concerns about particular aspects of the specifications.

2.12 The Curriculum 2000 changes ...

...were becoming embedded in that teachers appeared to have a better understanding of the standard of the AS. Four AS subjects taken in year 12 and three A levels in year 13 had become the norm for most students. There was a modest increase in programme breadth. Fewer students were studying key skills. The VCE was seen to be less vocational and more academically demanding than its GNVQ predecessor. The proportion of centres entering students for the AEA was unchanged from the previous year.

2.13 The use of transfer data ...

... was significantly inadequate. Value-added information and examples of pupils' work were transferred by many schools, but few used the Common Transfer Document. Many secondary schools said they were not receiving enough information, or sufficiently reliable information, from key stage 2 schools in adequate time.

2.14 The impact of transfer data on teaching and learning ...

... was limited primarily to grouping or setting pupils at the start of secondary school. The data were also used, to a lesser extent, for monitoring progress, target-setting and differentiation.

2.15 Awareness of QCA's support and guidance materials ...

... had increased in four subjects (English, design and technology, ICT, and geography) and remained the same in four others (mathematics, science, MFL and music). Almost all teachers were aware of the national curriculum subject booklets and programmes of study and QCA's schemes of work (which were provided in print form) but typically less than half of them were aware of website-based materials.

2.16 QCA's materials were 'useful' or 'very useful' ...

... in the view of the overwhelming majority of users.

3. Findings

3.1 Programmes of study

How manageable are schools and settings finding the programmes of study (areas of learning in the foundation stage)?

In most subjects across key stages 1 and 2 most schools were able to teach all aspects of the programmes of study in the time available, although about 45% of schools did so only 'with difficulty'. Approximately half of the respondents to the SSP survey found difficulty at key stage 2 in covering design and technology (56%), geography (52%), history (50%), art and design (50%), music (47%), physical education (42%), PSHE and citizenship (51%).

These findings were confirmed at monitoring seminars and school visits. Reasons given include schools concentrating on English and mathematics and to a lesser extent, difficulties with resourcing.

At key stage 3, many schools, especially middle schools, reported that there was still too much to teach. Subjects particularly mentioned were history, the arts and PSHE. A particular group of schools studied by QCA because they had a distinctive curriculum, did find the programmes of study manageable largely because of imaginative approaches to curriculum design. The school ethos, the availability of funding and specialist status were cited as key factors in producing such approaches.

In the foundation stage, schools and settings generally reported few difficulties in covering all aspects of the six areas of learning. There were, however, some concerns with regard to children attending part-time, and children in mixed reception/key stage 1 classes. These concerns may be linked to a perceived need to prioritise communication, language and literacy and mathematical development over other areas of learning, and (in the case of mixed-age classes) to the need to deliver two curricula within one class. 61% of SSP respondents from settings with children of reception age and 34% of those for 3- to 4-year-olds, reported difficulties in providing outdoor activities and play opportunities. This had potential implications for the quality of provision across all areas of learning.

The key subject-specific issues to emerge from the findings are as follows.

Science

At key stages 1 and 2, teachers believed that 'too much hands-off science' was taking place because of the shortage of time for science and foundation subjects and the 'relegation' of these subjects to the afternoon timetable slot as a consequence of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Moreover, they reported that time for science teaching, particularly of practical and investigative science, continued to be compressed, especially in year 6, by preparation for the statutory tests.

In 2000–1 and 2001–2, many teachers regarded the key stage 3 programme of study for science as overloaded, and its interpretation in the QCA/DfES scheme of work as

unworkable in year 9. While some teachers continued to express this view in 2002–3, most now regarded any difficulties experienced in covering the whole of the programme of study in the time available as a consequence of 'structural, organisational and operational' difficulties, rather than an overloaded programme of study. This change of perception may have been brought about by the key stage 3 science strategy.

Citizenship

At key stages 1 and 2, citizenship does not have a programme of study, but non-statutory frameworks covering both PSHE and citizenship. Only half the schools sampled were confident about being able to cover all aspects. They were least confident about the following aspects:

- challenging racism and stereotypes
- communication skills
- participation and responsible action skills
- bullying and behaviour.

At key stages 3 and 4, citizenship became a new national curriculum subject at the start of the 2002/3 school year. Many schools used PSHE as the main vehicle for teaching citizenship. In two thirds (65%) PSHE had not been given additional curriculum time since the introduction of citizenship; indeed, 17% said time had decreased for PSHE. This finding supports Ofsted evidence that many schools had not recognised the importance, status or scale of work necessary to introduce this new national curriculum subject.

Approximately half the schools were confident about addressing all the requirements of the programmes of study, and about 10% were not at all confident. Aspects of the subject in which schools were least confident were:

- community involvement
- law, work of government, parliament and the courts
- international relations
- work of government and public services
- democratic processes, elections and voting.

History

Evidence from teacher trainers, LEA advisers and Ofsted suggested some aspects, such as historical enquiry and interpretation, were not receiving the space within the teaching timetable they require.

MFL

In modern foreign languages, some teachers reported that two aspects of the programmes were difficult to cover: 4b 'communicating with native speakers' and 5h 'using the target language for real purposes'.

Music

Areas of the programmes of study most often omitted or covered only very superficially at key stages 1 and 2 were those to do with the disciplined skills, for example rhythmic and melodic work – the skills needed for musical progression into

the secondary school. A concern in the secondary phase was the requirement for 'a range of live and recorded music from different times and cultures, including music from the British Isles, the 'Western classical' tradition, folk, jazz and popular genres, and by well-known composers and performers'. Teachers tended to feel more confident teaching music from the Western classical tradition and research showed that very few teachers had any in-depth knowledge and expertise in the other musical traditions. More resources were needed to help teachers teach these other traditions.

Mathematics

Schools in general reported that they were able to cover all aspects of the mathematics programmes of study in the foundation stage, key stage 1 and key stage 2. Where there were difficulties, teachers spoke of the lack of time to consolidate pupils' learning (in KS1), the inhibitory effect of the Numeracy Framework on cross-curricular work and creativity, and the need to spend a large portion of years 2 and 6 in preparing for the national tests. No specific problems with manageability at key stage 3 were reported. In GCSE and AS/A level mathematics, however, students reported that the subject was more demanding, in terms of time and effort, than the other subjects they were studying.

Foundation stage

In the foundation stage the area for which schools and settings felt they had most difficulty in providing was knowledge and understanding of the world. This was also the area given the least priority. This may have been due to a lack of staff expertise in some aspects of the area.

Key stage 4 programmes of study are dealt with in section 9: 'Revised GCSE Specifications'.

3.2 ICT to enhance learning

What evidence is there that the use of ICT has enhanced pupils' learning experience across all phases and subjects?

Evidence from SSP, Ofsted reports, focus seminars, monitoring conferences with teachers and LEAs, and research conducted by ICT-related organisations such as Becta[2], showed that:

- the use of ICT in schools was growing, but continued to be limited by difficulties in accessing the equipment and by teachers' understanding of its use
- ICT enhanced learning because: pupils enjoyed the ICT-based aspects of subjects; it could make subjects clearer to understand and it helped teachers to produce better teaching materials.

The use of ICT

The evidence here comes mainly from the SSP survey and a 14–19 curriculum monitoring conference.

More than 90% of all subject departments in schools made at least 'some' use of ICT,

2 British Educational Communications Technology Agency

with the exception of citizenship, where the figure dipped to 85%. The subject with the largest number of departments using ICT 'a lot' was design and technology at 50% of subject respondents, followed by music with 41%.

Where departments indicated limited use, accessibility of computers was clearly the major factor, with more than two thirds of the respondents in English, design and technology, geography, art and design, music and RE ranking this as the main reason for not using ICT. It was also the main reason given by more than half the respondents in all other subjects other than PE.

In secondary schools, the focus on specialist ICT teachers and specialist ICT rooms limited access to ICT facilities for other subjects. 'Until there is a shift of resources away from specialist rooms into subject teaching areas, ICT is unlikely to have a major impact on pupils' attainment in subject learning'[3]. The SSP found a high proportion of schools teaching ICT as a discrete subject. LEA representatives at the curriculum monitoring conference indicated that the teaching of specialist courses was taking up time in specialist suites that might otherwise have been available for subject-based teaching. Representatives also indicated that despite funding initiatives supporting the training of non-specialist teachers, many still lacked confidence, enthusiasm or the capability to integrate ICT into their subjects.

In all subjects, at least half of the respondents reported an increase in the use of ICT this year. Design and technology led the way with 81% of respondents, closely followed by science with 79%.

At key stages 3 and 4, the three main types of ICT used were – in order of greatest use – word-processing, internet browsing and video. These uses far outweighed other uses such as spreadsheets, email, CD-ROM and data-logging. Word-processing at key stage 3 was used 'frequently' by 60% of departments in English, by 52% in history, 48% in design and technology, 44% in RE and 42% in geography. 63% of PE departments reported 'never' using it as did 28% of music and 37% of mathematics departments. At key stage 4, all respondents in English, design and technology, and geography reported at least 'frequent use', with only mathematics, music, PE and citizenship dipping below 90%. However, almost all mathematics departments make some use of spreadsheets or databases in key stages 3 and 4.

Enhancing learning

Some subjects, notably music and design and technology, have ICT-based aspects which pupils found particularly motivating. In design and technology, computer aided design and computer aided manufacture (CAD/CAM) encouraged pupils to complete their work to a high standard because they had the 'guarantee' of a 'machine-made' finish.

In music, pupils who were less positive about music lessons in general were much more motivated when they were able to use music technology (using computers to sample and mix sounds) as it was very relevant to music-making today and to their own musical interests. One such pupil said:

3 DfES, Becta NGfL Pathfinders

> I didn't know that music was anything to do with computers and when we went into this IT room I couldn't believe it and it was brilliant and I love the guitar and I'm playing it now and it's brilliant now.

A general way in which ICT can enhance learning is that it can be used to make a subject clearer and more enjoyable. For example, primary teachers at a QCA focus group said that the power to demonstrate some mathematical ideas in a dynamic way enhanced the teaching of topics such as angles.

English teachers in a QCA focus group found various web sites useful for enhancing pupils' learning. Some grammar and dictionary websites included tests and interactive activities. Digital video was useful for teaching speaking and listening, drama and media studies.

In art and design, the use of digital and video cameras, computer software and scanners in practical work and the use of the internet to access artists' work had opened up new and exciting possibilities for visual investigation and practical work.

In history, an Ofsted report on the use of ICT in schools gave examples of e-mailing Russian school pupils to gain a different perspective on the Second World War in Russia, analysing databases and census returns and using Public Record Office materials or original sources from the British Library.

Using ICT to help teach a subject can improve results. In the primary phase, positive associations were found between high ICT use and higher achievement in end of key stage 2 tests in English and mathematics[4]. But using ICT did not necessarily enhance learning. Ofsted, in its 2001–2 subject series reports stated that the potential of ICT 'has not been fully recognised by many science departments … ICT was being used increasingly in practical work but not always in a way which added to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the scientific ideas involved.'

Interactive whiteboards were particularly useful. Recent Becta research found they could promote interaction and discussion. They allowed more varied, creative and seamless use of teaching materials and motivated both teachers and students. LEAs and schools suggested that interactive whiteboards, above other forms of technology, made the biggest difference to teaching. However, LEA respondents also said many teachers were not yet using interactive whiteboards to their full potential.

Finally, ICT enhanced teaching and learning where teachers' increasing competence in ICT was leading to better resourced classes and well-presented materials.

3.3 The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies

What impact have the strategies had on the teaching and learning of all subjects in schools?

The impact of the strategies was extensive in that almost all primary schools were implementing them. Many teachers continued to express concern that the breadth and balance of the curriculum suffered as a result of the emphasis on literacy and

4 DfES, Bect report Impact 2

mathematics. However, seminar delegates also acknowledged some beneficial effects including higher standards of children's' achievement in other subjects.

The evidence here comes primarily from the SSP but in places is supplemented by additional evidence from QCA seminars, school visits and Ofsted findings.

Almost all primary schools were implementing the primary strategies. Primary phase responses to the SSP showed that 94% were implementing the National Literacy Strategy, and 95% the National Numeracy Strategy: figures which were very similar to last year's results.

There were mixed views about whether the impact was positive or negative. Nine subject and phase reports referred to concern that the emphasis on literacy and mathematics was having a negative effect on the breadth and balance of the curriculum as a whole. There was less teaching time, funding and attention being given to other subjects.

- In **art and design**, pressure from the national strategies was the reason half of the schools said they could only cover art and design programmes of study with difficulty.
- In **PSHE**, teachers said that funding had been concentrated on the strategies, limiting what was available for PSHE development, although some LEAs had produced materials that linked PSHE and literacy.
- In **design and technology**, seminars and school visits indicated that the strategies had squeezed time allocated to design and technology and other foundation subjects. A primary teacher reported that 'catch up' or 'booster' classes used to support literacy and mathematics often led to the removal of pupils from design and technology classes. These pupils fell behind and often failed to complete design and technology projects. Unfortunately these were usually the pupils who most enjoyed design and technology and generally performed better in it than they did in other subjects. Ofsted reports confirmed these findings.[5]
- The main obstacle to providing a broad and balanced curriculum in primary schools remained the continued priority given to literacy and mathematics, which meant that **geography** was unlikely to feature in School Development Plans and that funding for change was limited. The time allocation for geography in the schools represented at a primary seminar was in nearly all cases well below the indicative time given in the QCA booklet Designing and Timetabling the Primary Curriculum (July 2002). In fact, in many of the schools the combined time for geography and history teaching was the same as the recommended minimum time for geography alone. Significantly, nearly all schools reported no change in the priority given to geography, or the time or financial resources allotted to it, since September 2000, which was at the end of the two years in which national curriculum requirements in geography and the other foundation subjects were relaxed.

Monitoring of the primary phase, and of English, music, mathematics, science and history also revealed concerns about the effect on the breadth and balance of the curriculum.

5 Ofsted, D&T in secondary schools, 2002; Ofsted, D&T in primary schools, 2002

- Some **primary phase** seminar delegates considered that the strategies had raised standards in their schools and that teachers had become more confident in adapting the organisation of the literacy hour.
- **Music** teachers recognised that improved literacy skills could help to raise standards in music through helpful pupils to communicate ideas and develop a musical vocabulary.
- In **mathematics**, fewer teachers than in previous years perceived a tension between the numeracy strategy and foundation stage approaches in reception and nursery. Moreover, teachers and children appeared more enthusiastic about mathematics than before. Teachers reported that low-achievers were more positive about their mathematics learning than literacy[6]. A review of Ofsted inspections indicated an improvement in mathematics teaching since the introduction of the strategy, although improvements in learning were not as dramatic. The Leverhulme report also assessed the impact of the strategies on teaching and learning by looking at test results. After an initial, dramatic improvement at the introduction of the strategy, national curriculum test results have remained fairly stable in recent years. Key stage 2 results for 2003 showed a similar proportion of pupils achieved level 4+, as did in 2002, but a slight increase in the proportion achieving level 5. Research showed improvement in the progress children make in many aspects of mathematics during key stages 1 and 2 was most evident in middle-attaining pupils rather than high-attainers. There was some evidence that problem-solving abilities declined from 1997–2001[7].
- In **science**, many teachers in this year's monitoring exercise indicated that they were now adopting a more cross-curricular approach in their teaching of science, in order to combat time pressures. Other evidence showed children were transferring some literacy and numeracy skills to science.
- In **history**, evidence from teacher educators, Ofsted and the primary teachers' survey indicated a small but significant reduction of the teaching time for history in some schools. However, opinion on the impact of the literacy strategy varied with about half of primary teachers surveyed feeling that it had generally been positive. History was frequently used as the focus for the development of literacy skills. This had the advantage of preserving and in some, more unusual, cases even extending the share of teaching time available for history.
- 47% of **MFL** respondents to the SSP thought that the literacy strategy had contributed 'quite a lot' to pupil achievement in MFL. Less time was being spent on teaching grammar as teachers could build on prior knowledge. At the QCA regional seminars, secondary teachers of MFL were asked about the extent to which they felt the literacy strategy in primary schools had had an impact at key stage 3 on pupils' understanding of grammar and the way language works. Generally they felt there had been a positive impact, improving pupils' knowledge

6 There was wide agreement on this in the Primary Teachers' Focus Group, July 2003.

7 Leverhulme Project, Kings

3.4 The impact of the new statutory nature of the foundation stage curriculum

What have been the implications for schools and settings of the new statutory nature of the foundation stage curriculum?

The new statutory basis of the foundation stage curriculum and the early learning goals were welcomed by many working in the primary phase as strengthening and endorsing the case for high quality early years practice.

However, there were frequently-expressed concerns about children's experience of the transition between the foundation stage and key stage 1. At the root of this concern was the contrast between the teaching approaches that typify the two phases. This was often attributed to the fact that children are moving from six areas of learning, delivered through play and exploration, to 11 subjects and prescribed programmes of study. Significant numbers of seminar delegates called for a reappraisal of the key stage 1 curriculum.

3.5 The Key Stage 3 Strategy

What impact has the Key Stage 3 Strategy had on the teaching and learning of all subjects in schools?

There was significant agreement, through both SSP returns and seminar findings, that greater curriculum coherence has been encouraged by the strategy especially where unified management structures are in place.

The impact of the Key Stage 3 Strategy varied significantly from one subject to another. Not surprisingly, a given strand of the strategy affected the subjects most closely related to it. In the case of the Foundation Subjects strand, there was strong support for its impact on pedagogy, although its impact outside the foundation subjects was considered, as yet, to be minimal by 80% of SSP schools.

The evidence came primarily from the SSP, but a variety of findings emerged from other sources, as described below.

The SSP monitoring of subjects produced the following findings.

- 71% of English departments reported using the Key Stage 3 Strategy In Literacy ‘a great deal’ for overall planning, and a further 23% ‘quite a lot’. There was considerable variation across other subjects: mathematics reporting only 21% using it ‘quite a lot’ or more, but 80% in history. The figures for planning individual lessons were very similar.
- Very few departments reported using the Key Stage 3 Strategy In Numeracy ‘a great deal’, though more than 50% of science and geography departments used it ‘quite a lot’ or more. 56% of English departments did not use it at all and 56% of mathematics departments reported using it only ‘a little’. Again, the figures for planning individual lessons followed a similar pattern.
- The Key Stage 3 Strategy In Science was used for overall planning ‘a great deal’ by more than half the science departments responding to SSP, with a further 30% using it ‘quite a lot’. 72% of Design and Technology departments reported using it

'quite a lot' or more but otherwise its use was only 'a little', including some two-thirds of mathematics departments.

- The Key Stage 3 Strategy In ICT was used 'a great deal' for overall planning by more than two-thirds of the ICT departments and in all subjects it was rated 'quite a lot' or more by more than one third of SSP respondents: 90% in ICT, 72% in D&T and over half in MFL, geography and music. A similar pattern was seen in planning individual lessons.
- Only in history, geography and art and design was the Key Stage 3 Strategy In Foundation Subjects used 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' by more than a quarter of SSP respondents for overall planning and only in geography and history for planning individual lessons.

Significant other findings from non-SSP sources are as follows.

Mathematics

A QCA conference in 2002 suggested the National Strategies had had an uneven effect on attainment. Improvements in some areas or at some ages (for instance in year 7) may have been at the expense of others (eg year 9, or GCSE). The 5-day training was not seen to give appropriate emphasis to Using and Applying Mathematics. Teachers were positive about the amount of training, but advisers expressed concern that the cascade model fails to impact on teaching and learning at the classroom level and that there was a need for more breadth in CPD, both in terms of the teachers targeted and the content of training so as to avoid a narrowing effect on the taught curriculum. The Leverhulme Project, 2002, indicated that the gain in some aspects of mathematics directly attributable to the strategies may have been at the expense of others, such as Using and Applying Mathematics.

Science

LEA advisers, Key Stage 3 Science Strategy consultants and teachers judged that it was 'too early' to assess the full impact of the KS3 Science Strategy on teaching and learning. However there were some indications that it was having some initial positive effects, eg on teaching and learning styles; the quality of assessment; transition and progression across and within key stages: teaching and assessment of Sc1. The work of the strategy consultants with individual teachers was particularly welcomed, and there was a plea for continued support.

Citizenship

Teachers at monitoring focus groups felt that the Key Stage 3 Strategy and the particular focus on literacy and numeracy was squeezing the timetable which meant that other subjects were being particularly protective of their timetable slots.

PSHE

Some LEAs and schools reported lack of time for training and development in areas not directly related to the Key Stage 3 Strategy.

MFL

At the QCA regional seminars, secondary teachers of MFL were asked about the extent to which they felt the literacy strategy in primary schools had had an impact at key stage 3 on pupils' understanding of grammar and the way language works.

Generally they felt there had been a positive impact, improving pupils' knowledge of terminology and their understanding of grammatical concepts. However, the benefits were felt to be patchy: some teachers reported that it had not helped weaker pupils, or that pupils' familiarity with terminology did not always mean that they understood how to adapt languages for different purposes.

3.6 The inclusion statement

Across all phases and subjects, how widely are schools and settings interpreting the inclusion statement? What evidence for this is there?

Although many teachers were not aware of the inclusion statement and QCA's supporting material, most schools and settings felt they were fully or largely meeting the needs of the groups of pupils specified in the SSP questionnaire. However, there were some difficulties in providing adequately for pupils with disabilities, gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs. Almost all subject departments modified their curriculum to cater for differences in pupils' needs, and most did so to allow for pupil preferences. Phase and subject seminars findings amplified those of the SSP.

Awareness of the statement

Awareness of the inclusion statement and supporting QCA material was limited in at least some quarters. Half the delegates to a QCA focus group on English as an additional language were unaware of the inclusion statement. Seminars in English, MFL, geography and music found that significant numbers of teachers were not familiar with the inclusion statement.

A questionnaire survey conducted by QCA's Diversity and Inclusion Team found 67% of schools were unaware of QCA's *A Language in Common*, and 92% were unaware of QCA's *Respect for All* website. Key stage 3 monitoring seminars suggested many teachers had not visited the *Guidance on Teaching the Gifted and Talented* website; SSP data was unclear on this issue. Only a third of SSP subject respondents had either seen or used the *Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties* website. Just over 30% of headteacher and manager respondents had not seen the DfES SEN *Excellence for All* website.

SSP findings

The SSP asked schools and settings in all phases how well they were able to meet the diverse learning needs of pupils who differed in terms of gender, or ethnic, religious, cultural, social or linguistic backgrounds, or who had special educational needs or disabilities, or who were gifted and talented.

While most respondents felt that they were largely meeting the needs of some of these groups, provision for pupils with disabilities was a problem with around 40% of respondents feeling they were meeting the needs of those pupils either 'only partly' or 'not at all' at both primary and secondary phases. Another difficult area was provision for gifted and talented pupils with 41% of schools at key stage 3 and 37% of schools at key stage 4 feeling they were meeting their needs 'only partly' or 'not at all'. Significant numbers of respondents also felt they were only partly meeting the needs of SEN pupils, especially at key stage 4.

Among secondary schools, considerably more felt that they were only partly meeting the needs of boys, compared to those of girls, although the vast majority were satisfied in these areas.

In the **foundation stage**, the group for whom settings indicated they felt it easiest to provide for was 'children who are very able' - an SSP finding which was borne out in seminars. The group for whom the highest percentages of SSP respondents said they were able to provide for only 'with some difficulty' or 'with great difficulty' was 'children with English as an additional language'. When asked about provision for children with 'specific learning difficulties', children with 'behavioural or emotional needs', and children with 'physical disabilities', sizeable percentages of SSP respondents (in the range 18–37%) stated that their ability to provide for these groups 'depended on the nature of the individual child's needs'. Seminar evidence suggested that it was these groups of children for whom practitioners found it most difficult to provide.

Subject departments in secondary schools varied widely in whether they modified their curriculum to cater for gender differences, from only 10% of ICT departments to 76% of English departments making modifications. 71% of PE departments and over half of MFL and art and design departments also made modifications.

Modifications to meet pupils' needs were much more common with over 90% of subject departments reporting it in all areas except ICT (81%) and citizenship (69%). Pupils' preferences were catered for in about two-thirds of English, design and technology, MFL, art and design, music and PE departments and over half in all departments except mathematics, science, ICT and citizenship.

Other findings

At **key stages 1 and 2**, seminars found that inclusion was an issue with a high priority in schools and LEAs. Teachers reported dealing with rising numbers of children with a very wide range of needs. NFER research found that 40% of schools were experiencing an increase in the proportion of children with SEN[8]. Most schools believed in the principles of inclusion, but various factors could inhibit it in practice. These included: funding; the difficulty of recruiting specialised staff; and concerns of staff and parents about the school's position in performance tables. Evidence from seminars suggested that provision for gifted and talented children continued to grow.

In **PE** there was evidence that the needs of specific groups of pupils were not always met. For example, evidence of higher achievement is not strong in PE compared to other subjects either in key stage 3 teacher assessment or in general qualifications. This suggests that the needs of some of the more able may not be met. The reliance on games activities as the main focus for the delivery of the national curriculum, and the over emphasis on specific sports often had the effect of excluding large groups of pupils, especially girls. There was also a need for schools to take greater account of the needs of pupils of different ages and from a variety of backgrounds.

In **music**, inadequate attention was being paid to the needs of pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds. Pupils who expressed negative views towards music education in schools, and felt excluded from classroom music, often emphasised that their music lessons were unrelated to the music they listened to.

8 Source: Annual Survey of Trends in Education

3.7 Inclusion measures

What measures are schools taking to:

- ***set suitable learning challenges for all;***
- ***respond to pupils' diverse learning needs;***
- ***overcome potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups of pupils?***

Many different types of measures were employed to meet the needs of boys and girls, pupils learning English as an additional language, ethnic minority groups, and gifted and talented pupils. The most common were giving pupils differentiated activities, grouping or setting pupils in various ways, providing additional teacher or teaching assistant support, and providing extra lessons at lunchtime, after school or in the summer holidays. Detailed statistical evidence came from the SSP, with subject reports providing specific insights.

SSP findings

The different needs of **boys and girls** tended to be catered for mainly by giving them differentiated activities (roughly three-quarters of primary respondents and half of secondary respondents). Many schools also put boys and girls into specific groupings and provided an additional teacher or teaching assistant support (roughly half of primary respondents and a third of secondary respondents).

The needs of pupils learning **English as an additional language** were provided for in a variety of ways in primary schools: differentiated activities; specific groupings; additional teacher or teaching assistant support; bi-lingual support teachers or assistants; and additional specific resources such as dual-language texts (between 20% to 36% of respondents for each of these). In secondary school, all these methods were used to a slightly lesser extent. The main provision was additional teacher or teaching assistant support, followed by differentiated activities.

To help ethnic minority groups, both primary and secondary schools relied mainly on differentiated activities and additional teacher or teaching assistant support.

Over 90% of primary schools made some provision for gifted and talented pupils, by, for example, covering objectives for older year groups, grouping children in various ways or planning for greater depth of learning. Significant numbers of primary schools also mentioned after-school or lunchtime clubs, able pupils' groups, enrichment teaching groups, extension classes and gifted programmes. Around a quarter of secondary schools provided enrichment programmes, materials or activities, and almost as many provided 'extra curricular opportunities'. Roughly 15% of secondary schools provided summer schools and used grouping or setting and 8% provided additional lessons or an extended school day. Respondents also mentioned various other measures including, for example, the appointment of gifted and talented co-ordinators, staff training and early exam entry.

14–19 curriculum monitoring findings

It was clear from 14–19 curriculum monitoring that a significant proportion of schools were thinking about how the organisation of the curriculum and particularly the new flexibility could be used to respond to students' diverse learning needs. Trends noted included the development of **'pathways'** within the key stage 4 curriculum, the

opening up of options, a curriculum emphasis derived from specialist status and increasing use of disapplication of subjects of the national curriculum.

Proponents of curriculum pathways leading to different outcomes said that they were **tailoring the curriculum to students' needs**, thereby maximising potential. The schools using pathways had taken pains to ensure that students' choices of pathways were well-informed. Those advocating a wider choice of key stage 4 options upheld breadth as an important principle and said that choice helped to keep students motivated and engaged. Specialist schools that had created a curriculum emphasis linked to their specialist status talked about overcoming barriers to learning. Examples of students' renewed enthusiasm for participation include performing arts courses and developing skills and confidence from business-related learning activities.

While QCA no longer formally monitors how many students have national curriculum subjects disapplied, and for what purposes, other monitoring activities revealed **increasing use of these arrangements**. Reasons given are to provide a more appropriate curriculum for some students and to begin a process of curriculum development leading to 2004.

Subject reports

English

Teachers involved pupils in creative writing projects relating to Black and Asian History Month in October 2002, and chose fiction and non-fiction texts that reflected cultural diversity although they also wanted more guidance from QCA on suitable texts.

Design and technology

A focus group on SEN and inclusion in design and technology provided examples of:

- alternative or adapted activities to overcome difficulties with tools, equipment and materials, such as using a balloon to show how yeast produces gas when making bread so that pupils without sight could understand the process;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment by using talking scales, stencils and templates to guide cutting.

One school made their textile technology more inclusive for boys by incorporating structures into projects thus removing the gender bias apparent in most textiles contexts.

Science

Many primary, middle school and secondary teachers had a number of strategies for raising awareness of gender and multi-cultural issues in their science teaching, such as:

- woman scientists coming into schools and working with the children;
- considering the multi-cultural and gender issues in the teaching of certain topics, eg nutrition, animals, adaptation, variation, drugs, adolescence;
- studying scientists from other countries (as part of a Science Week event);
- offering research tasks using suitable role models.

However, it was felt that further support and guidance, eg websites, lists of women scientists, lists of the origins of different scientific ideas, case studies, and clearer signposting in schemes of work units, were needed to avoid tokenism.

History

Evidence from seminars and teacher educators suggested that the main focus in most schools was still on differentiation and that the issue of the relevance of the history curriculum to the ethnic background of pupils was rarely addressed. The Ofsted subject report for secondary history 2001–2 found improvements in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs.

Art and design

Some departments were addressing issues such as the differences in attainment between boys and girls by increasing opportunities for pupils to start with making activities (rather than drawing or designing ideas first), setting up team-working to provide different kinds of challenge or competition and providing opportunities for using ICT in all units of work.

ICT

Ofsted found that in secondary schools, differentiation through tasks and materials was under-developed, but well-judged support was given to individual pupils. On entry to secondary schools, tasks set were sometimes too challenging for lower attaining pupils, and higher attaining pupils were not sufficiently challenged because teachers' planning paid too little attention to these disparities.[9]

Music

Teachers had found that through using sound as the medium for learning, the barriers of language could be lessened and pupils could be released to demonstrate high levels of achievement. This contribution was significant as music could provide the only point of access to success for some pupils, and an additional point of access for all pupils.

Mathematics

The Leverhulme research suggest that the National Numeracy Strategy has impacted differently on different groups of pupils. It reports that boys in the study benefited more than girls. The research also suggests that the Strategy has had the greatest positive impact on middle ability pupils. Additionally, pupils with English as an additional language appear to have benefited more than other groups. In terms of ethnicity, findings suggest that black Caribbean and black British groups made greater gains than white, mixed-race and Pakistani pupils, whose gains were similar to the whole sample. The Indian group benefited most and the black African group did not appear to have benefited. About half of the primary schools represented at QCA's focus group meetings have had INSET and/or used QCA guidance to develop mathematics provision for gifted pupils. A small proportion suggested that materials providing multicultural contexts for mathematics are needed.

PSHE and Citizenship

These subjects taught knowledge and skills which were particularly relevant to inclusion. Examples included teaching about: identities and communities; human and legal rights and responsibilities; dealing with and challenging bullying, racism and stereotypes; resolving conflict and negotiation; and investigating issues or problems involving working with different people in the school and wider community who may have particular needs.

9 Ofsted Subject Report 2002–3

3.8 Use of the level descriptions

Across all phases and subjects, what use are schools making of the level descriptions?

Level descriptions were used, in some subjects, for providing information about a pupil's performance on entry to secondary school, and, in almost all subjects, for planning targets, for end-of-year assessments and for statutory teacher assessment. Teachers sometimes re-wrote them or sub-divided them to make them more useful and employed a variety of methods to standardise their use of them in assessment. The source of evidence was always the SSP except where mentioned otherwise.

The uses

- **To provide information about a pupil's performance on entry to secondary school**
  Only in history did more than 25% regard the level descriptions as 'very useful' in providing such information whilst in English, mathematics, science and RE, more than half reported them as being at least 'quite useful'.
- **For planning targets**
  For this purpose, in all subject areas except science, more than 70% thought level descriptions 'quite useful' or better and over 20% of responses in English, mathematics, design and technology, MFL, history and RE rated them 'very useful'.
- **For assessment at the end of each year**
  Again, more than 70% of SSP respondents in all subjects thought level descriptions 'quite useful' or better, except in history and science. In English, mathematics, ICT, design and technology, MFL, art and design, music and RE, more than 20% regarded them as 'very useful'.
- **For end-of-key stage 3 statutory teacher assessment**
  In this respect, level descriptions were regarded as 'quite useful' or better by more than 60% of respondents in all subjects, reaching 85% in PE and 89% in MFL.

Difficulties and adaptations in usage

Some difficulties in using the level descriptions were reported. At the key stage 3 monitoring seminars there was a good deal of implied criticism of the progression articulated through the descriptions and also of the credence given to them by teachers newly arrived into the profession. In a report on ICT in primary schools, Ofsted found that teachers showed a continued lack of confidence in making summative assessments against the national curriculum.[10]

However, in most of the schools taking part in the secondary history seminars teachers had a good understanding of the level descriptions, although some schools were re-writing them using more accessible language to help pupils and parents to become more involved in assessment. Further guidance on assessment from QCA was requested in these history seminars.

The music subject report argued that the structure of the levels had not been understood as the layout did not make it clear that each level begins with the underlying concept which is followed by illustrations of how this concept is demonstrated through performing, composing and appraising activities. When this structure was explained, all teachers, especially in the primary phase, found the levels much easier to use.

10 Ofsted Subject Report 2002–3

In order to deal with these difficulties, teachers sometimes adapted the level descriptions. The SSP found that re-writing the level descriptions was most prevalent in history (60%), design and technology (58%), geography (55%) and PE (51%). It was rare in mathematics or science. Sub-dividing the level descriptions was carried out by half or more of respondents in history, PE, geography and design and technology departments, but rare (less than 25%) in mathematics, MFL and science.

Key stage 3 seminar participants observed that pupils arriving at secondary school would often talk in terms of sub-divided levels and secondary teachers were taking their lead from this. It was felt by some LEA personnel that sub-division was useful for tracking progress, setting targets and understanding the reasons behind pupil performance. It was also given as a way to demonstrate progress to parents where movement between the levels seemed to take a very long time. LEAs were finding quite a marked divide between schools which choose readily to adopt this process and those which rejected it. Exponents said that it helped them to identify and analyse under-performance, set targets and calculate the precise value added.

Some design and technology teachers in secondary schools visited by QCA had re-worded the level descriptions for the pupils so that they could target their progress towards a level more easily and reflect on what skills knowledge and understanding they needed to improve their attainment. One school also used colour coding linked to level descriptions in their record system to help teachers see at a glance the progress of pupils within their group. Ofsted found, in both secondary and in some primary schools:

> Where assessment is particularly successful teachers have often developed assignment-specific criteria. This enables teachers and pupils to have a very clear idea of what is expected in the work they are doing, rather than struggling with generic statements, and what to do to improve each piece of work; consequently pupils develop their overall designing capability. This in turn helps them to understand the more generic statements (level descriptions) in order to gain a broader view of how well they are doing.[11]

Standardisation

On the question of standardisation of teacher assessment, a number of methods were identified by SSP respondents.

- Teachers relied on their **own judgements** at least 'to some extent' in 90% of all departments except ICT where 12% indicated this was not done at all. Teachers relied on their own judgements 'a great deal' in half or more of English, PE, music, and art and design departments and in 30% or more in all other subjects.
- Teachers followed **departmental guidelines** 'to some extent' in almost all departments; the lowest was ICT at 96%. Departmental guidelines were used 'a great deal' in more than 80% of art and design, RE, design and technology, music and MFL departments, and in over 70% in all others except ICT where the figure was 64%.
- Where arrangements included **standardisation portfolios** there was considerable variation across the subjects. They were used 'to some extent' in more than 85% of art and design, design and technology and English departments, but less than half in mathematics and PE.

11 Ofsted: Design and technology in secondary schools. Ofsted subject report series 2001/02–Nov 2002

- **Standardisation across the department** was used at least 'to some extent' in 85% or more of all subject departments and 'a great deal' in more than half of the departments responding in art and design (74%), PE, design and technology, MFL, English, and music. An English focus group found that a number of primary schools used internal standardisation procedures. For instance, each half-term pupils completed an assessed piece of writing and teachers made selections from this work to share with colleagues in a standardisation staff meeting.
- **Standardisation across subjects** was rare in any subject. It was used 'a great deal' by 13% of science and 12% of design and technology departments but 'not at all' by more than 60% in all other subjects except RE where 41% used it at least 'to some extent'.
- **Meetings with other schools** to assist in standardisation were rare. It was most common in art and design where 60% used it 'to some extent', including 19% 'a great deal'. Use in other departments ranged from a low of 14% in MFL to a high of 43.5% in PE (including 9.5% 'a great deal').

3.9 The expectations in the level descriptions and early learning goals

Do schools think the expectations set out in the level descriptions are realistic in all subjects?

The expectations in the level descriptions were overwhelmingly seen as satisfactory, although there was some evidence to the contrary in science. Some LEA advisors felt that a statement of national expectations was needed in PSHE. The sources of evidence are indicated in the text below.

The SSP found that the expectations set out in the level descriptions were seen as satisfactory by most subject respondents and very rarely as 'too low'. Only slightly more than 10% of respondents in all subjects except mathematics, science and RE regarded them as 'too high'.[12]

SSP responses

Percentages of responses to 'Do you think the expectations set out in the (non-statutory) level descriptions in your subject are …

	English	Mathematics	Science	ICT	D&T	MFL	History	Geography	Art & design	Music	PE	Citizenship	RE
Too high	12	8	3	17	10	13	11	10	14	18	16	n/a	9
About right	86	90	97	82	90	86	88	90	86	80.5	84	n/a	89
Too low	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	n/a	1

All figures are percentages.

However, while 97% of science teachers in the SSP survey considered that the expectations were appropriate, many teachers and others continued to report that the level descriptions were 'too broad.' Difficulties in differentiation were cited, notably

12 The highest proportion was 18%.

for Sc1 and Sc4, and between levels 4, 5 and 6. It was felt that the level descriptions would be more user-friendly if:

- they were presented as bullet points or in tabular form;
- sub-levels/strands/small steps, similar to the P-scale were introduced, eg a, b, c strands;
- there were more levelling of specific statements in the PoS - for example, what a pupil should be able to do to demonstrate a level achievement in relation to sound.[13]

In the foundation stage, the early learning goals became statutory during this monitoring cycle. The overwhelming majority of SSP respondents (in the range 90-98%) said that they felt that the early learning goals 'described reasonable expectations of children's achievement by the end of the foundation stage'. There was some disparity between the areas of learning, however. Most notably, 9% of respondents from settings with children of reception age did not feel that the goals for Communication Language and Literacy (CLL) were reasonable (it was not possible to tell from the data whether their reservations applied to all or some of the goals for this area).

The SSP questionnaires also asked whether settings felt that the stepping stones 'identified the developing knowledge skills, understanding and attitudes that children need if they are to achieve [the] early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage'. Most respondents (96-98%) supported the stepping stones, with no marked disparity between areas of learning.

There were no national expectations in PSHE, but 30% of LEA advisers responding to a question about further support and guidance needs for PSHE identified assessment issues including the establishment of expectations. Assessment was also identified as a development need by focus group attendees.

3.10 Key stage 4 developments and the revised GCSE specifications

How are schools reacting to developments at key stage 4, including the introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects and, in all subjects, the revised GCSE specifications?

There were four **key findings** from monitoring activities.

- Schools were beginning to **use the curriculum flexibility** signalled by the Green Paper: *14–19: extending opportunities, raising standards* (Feb. 2002) and changes to disapplication arrangements.
- There was **significant take-up** of the new GCSEs in vocational subjects.
- In some subjects the revised GCSE specifications had had **little impact** because the revisions had been minor.
- There were concerns about **particular aspects of the specifications** in five subjects: mathematics, science, history, art and design, and music.

13 Source/evidence base for the 2002–3 findings in science: SSP, 20 LEAs in the key stage 3 science strategy consultants monitoring, NAIGS – 14 to 16 LEAs represented, two subject associations, meetings with nine primary and middle school teachers and with 14 secondary school teachers, two primary and one secondary 'case study' schools, one primary school visited in June 2003 and one secondary school visited in July 2003.

Monitoring activities showed that schools were developing **their key stage 4** curriculum in the context of forthcoming changes to the 14?19 curriculum by:

- examining their provision for the new entitlement areas (arts, design and technology, humanities and modern foreign languages);
- using the opportunities provided by changes to the purposes and arrangements for disapplication of national curriculum subjects to increase option choices for some students;
- developing differentiated curriculum pathways to meet student needs;
- investigating the possibility and desirability of introducing new qualifications, including AS levels, vocational and entry level qualifications, and in some cases introducing them;
- increasing student access to college courses, work-based pathways and a wider range of qualifications;
- collaborating with colleges and other schools to provide for the range of student needs;
- developing a curriculum and offering qualifications linked to their specialist status.

Most of the 60 schools closely involved in the monitoring programme had changed their curriculum for September 2002; were planning to do for 2003; or were awaiting the outcome of consultation on the changes to set development in train for September 2004. It is therefore a period of significant curriculum thinking and development.

Provision of GCSEs in vocational subjects was substantial and projected to grow further. Sixty-two per cent of state schools and 45% of all schools responding to the QCA/UCAS June 2003 survey signalled an intention to offer GCSEs in vocational subjects from September 2003. The figure for state schools in 2002/3 was 43%. The fact that 22% of FE colleges also said that they offer GCSEs in vocational subjects to key stage 4 students underlines the growth in collaborative activity.

LEA delegates at a monitoring conference considered the **Increased Flexibility Programme** to be a major influence on take-up of these qualifications In some LEAs all schools are offering at least two GCSEs in vocational subjects and the opportunity to take GCSEs in vocational subjects is gradually being opened up to students of all abilities.

There was generally a poor correlation between students' work experience and the GCSEs in vocational subjects that they were taking.

The impact of the revised GCSE specifications in all subjects

Mathematics

There was some concern in schools as to the desirability and manageability of the handling data project as part of GCSE.

Science

As in the previous two phases of the science monitoring exercise, criticism continued to be levelled at GCSE coursework and the assessment criteria. The take-up of the new GCSE in Applied Science continued to be relatively low, and there were mixed views about this award in those centres offering it. Some regarded the course as too 'academic' for those who would normally take GNVQ Foundation and Intermediate, while others thought it was appropriate for the students.

Design and technology

Schools concluded, by noting the grade residuals for each focus area, that systems and control was the 'hardest' focus area, and graphic products the 'easiest', perceptions which were reflected in the pattern of examination entries. The short course continued to decline, from 10.3% in 1999 to 5.2% now. Reports from the secondary schools visited by members of the QCA design and technology team indicated that teachers were very concerned that the subject would no longer be compulsory at key stage 4 from September 2004, which would reduce the subject's status in the opinion of both parents and pupils.

ICT

The significant developments were:

- an increase in popularity of the short course GCSE;
- growth in the use pre-16 of the key skill in ICT;
- an increased take up of foundation and intermediate GNVQs, both as Part One and full qualifications;
- the take-up of the GCSE in Business and Communication Systems.

There was evidence from QCA 14–19 monitoring and from Ofsted of some centres starting formal qualifications, such as GNVQ, in year 8, and of centres choosing to use vocationally related qualifications such as CLAIT or ECDL[14] with some students.

History

A number of criticisms were levelled at the GCSE specifications from different quarters. Feedback from some teachers and subject associations pointed to an increasing disparity between developments in teaching and learning at key stage 3 and GCSE, implying the need for a thorough review of some courses. Recent research by the Universities of Nottingham and East Anglia suggested that some pupils found history more demanding than other subjects and less relevant to their future employment prospects. More widespread, was the concern expressed about the 'Hitlerisation' of post-14 history. QCA's new GCSE history hybrid pilot would try to address some of these issues.

MFL

Although there had been significant changes in the mark scheme, the revised specifications had, surprisingly, not affected teaching and learning. However, in the 2003 examinations there was a decline in the proportion of candidates achieving grade C or above (down 2.4% in French, down 2.8% in German and down 1.6% in Spanish) which caused concern among teachers, especially at a time when they felt MFL was under threat in key stage 4 because it would no longer be a statutory requirement from September 2004.

Art and design

The new GSCE specifications had been well received, although concerns continued over the use of photocopies as preparatory work and the lack of evidence of candidates' own drawing and imagery.

14 CLAIT: Computer Literacy and Information Technology; ECDL: European Computer Driving Licence

Music

The new specifications focused on musical understanding. So, for example, pupils were now able to achieve the highest grades without the highly developed instrumental skills that were normally learned outside of the class lessons. Nonetheless, there were mixed feelings about the extent to which all pupils could achieve. The nature of assessment may need further investigation in the light of teachers' comments on the increased workload and the difficulty of managing the assessment.

In two subjects, attention centred on the **place of the subject** in the key stage 4 curriculum from September 2004. Design and technology and MFL were apprehensive about their prospects now that they were no longer to be compulsory. Publication of the 14-19 document in January 2003 caused a significant proportion of schools to re-assess their provision in the four new entitlement areas arts, design and technology, humanities and modern foreign languages.

3.11 The Curriculum 2000 changes

To what extent are the Curriculum 2000 changes becoming embedded?

General findings

The Curriculum 2000 changes were **becoming embedded** in that teachers appeared to have a better understanding of the standards of the new qualifications. In response to the UCAS June 2003 questionnaire 81% said that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'teachers are confident that they know the standard required for GCE AS'. The figure for A2 was 76%, suggesting that time and familiarity are crucial to understanding of revised qualifications. Sixty-seven per cent of respondents said that their students' January results were as expected, while 15% had not used that assessment opportunity.

Some teachers reported that Curriculum 2000 required them to adopt a **more examination-focused approach,** to be more selective in the material they taught and to compress schemes of work because of the timing of AS examinations. This had an effect on the use of fieldwork in subjects such as geography.

Concern about **pressure of time** in the AS continued, albeit somewhat less than previously. Fifty per cent of respondents to the UCAS survey said that year 12 students were not coping well with their workload. Twenty-six per cent said the same of year 13 students. These concerns were particularly expressed in sciences, history and languages. Centres generally felt that A2 students coped with their courses better than AS students did.

Coursework deadlines were problematic in GCE since AS coursework often had to be completed in a tight 'window' within the spring term. Some centres were trying to alleviate the workload pressure on students by separating coursework deadlines, and by closer monitoring and advising of students. VCE coursework was generally felt to be less problematic. Some centres had a definite policy of only allowing students to sit examinations in the June session each year, Others took the view that using the January assessment opportunities spreads the assessment load. In many cases subject departments could choose which opportunities to use.

Students are studying bigger and broader programmes, with four AS in year 12 becoming the norm – 58 % of students in schools and colleges responding to the UCAS survey were following four AS courses. There is some evidence that the proportion of students taking qualifications from different disciplines is rising, the fourth AS providing breadth. While 72% of year 13 students were taking three A2 subjects, other evidence suggests that around a third of them were likely to be taking subjects from one broad discipline. In terms of the flexibility offered by Curriculum 2000 programmes, 15% of students in centres responding to the UCAS survey took a new AS in year 13.

The proportion of students taking **VCE** appears to be rising. According to the UCAS survey, while 19% of year 13 students were taking VCE, in year 12 the figure was 25%. Twenty-three per cent of respondents said that they considered there would be more combining of VCE and GCE qualifications in 2003/4, and 9% said they were adding VCE to their curriculum offer. Teaching and learning styles appropriate for the GNVQ were not necessarily applicable to the VCE. Compared with the GNVQ, the VCE was seen as less vocational, more academically demanding, and more likely to be studied alongside GCEs. These factors and the VCE's availability in three, six and twelve unit sizes mean that it is used differently in schools and colleges, with more use of the six unit VCE alongside GCEs in schools and more use of the 12-unit VCE in colleges. In some cases, mainly in colleges, the 12-unit VCE is being replaced by BTEC national qualifications.

Fewer students were taking **key skills** qualifications, the reason most frequently given being a belief that key skills qualifications were not sufficiently recognised by higher education. Seventy nine per cent of respondents to the June 2003 UCAS survey disagreed with the statement that 'HE officers recognise key skills achievement'. However, UCAS analysis of course information showed that 63% of courses offered are prepared to accept key skills as part of a tariff-based offer for 2004 entry. Of those centres offering key skills in June 2003, 38% said they were offering advanced level students the opportunity to take application of number, 50% communication and 51% offering IT, though fewer than 25% of centres were expecting to enter students for key skills certification.

The proportion of centres entering students for the **AEA** was unchanged from the previous year. Eighty per cent of responding centres were not entering students.

Responses to the UCAS and SSP surveys underlined the importance of **student demand** as an influence on provision at this level, it being cited when qualifications or enrichment activities are added to or deleted from provision. Other significant drivers cited were: desire to provide breadth, student workload and HE response.

In this, the third, year of implementing Curriculum 2000, **the top six issues** raised by UCAS respondents in the 'Any comments?' section were:

- AS exams are too early;
- extra-curricular activities have been squeezed out;
- the workload is burdensome;
- students are stressed;
- students are over-examined;
- the AS specifications are too full.

Evidence is drawn from the monitoring carried out by subject teams, the 14-19 and research teams. A wide range of quantitative sources was used including SSP, Ofsted, the UCAS/QCA and subject associations' surveys, in addition to qualitative data from QCA conferences, seminars and visits. QCA's *Curriculum 2000 Review: Report on phase 3 and its Key Skills Review Report* contain further information.

3.12 The use of transfer data

In all subjects, what use is made of transfer data within and between key stages?

The information in this section falls into two categories: information from the subject SSP survey, and information from SSP phase surveys and QCA seminars, visits and other investigations. The conclusion which emerges from both categories of findings is that the use of transfer data was significantly inadequate.

Three types of transfer data

The Common Transfer Document was used, generally, by less than half of schools' subject departments. In three subjects - design and technology, art and design, and PE – it was used by almost half of departments at every change of year group or teacher.

Value-added information was used more widely. More than 40% of departments in English, mathematics, science, MFL, history, geography, and art and design used it at every change of year group or teacher, but its use was less common in music, PE and RE.

Examples of pupils' work were transferred by 37% (science) to 77% (art and design) of subject departments at every change of year or teacher. Examples of pupils' work (77%) were most common in art and design, English (68%), design and technology (60%) and music (57%) but more than half of PE and science departments did not pass on examples.

Transfer between each phase

Foundation stage

In the **foundation stage** information about in-coming children was gleaned from home visits when staffing resources permitted, and from parents who helped settle the children into their settings. Seminar delegates from the non-maintained sector often commented that it was difficult for them to make links with the schools to which their children transferred. They also had doubts as to how much use schools made of the information about individual children passed to them by pre-school settings (portfolios of work, reports etc).

Foundation stage to key stage 1

Concern was frequently voiced about the difficulty of facilitating continuity between the foundation stage and key stage 1. While a small minority of seminar participants reported successful transition from reception into year 1, both in terms of the curriculum and broader pastoral experiences, the majority appeared not to be satisfied that children were experiencing the transition as a smooth and easy process. (see also paragraph 3.4)

Key stage 1 to key stage 2

Many seminar delegates commented on the importance of good communication and talked of successful projects where year 3 teachers work with year 2 classes, and year 2 teachers with year 3 classes. This transition seems most successful where both key stages are on the same site.

Key stage 2 to key stage 3

Almost all SSP respondents reported making use of statutory tests on transfer from key stage 2 to key stage 3, with half of all schools using them at all three transition points in the secondary school. Next most commonly used were cognitive ability tests, value-added information and then other reading test results. Cognitive ability tests and value-added information were most commonly used at change of key stage and change of year group (around 30% of schools in each case). Value-added information was also used by 13% only at change of key stage. The use of other reading test results was more varied, being used by 17% at all 3 changes, by 15% at change of key stage and change of year group and by 12% solely at transfer from feeder schools or change of year group. The highest incidence of usage of examples of students work was at transfer from feeder schools (19%).

QCA subject-based seminars were frequently told that secondary schools were not receiving enough information, or sufficiently reliable information, from key stage 2 schools. Where data was provided it tended to concentrate on core subjects. However, an ICT seminar heard that many primary schools did offer transfer data in ICT but the use made of this by the receiving schools was patchy, particularly between key stages 2 and 3, where some schools started year 7 with basic ICT skills, regardless of information received from their partner primary schools.

Phase seminar discussions reported that most schools were now using some form of bridging or transition materials, and were beginning to transfer data from primary to secondary schools electronically. They also noted that successful transition involved a number of meetings between primary and secondary staff. It was also thought to be beneficial to transfer teacher assessment information in all subjects in addition to test results.

Phase seminar participants differed on whether transfer systems were improving. Some thought that transfer was not getting any better: the Common Transfer Document was still arriving too late for secondary schools and the problems associated with multiple feeder schools persisted. For others it seemed preferable, in the short term, to draw on pupils for information about attainment levels and curriculum coverage. There were many instances of improving partnerships between year 7 and or subject, secondary teachers and year 6 teachers and some use of the transition materials and work used at KS2 prior to transfer. There were opposing views about the reliability and relevance of statutory assessment results with a number of middle schools expressing the most positive view. Many schools continue to supplement the national curriculum tests with other tests, adding to the weight of the assessment regime.

Pupils questioned as part of the DfES study on children's views on education and learning, said that they were often repeating material that they had studied in the later stages of the primary school.

A questionnaire about benchmark data used for target setting in MFL found that 56/140 respondents mentioned the use of scores from CATs, national curriculum tests, NFER tests or YELLIS data.

Key stage 3 to key stage 4 and beyond

A substantial majority of SSP phase respondents provided the following types of information to pupils to help them make the transition from key stage 3 to key stage 4.

- Types of course available and qualifications
- Explanations of possible combinations of options
- Information about individual subjects
- Careers information
- The opportunities and demands of key stage 4
- Information and activities to prepare students for new ways of working.

Seminar participants from middle schools were keen to have transfer records to facilitate efficient transfer to high schools and said that students themselves wanted more of substance to take with them.

The 14–19 monitoring programme involved interviews with around 100 students at the end of year 10. Few of these students were able to report specific advice and guidance regarding post-16 opportunities, though they had received information and guidance on their key stage 4 choices. Most had only general ideas about possible progression routes and had little or no knowledge of courses or qualifications available to them at 16. Most assumed that they would be given such information in year 11. This indicated that there was some distance to go before students were equipped at 13 to choose 14–19 programmes.

Schools were, however, making changes to their key stage 4 careers education and guidance. In the SSP a quarter of the schools had changed their provision in the 12 months prior to the survey. The nature of the changes was diverse, the biggest category concerning changes to Connexions provision (9%). 42% of responding schools said that the introduction of Connexions had made an impact during the 12 months prior to the survey.

Providers for students with special educational needs thought that a broader range of experience offered to 14–16 year olds, in different learning environments, enabled students to make better-informed decisions at the age of 16.

3.13 The impact of transfer data on teaching and learning

In all subjects, what impact, whether positive or negative, does transfer data have on teaching and learning?

The impact of transfer data on teaching and learning was limited primarily to grouping or setting pupils at the start of secondary school. The data was also used, to a lesser extent, for monitoring progress, target-setting and differentiation. Otherwise, very little use was made of transfer data. The main source of information was the key stage 3 SSP survey supplemented with a very few supplementary findings from other sources.

The SSP asked key stage 3 schools what use they made of the following transfer data: QCA statutory test results, QCA optional test results, other reading test results, Cognitive Ability Test results, value-added information, and examples of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science. The responses, below, showed the major uses were for placing pupils in groups or sets, and to a lesser extent for monitoring progress, target-setting and differentiation.

Grouping/setting	34%
Monitoring individual pupil progress/needs	15%
Target setting	15%
Differentiation	14%
Organisation of curriculum/adjustments	8%
Appropriate staffing	3%
Little/none	3%
Central database for staff access	2%
Provide base line data	1%
Other uses	7%

Primary teachers at a mathematics focus group said that transfer data from key stage 1 was used as a basis for tracking progress during key stage 2, along with optional year 3, 4 and 5 test results in most primary schools.

Science researchers found the success of bridging programmes and units were dependent on secondary schools making some organisational and timetabling changes in year 7.[15] Ofsted's evaluation of the second year of the KS3 Science Strategy concluded that only in three out of ten schools were bridging units used effectively.

An MFL seminar found that where pupils learnt two languages in key stage 3, the data was sometimes used to guide pupils' choice of the language to be continued in key stage 4.

The design and technology report showed that transfer data may not have the desired impact on teaching and learning even when the receiving school was trying to make full use of the data. A secondary school with excellent links with primary feeder schools was certain it was fully aware of the problems associated with transition, and assured the visiting QCA team member that they avoided repetition of project contexts. Primary teachers who attended the QCA focus groups, however, reported that this was not necessarily the case in practice. Examples of basic electronic circuit work and mechanisms activities being repeated in year 8 within less interesting contexts than they had been in year 6 had been reported back to primary teachers by past pupils.

3.14 Awareness of QCA's materials

Has awareness of QCA's support and guidance materials increased since last year?

Awareness of QCA's support and guidance materials had increased in four subjects and stayed the same in four others. Almost all teachers were aware of the national

15 *Transfer and Transitions in the Middle Years of Schooling (7–14): Continuities and Discontinuities in Learning* – DfES Research Report RR443, University of Cambridge and NFER, June 2003

curriculum subject booklets and programmes of study and QCA's schemes of work (which were provided in print form) but typically less than half of them were aware of website-based materials.

The evidence came primarily from the SSP, but was reinforced with findings from various QCA seminars. Occasionally subject reports also drew on other sources such as school visits or findings arising from gathering case study information.

In four subjects, there appeared to be an increase since last year in awareness of QCA's support and guidance materials. These subjects were English, design and technology, ICT and geography. In ICT there had been a 'significant' increase, and in English too, although in English the evidence for this was 'limited'.

Four subjects – mathematics, science, MFL and music – reported no change since last year. In the case of MFL and music there might even have been a slight decrease in awareness. The MFL report was hesitant about drawing any firm conclusions from the available evidence. Other subject reports, together with the phase reports, did not refer to changes in awareness.

SSP findings showed that QCA schemes of work were used by more than half of respondents in all subjects except German and Spanish and were particularly used in ICT (85.5% of subject respondents), science (80%) and geography (78%). The schemes of work were mainly used to enhance parts of the school's current scheme. Over 90% of all subject departments, except MFL, were aware of the national curriculum subject booklets and the national curriculum programmes of study.

But, otherwise, awareness of QCA materials was frequently described in subject reports as 'limited'. Awareness of website material was particularly low. The SSP found that the majority of subject respondents had either 'not seen' or had 'seen but not used' the following websites.

- National Curriculum Online
- Curriculum On Line (except for science departments, of whom only 18% were unaware of the website)
- Assessment for Learning
- National Curriculum in Action: Exemplification of Standards (except for ICT departments, of whom only 17% were unaware of the website)
- Guidance on Teaching Gifted and Talented Pupils
- Guidance for Pupils with Learning Difficulties.

On the other hand, the improvements in awareness cited by ICT, design and technology and geography referred particularly to awareness of their websites. It is not clear why some subject departments were markedly more aware than other subject departments of particular websites.

Awareness of material may be affected by whether it is provided in print form or in websites. The foundation stage report found:

… there was low awareness of foundation stage resources on the web in comparison with hard-copy versions. At seminars, participants regularly commented that they found hard copy versions more useful and easier to access.

The music report pointed out:

> The national curriculum booklet and schemes of work have been seen by almost all teachers. In stark contrast, web based materials are not being seen and/or used by well over half of all teachers.

Teachers at an MFL seminar said they would prefer to have hard copies of QCA publications.

Delegates at two seminars offered suggestions for improving awareness of QCA materials. At a key stages 1 and 2 seminar:

> Many delegates felt that problems in disseminating QCA's products needed addressing. They referred to the DfES mailing, Spectrum, which had a relatively high profile in schools. The posting of single copies of materials to LEAs was seen as an important opportunity missed. A single copy could rarely reach the relevant people, and in some cases, advisers felt that they entered schools without appropriate knowledge of QCA's current or recent output. OnQ was not widely seen, and was felt to be too detailed, in some cases. Some delegates suggested that this situation could be improved through the production of a regular digest or directory of existing and new publications. By providing schools and LEAs with a regular list of publications and websites, with brief, one-line descriptions and web addresses or ordering details, QCA could increase awareness.

At a science seminar:

> In order to raise awareness, it was strongly urged that teachers should be alerted to these new websites, other publications and key developments, either in a newsletter, teachers' magazine or a message/e-mail should appear on the computer screen when new items are posted. The newsletters/updates provided by Planet Science were felt to be particularly helpful, and such a model could be adopted for an equivalent QCA update.

3.15 Usefulness of QCA's materials

Where schools and settings are using QCA's support and guidance materials, how useful do they find them?

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of those who used the QCA support materials found them useful. The evidence for this came almost entirely from the SSP, but for some subjects there was also corroborating evidence from Ofsted reports and QCA seminars.

Schools' subject departments responding to the SSP were asked, if they had used the QCA websites[16] and the key stage 3 scheme of work, to rate each one as 'not useful', 'useful', or 'very useful'. While there were variations between subjects, websites and schemes, the responses generally showed that about two-thirds of those who had used the materials found them useful and most of the remainder found them very useful. Generally, only about 5–10% of users thought the materials were not useful.

The mathematics report noted that the SSP key stages 1 and 2 report found the guidance on changes to the tests was used widely and was rated highly. The science subject report noted that Ofsted judged that the science scheme of work had:

16 These are the websites discussed in the previous section.

> … increased uniformity of content in the science curriculum; improved the clarity of lesson objectives; which resulted in better progression; and extended the appropriate use of scientific vocabulary. However, it has reduced the extent to which schools explore the use of local resources and contexts for teaching science.[17]

The design and technology report mentioned that delegates to primary seminars and focus groups echoed SSP findings on the usefulness of QCA materials. The ICT report noted that Ofsted regarded the influence of the QCA schemes of work as a key factor in improvements in the subject last year.[18] An MFL questionnaire found a clear majority of respondents regarded QCA's materials as useful, and the history report referred to Ofsted's annual report for primary history 2001–2 as further evidence of the usefulness of the schemes of work.

17 Science in Primary Schools – Ofsted subject report series 2001/2, Ofsted, November 2002.

18 Ofsted subject report 2002–2003.

4. QCA's monitoring and evaluation programme 2003–4

4.1 Planning

From 2003–4 there will be a more focussed approach to the monitoring and evaluation programme. Each year of monitoring will focus on a manageable number of common areas of enquiry and corresponding key questions for investigation.

We are already in to the next phase of monitoring and phase/subject teams are developing their monitoring plans.

This year all teams will be asked to:

(i) incorporate in their plans a set of key questions (see below); and
(ii) ensure that monitoring gathers evidence on the key questions which will be in the Monitoring the Curriculum and Assessment Project (formerly SSP).

Teams will also investigate other issues relevant to their phase/subject.

4.2 Common areas of enquiry and focussed questions

The curriculum

- What are the key issues regarding teaching and learning in your subject at each key stage?
- Are there any particular curriculum concerns in your subject at each key stage?
- How manageable are schools finding the programmes of study in your subject at each key stage?
- How are schools using the flexibilities and freedoms available in your subject, and what impact have they had on planning the teaching and learning?
- In what ways, if any, is ICT being used to enhance the teaching and learning in your subject at each key stage?

The impact of national initiatives/other developments

- What impact have the primary strategies had on the teaching and learning of your subject?
- What impact has the key stage 3 strategy had on the teaching and learning of your subject?

Inclusion

- How are schools interpreting the inclusion statement in your subject? What evidence for this is there?
- What measures are schools taking to:
  - set suitable learning challenges for all
  - respond to pupils' diverse learning needs
  - overcome potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups of pupils?

The impact of developments in assessment

- What assessment strategies are teachers using in your subject?
- How is assessment being used to support learning in your subject?
- Are the expectations set out in the level descriptions for your subject realistic and helpful in making teacher assessments?

The impact of developments in qualifications

- What impact have the revised GCSE specifications had in your subject?
- What impact have the Curriculum 2000 changes had on planning, teaching and learning in your subject?

Transfer and transition

- What are schools doing about continuity and progression between and within key stages in your subject?
- What impact has target setting had on teaching and learning in your subject?

Evaluating QCA's support and guidance programme

- Are schools aware of QCA's support and guidance materials for your subject?
- Where schools are using QCA's support and guidance materials for your subject, how useful are they finding them?
- What needs to be done to increase the levels of awareness of QCA's support and guidance materials for your subject?

Appendix 1
Source documents

This report is based on the following QCA documents.

Subject reports

English
Mathematics
Science
Design and technology
ICT
History
Geography
MFL
Art and design
Music
PE
Citizenship, key stage 1 and key stage 2
Citizenship, key stage 3 and key stage 4
PSHE
Inclusion – EAL

Phase reports

Foundation stage
Key stage 1 and key stage 2
Key stage 3
14–19

SSP 2003 reports

Subject comparisons
Key stages 1 and 2, part 1
Key stages 1 and 2, part 2
Key stages 3 and 4, report 2
Key stage 3
Key stage 4
Schools and settings for 3–4 year olds and 4–5 year olds
Post-16 provision in schools

Appendix 2
Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this report.

A level	GCE Advanced level
A2	the second half of the GCE Advanced level qualification
AEA	Advanced Extension Award
AS	Advanced Subsidiary
BECTA	British Educational Communications Technology Agency
CAD	computer-aided design
CAM	computer-aided manufacture
CLAIT	Computer Literacy and Information Technology
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
ICT	information and communication technology
INCA	International Review of Curriculum and Assessment
LEA	local education authority
MFL	modern foreign languages
NAIGS	National Association of Inspectors in Science
NGfL	National Grid for Learning
Ofsted	the Office of Standards in Education
PE	physical education
PSHE	personal, social and health education
RE	religious education
SEN	special educational needs
SSP	School Sampling Project 2002-2003 (see Introduction for details)
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
VCE	Vocational Certificate of Education

About this publication

Audience	Teachers, local education authorities and other bodies involved in education and training
Description	A summary of the findings of QCA's monitoring and research activities on the school (and post-16) curriculum in England in the 2003–3 academic year
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