

Transforming 16 to 19 education and training: the early implementation of 16 to 19 study programmes

The purpose of this survey was to evaluate how effectively further education and skills providers and schools and academies with sixth forms have implemented the 16 to 19 study programmes introduced in August 2013 and made the best use of the changed funding arrangements for 16–19-year-olds. The fieldwork for this survey was carried out between September 2013 to April 2014.

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361

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Contents

Executive summary	4
Key findings	5
Recommendations	7
The implementation of 16 to 19 study programmes	10
Study programmes at level 1 and below	10
Study programmes at level 2	11
Study programmes at level 3	12
Individual study programmes and progression	13
Study programmes at level 1 and below	13
Study programmes at level 2	14
Study programmes at level 3	15
English and mathematics	16
Traineeships	17
Supported internships	18
Notes	19
Further information	21
Ofsted publications	21
Other publications	21
Websites	21
Annex A. 16 to 19 study programmes	22
Changes to 16 to 19 funding arrangements	23
A note on work experience	24
Qualification levels	24
Annex B. Participation in education and training, age 16 to 18, in 2012/13	26
Table 1: Participation in education and training, age 16 to 18, in 2012/13	26
Table 2: The proportion of learners aged 16-18 in different provider types by level, 2012/13	27
Table 3: Participation in work based learning by 16-18 year olds in 2012/13	27

Executive summary

From August 2013, major changes have been made to the education and training of 16–19-year-olds: raising the participation age to 17, changing the 16 to 19 funding arrangements and introducing the 16 to 19 study programmes.¹

This report evaluated how effectively further education and skills (FE and skills) providers and schools and academies with sixth forms implemented the 16 to 19 study programmes and used the funding changes to provide individualised programmes for all their learners. The fieldwork for this survey was carried out during the early stage of implementation - between September 2013 and April 2014.

The 16 to 19 study programmes provide a very clear structure to ensure that every young person has a challenging individualised learning programme, designed to support their development and progression in line with their future career plans. At this early stage of implementation of this new provision, inspectors found little evidence of the transformational 'step change' intended with the introduction of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Most providers surveyed had made a few changes, but the extent of these changes, how rapidly they had been made and how effectively flexibilities in the funding had been used, varied widely.

The introduction of these study programmes was welcomed by many providers of 16 to 19 education and training. The FE and skills providers in the survey generally considered that the 16 to 19 study programmes would allow them to match 16 to 19 provision more closely to the needs of individuals and employers, particularly for learners on programmes at level 2 and below. The providers sampled, that had managed the transition to this provision well, ensured that their learners followed well-designed individualised programmes that were clearly linked to their plans for their next step in their careers. However, despite the widespread acceptance of the importance and usefulness of the 16 to 19 study programmes, some significant weaknesses in implementation were identified and will need to be addressed.

While the FE and skills sector was well informed about the introduction of the 16 to 19 study programmes, many of the school and academy leaders interviewed as part of this survey were unaware of the full extent of the requirements of the study programmes and the implications for their sixth form provision. Implementation was generally too slow in these types of institutions.

The key requirements of study programmes are that they should:

- be individualised and provide progression to a higher level of study than learners' prior attainment to meet clear educational and career aspirations
- include qualification(s) that stretch the learner and link clearly to progression routes to training, employment or higher education, or include an extended period of work-experience/work preparation for those learners

¹ This will rise to 18 in 2015.

who are not ready to study for a substantial qualification at level 2, or a traineeship²

- include continued teaching, to enable learners to work towards achieving English and mathematics GCSE grades A* to C, for those who do not already hold these, or other interim/stepping stone qualifications towards achieving these GCSEs
- allow for meaningful work experience (related to the vocational area) or other non-qualification activity to develop learners' personal skills and/or prepare them for employment, training or higher/further education.

Too many of the providers in this survey were not yet offering programmes that met the key requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes or the key principles underpinning them. For example, too many learners were not progressing from their prior attainment to a higher level of study to meet educational and career aspirations, particularly those on level 1 and 2 programmes, and most providers did not use work experience effectively.

Another key challenge for the sector in implementing the 16 to 19 study programmes is the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. Too much provision, particularly for those learners who need to gain a level 2 qualification, was not good enough. Despite all of the incentives available, there is a shortage of good teachers of English and, in particular, mathematics.

Finally, in order for learners to make the most of the new study programmes, high-quality careers advice and guidance are essential. Learners are entitled to receive impartial information and advice about the full range of available provision to inform their choices about the most suitable provider for them. However, too much careers guidance about the full range of options available to young people through the 16 to 19 study programmes was weak.

Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensure that the 16 to 19 study programmes achieve the 'step change' in provision intended, and to provide all 16 to 19-year-olds with the opportunity to reach their potential.

Key findings

- Very few providers surveyed have made the best use of the flexibility created by the changes to the funding arrangements to provide individualised study programmes tailored to learners' career plans and their developmental needs.
- The characteristics of successful provision include a thorough review of the curriculum to prepare learners for identified progression routes, well-integrated provision in English and mathematics, and external work-experience for all learners at some stage of their programmes. This was often the case at the independent learning providers sampled.

² These are referred to as the individual study programme's 'core aim': substantial qualification(s); work experience; or a traineeship.

- Too many of the providers have not changed their provision sufficiently or quickly enough. Too many learners did not progress to a higher level of study from their prior attainment to meet their educational and career aspirations. This is particularly so for learners below level 3. This key requirement of the 16 to 19 study programmes is not being met.
- While many independent learning providers have made good use of the flexibility of the study programmes in offering individual programmes for learners at or below level 1, too few learners without level 2 qualifications at age 16 progress to programmes at level 2 quickly enough. Too many learners deemed not ready to progress to level 2 are placed on long-term vocational programmes at level 1 in colleges and programmes where work-experience is the core aim in independent learning providers, without clear plans for their progression into training or employment.³
- The introduction of the study programmes has led to disappointingly little change to level 3 programmes, particularly in schools and academies, other than in taking account of the requirement for English and mathematics (for the minority of learners that need further study). Many of the school and academy leaders interviewed were unaware of the requirements of the study programmes and implications for sixth form provision; implementation in these contexts has been too slow.
- Currently, not all local authorities track the progression of all individual learners beyond the age of 16 effectively, especially learners who drop out or change their study programme. This makes it difficult to know what happens to them. The Department for Education (DfE) was unable to provide clear accurate data on all learners enrolled on the 16 to 19 study programmes during the time of the fieldwork.⁴
- Too much careers guidance at all levels is weak. Too many learners interviewed for this survey were unclear about the progression routes available beyond the study programme they were following and too many of them had changed provider, their core aim or both.
- The key requirement of the 16 to 19 study programmes, namely that learners without GCSE grade C or above in English and mathematics continue to work towards them, is not yet being met in full. Too few learners, who are probably capable of achieving these qualifications, are working towards a GCSE at grade C or above in English and mathematics.
- Too much teaching in English and mathematics is not good enough as not enough learners are making sufficient progress in developing their reading,

³ The use of the term 'independent learning providers' includes community learning and skills providers and local authority providers, as well as private independent learning providers.

⁴ Data collected through the initial individualised learner record (ILR) in the autumn and spring can be used to give an early indication of numbers. It will be possible to fully analyse data recorded by providers on the full year data returns for 2014/15 in the autumn of 2015.

writing, oral communication and mathematical skills. There is a shortage of good teachers of English and, in particular, mathematics.

- Very few providers are able to arrange sufficient good-quality, work-related learning, including external placements with local employers, for all their learners. This is most acute for learners on programmes at level 2 and below, especially for learners where an extended period of work-experience should be included as a main element of their programme. It is also a significant barrier to the success of traineeships and supported internships.
- Most level 3 vocational programmes lack sufficient work-related activity, work-experience or both to prepare learners well for employment, training or higher-level vocational education. Similarly, non-qualification and work-related activity is not used enough to develop learners' wider employability skills for those following academic courses and there is some lack of clarity about what these skills entail.⁵
- In the providers sampled, the availability and take-up of traineeships was too low. Too few learners in the early cohorts progressed successfully to an apprenticeship or employment with training and the early drop-out rate was high. Learners, for whom a traineeship might be suitable, are not given good advice about such programmes when they are in school.
- Supported internships are more established and, where these are running, are generally successful with high proportions of learners progressing to employment or an apprenticeship. Successful programmes provide a very good stepping stone to employment. However, there are still too few opportunities for learners to participate in supported internships.

Recommendations

The DfE, working with other government departments and agencies, where relevant, should:⁶

- ensure that all providers implement the study programmes quickly and take full account of the findings in this report
- make sure headteachers and principals of schools and academies with sixth forms are fully aware of the requirements and adhere to the principles of the 16 to 19 study programmes
- ensure that the new 16 to 19 performance measures, including retention, completion of the core aim and destinations on leaving the programme, can be used to hold providers to account for the success of study programmes
- as a matter of urgency, put reliable systems in place to monitor all learners' core aims and their destinations, as they progress, to different provision

⁵ The term 'employability skills' is used to include skills such as written and oral communication, mathematical skills, teamwork, leadership, taking responsibility, problem solving, creativity, reflective thinking and independent enquiry.

⁶ Such as the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, the Education Funding Agency, the National Apprenticeship Service and the Education and Training Foundation.

from the age of 16 up to and including the age of 19, including those who transfer to other programmes or providers midway through their 16 to 19 study programme, and enable the data to be analysed at provider level

- support the identification and dissemination of good practice in the 16 to 19 sector to increase the pace of the improvements in the quality of provision for learners without a GCSE grade C in English, mathematics or both
- work with all stakeholders to increase the availability, take-up and success rates of traineeships
- explore ways of increasing the number of providers able to offer traineeships
- encourage wider take-up of supported internships, make the benefits more widely understood, including to employers, and work with all partners to disseminate good practice.

FE and skills providers, as well as schools and academies with post-16 provision, should:

- ensure that learners receive complete and impartial information, advice and guidance about all the study programmes available so that all 16–19-year-olds enrol on programmes that prepare them most effectively for their next steps
- identify the senior leader who is accountable for the full implementation of the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes
- carry out a full review of their 16 to 19 provision and make any necessary changes to ensure that it meets the full requirements and principles of the 16 to 19 study programmes
- ensure that senior leaders are held to account by those responsible for governance for fully meeting the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes
- ensure that:
 - all 16–19-year-olds are on individualised study programmes that are best suited to prepare them for the next steps in their career plans
 - learners working at level 1 and below who are not ready to take a substantial qualification have work experience and work preparation as their core aim, alongside English and mathematics, and that there is good progression for them into traineeships, apprenticeships, further training or employment, including prompt progression to level 2 for individuals as soon as they are ready within the year
 - the proportion of lower-attaining learners at 16 who progress directly to a level 2 programme that leads to a substantial vocational qualification increases and that these programmes have a clear focus on English, mathematics and work experience

- learners on programmes at level 2 and 3 that lead to a substantial vocational qualification have sufficient and suitable work-related activity and external work experience
- learners studying at level 3 have opportunities for relevant non-qualification and work-related activity to develop their personal and employability skills
- develop and implement clear policies and procedures to ensure that learners without a GCSE grade C or above in English, mathematics or both develop their skills so that they make significant progress towards achieving this
- increase the take-up of traineeships and supported internships and ensure that they result in progression by: ensuring sufficient suitable work experience placements; checking the suitability of applicants; checking the availability of suitable apprenticeships or jobs; and ensuring appropriate employers are fully engaged.

Employers' organisations and local enterprise partnerships should:

- build on existing good practice to define 'employability skills' clearly, with agreed sets of core and supplementary skills
- identify and overcome the barriers that prevent more employers from providing work-experience placements, including for learners on traineeships and supported internship programmes, and learn from the existing highly effective partnerships.

Local authorities should:

- work with all local providers to ensure up-to-date mapping of all 16 to 19 provision across the full range of study programmes and make the information available to all learners in Years 10 and 11, their parents, all schools and academies, providers, employers and any other stakeholders.

Ofsted should:

- through inspection, ensure that all providers of 16 to 19 education and training are acting on these recommendations
- work with other agencies and provider organisations to identify and disseminate good practice in the implementation of 16 to 19 study programmes and provide further case studies to show how study programmes can be used to meet individual learners' needs at all levels.

The implementation of 16 to 19 study programmes

The pace of implementation of individual 16 to 19 study programmes has been too slow. Some of the providers sampled adapted their provision well so that learners, where appropriate, attended for the full week, were on programmes that would directly prepare them for their planned progression routes and that included good-quality external work experience. However, too few providers made changes to their curriculum and how their programmes were managed, or ensured that their learners progressed from their prior attainment. Their provision therefore failed to meet many of the principles of the study programme.

The Wolf Report strongly recommended giving more 16–19-year-olds opportunities to spend substantial periods of time in the workplace undertaking ‘genuine’ work experience and workplace activities.^{7 8} The 16 to 19 study programmes require providers to develop individual programmes that ‘allow for meaningful work experience or other non-qualification activity to develop learners’ personal skills and/or prepare them for employment, training or higher education’. Although some providers have responded well to this requirement and were successful in incorporating non-qualification activity and external work-experience into their programmes, this is underdeveloped in many of the providers surveyed. This is because of some or all of the following:

- a lack of understanding of the place of such activity
- some lack of understanding that the new funding arrangements incorporate non-qualification, work-based activity and work experience, particularly for learners studying for A levels
- some employers’ reluctance to provide work-experience placements for some learners, especially those working below level 2.

Study programmes at level 1 and below

Too few learners not ready to take a substantial qualification at level 2 have work experience as their core aim, a key principle of the 16 to 19 study programme. There are too few programmes at level 1 and below with this as a core aim.

Evidence from inspections and visits shows that too many providers do not adhere to the stipulation of the 16 to 19 study programme that learners who are not ready to take a qualification at level 2 should have work experience as their core aim. The Wolf Report’s recommendation that the lowest-attaining learners at age 16 should concentrate on English and mathematics and work experience post-16, has led to some changes in provision for these learners and, although generally positive, the extent of the changes and their impact are too variable across the different types of providers.

⁷ Wolf, A. *Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report* (DFE-00031-2011), DfE, 2011; www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report

⁸ Annex A defines ‘genuine’ work experience.

In the providers sampled, about two thirds of programmes at level 1 and below have a substantial qualification as the core aim. In many of the remaining one third of programmes, too few learners have work experience as their core aim; the core aim for the others is not clear. Too many learners are on programmes that involve working towards vocational qualifications with simulated work experience (not in an external employer's workplace) and/or external work experience that do not focus enough on preparing learners for a planned progression route, such as apprenticeships, traineeships or a substantial qualification at level 2.

Evidence from inspections, visits and follow-up discussions suggests that many independent learning providers have made good use of the flexibility of the study programmes to offer individual programmes for learners at or below level 1. Learners attend more days each week than on the former Foundation Learning programme to ensure that they meet the guided learning hours requirement. Similarly, a high proportion of learners are on programmes planned for much longer than on the Foundation Learning programme, often until the end of the academic year.

These independent learning providers make good use of the period of at least six weeks that is available before deciding on a learner's core aim, enabling a thorough individual initial assessment to take place. The best programmes, seen in about half of these providers, include, for example, four weeks' induction, eight weeks' development, four weeks' introduction to the 'world of work' and eight weeks' work experience to meet the 600-hour study programme guidelines. These successful programmes often include a mix of entry-level, level 1 and level 2 elements, such as a work skills or work preparation qualification, matched to the needs of the learner. Learners make progress from one level to another within the programme. English and mathematics are usefully set into work-related contexts and learners value this highly.

In contrast, the evidence from inspections and visits indicates that less than half of FE colleges have made significant changes to their study programmes at level 1. These programmes do not have the flexibility for learners to study elements at entry level, level 1 and level 2 described above. Learners are enrolled onto these programmes for a full year and are often given no opportunity to progress to level 2 during the programme, even when they are capable of this. The extent and quality of work experience on these programmes vary widely and it is often not with an external employer. These programmes do not meet the requirement that the core aim of study programmes for these learners should be work experience.

Study programmes at level 2

Analysis of national data shows that in 2012/13 around 85% of all level 2 programmes were in FE colleges or independent learning providers and most had a substantial vocational qualification or qualifications as their main aim.⁹ Although the providers surveyed know that they now need to meet the requirement for learners to continue to study English and mathematics, many learners either do not attend this

⁹ See Table 2 in Appendix B.

provision or they are working at levels that are not sufficiently challenging. Most providers have accepted the need for all their learners to have external work experience at some stage of their programmes, but not enough providers are successful in arranging this for them.

A minority of programmes at level 2, while enabling progression to level 3 qualifications for some learners, does not fit well with the requirements and principles of the 16 to 19 study programmes.

Evidence from inspections shows that around 10% of learners on level 2 programmes are following programmes that are essentially re-sits, including GCSE English and mathematics, to obtain a good set of level 2 qualifications as preparation for progressing to level 3. They follow a programme of GCSE and/or intermediate vocational qualifications rather than a programme leading to a substantial vocational qualification. In a small number of cases seen, learners are expected to follow a full-year level 2 programme when they could study English and mathematics at level 2 alongside a level 3 qualification.

Study programmes at level 3

An analysis of inspection reports, supported by focused visits and questionnaires, shows that the introduction of study programmes has led to very little change to level 3 programmes, particularly in schools and academies. More work is needed to make the best use of non-qualification and work-related activity and to develop learners' wider employability skills.

More than half of the sixth form colleges and FE colleges in the sample have made changes to the curriculum as a result of the study programme. In many cases, however, the changes relate largely to the requirement for further study in English and mathematics for learners that need this.

Evidence from inspections, questionnaires completed by lead inspectors, focused visits to a range of providers and interviews with learners shows that many level 3 vocational programmes lack sufficient work-related activity and/or work experience to prepare learners well for employment. It is not clear that these vocational qualifications meet the test that they are 'relevant and command the confidence of employers and prepare young people for the workplace'.¹⁰ This raises concerns about the extent to which the new applied general qualifications will be 'a broad study of a vocational area' with a focus on vocationally based 'applied learning'.

Very few providers created time for their learners to participate in non-qualification activity and/or work experience. For example, not enough providers give their learners on A-level routes sufficient time to do well planned, well managed activities that would enhance their employability.

¹⁰ See *Implementing study programmes*; Association of Employers and Learning Providers; www.aelp.org.uk.

A small number of schools and academies have successfully embraced the opportunity for a complete review of their sixth form provision. This has enabled them to provide a curriculum across the full range of study programmes that meets the needs of many students well. These tend to be schools or academies that already offer some level 2 (and, in some cases, level 1) provision and that are a main post-16 provider in a particular area. Too few schools and academies, however, have reviewed their provision in this way.

Individual study programmes and progression

Too many learners do not progress to a higher level of study than their prior attainment to meet clear educational and career aspirations. This is particularly so for those learners below level 3. This key requirement of 16 to 19 study programmes is not being met by enough providers.

The extent and quality of careers guidance for many learners at all levels are not good enough.¹¹ Many of the learners interviewed as part of this survey typically said that they were not well-informed about the range of provision in colleges and training providers. This often leads to 'false starts' where learners take up a course at 16 but soon discover that it does not meet their needs. While it is difficult to be precise about the exact numbers, in the colleges visited or where questionnaires were completed as part of the survey, approximately one in 10 learners who responded had stayed on at school for up to a year before they transferred to more flexible college provision. In the independent learning providers, a similar proportion of learners who had gone to college had dropped out of these courses. There is currently no reliable system for tracking the progress of individual learners beyond age 16, especially when they leave mid-way through their programmes.

Study programmes at level 1 and below

All of the evidence considered for this survey indicates that too few learners with low attainment at age 16 progress to programmes at level 2 post-16. Currently, just over half of learners who achieve level 1 or below at age 16 progress to programmes at level 2 post-16. The Wolf Report's recommendation that an increasing proportion of learners in the lowest-attaining quintile at Key Stage 4 should progress directly to level 2 programmes at 16 is not being met.

Discussions with learners and inspection evidence show that, despite improved provision resulting from the introduction of the study programmes and the changes in funding arrangements, too many learners who do not achieve level 2 at age 16 are placed on level 1 programmes in colleges, or employability programmes in independent training providers often of a full year's duration, lacking purposeful external work experience (as the core aim) and without clear plans for progression into traineeships, apprenticeships, training or employment.

¹¹ Ofsted has already reported on this in *Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012* (130114), Ofsted, 2013; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130114.

Study programmes at level 2

Historically, more than three quarters of learners on programmes at level 2 were in FE and specialist colleges, with smaller proportions in independent learning providers, sixth form colleges, schools and academies.¹² In 2012/13, around 85% of level 2 programmes had a substantial qualification as the main aim. Around one third of those currently on level 2 programmes, interviewed for this survey, expressed some dissatisfaction with their course and were not clear where their course would lead to. The programmes do not prepare them well for employment or apprenticeships.

Learners who move from having achieved a set of level 2 qualifications (such as GCSE at grade C and above) at 16 to a substantial vocational qualification post-16 show progression as the vocational programme develops their knowledge and a different set of skills. Generally, these learners are more satisfied with their programme, although typically around one in five of the learners interviewed still expressed some concerns. The best of these programmes are found in about half of independent learning providers and about one in three FE colleges. The programmes include GCSE/functional skills in English and mathematics, substantial vocational qualifications, work preparation, and well-planned and managed work experience, including some with an external employer. Learners on these programmes have good-quality individual learning plans. In such plans:

- initial assessment is detailed and thorough
- objectives and targets are clear
- how the elements combine to equip learners with the knowledge and skills that they need to progress to employment or to an apprenticeship is shown clearly
- individuals' progress is monitored frequently and systematically.

Programmes such as these prepare learners well for employment, further training or an apprenticeship. Providers offering these are prepared well for the planned changes to 16 to 19 level 2 vocational qualifications.

In the providers sampled, around 10% to 15% of all learners on level 2 study programmes, mainly those in school and academy sixth forms and in sixth form colleges, are on programmes that mainly involve GCSE re-sits, including English, mathematics or intermediate vocational (GCSE-equivalent) courses. In most cases, these programmes are designed to deal with underachievement at 16 and are planned so that learners can move on to a level 3 programme in the school, academy or college. Many providers have broadened the range of level 2 courses that they offer to provide this route. However, many of the learners interviewed reported that to progress to level 3 courses they would have to take courses in subjects they are not interested in, sometimes just to obtain five GCSEs, or their equivalent, at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics.

¹² See Table 2 in Appendix B.

The flexibility to match the individual study programme to the needs of the learners is not being used well. In some cases, for example, learners who have not achieved at least a grade C in English and mathematics have to follow a programme of GCSE and/or level 2 vocational courses for a full year as preparation for level 3, rather than taking English and/or mathematics alongside a level 3 programme.

Many of the learners on planned three-year programmes interviewed had not been advised well about the full range of progression routes open to them and were concerned about what will happen at the end of the first year and/or about committing themselves to a three-year programme. These three-year programmes rarely include work experience as an alternative to learners gaining more qualifications.

Study programmes at level 3

The introduction of 16 to 19 study programmes was not based on significant concerns about provision at level 3. It provides opportunities, however, that have not been fully used to improve learners' experiences and preparation for their next steps. Many providers need to do significant work to prepare themselves fully for introducing the study programmes in time for outcomes to be reflected in the 2016 16 to 19 performance measures and tables.

Many learners interviewed in schools and academies, and in some sixth form colleges, often felt (or were made to feel) that vocational pathways were not valued as highly as academic A levels.

Many of these learners are not well informed about how these courses could prepare them for higher education, employment or an apprenticeship as this is not the main reason why they are provided. Level 3 vocational courses offered in schools, academies and sixth form colleges frequently do not have sufficient practical vocational content. For example, assessment is through written assignments rather than through the assessment of vocational skills. Many of these courses do not include sufficient work-related activity or periods of work experience, particularly with external employers. This, in turn, limits the extent to which learners are prepared well for employment or vocational study at a higher level.

The number of learners who start on a two-year programme and then change their core aim and/or provider at the end of the first year to start another two-year programme is a concern. Inspection evidence suggests that around one in 10 learners who start a planned two-year level 3 programme at 16 do not progress to the second year; this figure is confirmed by evidence from this survey. Currently, it is very difficult to track these learners' progress if they change their core aim and/or move to a different provider. This problem needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

There is no shortage of academic A-level provision in schools, academies, sixth form colleges and FE colleges. If anything, as more schools become academies, the opening of new sixth forms and the raising of entry requirements to make some

existing sixth forms more 'academic' have led to increased competition and less collaboration. GCSE grades C or above in English and mathematics, with specific requirements for individual subjects, are often a condition of entry into school and academy sixth forms that offer mainly level 3 academic programmes. These changes raise questions about what provision is available below level 3 for learners, often the most vulnerable, who are not able to follow the programmes offered by the school or academy they attended up to the age of 16.

All the evidence indicates that introducing study programmes has had no significant impact for learners following academic A-level routes. Headteachers and principals of many schools and academies have not fully absorbed the implications of the study programmes or undertaken any significant reviews of post-16 provision. Sixth form colleges are better informed and most have reviewed their provision.

Many students report that teachers use few explicit activities to develop their wider employability skills. Too few of the schools, academies and sixth form colleges sampled are adopting a planned approach to non-qualification activity and work experience to develop learners' personal and wider employability skills and prepare them better for higher education. Even when they do, the extent to which the impact on learners' progress in developing these skills is monitored varies significantly. When this monitoring is done well, the provider often uses a local enterprise partnership charter mark or something similar.¹³

English and mathematics

The key requirement of the 16 to 19 study programmes - to enable learners to work towards achieving English and mathematics GCSE grades A* to C, for those who do not already hold these - is not yet being met in full. Too much teaching in English and mathematics is not good enough. Despite all of the incentives available, there is a shortage of good teachers of English and, in particular, mathematics.

Although all of the providers surveyed are aware of the English and mathematics GCSE requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes and understand and agree with their importance, very few of them met the requirements adequately, particularly FE colleges and independent learning providers. For example, far too many learners were on provision, often in functional skills, that was not higher than their prior attainment.

In three of five general FE colleges inspected between September 2013 and April 2014, the quality of teaching in English, mathematics or both was not good enough. Colleges and especially independent learning providers still suffer from a shortage of suitable English and mathematics teachers at level 2.¹⁴ The increasing demand for

¹³ Many local enterprise partnerships run a scheme to recognise the work of schools and other providers in developing learners' employability skills. To receive the charter mark, the provider is assessed and monitored.

¹⁴ See the reports on the study programmes published by the Association of Colleges. This was confirmed by Ofsted inspections undertaken between January and February 2014.

these teachers means that the situation is not improving rapidly enough, particularly in mathematics, despite four in five colleges actively training new staff or increasing the skills of existing tutors.

In FE colleges, a high proportion of new learners (more than half the learners in around half the colleges) do not have at least a GCSE grade C in English, mathematics or both. In around one third of these providers, at least a quarter of learners have still not gained a level 2 qualification when they start the second year of a two-year programme. In three quarters of FE and skills settings, learners are either studying for GCSEs directly or working towards interim qualifications as stepping stones. However, around one in 10 of the colleges inspected between January and April 2014 makes insufficient provision for the increasing number of learners who need these qualifications. Almost all independent learning providers provide training only in functional skills; they do not offer pathways towards GCSE, even when some learners, including those on traineeships, are capable of this.

The schools, academies and sixth form colleges surveyed make appropriate provision for any learner on level 3 programmes who needs to gain a GCSE grade C or above in English, mathematics or both to work towards these qualifications alongside their level 3 programme. Most learners are, sensibly, on full-year programmes.

Learners hold widely differing views on how well their reading, writing, oral communication and mathematical skills are developed through teaching in the range of subjects or specialist routes that they follow. Where this happens, it is often at the level of the correction of spelling and grammar, and not systematically planned across the curriculum.

Evidence from the inspections of Higher Education Institute-led initial teacher education partnerships for FE and skills is encouraging. However, there is still a shortage of applicants taking up training places specialising in English and mathematics. Trainee teachers in all specialist areas are aware that the English and mathematics requirements have been strengthened in the 16 to 19 study programmes in response to the Wolf Report. Inspectors found good examples of trainees integrating reading, writing and oral communication skills into their specialist teaching, although trainee teachers' understanding of, and confidence in, how to develop mathematical skills is much more limited.

Traineeships

The introduction of traineeships as an effective pre-apprenticeship/pre-employment programme has been widely welcomed. However, fieldwork up to April 2014 to explore the impact of the programmes that had started at the early stage of this new provision showed that the growth of traineeships had not happened quickly enough. The number of traineeships offered in those 17 providers sampled was significantly lower than they had expected and recruitment was below target in almost all of these providers. The shortage of sufficient good-quality work placements and progression routes to apprenticeships were often the main problem. Many providers

delayed the introduction of their traineeships because they were not fully ready to start when they had intended to.

The proportion of learners in these first cohorts of traineeships who successfully moved on to an apprenticeship or employment with training was too low. Evidence from inspections, survey visits and from a telephone survey carried out in April 2014 all confirm that the proportion of learners who start a traineeship and successfully move on to an apprenticeship or employment with training, either during or at the end of the sixth-month period, is too low.¹⁵ A further small number, around one learner in 20 of those completing the six-month period, either moved on to a level 1 employability programme without clear progression to employment or took part-time employment without sufficient training. In the providers sampled, almost all learners who dropped out of a traineeship and did not progress to an apprenticeship or employment did so during the work experience phase or they were asked to leave at this time because of their poor attendance, punctuality or attitudes. This raises concerns about how well such learners were selected and prepared to meet the aim of traineeships of recruiting learners 'focused on work or the prospect of it and with a reasonable chance of securing employment or an apprenticeship within six months'.¹⁶

Around one in 20 learners on a traineeship, in the providers sampled, secured employment or an apprenticeship very early in the sixth-month period, most within the first month and before they were allocated to a work placement. This suggests traineeships were not suitable for these learners as they already had the skills and experience necessary to start an apprenticeship or find work.

Where providers identified employers who will provide work placements before learners were enrolled, progress to apprenticeships or employment with training was higher. These providers undertake a thorough needs analysis before allocating learners to external work-experience placements, but they ensure that they have sufficient suitable placements available. Providers of successful traineeships use their strong employer links very well to ensure that the content of each learner's programme is focused well on what they will need when they progress to employment.

Supported internships

Supported internships are study programmes for young people who have complex learning difficulties with a statement of educational needs or a learning difficulty assessment. The learners should be based primarily with an employer and have a personalised study programme that must include English and mathematics. While the number of providers involved in offering supported internships is low, those interviewed were extremely positive about the programmes; at the same time, they

¹⁵ Statistical First Release, Thursday 27 March.

¹⁶ This is a requirement of traineeships and is explained in the DfE guidance on study programmes and traineeships; DfE, www.gov.uk/government/collections/traineeships-programme

described managing them as 'a challenge', particularly in finding sufficient high-quality and appropriate work-experience placements. Evidence gathered from a small sample of providers for this survey shows that they are far more successful than previous programmes, with more than three quarters of learners progressing to employment, an apprenticeship or, where appropriate, to volunteering work as a stepping-stone to paid employment. In the past, learners often moved from one programme to another without securing employment.

The key feature of the successful programmes is the strength of the partnership between the provider, employers, local authorities, the 'supported employment provider' and parents. Where supported internships work well, there is a strong focus on ensuring that they meet the diverse, and often complex, needs of these learners well. For example, in these successful programmes, providers' specialist staff work well with a job coach employed to support individual learners in the workplace and learners develop their skills in English and mathematics in contexts relevant to their workplace.

An insufficient number of employers are willing to provide placements for these learners. Some employers offering employment to learners at the end of the programme are reluctant or unable to continue offering placements for the next cohorts of learners.

Notes

This survey was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) to evaluate how effectively further education and skills providers and schools and academies with sixth forms had implemented the 16 to 19 study programmes and used the new funding arrangements. The survey included traineeships and supported internships, but not apprenticeships.

Judgements on the outcomes for learners were constrained because the survey looked only at the implementation of study programmes from their introduction and before the end of the first year.

The survey drew upon evidence from a wide range of sources:

- inspection reports published by Ofsted between September 2013 and March 2014 covering all types of setting with 16 to 19 provision: 173 schools or academies with sixth forms and 109 FE and skills settings, including FE colleges, sixth form colleges and independent learning providers
- analysis of national datasets held by Ofsted, such as the individualised learner record data
- questionnaires completed by 63 lead inspectors of inspections of settings with 16 to 19 provision to gather information and evidence about specific features of the study programme: schools and academies, sixth form colleges, FE colleges and independent learning providers

- focused visits by HMI to 19 providers offering a range of study programmes: four schools or academies with sixth forms; seven FE colleges; five sixth form colleges; and three independent learning providers. On these visits, HMI interviewed a wide range of learners, as well as senior staff and those responsible for study programmes for 16–19-year-olds
- a telephone survey in April 2014 involving 17 providers of 16 to 19 traineeships to follow up specific lines of enquiry relating to the provision of traineeships: FE colleges, independent learning (training) providers and local authorities. To identify this sample, 47 providers, identified as running traineeships, were contacted. Only 17 of these responded and were contacted by telephone by an HMI: 15 provided details of their traineeships and two said that they had not yet started these programmes
- HMI telephoned three providers of supported internships to gather specific information about these programmes to build on the evidence from the providers inspected or visited that offered such programmes
- evidence specifically about how well the requirements for English and mathematics were being met for 21 inspections of FE and skills settings to add to the evidence from inspection reports, visits and questionnaires: 10 general FE colleges; one specialist land-based college; one sixth form college; two higher education institutions; and seven independent learning providers
- an online survey of 91 learners undertaken for Ofsted by Youth Sight – an independent research and opinion panel which runs a ‘youth panel’ that includes 16–19-year-old learners – to gather a wider range of learners’ views about specific features of their study programmes
- evidence from the Ofsted pilot area-wide 14 to 19 surveys, particularly about the extent to which ‘sufficient and suitable’ 16 to 19 provision across the full range of study programmes was available for learners and how this was managed and monitored
- evidence gathered through 26 inspections of university-led secondary (19) and FE and skills (seven) initial teacher education partnerships: for those training to teach the secondary age range, this was to find out how well new teachers were being prepared for post-16 teaching; for those training to teach in the FE and skills sector, both in-service and pre-service, to find out how well they were being prepared for the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme.

Relevant, published research findings were also taken into account.

The evidence from the survey will be used to produce a set of good practice case studies that will be available from the Ofsted website.

Further information

Ofsted publications

Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012 (130114), Ofsted, 2013; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130114

Good practice in involving employers in work-related education and training (090227), Ofsted, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090227

Lessons from the Foundation Learning provision for the new 16 to 19 Study Programmes (130115), Ofsted, 2013; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130115

Other publications

An update on 16–19 funding for the 2014 to 2015 academic year, Education Funding Agency, 2013; www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-funding-agency

AoC second 16–19 Study Programme Survey Report, Association of Colleges, 2014; www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Study_Programme_Survey_Report_Janauary_2014_FINAL.pdf

Implementing study programmes, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, 2013; www.aelp.org.uk

Post-16 work experience as a part of 16 to 19 study programmes: departmental advice for post-16 education and training providers (DFE-00210-2013), DfE, 2013, www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-work-experience-as-a-part-of-16-to-19-study-programmes

Wolf, A. *Review of vocational education: the Wolf Report* (DFE-00031-2011), DfE, 2011; www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report

Websites

Information about the 16 to 19 study programme, 16 to 19 funding arrangements, 16 to 19 performance and accountability measures and other policies relating to 16–19-year-olds is available at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education

Information about supported internships is available in the publication *Supported internships*, Department for Education, 2013: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/316676/Supported_internships.pdf

Annex A. 16 to 19 study programmes

Following evaluations of pilot programmes, the government introduced 16 to 19 study programmes in August 2013 as a response to the Wolf Report.¹⁷ Since then, all learners in full- or part-time education aged 16 to 19 have been expected to follow a study programme tailored to their individual needs and education and employment goals.

In her review of vocational education, Professor Wolf recommended that study programmes be introduced to offer learners breadth and depth and without limiting their options for future study or work. The principles that underpin the study programme are that providers of 16 to 19 education and training should develop well-designed individual study programmes that:

- provide progression to a higher level of study than learners' prior attainment to meet clear educational and career aspirations
- include qualification(s) that are of sufficient size and rigour to stretch the learner (at least 50% of the programme) and clearly linked to progression routes to training, employment or higher education, or an extended period of work experience/work preparation for those learners who are not ready to study for a substantial qualification at level 2, or a traineeship.¹⁸
- include continued teaching to enable learners to work towards achieving English and mathematics GCSE grades A* to C, for those who do not already hold these, or other interim/stepping stone qualifications on the way towards achieving these GCSE qualifications
- allow for meaningful work experience (related to the vocational area) or other non-qualification activity to develop learners' personal skills and/or prepare them for employment, training or higher/further education.

The learner's study programme should state clearly the 'core aim'. This can be a substantial qualification(s) or work experience.

Study programmes cover all types of 16 to 19 education and training except apprenticeships. The range of programmes covers:

- a programme of level 3 academic or vocational qualifications
- a programme leading to a substantial level 2 or 3 vocational qualification – preferably with relevant work experience or work-related activity
- programmes at level 2 or below, which must include English and mathematics qualifications as appropriate, and may be:

¹⁷ Wolf, A. *Review of vocational education: the Wolf Report* (DFE-00031-2011), DfE, 2011.

¹⁸ These are referred to as the individual study programme's 'core aim': substantial qualification(s); work experience; or a traineeship.

- a course leading to a substantial level 2 vocational qualification with clear progression to employment or an apprenticeship
- a programme where the core aim is work experience, together with some other qualifications, and the development of learners' employability skills and their personal and social development
- traineeships – these study programmes:
 - are for young people not currently in a job, who have little work experience and who are qualified below level 3, but are focused on work or the prospect of it and have a reasonable chance of securing employment or an apprenticeship within six months (not the most disengaged or those who require very intensive support)
 - are designed to secure progression to an apprenticeship or a sustainable job as soon as possible
 - should not last more than six months
 - currently, can be offered only by providers graded by Ofsted as good or outstanding for overall effectiveness.

Traineeships are not intended for learners who already have the skills and experience needed to start an apprenticeship or find work.

In addition, supported internships are study programmes for learners with a learning disability assessment.¹⁹ These learners should follow a programme with substantial work experience or other activity designed to develop their work-related skills and employability, alongside programmes in English and mathematics. The supported internships involve partnerships between the provider, employers, the relevant local authorities and a supported employment provider (personalised support for people with disabilities and/or who are otherwise disadvantaged).

Changes to 16 to 19 funding arrangements

Since September 2013, funding has been allocated per student rather than per qualification. This is intended to give providers more freedom to design programmes that meet the needs of their learners.

Under the new formula, funding for study programmes for full-time students is designed around an average of 600 hours of participation per academic year (for guidance, an A level is 360 hours over two years).

The hours that count towards funding a study programme are categorised as either qualification (planned learning hours) or non-qualification hours (planned work-related activity, work experience – unless this is the core aim, tutorials, and so on).

Funding is adjusted for retention, disadvantage, programme costs and area costs. Financial penalties based on success rates have been removed so that providers can

¹⁹ From September 2014, this will become an education, health and care plan.

focus on what is best for their students, even if that means entering them for a challenging qualification that they might not pass.

The inclusion of English and mathematics in study programmes will become a condition of funding from September 2014.

A note on work experience

High-quality work experience is tailored to suit the prior attainment of each learner and their career aspirations. It may form a requirement of the 'substantial qualification' element of a learner's study programme or be the main learning aim for those who are not taking substantial qualifications at level 2 or 3.

A-level students' study programmes will usually include non-qualification activity, such as tutorials, work to develop personal or study skills or support in choosing options for employment and higher education. This will often include work-related activity or work experience.

Work-related activity

Work-related activity is planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding that are useful in work; it does not include actual work experience with an employer. In some curriculum areas, such as in business studies, engineering, art and design, the performing arts or computer studies, this can include working for a client to meet a specification or brief set by an internal or external client.

Internal work experience

This is work experience that takes place in, for example, a college hair and beauty salon, restaurant, travel agency or motor vehicle workshops. It can, and often does, involve working for clients. This type of work experience provides valuable experiences, but it is not a substitute for work experience with external employers.

External work experience

External placements provide 'genuine' or 'real' work experience in an external employer's work place. The placement is planned and managed by the provider and matched to the learner's needs and next steps as defined in their individual learning plan. The learner's experiences and progress will be monitored, reviewed, recorded and discussed with them. For many study programmes, particularly for those at level 2 and below (as outlined in this report), external work experience should be expected for all learners, supported by, as appropriate, work-related activity and internal work experience.

Qualification levels

- Entry-level qualifications, such as entry-level certificates, below level 1

- Level 1 qualifications (foundation level) are equivalent to GCSE below grade C
- Level 2 qualifications (intermediate level) are equivalent to GCSE at grade C and above
- Level 3 qualifications (advanced level) are equivalent to GCE A levels.

Annex B. Participation in education and training, age 16 to 18, in 2012/13

Table 1: Participation in education and training, age 16 to 18, in 2012/13

	Highest level of study (learner numbers)							Total
	Entry level ^[1]	Level 1 (62700)		Level 2 (156600)		Level 3 (926800)		
		Foundation GNVQ	NVQ 1 and equivalents	GCSE/Intermediate GNVQ	NVQ 2 and equivalents	GCE/VCE A/AS levels	NVQ 3 and equivalents	
All providers - number	36,100	200	62,500	40,300	116,300	629,300	297,400	1,182,100
State-funded schools	300	0	600	8,300	4,100	381,700	43,000	438,000
<i>Local Authority Maintained schools</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>300</i>	<i>3,200</i>	<i>1,400</i>	<i>130,800</i>	<i>14,500</i>	<i>150,300</i>
<i>Sponsor Academies and City Technology Colleges</i>	-	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>1,900</i>	<i>1,200</i>	<i>37,100</i>	<i>13,100</i>	<i>53,400</i>
<i>Converter Academies</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>1,400</i>	<i>211,600</i>	<i>14,500</i>	<i>230,900</i>
<i>Free Schools</i>	-	<i>0</i>	-	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2,200</i>	<i>900</i>	<i>3,300</i>
Special schools ^[2]	13,800	0	0	0	0	0	0	13,800
Independent schools ^[3]	4,100	0	400	5,700	400	75,100	2,300	88,000
Sixth form colleges	600	0	800	5,400	2,600	120,500	22,900	152,800
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	17,200	0	60,600	20,900	108,600	52,000	226,500	485,800
Higher education institutions	100	200	0	0	600	0	2,700	3,600
All providers – percentage of level	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
State-funded schools	0.8%	0.0%	1.0%	20.6%	3.5%	60.7%	14.5%	37.1%
<i>Local Authority Maintained schools</i>	<i>0.3%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.5%</i>	<i>7.9%</i>	<i>1.2%</i>	<i>20.8%</i>	<i>4.9%</i>	<i>12.7%</i>
<i>Sponsor Academies and City Technology Colleges</i>	-	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.2%</i>	<i>4.7%</i>	<i>1.0%</i>	<i>5.9%</i>	<i>4.4%</i>	<i>4.5%</i>
<i>Converter Academies</i>	<i>0.6%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.3%</i>	<i>7.4%</i>	<i>1.2%</i>	<i>33.6%</i>	<i>4.9%</i>	<i>19.5%</i>
<i>Free Schools</i>	-	<i>0.0%</i>	-	<i>0.2%</i>	<i>0.1%</i>	<i>0.3%</i>	<i>0.3%</i>	<i>0.3%</i>
Special schools ^[2]	38.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
Independent schools ^[3]	11.4%	0.0%	0.6%	14.1%	0.3%	11.9%	0.8%	7.4%
Sixth form colleges	1.7%	0.0%	1.3%	13.4%	2.2%	19.1%	7.7%	12.9%
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	47.6%	0.0%	97.0%	51.9%	93.4%	8.3%	76.2%	41.1%
Higher education institutions	0.3%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.9%	0.3%

Source: DfE Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England: End 2013 (SFR18/2014 provisional)

[1] Includes all courses below level 1 and those of unknown or unspecified level (also includes PRUs; and special schools, for which no qualification breakdown is available).

[2] Excludes independent special schools.

[3] Includes all pupils in independent schools - assumed to live in the same LA as the school

Note: '-' denotes a value that has been rounded to zero; totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 2: The proportion of learners aged 16-18 in different provider types by level, 2012/13

	Entry level ^[1]	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
All providers	3.1%	5.3%	13.2%	78.4%
State-funded schools	0.1%	0.1%	2.8%	97.0%
<i>Local Authority Maintained schools</i>	0.1%	0.2%	3.1%	96.7%
<i>Sponsor Academies and City Technology Colleges</i>	-	0.2%	5.8%	94.0%
<i>Converter Academies</i>	0.1%	0.1%	1.9%	97.9%
<i>Free Schools</i>	-	-	6.1%	93.9%
Special schools ^[2]	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Independent schools ^[3]	4.7%	0.5%	6.9%	88.0%
Sixth form colleges	0.4%	0.5%	5.2%	93.8%
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	3.5%	12.5%	26.7%	57.3%
Higher education institutions	2.8%	5.6%	16.7%	75.0%

Source: DfE Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England: End 2013 (SFR18/2014 provisional)

[1] Includes all courses below level 1 and those of unknown or unspecified level (also includes PRUs; and special schools, for which no qualification breakdown is available).

[2] Excludes independent special schools.

[3] Includes all pupils in independent schools - assumed to live in the same LA as the school

Note: '-' denotes a value that has been rounded to zero.

Table 3: Participation in work based learning by 16-18 year olds in 2012/13

Work Based Learning (WBL)	116,300
Advanced Apprenticeships (AAs)	37,600
Apprenticeships (As)	78,700

Source: DfE Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England: End 2013 (SFR18/2014 provisional)