

**York Consulting**

---

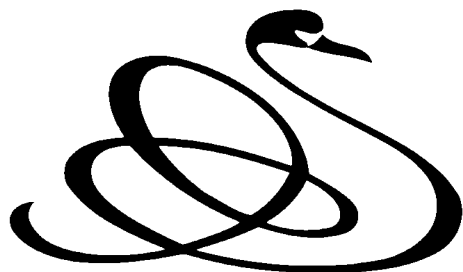
**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES**

**BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY EVALUATION:  
MAIN REPORT**

**FINAL**

**JULY 2004**

---



**York Consulting**

**Originated by: Jo Cutter.....**

**Dated: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2004 .....**

**Reviewed by: Helen Barugh .....**

**Dated: 29 July 2004**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES**  
**BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY EVALUATION:**  
**MAIN REPORT**

## **Contents**

	<u>Page</u>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4 CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITY .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5 EARLY YEARS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>6 FAMILY PROGRAMMES .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>7 SCHOOLS ACTIVITY – OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>8 PRIMARY SECTOR.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>9 SECONDARY SECTOR .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>10 POST-16 .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>11 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>ANNEX A: LINKED ASSEMBLY &amp; NATIONAL PARTNER POLICY</b>	
<b>ANNEX B: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY</b>	
<b>ANNEX C: POST 16 NATIONAL SUPPORT PROJECTS</b>	
<b>ANNEX D: OTHER POST-16 BASIC SKILLS ACTIVITY IN WALES</b>	
<b>ANNEX E: OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS REPORTED IN CASE STUDY AREAS</b>	
<b>ANNEX F: DATA GROUP REPORT</b>	



## SUMMARY

This report sets out the summary and conclusions from the evaluation of the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales. The goals of the Basic Skills Strategy are that:

- all young children are prepared for learning when they begin school;
- to reduce the number of children leaving primary struggling with reading, writing and maths;
- fewer people leave school struggling with poor basic skills;
- the number of adults with poor basic skills is significantly reduced.

The focus of the evaluation is on the effectiveness of the strategy in laying the foundations required to achieve the strategy goals. Data<sup>1</sup> on the extent of basic skills needs in Wales indicated that up to 780,000 children, young people and adults have poor basic skills. Barriers that prevent basic skills development include both supply and demand factors. The national basic skills strategy seeks to address these factors through intervention with an all-age strategy seeking to reduce the incidence of poor basic skills amongst very young children, young people and adults. The evaluation is focused on gathering evidence from national and local partners to report on the activities of the strategy. The aim is to report on the following:

- How appropriate are the strategy targets and performance measures?
- How does or can the strategy link into wider policy agendas?
- How are those most in need defined and targeted?
- How can outcomes be sustained?
- What is the scale and nature of displacement and deadweight<sup>2</sup>?
- What has the strategy achieved overall?

The evaluation fieldwork involved interviews with 360 participants. The core focus of research activity was in four case study areas, covering in-depth interviews in 32 schools, 20 LEA officers, 25 parents, 45 young people, also 35 staff working in early years, 24 post-16 providers and 18 employers. An annex to the report outlines the approach taken to sample selection.

## Outputs

The strategy programme has been managed by the Assembly Government and delivery has been facilitated by the Basic Skills Agency (the BSA). The sectoral programmes have allocated funding and expert support and resource to build capacity across all areas of Wales. To date (2001-2004) strategy activities have delivered the following outputs:

- 90,000 book bags distributed to parents of young children;
- 8,000 parents and 8,200 children participating in Language and Play (LAP) courses;
- 66% of primary schools and 48% of secondary schools achieving the basic skills Quality Mark;
- 95% of secondary schools receiving grants for basic skills training for staff;
- 18,000 parents involved in family programmes;
- advice and consultancy to all FE colleges and basic skills providers;
- 44 basic skills Quality Mark awards given to providers in the post-16 sector;
- teacher training for 385 post-16 teachers in the new core curricula;
- awareness training for 600 staff in the voluntary and community sectors;
- 59 employers signing the Employers Pledge to address basic skills needs in the workplace.

---

<sup>1</sup> Awaiting data from latest needs survey

<sup>2</sup> Development or learning that would have happened anyway

## **Evaluation of the Basic Skills Strategy Main Report**

---

The strategy also includes a range of cross-cutting activity including promotional campaigns, research and development of bilingual policy, curricula and materials. The development of the Tripartite course and award for post-16 learners, the delivery of Level 2 basic skills teacher training. The promotional campaigns have been successful in raising general awareness about basic skills and targeted specific groups, notably parents of young children and young people at Key Stage 3.

### **Early Years**

Progress against planned outputs is good, with a higher than anticipated number of sector workers trained to deliver the Language and Play course. There are very positive examples where the activity of LAP coordinators has been well supported strategically by the LEA and Early Years Childcare Development Partnerships (EYCDPs). In other areas, where these networks have been weaker, the roll-out has tended to be slower. Despite the differences in local infrastructure, partnership working is a key feature of the success of the LAP and is evident in all areas. Across the four areas sampled roll out of the programme has varied through agencies and groups such as Sure Start, Health Visitors, Mother and Toddler groups, Social Services and Nursery and primary schools. There are several examples of where LAP coordinators have extended the programme beyond the main key early years provider organisations to work with community organisations and inclusion projects.

Feedback from parents on the LAP programme is overwhelmingly positive and is valued by those that took part. Common benefits of the programme cited were improved confidence and contribution to child development and changed interaction with them.

The original aim was that early years workers would be trained in the programme and would go on to deliver the programme on a voluntary basis, supported by the LAP coordinator. However, many are not confident to deliver the programme. In other areas the issue has been overcome by training a team of staff to deliver the programme on a peripatetic basis. Whilst this has helped to ensure quality and consistency in delivery of the programme, it does not allow for the programmes to be embedded within early years providers and therefore be sustained without ongoing support.

In one case study area the LAP coordinator role will be continued with funding from the LEA. In the others, the post will not continue without further external funding. The development of the Foundation Phase offers opportunity for improved focus on language and play in early years education, but there is also a need for further intervention in the 0-3 age group. Early intervention is widely regarded by practitioners in all sectors as key. Currently, the model of work within the early years sector mainly focuses work through parental contact with early years providers. However, those that are most in need of support may not have children registered with an early years provider. More extensive community links need to be developed across all LEAs to ensure the hardest to reach are engaged. There is scope for further integration with Surestart and EYCDPs is placed to ensure the appropriate focus on parents in need of support. However, the future drive for the development of Language and Play needs to be retained in the maintained sector to help focus on basic skills outcomes and the links to the development of Foundation Phase curriculum.

### **Family Programmes**

Family Programmes had previously been operating at a local level, but the strategy brought these programmes under a national umbrella. The overall reported progress on achieving target volumes for Family Programmes has been a third below that planned. In three of the four case study areas, the LEA has targeted Family Programme activity with schools in areas with the highest levels of deprivation. Most of the case study areas selected have experienced difficulties recruiting parents from the Entry level 3 target group i.e. those with poor basic skills. Links have been made in some

areas with LAP programmes and Family Programmes have become a progression route for LAP participants. Parents interviewed have highlighted a range of benefits from participation in the programme including increased confidence to take up further learning progression onto college ICT courses.

Some schools comment negatively about the level of understanding of some providers of the confidence/issues and other barriers faced by many parents in the target group. Good practice identified requires improved dialogue, planning and integration of delivery with schools.

In most of the sampled cases, the level of Family Learning activities will not continue without ongoing external funding support. Cuts in GEST funding have limited the potential for family learning activities to be continued. Family Programmes provide a unique link of activity between the early years, schools and post-16 basic skills sectors. However, the current funding model and delivery does not necessarily drive cross-sector ownership or planning of the Family Programme model. The funding mechanism needs to be reviewed to ensure that programmes are based on local need and encourage flexibility and innovation, whilst retaining focus on basic skills learning outcomes.

### **Schools**

Much had been done in the schools sector prior to the national basic skills strategy for Wales. Within the national basic skills strategy, emphasis was placed on focusing initiatives on those students within mainstream school with levels of literacy and numeracy that were below that of their peers. In the schools sector, the work of the strategy has significantly boosted what was already in place.

There is strong evidence that intervention programmes and the Quality Mark (QM) framework has helped to ensure focus on this target group, which for many schools was the first explicit activity with them, although needs had long been recognised. The more consistent use of assessment tools and improved monitoring of pupil progress has helped build confidence that interventions can address the needs of many pupils in this group. Although for some interventions will need to be sustained. Both LEAs and schools have identified the need for further LEA advisory support to schools, due to the increased activity in basic skills and interest in developing further support for the target group, especially in numeracy.

There is evidence of some lack of joint working within LEAs, although there are notable exceptions and although the BSA has been seeking to encourage improved co-ordination and strategic planning, gaps still remain. LEAs have developed programmes of work under the basic skills strategy that are driven by local priorities as set out in their Education Strategic Plans. In the four case study areas LEAs have been reviewing the basic skills strategy activity, and the BSA has encouraged senior level participation to ensure links to wider planning processes. In some cases this strategic review is taking place with, for example ESP updates showing how plans for basic skills have been developed as a result of the strategy. However this is not the case in all areas sampled.

The rate of progress against the basic skills QM target has varied across the case study areas from 100% to 30% of schools to date. Where the QM has been achieved, the advantages of the QM were clearly articulated by most schools. The most common benefits are:

- improvements in cross-departmental activity;
- recognition of the efforts schools had been putting in previously;
- more systematic monitoring of activities and action to address priorities.

## **Evaluation of the Basic Skills Strategy**

### **Main Report**

---

Although the BSA regularly provide information and guidance setting out the strategy goals, many staff in schools and some in LEAs were not aware of the specific goals basic skills strategy or the explicit links with other national schools policy. Schools and other stakeholders are not aware of how or where progress against strategy goals is reported.

There is some but only limited evidence of specific benefits resulting from the Secondary Training initiative to date as much of the training planned had not yet or only recently taken place. Isolating the impact of specific training on outcomes is unlikely to be achieved.

The BSA report that the quality of training plans submitted was variable. Conversely, schools indicate that they are not always clear what is readily available or best used to them. School request improved mechanisms to share learning and basic skills good practice from other schools.

The schools interviewed are in no doubt that the relatively short but intensive interventions developed do make a difference in reading/maths ability of pupils in the target group. However, there is not enough evidence yet to show if this intervention is sufficient for pupils to 'catch-up' with their peers in the mainstream. The majority of schools felt that at the time of interview, it was too early to tell if improvements in specific basic skills are having an impact on attainment in core subjects, although expectations were good. Furthermore, tracking systems had been improved so that links to outcomes in SATs and GCSEs could be reported in the future. The BSA plans to undertake an evaluation of the intervention programmes (SIGs) and LEAs should be encouraged to collate and report on the basic skills data that they have collected from participating schools.

### **Post-16**

Through the early years, family and schools programmes the basic skills strategy has supported the delivery of learning programmes for parents and young people. The activities of the basic skills strategy in the post-16 sector has been much focused on building the capacity of providers and engaging employers in the basic skills agenda, through the set up and delivery of 5 national Support Projects (NSPs). The NSP programmes have made steady progress.

All FE colleges have been supported with consultancy and are developing plans and actions to address issues identified. There are currently 44 holders of the post-16 Quality Mark across Wales. Progress in raising awareness in the voluntary and community sector has been varied and dependent upon existing network infrastructure. The NSP Voluntary and Community project has worked across a diverse sector and identified considerable potential to support and engage people in communities with poor basic skills. Key issues and barriers to the development of provision by providers in all sectors include:

- a lack of suitable experienced and qualified staff, with many tutors on part time/temporary contracts limiting the scope to extend provision;
- funding issues and concerns that there is not sufficient funding available to meet potential demand and, for training providers, the current main funding routes do not meet the costs/incentivise providers to support learners with basic skills needs;
- limited sharing of screening/assessment data from referral.

Outputs achieved for the NSP workplace show a good level of activity given the complex nature of the work: 59 employers have signed the pledge and 22 action plans have been approved by the NSP. The NSP has also trained 35 provider staff in the Employer Pledge Teacher Training programme and developed a network of those providers supporting the Employer Pledge programme. The model encourages the development of a sustainable model which includes embedding basic skills awareness and policy, which often takes time to embed and work through



internal structures. Lack of access to direct funding for basic skills provision is also a key barrier. In some cases employers report that take-up of basic skills activities by staff is low. Ensuring that basic skills learners in the workplace are effectively and appropriately supported to participate in learning is key, and needs to be strengthened. The capacity of intermediaries such as union learning reps needs to be well linked to the Pledge process.

Consultations with other national partners highlight issues regarding the adequacy of basic skills provision for clients in Jobcentre Plus and the Probation Service. These partners have their own specific basic skills target to meet and action plans developed, however there is no formal forum at which progress on these activities can be shared at the national level. The extent to which strategy on basic skills is incorporated into the work of CCETs in the areas sampled varied greatly.

## **Overview**

Overall, the Basic Skills Strategy for Wales has been successful in achieving good progress in each of the sectors targeted. The wide ranging programme of work has built awareness, action and further commitment to tackle basic skills by people and organisations across a wide spectrum of activity. There is some, but not a significant amount of deadweight within the outputs achieved to date in the development of capacity within organisations.

Central to the success of the strategy to date has been the role played by the BSA's team, the model of implementation, the complementary range of strands of work that have progressed development on a range of fronts and the access to resources (funding, expertise and materials). The key tools and interventions that form the programme of strategy activity are generally reported by participants as effective. In most cases, schools colleges and providers value the Quality Mark as an effective way of developing coherence and embedding strategic thinking about basic skills.

Despite the good progress made, the review of activity to date indicates that there is still much more to do. In all sectors the scale of need is considerable. A key challenge at this stage of the strategy is that much of the good work developed to date is not sustainable without further additional funding. In several areas key coordination posts (notably LAP coordinators) funded at the local level have come to an end, with key staff leaving.

The vision and purpose of the strategy is clear, although amongst delivery partners, still not well known. Increasingly, the links between the strategy goals and other policy statements/priorities are being made but there is an ongoing need to reinforce these links from the centre and how the activities of the basic skills strategy underpin these wider objectives/priorities. There is a need also to report feedback on strategy progress and how the activities of the strategy contribute to these wider goals. Currently, the main statements of progress report on activities and volume outputs (number of people engaged), rather than the outcomes of these activities (in terms of basic skills achievements).

Although data collection systems have improved, systems for reporting outcomes are currently weak and require strengthening. Developments such as the LLWR, the learner record database being developed by Elwa offer the opportunity to improve some of the data available. On adult learners, however, improved reporting on the outcomes of activities between sectors e.g. referrals from family programmes also needs to be improved.

The strategy goals are not time bound. There is a need to develop a shared vision of how sector development is expected to progress over time (and key milestones) for this development to help bridge the gap between current activity and the ultimate goals of the strategy.

## Evaluation of the Basic Skills Strategy

### Main Report

---

Given that the scale of need is much greater than the current strategy can seek to engage, future strategy needs to ensure that focus on tackling basic skills of those in priority groups. Targeting can be achieved through the definition of learner type, learner location, by level of basic skill need or age cohort.

We recommend that the strategy remains all age and all area. Limiting the strategy to an area based initiative will have a potentially damaging effect of seeing basic skills needs as only an issue affecting deprived areas. Whilst prevalence is higher here, basic skills needs exist across the country. The current strategy encourages organisations involved in the strategy to consider all their pupils/learners/services users and identify those with basic skills needs. This is a principle that should be retained.

The core challenge amongst adult population in Wales is the proportion with literacy or numeracy needs at Entry Level 3 (below NVQ level 1 equivalence). We recommend that this group are the priority learners for work with adults.

For young people, the BSA's planned evaluation of the SIG programme should help report on the effectiveness of interventions focusing on learners just below their expected national curriculum level in core English, maths and Welsh. However the scale of need, total number of young people in this target group, is not known. In all sectors, monitoring is required to ensure that activity is focused on the target group and that providers funding and systems encourage providers to improve the basic skills of those learners.

The key priorities for the next phase of the strategy are as follows:

- clarify the focus on priority groups;
- develop government structures for the reporting and design of future activity;
- build provider/EY/Schools capacity to deliver basic skills outcomes.

The structures that drive the basic skills strategy need to be stronger within the Assembly Government. This includes the need for:

- an inter-departmental group reporting on basic skills activity cross-government;
- a forum for national partners to report and co-ordinate basic skills plans and strategy;
- specific focus on developing the monitoring, evaluation and reporting around basic skills.

The BSA has been a key agent for change. In the longer term it would be desirable to build wider awareness and support for the strategy within statutory organisations in Wales in order to:

- build capacity within the Assembly to drive review strategy/policy and report on outcomes;
- funding LEA, Elwa/CCET to support the capacity building process and working closely with Estyn in the inspection and quality assurance process.

Some of this work has clearly begun, but there is more to do. At this stage of the strategy a key constraint is the limited resource in early years, schools and noticeably post-16 to meet the needs of the strategy. Proposals are underway for Elwa to work with the BSA to plan to address some of these issues in the post-16 sector. The needs of the early years and schools sector capacity to support and sustain the basic skills agenda also needs to be reviewed and addressed.

Similar consideration needs to be given to the resource available to providers in the early years and schools sectors. Much of the frontline capacity development is threatened because of the

turnover of staff and vulnerability of posts. In the medium term resources need to be mainstreamed to ensure sustainability.

## **Recommendations**

### **Generic**

- (1) Develop phase 2 of the national basic skills strategy for 2005-08;
- (2) Allocate specific and additional resources to meet the scale of the challenge;
- (3) A discrete programme of work, with focus on building capacity and mainstreaming;
- (4) Continue to ensure focus is place on target groups, notably those with basic skills Entry 3;
- (5) Improve ownership, involvement of the strategy cross-government;
- (6) Reinforce expectation of achievement of the QM by schools and providers;
- (7) Co-ordinate capacity building at the local level;
- (8) Develop the strategic framework within which voluntary and community sector activity develops;
- (9) Undertake joint planning for basic skills teacher training in the pre and post-16 sectors;
- (10) Develop and improve data and reporting of strategy outputs and outcomes;
- (11) Improve the coherence of basic skills and other policy/support in statutory agencies in the medium term;
- (12) Develop links between quality and inspection;

### **Sector Specific**

- (13) Fund and embed the LAP co-ordinator role within LEA structures and working to integrate LAP in the non-maintained sector;
- (14) Review Family Programmes to ensure the model is needs driven;
- (15) Review funding and incentives for post-16 providers;
- (16) Ensure consistency of approach across post-16 referral routes;
- (17) Continue the development of the Tripartite Course and Award to offer routes to accreditation for adult learners;
- (18) Stimulate workplace basic skills activity via the Employer Pledge, ensure the learner voice is effectively represented in the process.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report sets out the summary and conclusions from the evaluation of the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales. The goals of the Basic Skills Strategy are that:

- all young children are prepared for learning when they begin school;
- the number of children leaving primary school struggling with reading, writing and maths is reduced;
- fewer people leave school struggling with poor basic skills;
- the number of adults with poor basic skills is significantly reduced.

1.2 A mix of models of activity has developed as part of the strategy, including cross-cutting activities including promotion and dissemination of good practice. The latter includes 5 national support projects. The remaining activities in the all-age strategy are focused on three key areas:

- early years language and play;
- the improvement of schools quality and planning, the development of basic skills support for those at risk of poor basic skills and the engagement of the family in the learning of children;
- widening participation and improving the quality of post-16 learning to meet the needs of those with poor basic skills.

1.3 The strategy already outlines core performance indicators for each of these areas of activity. The invitation to tender seeks to ensure that the evaluation project supports the delivery of the strategy. The focus of the evaluation is on the effectiveness of the strategy in **laying the foundations** required to achieve the strategy goals. The invitation sets out a specific set of objectives for the evaluation in assessing the contribution of different strands of activity to the overall goals. Core activities include:

- initial scoping and development of an evaluation framework;
- critique of programme design;
- impact and attribution;
- evaluation of the effectiveness of the BSA and other partners.

## 2 CONTEXT

### Basic Skills

- 2.1 Data<sup>3</sup> on the extent of basic skills needs in Wales indicated that up to 780,000 children, young people and adults have poor basic skills. Research in the past ten years has highlighted the consequences of poor basic skills on individuals, communities and the economy. More recent longitudinal studies have clearly shown the link between poor basic skills and employment prospects and earnings<sup>4</sup>. In addition, poor basic skills were found to be a greater barrier to improved labour market outcomes than 'soft' skills, such as motivation, social skills and the ability to interact with others.
- 2.2 In comparative terms, an analysis of basic skills needs across OECD countries found that only adults in Ireland and Poland had lower levels of functional adult literacy than in the UK<sup>5,6</sup>. More than one-third of the UK's working population are 'low-skilled' workers, compared to less than one-fifth in Germany, creating concern that the UK economy is heading for a low-skill equilibrium where employers, anticipating supply of low skilled workers, adopt processes that require lower skill input<sup>7</sup>.
- 2.3 Although some observers have noted the trend towards low-skill processes in certain sectors<sup>8</sup>, research undertaken in the BSA's Basic Skills at Work Programme (1991-1995) portrayed the extent to which basic skills requirements of jobs are rising<sup>9</sup>, where 90% of jobs require communication skills and 50% require numeracy skills.

---

<sup>3</sup> Improving Literacy and Numeracy: A Fresh Start, Moser (DfEE) 1999

<sup>4</sup> Basic Skills, Soft Skills and Labour market Outcomes: Secondary Analysis of the National Child Development Study: Machin et al 2001

<sup>5</sup> International Adult Learning Survey OECD 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Please note: studies have commented on lack of confidence in international comparisons of literacy developed in IALS – see for example Goldstein H. IoE 1999.

<sup>7</sup> CBI-TUC submission to the Productivity Initiative 2001.

<sup>8</sup> The Failure of Training in Britain: Analysis and prescriptions. Finegold & Soskice. OEPR 4. 1988

<sup>9</sup> Basic Skills and Jobs. Institute for Employment Studies. 1993

- 2.4 Research undertaken by the Prince's Trust<sup>10</sup> with young people aged 14-25 in 'disadvantaged groups'<sup>11</sup> identifies the key aspirations and barriers facing this group. Key aspirations relate to family, employment, incomes and making choices. A lack of qualifications is recognised as one of the barriers to achieving these goals, especially by 18-21 year old males. The research identifies that opportunities for intervention with this group are most likely to occur when they reach critical points: leaving education/care, becoming a parent, entering the criminal justice system, leaving prison, becoming unemployed or returning to work. Action within the National Basic Skills Strategy seeks to integrate awareness and provision with the agencies that provide support to young people at these and other key intervention points.
- 2.5 It is estimated that half of all adults with poor basic skills are in employment. Although poor basic skills have a significant impact on individuals and the economy, there are major market failures that prevent employers and employees addressing this directly. Recent research with employers in Wales<sup>12</sup> highlights that one in eight employers are aware of basic skills difficulties affecting their staff. There is a limited understanding of the language used by basic skills practitioners, the impact of poor basic skills on company performance or how to address this.
- 2.6 There are other related effects of poor basic skills. Research undertaken by the BSA into adult basic skills in Wales noted that men with poor basic skills were four times more likely to be unemployed than those with functional levels of literacy and numeracy. Key factors affecting low levels of basic skills include poverty, lack of opportunity to read as a child, a lack of parental engagement in their child's learning and a likelihood of having parents with poor basic skills<sup>13</sup>.
- 2.7 The national basic skills strategy seeks to address both supply and demand side factors, not only through intervention in the learning market for adults, but through an all-age strategy seeking to significantly also reduce the incidence of poor basic skills amongst children and young people.

---

<sup>10</sup> Breaking Barriers: Reaching the Hardest to Reach: Princes Trust 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Defined as unemployed, few or no educational achievements, ex-offenders and care leavers

<sup>12</sup> Baseline Survey of Workplace Basic Skills Programme in Wales: BSA 2002

<sup>13</sup> Literacy and Numeracy Skills in Wales: BSA 1997

## National Policy Context

2.8 **Annex A** outlines the wide range of learning related policy areas that have been raised during the evaluation phase. These include:

- Communities First;
- National Play Policy;
- The Learning Country: Foundation Phase 3-7 Action Plan;
- Literacy and Numeracy Strategies: Raising Standards of Literacy in Primary Schools;
- Building Excellent Schools Together;
- Extending Entitlement;
- Better School Wales;
- Framework for Work-Related Education for 14-19-Year-olds in Wales;
- Skills and Employment Action Plan;
- Wales – A Better Country;
- Skills Concordat Agreement;
- Elwa Policy;
- Future Skills Wales (FSW) 2003 Generic Skills Survey;
- Sector Skills Network;
- Wales Union Learning Fund;
- Company Learning Account (CLA);
- Individual Learning Account Wales (ILA Wales);
- Workforce Development Account;

2.9 The range of policy agendas that the basic skills strategy touches illustrates that:



- the range of activity relating to, especially, literacy and numeracy in schools that existed before the Basic Skills Strategy was introduced in 2001;
- the broad range of learning and skills policy developments that are currently on-going; many of which have taken shape since the start of the basic skills strategy.

2.10 The evaluation has sought to identify how the national basic skills strategy is linked to these policy areas and explore the future potential for further developing integrated policy.

### **Features of the Basic Skills Strategy for Wales**

2.11 The unique feature of the national basic skills strategy in Wales is that it is all an age strategy, covering activity in early years, schools and the post-16 sector. The strategy draws together basic skills activity across this broad range of activity in a way that has not been done previously in other UK countries, where current basic skills strategies are ongoing, but have a different focus. For example:

- in Scotland, the main focus of basic skills policy for adults (not referred to as basic skills but as referred to as literacy and numeracy) is embedding strategies with the social inclusion agenda;
- in England the adult basic skills strategy focuses targets for engagement and achievement of basic skills improvements, with all local learning and skills councils given specific achievement targets;
- in Northern Ireland, there is an adult strategy focusing on “Essential Skills for Living” also has specific targets for volume of adults engaged in improving literacy and numeracy linked to improvements in employability and personal development.

2.12 The rationale for the all age strategy in Wales is noted below.

## **Early Years**

- 2.13 The approach of an all-age Basic Skills Strategy is driven in part by the wider policy focus on early childhood education across Europe. The move towards focusing on early years has been driven by the increasing recognition that “equitable access to quality early childhood education and care strengthen the foundations for lifelong learning for all children and support the broad education and social needs of families<sup>14</sup>.” However, in addition to the need to target very young children starting their education and ensuring an appropriate focus on language, literacy and maths skills, there is recognition of the needs of those young people and adults that have not attained functional levels of literacy and numeracy.

## **Schools**

- 2.14 Education policy has also been developing to improve the basic skills of those leaving primary and secondary education. The improved outcomes achieved by those completing Key Stage 2, in particular, give a strong indication of the effectiveness of this policy.

## **Adults**

- 2.15 The rationale for the all-age Basic Skills Strategy is also based, however, on the premise that there are still a significant minority who leave the education system without adequate basic skills. Activity is also needed to support the upskilling of those with low levels of literacy and numeracy skill in jobs where these skills requirements are increasing.
- 2.16 Furthermore, given the time lag between the achievement of improved standards in primary schools and the positive impact this will have on the skills of the workforce (10-15 years), focusing a strategy on young people only will have no short term benefits for the economy in Wales, leave behind a significant minority, and adversely affecting the local communities and economies in which they live. Therefore, the strategy also includes action to address the needs of young adults and those in the labour market (both unemployed and employed) who have poor basic skills.

---

<sup>14</sup> Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care. OECD 2001

### Cross-cutting themes

2.17 In addition to the strands of the programme focused on the three sectors outline above. The Basic Skills Strategy has included a range of cross cutting activities. These include:

- Book awards;
- Tripartite award and course;
- Training and qualifications framework;
- Teacher training for basic skills teachers;
- English as a second or additional language (ESOL/EAL) for those in linguistic minorities;
- Financial and consumer literacy;
- European programme;
- Strengthening Welsh language;
- Promotions campaign.

### Strategy Goals

2.18 **Table 2.1** outlines the stated goals, baseline and milestones set for the national basic skills strategy. The goals for the schools sector are in line with 'BEST' targets. Baseline data for the early years sector was not available as there was no standard test on school entry to report on this measure. Hence the BSA commissioned a survey of primary head teachers to seek their views on the skills of new entrants. Baseline data on adults was estimated from the International Literacy and numeracy survey (1997). Since that survey the national frameworks for literacy and numeracy have been developed and to ensure that baseline measurement made clearer reference to these national frameworks, the BSA commissioned the 'Scale of Need Survey' in 2003/04 to undertake a large scale assessment of literacy and numeracy needs. Interim data<sup>15</sup> has been reported with final data expected in Autumn 2004.

---

<sup>15</sup> The Survey of *Basic Skills* in Wales, BMRB, 2004

**Table 2.1: National basic skills strategy – Goals, Baseline and Milestones**

<b>Ultimate Goal</b>	<b>Baseline – 2001</b>	<b>2004 Milestone</b>
1. No child begins school unprepared for learning.	Teachers' perception survey indicates 50% of children are unprepared for school across a range of speaking & listening and pre literacy & numeracy tasks.	Reduce by 20%
2. At KS1: All 7 year olds achieve Level 2 <sup>16</sup> or above <sup>17</sup>	82% of 7 year olds achieve Level 2 or above in English, 90% in Maths, 87% in Welsh.	Improve by 10%
3. At KS2: All 11 year olds achieve Level 4 or above	78% of 11 yr olds achieved Level 4 or above in English, 74% Maths and 68% in Welsh.	85% of 11 year olds should achieve Level 4 or above.
4. At KS3: All 14 year olds achieve Level 5 or above	62% of 14 year olds achieved Level 5 or above in English and Maths, and 71% in Welsh.	80%-85% 14 year olds should achieve Level 5 or above.
5. At KS4: All 16 year olds leave school literate and numerate.	14% of 16 year olds have no qualifications.	At least 95% of 16 year olds should have qualifications
6. All adults have literacy and numeracy skills that mean they can function and progress in work & society	72% of adults have functional literacy and 68% have functional Numeracy.	At least 90% of adults should have functional literacy and 80% have functional Numeracy

<sup>16</sup> National Curriculum Levels: are statements against which schools can measure pupils' progress. Each attainment target sets out the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage". There are 8 level descriptions of increasing difficulty and a description of exceptional performance above level 8. Each level description explains the range and the types of performance that pupils working at that level should be able to demonstrate. Key Stage 1 aged 7 levels 1-3, Key Stage 2 aged 11 levels 2-5, Key Stage 3 aged 14 levels 5/6 and Key Stage 4 aged 16 GCSE.

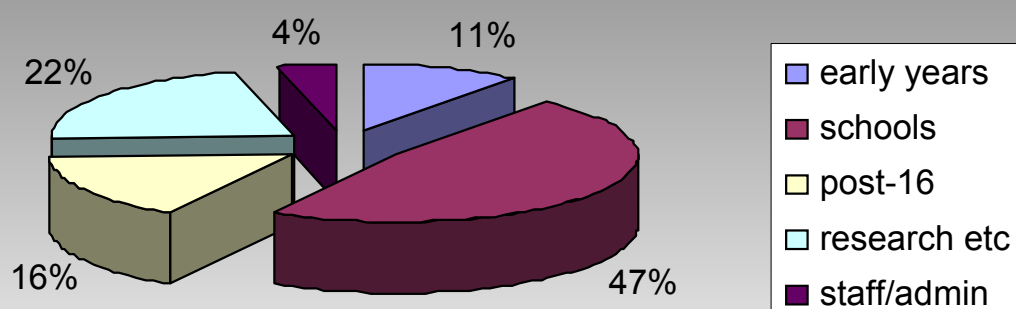
<sup>17</sup> In English, Welsh and Mathematics.

2.19 **Table 2.2** provides an overview of the main strategy strands and programmes, the total budget spend for these strands and the strategy goal to which they relate.

<b>Table 2.2: National basic skills strategy strands, goals and spend 2001-05</b>		
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Sector/Strand</b>	<b>Total Spend 2001-05 £</b>
	<b>Pre-school and early years</b>	
1	Language and Play	£3,302,861
1	Books for Babies	£1,010,383
	<b>Strengthening basic skills in schools</b>	
2, 3, 6	Family Literacy and Numeracy	£5,014,592
2, 3, 4, 6	Keeping up with the Children	£711,433
2, 3/ 4, 5	Primary Quality Mark/SQM	£2,262,161
2, 3, 4, 5	Strategic Grants Initiative	£6,320,499
4, 5	Training for Secondary School Teachers	£3,053,947
2, 3, 4, 5	Training for Supporters in Schools	£78,631
5, 6	Support for Disengaged Young People and those on Probation	£108,180
	<b>Post 16 Sector</b>	
6	Post 16 Quality Mark	£813,298
5, 6	Tripartite Award and supporting course	£436,258
6	Training and Qualifications Framework for Basic Skills Teachers	£250,711
6	Teacher Training for Basic Skills Teachers	£1,354,030
6	Workplace Basic Skills Strategy and Employer Pledge	£1,014,185
6	Strengthening basic skills teaching in Training Organisations	£546,454
6	Strengthening basic skills support in FE	£425,309
6	Strengthening basic skills support in Voluntary & Community organisations	£598,216
All	Supporting ESOL/EAL programmes	£125,242
	<b>Cross Cutting</b>	
All	Strengthening Welsh language in policy, curricula & publications	
All	Promotion campaigns and other promotional activity	£6,112,934
All	Dissemination of information	£1,273,590
All	Basic Skills Research and Surveys	£1,785,598
All	Quality Seal for Basic Skills material	£168,345

2.20 **Figure 2.1** shows the proportion of funding allocated across the five main areas of spend: early years, schools, post-16, research and promotions and staff and admin costs. Just under half of the strategy funding has been allocated to the schools sector work, 11% to the early years programmes and 16% to activity in the post-16 sector.

**Figure 2.1:  
Basic Skills Strategy Budget 2001-05, by sector**



### 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

#### Research Questions

3.1 The evaluation is focused on gathering evidence from national and local partners to report on the activities of the strategy. The aim of the evaluation is to seek to report on the following research questions:

- (1) Has the awareness of the importance of basic skills amongst children, young people and adults, including parents been increased?;
- (2) Have the activities of the strategy contributed to raising standards of literacy and numeracy in primary and secondary schools?;
- (3) Has the strategy encouraged LEAs to plan effectively to address shortfalls in literacy and numeracy support for children 'falling behind' their peers?;
- (4) Has the strategy strengthened the supply of basic skills teaching across the secondary curriculum?;
- (5) Has the strategy strengthened the quality of basic skills teaching across the post-16 sector?;
- (6) Has participation in literacy and numeracy classes (in informal and formal settings) increased?;
- (7) Is the qualifications framework appropriate to learners needs?;
- (8) Has the strategy engaged relevant groups, including those from ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities?;
- (9) What is the value of an all age strategy?;
- (10) How appropriate are the strategy targets, performance measures and data collection? When might strategy goals be achieved?;
- (11) How does or can the strategy link into and be embedded within, wider policy agendas?;
- (12) How does the GEST funding complement the funds available through the strategy?;
- (13) What is the effectiveness of the Quality Mark?;

- (14) How are those most in need defined and targeted?;
- (15) How can outcomes be sustained? What will be in place to take objectives forward post-2005, and what gaps will need to be addressed?;
- (16) What is the scale and nature of displacement and deadweight?;
- (17) What is the effectiveness of the BSA and other key delivery partners?
- (18) What has the strategy achieved overall?

## Strategy Review

3.2 In seeking to answer the research questions, the evaluation has focused on reviewing the design of the strategy. This includes a framework to review the processes developed to achieve strategy goals. The framework used is a standard 'double-loop learning'<sup>18</sup> framework<sup>19</sup>. This is illustrated in **Figure 3.1**. This framework focuses on the inter-relatedness of the components of the strategy. Its primary focus is on the outcomes from the strategy, but considers feedback from participants at all levels in the design, implementation and delivery of strategy activities. The framework looks at the following elements:

- strategy purpose/goals;
- strategy inputs – although the aim of the evaluation has not been to report explicitly on cost/benefit;
- strategy design – rationale and delivery mechanisms;
- work design/tasks and partner roles and responsibilities;
- structure, including hierarchies for reporting and informal networks;
- information used in decision making;
- rewards and motivations of different participants in the strategy;

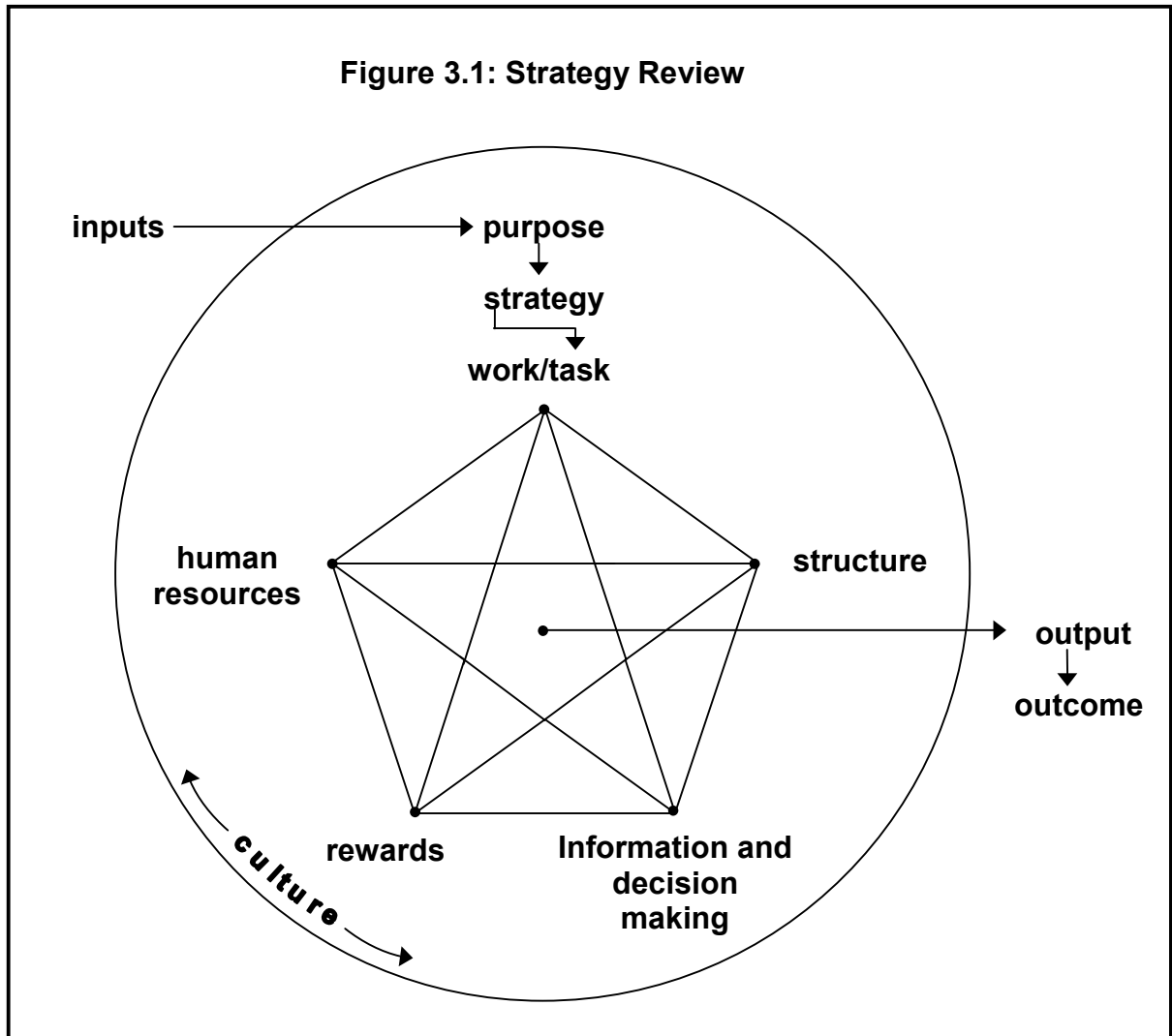
---

<sup>18</sup> Argyris and Schon (1978: 2) identify that *single loop learning* takes place when something goes wrong within organisations and managers look for another strategy that will work within the governing variables: chosen goals, values, plans and rules. An alternative response is to question the governing variables themselves, to subject them to critical scrutiny. This they describe as *double-loop learning*.

<sup>19</sup> Jay Galbraith Organisational design (1996)



- human resources and other inputs;
- culture and values;
- outcomes.



*Jay Galbraith Organisational Design (1996)*

3.3 The whole system approach seeks to look beyond the outputs generated (e.g. the numbers of participants in certain strands etc) and report on the outcomes achieved to date in terms of the effect that engagement in the strategy has had on the range of participants (including learners but also the organisations that the strategy seeks to engage (schools, colleges employers etc). Within the assessment of these outcomes, understanding the inputs, culture and reward and supporting infrastructure are also considered.

## Evaluation Methodology

3.4 **Annex B** shows for details of the sampling of participants and the approach taken to the evaluation study. The main activities have included:

- a scoping study to establish strategy rationale and progress;
- review of BSA progress and background reports;
- fieldwork in four case study areas;
- primary research with 362 people including:
  - 32 schools: 150 staff;
  - 20 staff from the 4 LEAs;
  - 35 staff from early years settings;
  - 25 parents;
  - 45 pupils;
  - 24 post-16 providers;
  - 18 employers;
  - 45 other partners;
- review of basic skills strategies in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland.

## **4 CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITY**

4.1 In addition to the strands of the programme focused on the three sectors outline above. The Basic Skills Strategy has included a range of cross cutting activities. These include:

- Book awards – national;
- Tripartite award and course;
- Training and qualifications framework;
- Teacher training for basic skills teachers;
- ESOL/EAL;
- Financial literacy;
- European programme;
- Strengthening Welsh language;
- Promotions campaign.

### **Basic Skills Book Awards**

4.2 The Basic Skills Book Awards have been developed as part of the Basic Skills Strategy and are run jointly by Basic Skills Agency and the Welsh Books Council. The Awards aim to recognise excellence in books and other material, and promotes the need to continue and improve the quality of resources to support the development of good basic skills.

4.3 The Awards and supporting programme of dissemination aims to help teachers, librarians, and parents to select the best material for improving literacy and numeracy. The book awards programme also aims to develop publishers' awareness of the basic skills strategy and encourage the development of materials that are high quality, age appropriate and relevant to Wales. The first Basic Skills Book Awards ceremony was held in Cardiff in November 2003, with awards made to winners in the following categories:

- overall excellence;

- primary age-group: Literacy - English-language basic skills books or schemes, Literacy - Welsh-language basic skills books or schemes, Non-book materials;
- secondary age-group: Literacy - English-language basic skills books or schemes, Literacy - Welsh-language basic skills books or schemes and Numeracy books or schemes - in English or in Welsh;
- adults: literacy - English-language basic skills books or schemes.

### Tripartite Course and Award

- 4.4 The aim of the Tripartite Course is to prepare young people and adults for a Level 1 qualification in literacy, numeracy and I.T. The Course has been written to cover all skills, knowledge and understanding needed at this level. It is aimed at learners who are at the top of Entry 3 or the lower end of Level 1. The course includes core elements which will enable a tutor to teach the literacy and numeracy and I.T. skills at this level. In addition, there will be a range of optional modules in which learners can practise and review the skills which are taught in the core elements. The optional modules relate to different contexts such as: Health, Sport, Job-search, Driving, Family Learning/Parenting, Financial Literacy, Citizenship/Current Affairs, Wales Europe and the World. There will also be vocational modules including Health & Safety, Skills for Retail, Skills for Care, and Skills for Construction. It is expected that most learners will require 240 to 300 teaching hours to learn and feel secure in all of the Level 1 literacy, numeracy and I.T. skills. The tripartite course has been piloted in a number of settings and feedback on the course is reported in **Section 10**.
- 4.5 The BSA has also been working with ACCAC and WJEC in order to develop the Tripartite Award. An agreement on the Award has not yet been reached. Proposals are that candidates will need to obtain Level 1 certificates in each of the three disciplines of literacy, numeracy and I.T. and in addition, will need to successfully complete a personal overarching assignment which demonstrates competence in the use of the three disciplines including writing, speaking and listening. The Level 1 certificates which will be recognised are the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy qualifications currently available from a wide range of awarding bodies and I.T. certificates approved by ACCAC, will also be recognised. The overarching assignment, guidelines and assessment criteria are being produced by the Basic Skills Agency in collaboration with WJEC.

### **Training and qualifications framework and teacher training for basic skills teachers**

- 4.6 The need for initial teacher training in basic skills has been an on-going issue particularly with training providers, and the supply of basic skills teacher training at all levels across Wales has been patchy. This has been exacerbated by delays in the development of qualification frameworks. For example, in 2002/03 it was not clear which teaching qualifications were still valid. The level 4, 2 and now 3 qualification frameworks are now developed and this strand of the strategy has developed a programme of work to train trainers, commission and pilot teacher training courses, and to raise awareness and understanding of the new teaching frameworks. In 2003, the BSA established Training the Trainers programme and a National Training Team for Wales was identified, with Lead Trainers in every LEA. Teacher training needs were identified through a survey of providers. By the end of the 2003/04 year the following activities had been completed
- 7 Literacy and Numeracy Core Curriculum training courses completed – 210 teachers trained;
  - 2 ESOL Core Curriculum training courses completed – 66 teachers trained;
  - 1 Pre Entry Core Curriculum courses completed – 30 teachers trained;
  - 2 Access for All courses completed – 64 teachers trained;
  - 1 Financial Literacy, training the trainers course completed – 15 participants involved.
- 4.7 Issues faced to date in the delivery of teacher training reported by the BSA include:
- entry requirements – availability of tools to measure basic skills competence at level 3 (as required by FENTO);
  - the availability of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver level 4 course.
  - the need to link to provision of basic skills support for those needing to gain level 2 literacy and numeracy certificates;
  - the lack of reliability of teacher's database owing to constant changes in basic skills personnel within organisations;
  - availability and accessibility of materials and resources;

- the variations in arrangements for release and payment of trainers and participants. Attitudes and approaches of organisations differ enormously resulting in some tension.

**4.8 Plans for 2004/05 include:**

- undertake audit of qualifications currently held by teachers;
- design and pilot Level 3 modular course for supporters of basic skills to young people and adults;
- commission Level 4 course design and pilot the level 4 course;
- hold local and national dissemination events to inform providers of framework;
- complete level 2 pilot courses and provide Level 2 training courses for Training Organisations through the NSP for Training;
- work with youth service, probation & prison service and careers & guidance staff to embed basic skills awareness training (unit 1 of level 2).

**ESOL/EAL**

**4.9** The ESOL/EAL programme aims to strengthen the support available to adults and children from minority communities. Just under 2% of the population in Wales are defined as being linguistic minority speakers. However in certain areas, notably the South East, there are pockets of the population where this proportion is much higher. In order to understand more about the current situation and needs in terms of developing basic skills activity, the BSA commissioned an EAL and ESOL scoping study in Wales, in October 2002. The findings from the study have shaped a programme of activity focused on skills-sharing, producing and disseminating resources and developing training leading to qualifications. Outputs to date include:

- guidance and key words in several different community languages for Language and Play programmes;
- provided dual language book boxes for LAP programmes working with minority linguistic families;
- commissioned materials to support minority linguistic students working towards the Tripartite Award;

- commissioned two Level 2 pilot training programmes for Adult Learner Supporters;
- begun to develop a Level 3 Initial Teacher Training programme;
- commissioned Cardiff LEA to develop a language programme for asylum seeker parents that underpins the LAP, Keeping Up with the Children programmes and develop the English language skills of participants who wish to work in the childcare sector (this is part of the ASSET UK project funded through the European Union's Equal Programme).

4.10 Further planned activities for 2004/05 include:

- strengthening the EAL and ESOL elements across all programmes;
- disseminate the outcomes of the Level 2 training for Adult Learner Supporters and continue to develop training and qualifications for Post 16 teachers at Level 3;
- produce support teaching and learning materials;
- increase the numbers of ESOL programmes with the Post 16 Quality Mark;
- pilot support in selected organisations including those supporting asylum seekers and refugees.

### **Financial Literacy**

4.11 The development of activity to improve financial literacy skills has been a thematic area within the Wales strategy. A consultative group established in partnership with Financial Services Authority and a Task group established to develop approach to the development, distribution and training of both basic skills teaching staff and financial advisors. Activity to date has focused mainly on the development of partnership and materials, and initial training programmes. This work has included the development of a Financial Capability Framework which has also been translated, a Financial Exclusion Booklet and bilingual materials contextualised for Wales including: Making the Most of Your Money file; Consumer Confidence file and CD Rom, and the Money Go Round CD Rom.

4.12 In 2004/05 the BSA plans to disseminate the materials and provide training for teaching staff and for money advisers to raise awareness of basic skills. The BSA also plans embed Financial Literacy within other training and course development including:

- a Financial Literacy module developed as part of the Tripartite course;
- a Financial Literacy training module as part of the Level 2 and 3 teacher training programme;
- the development of pilot Family Financial Capability programmes.

### European programme

4.13 Two key programmes of work are being supported funded by European funding. The first aims to build on work undertaken by the NSP for Workplace which included initial exploratory meetings with Sector Skills Councils and integrate learning and development from the Tripartite course to develop sector specific basic skill modules for employees. Activity aims to build on work to improve employability in cleaning, construction, land-based and social care sectors, to work with four sector skills councils to identify staff training needs, write and produce/publish learning programmes and materials to improve literacy and numeracy skills of prospective and current employees and trial learning materials with trainees and employees.

4.14 The second programme is developing a bilingual basic skills observatory micro-site for Wales that will have links to the main observatory: **Spotlight on Wales - A Basic Skills Observatory**. The micro-site aims to provide Wales with information: policy, research and basic skills practice across 10 occupational sectors.

### Strengthening Welsh Language

4.15 To strengthen the Welsh Language aspects of the National Strategy the BSA has worked to develop policy, standards, curricula and publications, specifically to facilitate the teaching of basic skills in Welsh. By the end of 2003/04 the following outputs were achieved:

- Welsh Language Literacy standards and Numeracy standards in Welsh published and launched;



- Welsh Language Adult Literacy and Numeracy curricula drafted and ready for publication; ALDD and pre-entry curricula drafted;
- Fast Track assessment and Initial Assessment for Welsh language and Numeracy in Welsh drafted and ready for publication;
- range of materials available in bilingual form increased and publications programme drawn up;
- all initiatives facilitated through the medium of Welsh and English;
- BSA Welsh Language Plan drafted;

4.16 Activities planned for 2004/05 include:

- the publishing and launch of the Welsh curriculum documents;
- plan and deliver a training programme to promote the use of the Welsh curriculum;
- pilot the Fast Track and Initial Assessment materials, and promote their use;
- support the development of qualifications for Welsh literacy;
- plan a publications programme for bilingual materials.

## Promotional Campaigns

- 4.17 The BSA has commissioned a series of national campaigns over the lifetime of the strategy. Promotional activity to date has covered three phases with a fourth phase, the Talk to Me campaign for those aged 0-3 years, being commissioned in 2004. The emphasis for communications in the final year of the strategy will also be placed on maintaining a press campaign to include positive stories and the outcomes from the range of strategy strand activities.

## **Phase 1**

4.18 The first and largest phase of the campaign (Feb-March 2002) was an all age awareness raising campaign. It encouraged people to reflect on their own skills and their motivation for addressing poor basic skills and provided general information about the existence of the national strategy. Pre and post campaign research undertaken by Market Research Wales on behalf of the BSA. This included feedback from 400 parents (pre and post), 500 children (pre and post), 160 teachers and a further 500 adults post campaign. The research identified the following:

- 4% of parents considered that their basic skills were poor (prior to the start of the phase 1 campaign). Those aged 16-24, those in social class grades DE and those that were unemployed were more likely to consider that they had poor basic skills;
- the measure of self-reported level of poor basic skills increased after the phase 1 campaign, for parents in certain groups, notably those in social class DE;
- 9% of parents reported that they were participating in (formal and informal) activities to improve their basic skills, this rose to 16% after the phase 1 campaign;
- the levels of recall in relation to the range of campaign media were high;
- 73% of parents reported that they had been motivated to read more with their children, and a similar proportion indicated that the advertising campaign had made them realise the importance of reading with their children;
- four in ten parents agreed that improving their own basic skills would help improve the way they supported their children out of school.

## **Phase 2**

4.19 The second phase of promotional activity included the Read with Me campaign aimed at parents and young people aged 5 to 7. The second phase of the campaign (October 2002) included the development of the Read With Me booklet, which offered a range of tips and support for parents wanting to improve and increase reading activity with their children. The Read With Me campaign generated over 8,000 calls to the Wales team to request 12,500 copies of the free booklet. Schools libraries and bookshops have also ordered copies, totalling 53,700.

- 4.20 Follow up research identified that reaction to the booklet was very positive with a number of suggestions made for development of similar materials. The follow-up research also indicated that the booklet had not had a significant impact on the reading activities of those using it, however, the guidance had been helpful to reassure parents that they were “doing the right thing” when reading to their children.
- 4.21 Participating parents also indicated that the booklets should be distributed in schools to help ensure that everyone had access to the Read With Me materials.
- 4.22 A further element of the promotional campaign programme included activity to support World Book Day (March 2003) undertaken in partnership with the Welsh Books Council. The campaign included images and messages used in the phase 1 and 2 campaigns. The post campaign research with 800 parents established that the understanding of the key messages from the campaign was high. The proportion that felt that they were significantly more likely to participate in their child’s reading was 24%. This was an increase from the 18% who reporting this finding from the phase 1 research, perhaps indicating the value of a sustained campaign over 2-3 years. Feedback from those that used the book was also very positive, with three in five reporting that it gave them new ideas about reading with their children, and three in ten indicated that they had increased the frequency with which they read with their children, and 95% said they would continue to use the book.

### **Phase 3**

- 4.23 Phase three of the campaign was undertaken in October 2003 in partnership with the BBC, and included input from the BSA in the development and distribution of CDs and numeracy boxes and a maths game competition for schools to support the campaign. The activity in this phase focused on numeracy and targeted students at Key Stage 3 with three related adverts. Over 1,200 Year 6 and 7 pupils in 24 schools participated in the survey pre and post the campaign. The pre-campaign research reported views expressed by pupils about their attitude towards the importance of and interest in maths. Maths was identified as their least popular subject by 24% of Year 7 pupils, although just under half reported that maths was ‘quite fun’. Over 90% indicated that it was important to be good at maths. Just over three quarters of Year 7 pupils thought that they were good or very good at maths. A quarter of Year 7 pupils indicated that they had recently seen material that made them more interested in improving their maths skills.

- 4.24 Post campaign research indicated that pupils' awareness of the importance of being good at maths had increased slightly. However, recall of the TV adverts was low (less than 10%). The campaign research also included feedback from 225 teachers and 800 adults. Teachers were supportive of the national campaign and its value in supporting their work in school. Specific follow-up with teachers on the use and value of the numeracy boxes highlighted that the vast majority (86%) felt that the box had helped generate interest in maths amongst that target group (Year 7s). Just under two thirds of teachers also noted that the boxes helped them to undertake activities that they had not used before.
- 4.25 However, post-campaign research also indicated that there was not a high level of understanding by adults as to the focus of this campaign.

### **Strategy Evaluation Feedback on Awareness**

- 4.26 It was not a specific objective of the Strategy Evaluation to report on the impact of the promotional campaigns, as this had already been followed-up in depth by the research already commissioned by the BSA. However, during the interviews, notably with schools, staff did comment on the value of the materials and campaigns. Most notably the Read with Me booklets were mentioned.
- 4.27 During the strategy evaluation, respondents were asked more general questions on the extent to which they felt that the awareness of basic skills issues had changed in the past 3 years. Generally, stakeholders felt that awareness about basic skills had improved. This was expressed in terms of:
- understanding the importance of literacy and numeracy;
  - understanding (e.g. for practitioners) how to address and improve basic skills, for example as part of teaching strategies or within wider organisational policy.
- 4.28 Feedback was sought on what had lead to the noted change in increased basic skills awareness. For teaching staff, key drivers included:
- working towards the quality mark;
  - participating in strategy programmes and training;
  - LEA and BSA advisory support;

- other national schools policy;
- the national promotional campaigns.

4.29 The following quotes illustrate the most common types of comments made by respondents regarding activity that has helped improve teaching staff awareness and understanding of basic skills.

- **working towards the Quality Mark:** “there has been a noticeable improvement in the staff’s general awareness of the importance of basic skills as we have worked towards the QM and renewal” *Primary Deputy Head, Pembrokeshire*;
- **participating in training and CPD:** “staff have been made aware of the importance of especially numeracy skills, this has been developed through core curriculum and basic skills training for staff”. *Primary Head, Newport*;
- **LEA advisory support:** “I think they've been made more aware and when the advisor came in she spoke to us about basic skills being tagged up on their schemes at work and how it's going to be an important part of any inspection process in the future so we're all more aware of how these link in now” *Literacy Co-ordinator, Secondary school, Newport*;
- **other national schools policy:** “numeracy tutor receives referrals from Maths teacher and feels consistency and common approach amongst staff is increasing as a result. For example, Science/Geography teachers for e.g. are now aware of doing maths warm-up sessions at beginning of lesson if their lesson requires it, i.e. awareness has been raised about how to develop of numeracy for their lessons. However, we must note that although the Secondary Training Grant has helped fund this, activity has also been because of 'Numeracy across the Curriculum' nationally”. *Secondary Head, Pembrokeshire*.

4.30 Schools noted that they had been working **more activity to engage parents** and keep them informed about the literacy and numeracy strategies that the school was implementing, specifically if their children were involved in these. The extent to which the national campaigns have had an influence on changing perceptions cannot be quantified, however, teaching staff did note the importance of the wider campaigns in reinforcing the messages that schools were seeking to promote about their work on basic skills:

- “I can't say whether it is because of the campaign as such, but I think parents are more aware of the need to support their children in the basic skills than they have been in the past”. *Primary Head Anglesey*;
- “I think we are all more aware, including parents. We have been working to engage parents, explaining individual and class targets. We occasionally do an evening where we introduce different language and numeracy strategies to parents. The wider campaigns - the national advertising - has helped to increase general awareness on basic skills. So it all builds” *SENCO, Pembrokeshire*.

4.31 The feedback from schools illustrate the importance of a range of interventions that lead from awareness, to understanding action in relation to addressing basic skills: an area with a complex set of messages and cultural issues to address and overcome in order to make substantive progress. Within this range of activity, the national promotional campaigns form an important part of developing awareness of the priority placed upon basic skills at the national level by Government and other partners.

## 5 EARLY YEARS

### Introduction

5.1 In this section, we report on the findings from the evaluation on activities taking place in the Early Years sector. This reviews:

- Basic Skills Strategy objectives for the early years sector;
- the Involvement of LEAs and early years agencies;
- the activities of the strategy in the early years strands;
- outcomes;
- the sustainability of basic skills strategy activity.

### Policy Context

5.2 Policy for the early years sector is currently under major review with the impending introduction of the Foundation Phase stage of education, which covers the development of the curriculum for those aged 3-7. Other relevant policy includes Communities First and National Play Policy. These are described in summary in **Annex A**.

### Baseline Position

5.3 In 2002, the Basis Skills Agency (BSA) commissioned a 'perception audit'<sup>20</sup> of head teachers to provide a baseline on the readiness of children for learning when they begin school. The findings supported the widely held view that children today are less well prepared for starting school in terms of their language skills than children were five years ago. The specific baseline measure for the strategy was set as – 50% of children are unready for school in speaking/listening and pre literacy & numeracy tasks.

5.4 For the 2004 target (extended to 2005), the milestone was to reduce the proportion unprepared by 20%.

---

<sup>20</sup> Young Children's Skills on Entry to Education Survey 2002, Beaufort research Ltd., 2002

## Baseline Capacity

- 5.5 It was been widely acknowledged that parents' involvement in developing their children's language and literacy skills is vital, and prior to the introduction of the strategy Family Programmes and Bookstart initiatives had already been operating to promote and develop this interaction.
- 5.6 However, the strategy identified that LEAs and other partners needed to be supported to improve the co-ordination and development of interventions that seek to improve children's readiness for learning. Consultations with key agencies in the Early Years' sector field identified that early language development was the crucial area to focus on in the pre-school years. To this end, the Language and Play Programme was developed in Wales. In addition, the strategy supported the further development of the Bookstart programme through additional funding for Books for Babies.

## Operational Objectives

- 5.7 Operational targets were set at a national level, and devolved to each LEA to be fulfilled. **Table 5.1** and **Table 5.2**, below, show the planned targets and outputs for these strands for 2003/04.

Table 5.1: Language and Play	
Targets 2003/04	Progress against targets to end of year 2003-04
6600 parents participating in LAP programmes. 6600 children participating in LAP activities. 330 early years trainers and workers trained.	6,405 parents participated in LAP programmes. 6,636 children participated in LAP activities 610 early years workers trained.

Table 5.2: Books for Babies	
Targets 2003/04	Progress against targets to end of year 2003-04
Reach all families with babies aged 8-12 months.	94,066 Books for Babies book-bags were distributed by health visitors to parents at the 9-month health check. 40,000 Early years packs distributed at the 18 month health check or via LAP programmes.



- 5.8 Across the 3 years, the LAP programme has supported over 8,000 parents and 8,200 children. Overall, there are approximately 128,000 children in the 0-3 cohort (2001 mid year population estimates). Assuming the size of the cohort has not changed significantly and that the distribution of single age groups within the 0-3 age range is similar, then the LAP programme has supported approximately 6% of children in the total cohort to date, or 13% of the target group (50% of the 0-3 cohort).
- 5.9 At this stage we cannot state a priori that those engaged are within the target group, however, analysis below on deadweight, suggests that the LAP programme has been effective in engaging target parents and children (because of the focus on working in areas of high deprivation and with relatively low achievement scores).

## **The Role of Key Partners**

### **Role of the BSA**

- 5.10 An Early Years Advisory Group, coordinated by the BSA, supports all strands of activity. The BSA specifically designed the Language and Play programme for the Basic Skills Strategy in Wales. Grants have been made available to LEAs to appoint a Language and Play (LAP) coordinator to deliver, coordinate and support the development and roll out of the programme in each area.
- 5.11 Resources are also available to support the delivery of the programme, and, at the national level, facilitate a network for all LAP coordinators. BSA Link Officers, attached to each of the LEA areas, are also responsible for supporting LAP coordinators and monitoring activity progress and delivery.
- 5.12 Further Early Years work, funded through the BSA, is the development of the Books for Babies Programme through Bookstart, and by providing access to grants for LEAs to run Family Programmes (see below). The local authority usually administers and delivers this activity. The BSA Link Officers also monitor the progress of these activities.

### **Role of the LEA**

- 5.13 The BSA identified LEAs as a critical stakeholder in developing the LAP programmes. Continuation funding was made available to each LEA for the LAP co-ordinator role for three years and provided guidelines on the necessary skills and background for the coordinator position.
- 5.14 LEAs also have responsibility for developing linkages between LAP programmes, the Early Years Childcare Development Partnership, Sure Start and other agencies working in the field. The role of the LEA within the Books for Babies programme varies. Until March 2004, most authorities in Wales had a nominated Bookstart coordinator, often paid through GEST funding. Since this funding has been cut, there is a lack of clarity regarding how the coordinators role will continue. Some LEAs have committed to fund this themselves, in other areas, the role has been absorbed into the duties of other existing posts.

### **Role of Early Years Staff**

- 5.15 Staff from a wide range of organisations play a role in the development of LAP. The extent of this varies from area to area, depending upon the networks engaged and the pre-existence of similar play programmes in, for example, one of the case study areas sampled. Examples of the different partners engaged in early years strand work include:
- LAP coordinator – manages LAP activity and trains and supports others in the delivery of the LAP course to parents and children;
  - Health Visitors: Health Visitors distribute Book bags and give the first messages about the importance of interaction and communication with babies. Health Visitors trained to deliver LAP may follow this up with one to one or with group delivery on the LAP course;
  - Librarians: often coordinate distribution of Books for Babies. They may extend their role to include running Rhyme Time sessions in libraries, linking in with Sure Start and LAP etc. Their role is not funded through the strategy, but represents added value to the strand;
  - Head teachers or managers of nurseries/Infants: provide the link for recruiting parents onto LAP courses.

- 5.16 The extent to which these roles are joined up depends on the pre-existing links between staff working in the Early Years sector within the area, and the level of strategic support/infrastructure focused on early intervention with parents. Where the links don't currently exist, partnership working is tending to evolve, and some good progress has been made, but the process takes much longer than those areas where the infrastructure was well established, e.g. Newport and RCT.

### **Strategic Coordination**

- 5.17 The extent to which the delivery of the LAP courses and Books for Babies activities has been linked into other activity in the early years sector has varied across the LEAs sampled.
- 5.18 **Table 5.3** shows a summary of the key features of the LAP programme in the case study areas.

**Evaluation of the Basic Skills Strategy  
Main Report**

**Table 5.3: Summary of key findings from Case Study Areas: LAP programmes**

	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Newport</b>	<b>RCT</b>	<b>Pembrokeshire</b>
LAP programme fit within the LEA	Within education and leisure services. Links with Sure Start, Bookstart and family programmes.	In schools improvement (LAP co-ordinator was formerly Family Programmes manager, so good Links with schools).	In early years services of the LEA: team also includes Sure Start, HV, and Communities first EYCDP, NCA. A strong pre-existing strategic framework. Previous play programmes ongoing via SureStart.	In early years in education: LAP coordinator sits in LEA but is not from a teaching background.
LAP co-ordinator role	LAP coordinator - 0.6 LAP, 0.4 Family Programmes manager.	Linked into strategic partnerships strong Steering Group, offering LAP as part of a wider offer to parents. LAP seen as the first intervention and then provides links for parents into family programmes.	Partners have a raft of programmes: eg Talk About - similar, Toy Library etc. LAP can extend where they offer programmes/activities. Added LAP to offer to all EY centres.	Well established links into delivery with SureStart, health visitors and speech therapists.
Organisations involved in the delivery of LAP	Working in schools with nursery provision, mother and toddler groups/play groups and with Health Visitors.	Working with SureStart and an EY agency working with ethnic minority parents.	Started with existing contacts, now all EYs centres and Primary schools offered LAP. LAP supports an outreach worker and a pool of 50 group leaders. Much more activity than other case study areas.	Already lots of early years centres. Less overlap of strategic partners. Targets set for LAP to improve links with schools.
Working to engage parents from the target groups	Rural area - hard to get the numbers required, people drop out and some courses not viable. Strengths=having LAP.	Work through SureStart & EY centres in deprived areas. Not a directly seeking to target hardest to reach.	In most areas 'all parents are target parents'. Looking to roll out to Dad's groups and prisons plus an ESOL group of women.	Adhoc approach to engaging EY centre. Not a strong focus on targeting 'harder' target parents.
Effectiveness of the LAP course for parents	Enjoyed the programme, but activity not always sustained out of the programme times.	Good if the first part of a longer programme. No able to link into FP in Newport as orgn changes. Planning to develop in 2004.	Very good, given lots of ideas. Primary school with a history of working with parents of pre-school children for 3-4 months of start of schools. See LAP as something else to offer parents.	Parents very positive about it. Felt that it was long enough (for the age of children and time that they can commit). Positive that they do use the skills learned.

Table 5.3: Summary of key findings from Case Study Areas: LAP programmes

	Anglesey	Newport	RCT	Pembrokeshire
Effectiveness of the LAP training for trainers?		Model developed does not focus on training EY staff. Trained 8 trainers to deliver.	Large pool of trainers developed including a large group of health visitors. SureStart staff also delivers as part of their programmes. Other trainers include volunteer mums & library staff.	Released funding to train and pay others to deliver. Have a pool of 10 trainers.
Are the Early Years staff the 'right' people to deliver the course for parents?	Some difficulties faced eg Mums and Toddlers group leaders require additional resource from the LAP co-ord to train and support. Lots of turnover of EY staff, limiting the sustainability of activity. Small groups mean no demand to run frequently, so loss of confidence of trained EY staff to deliver.	Not those employed by a nursery.	EY staff and many others trained.	yes but needed to give staff and lot of support to enable the to deliver.
Links into other strategies/programmes	Good linkages and referral from LAP to FPs as co-coordinators delivers LAP courses and manages the FPs.	Was well linked at strategic level with FPs, but change in structure means operationally not so at the moment, other good links.	Beginning to link offer of LAP and FPs as part of the wider offer to EYs.	Less clear links between LAP and FPs (FP sits within communities schools).
Is LAP likely to continue?	LEA not likely to continue without funding - delivery dependant on the Coordinator driving it forward.	Definitely . LAP co-ord employed in the LEA.	Not sustainable: cuts in GEST funding have meant that they would not be able to continue to funding the LAP post. Some elements of LAP activity might continue but not the co-ordination that is needed to drive forward.	Quit likely, not sure if the LEA will pay for the LAP co-ord post, but will seek funding via EYCDPs/Cymorth to get funding (linked to Sure start/children and youth support fund).

- 5.19 There are some very positive examples, where the activity of LAP coordinators has been well supported strategically by the LEA/EYCDPs. This has helped facilitate the roll out and integration of the LAP programme through partner agencies and strong early years networks that already existed. In other case study areas, where these networks have been weaker, the roll-out has tended to be slower as links with early year providers have been forged through 'bottom-up' personal contact, rather than supported by 'top down' messages of support and promotion via network newsletters etc approach.
- 5.20 Linkages also vary in terms of the degree of linkage of the Language and Play programme with Family Programmes. This is often a result of operational issues, such as to where the management of those the activities lie and where key staff are based within the LEA. In most cases, a strategy has not yet been fully developed to link the two together. An exception to this is in one case study area, where the LAP coordinator is also responsible for Family Programmes. Other LEAs have intimated that development of linkages between the two programmes is the next step for development of their LAP programme.

### **Books for Babies**

- 5.21 This programme is mostly managed through library services that coordinate the main activity: the distribution of books and packs with health visitors. The Bookstart coordinators are GEST funded (i.e. they are not funded as part of the basic skills strategy). The basic skills strategy has supported the programme through funding for the books and packs.
- 5.22 Case study feedback from partners indicates the positive outcomes achieved from the Bookstart programme. Services track the outcomes, in terms of people joining libraries after distribution of book bags, and involvement in LAP. Some library services monitor registrations of Bookstart Babies and analyse the role the co coordinator has in driving up the numbers registering the library and increased use of children's library services.

- 5.23 Linking in with LAP, Librarians are receiving LAP training and Health Visitors have attended information events to learn how to introduce the packs at the 9 month health check. Sessions of LAP are frequently delivered in libraries where appropriate. Feedback illustrates that Health Visitors have been successful in their role of distributing the packs, but are restricted in the amount of information surrounding its use that they can get across.
- 5.24 Health Visitors feedback that they value these tools highly, but the volume of information given to parents at the 9 month check can dilute the message getting across, additionally, training is not annual, and, therefore, new staff are not being trained.
- 5.25 The strategy funding supports the publication and distribution of the books. Stakeholders recognise that distribution is just part of the process. However, consultations in case study areas stress the importance of the Bookstart coordinator role to help drive the process and encourage sustained activity by those distributing packs and encouraging other activity within library settings such as Rhyme Time sessions.
- 5.26 In terms of continuation, some authorities will fund the Bookstart co-ordinator role; however, others report that they are not in a position to do this, due to cuts in GEST.

## **Language and Play**

- 5.27 The programme is intended for use with groups of parents/carers and their babies and young children aged 0-3. Programmes run for six weeks for between 1-1.5 hours per week. Session plans include practical activities, which the parent/carer and their baby and child can do together. The focus is on language, literacy and play and can be used in parent and toddler groups, playgroups, health clinics, family centres, nurseries and schools. It is designed to complement the work of Sure Start, although the programme is open to all parents.

5.28 The BSA has allocated funding for each LEA to employ a LAP coordinator to manage LAP activity and train and support others to deliver the LAP course. Resources are also provided for use in the sessions, and some funding has been allocated to cover the costs of the delivery – venue costs and advertising. The approach to allocation of funding to these activities is left to the discretion of the LEA. As the BSA has not been prescriptive on how LAP coordinators should engage and work with partners, the roll out of the programme varies significantly in different areas. A number of factors affect how the LAP coordinators operate including:

- previous work history of the LAP coordinator;
- existing contacts;
- strategic guidance and support;
- existing infrastructure and role of other agencies;
- budget for other staff;
- economic and geographical environment of the area.

5.29 LAP coordinators have targets in terms of the numbers of parents and children involved in the programme and the number of staff trained in LAP. These vary according to LEA size.

5.30 Guidance is also provided on group size - 10 parents in each; however, there is significant flexibility in how the programme can be delivered depending on the nature of the group, the setting etc. Coordinators and deliverers report that the flexibility of the programme is one of its key attributes.

5.31 The initial LAP model was designed to offer training on the Language and Play programme to staff working in Early Years settings by the LAP coordinator. Then, on receipt of this training and additional follow up support from the LAP coordinator, the LAP trained Early Years staff would go on to deliver the LAP course to the parents and children that they already worked with. The model also encouraged the LAP trainer training to be delivered to others working in early years contexts including librarians, health visitors, foster parents, students on Childcare NVQ, Sure Start workers, childminders and mid-wives.



- 5.32 In two of the case study areas visited, the LAP coordinator has also delivered events to promote the overall message of the importance of language and play skills. One example was an oracy event at a leisure centre, where parents and children from a cluster of nurseries/infants attended a day of play and activities. The purpose was to engage parents in their children's education and demonstrate how they could continue such activities at home.

### **Partnership Working and Roll Out**

- 5.33 The scale and breadth of actual operation varies across LEAs. This is partly due to the time at which coordinators were appointed, (some were not in post until the end of the financial year 2002/03). In Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT), strategic networks were fully operational for early years, whereas in Anglesey, the LAP coordinator has needed to undertake considerable initial networking activity, because the existing infrastructure was relatively weak.
- 5.34 In RCT, the Early Years team have been involved in programmes developing parents' communication skills for some time, and work from the pre-birth stage. Good networks and linkages with partner agencies exist across the valleys, including through the Communities First teams<sup>21</sup>. The LAP programme has been added to the package of EY activity and the coordinator has been able to take advantage of established networks and operations. Whilst LAP activity has extended beyond existing operations, partnership working already established in the area facilitated the roll out of the process. As a consequence, the programme has a prominent role in EY services, which has stimulated significant demand for LAP courses. LAP has been delivered to over 500 parents in RCT in the last year.
- 5.35 Where less well-established networks exist, LAP coordinators have had to build relationships with partner agencies to stimulate demand. In Anglesey, partnerships have been built through operational mechanisms rather than being driven strategically. This process has been successful and demand for programmes is building; however, the process is time consuming and is potentially less well embedded than where strategic working supports roll out.

---

<sup>21</sup> RCT has high levels of deprivation with 22 Communities First wards in the area.

5.36 Despite the differences in local infrastructure, partnership working is a key feature of the success of the LAP, and is evident in all areas. Across the four areas, sampled roll out of the programme has varied through agencies and groups such as:

- Sure Start;
- Health Visitors;
- Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin;
- Mother and Toddler groups;
- Baby Massage Groups;
- Social Services;
- Adoption Services;
- Foster Parents;
- Colleges – NVQ childcare;
- Nursery and primary schools;
- Fathers Direct;
- TUF.

### **Implementing the LAP Model**

5.37 The focus of activity, in terms of age of children, also varies across areas. Some tend to focus the programme at nursery age (Newport/Anglesey), whereas others have used health visitors and baby groups as the primary area of work (Pembrokeshire/RCT). Where this has occurred, it is often due to a specific strategic push for intervention at the very early age.

5.38 There are several examples of where LAP coordinators have extended the programme beyond the main key early years provider organisations. In RCT, a fathers group is being run through contact with Fathers Direct, and a programme is being established in HMP Parc for offenders due for release. In Newport, programmes have been run for parents from BME groups facilitated by an interpreter. Both of these activities require flexibility in approach, and careful planning to ensure sensitivity to gender and culture is reflected in the style and approach to delivery.

## Value of LAP for Parents and Children

5.39 Feedback from parents on the LAP programme is overwhelmingly positive, and is valued by a large proportion of those who take part. Parents from all backgrounds indicate they have learnt something from the programme and have developed their ideas of how to play with their children. Common benefits of the programme cited by parents were under the following themes:

- confidence;
- contributing to child development;
- changed interaction;
- parent's progression, and;
- settling into schools.

5.40 Table 5.4 illustrates these points with quotes from parents.

Table 5.4: Examples of Benefits Reported by Participants in LAP	
<b>Confidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"I'm much more confident, as I know what I'm doing is right – it's like having a parenting class."</i> (Pembrokeshire)</li> <li>• <i>"It's really good for meeting other new parents and building confidence. There are a few groups where you can meet up with other mums, but this one you're actually learning something quite different."</i> (Pembrokeshire)</li> </ul>
<b>Contributing to Child Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"I really feel like I can contribute to how well she does at school. I can give her a head start now."</i> (Newport)</li> <li>• <i>"Instead of just coming home and putting the TV on, we do lots more stuff together now – I feel I know what I'm talking about when I'm trying to teach her new things."</i> (Newport)</li> </ul>
<b>Changed Interaction with Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"I spend much more time on a one to one basis. I used to tend to leave my little one to get on with it herself."</i> (Pembrokeshire)</li> <li>• <i>"We do things really differently. Instead of telling her to stop pulling things off the shelves at the supermarket, I get her to count and point things out – it's made shopping trips much easier."</i> (Newport)</li> </ul>
<b>Parent's Own Progression</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"LAP was the first positive step for me. I'm now working at my daughter's nursery and want to become an LSA when she moves onto primary school."</i> (Newport)</li> <li>• <i>"We're all really keen to learn more now. We've done other courses after LAP, and want to learn Welsh so we can support the children at school."</i></li> </ul>
<b>Settling Children into School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"It's been used here to bring us into school before the children start school. I think it helps settle them in and gives us confidence in the school environment."</i> (RCT)</li> <li>• <i>"I really wanted to help my son with Welsh before he starts school, by us both learning nursery rhymes in Welsh. I hope this will prevent him from being at a disadvantage."</i> (Anglesey)</li> </ul>

5.41 There have been some less positive comments about the sustained impacts of the programme from some parents and early years staff that work with the children. An illustration of this is:

- *"I really enjoy the time I have with my child here, but it's difficult to continue it at home because of time constraints."* (Anglesey);
- *"It's a really tough area round here, and we had a job getting three to come for the whole six weeks. They were really enthusiastic when they first finished but I think they've probably slipped back to their old ways now. I haven't seen any change in the children. The biggest plus is that they aren't afraid of talking to teachers now which is good."* (Newport).

### Impacts

5.42 Delivery staff from SureStart trained in the delivery of LAP have indicated that the programme has been particularly useful in one to one visits.

- *"I used to start visiting a parent, and not really have a plan for what I would do with them and how long I would visit for. LAP has been used to structure these visits and give them a real purpose. We both got a lot more out of it, and I see significant changes in how parents work with their children over the six weeks. It's great that it's so flexible."* (Anglesey)

5.43 LAP is not a targeted programme, and whilst coordinators are able to target delivery to specific areas, a significant proportion of parents are felt to be those that 'would have done it anyway'. One LAP coordinator indicated that they felt they had probably delivered courses to about 25% of parents they would expect to have a basic skills need, or were not developing their children's skills sufficiently.

### Other Outcomes

5.44 Whilst the primary aim of LAP is to develop parents' role in developing the language and play skills of their children, a secondary element is linking parents into progression activities and further learning. The LAP programme does act as a 'hook' for parents to become involved in further learning. To this end, coordinators are encouraged to link with the Family Programmes activity, to help ensure that parents with a basic skills need, can be signposted onto other learning.

- 5.45 In Newport, the LAP coordinator has pulled together an Integrated Learning Package, which allows parents to progress onto further activities after LAP. Programmes have been run on developing story sacks and maths games, and several parents have gone on to become volunteer readers in school. However, the strand is not yet formally linked in with the Family Programmes strand of the Strategy, although this is the next step for development.
- 5.46 In RCT, LAP is offered as part of a package of activities available to nurseries and early years centres. Several programmes can be requested to be run concurrently or to demand. For example, Sure Start's Talk About programme develops parents' communication skills, and the LAP programme then builds on this work through communication and play.

### **Key Issues/Barriers**

- 5.47 Whilst the delivery of LAP has been largely successful across all four of the LEAs sampled, there are some issues reported. The initial aim of the programme was that LAP coordinators would train a network of early years staff who would go on to deliver the programme on a voluntary basis within their organisation. This has not always been the case.
- 5.48 In a number of areas, LAP coordinators report that some early years staff are not confident delivering the programme after the one-day training session. Thus, in some cases many of the people trained have not yet been delivering to LAP courses independently. To overcome this, some LEAs have used the LAP budget (or other funding) to pay early years staff/health visitors to deliver the programme on a peripatetic basis. Whilst this has been excellent for quality of the programme and development of these individuals, it does not roll-out or embed practice in early years centres and, relies on continuous funding to sustain activity.
- 5.49 LEAs have employed staff from various different backgrounds to deliver the programme. Whilst all have an EY background, actual roles vary from ex-teachers to those employed in the voluntary sector. Whilst this is not an issue in itself, it can impact on links into other agencies, contacts and budget spent on salary. Some LEAs have much more flexibility in employing additional staff to support the LAP coordinator. However, this in turn impacts on the resource available to embed activity.

### **Impact on Planning**

- 5.50 As LAP is a new programme, most LEAs have witnessed some impact on planning, as the programme is incorporated into existing provision. In RCT, the early years team have taken the step to profile and advertise all the activities they offer to all nursery and early years centres in the area. Clearly, this has had an impact on demand, and the team is now planning activity for the next year. The introduction of LAP has been the catalyst for this approach.
- 5.51 In Newport, the LAP coordinator has been given responsibility of the Cymorth budget, in order that activity funded through this stream can complement that of LAP. An integrated learning package is being developed through this. Anglesey has chosen to join LAP and Family Programmes under one post in order that maximum value can be made through the links made with schools, nurseries and parents. Pembrokeshire has been able to spread activity up to the North of the county where activity of this nature is not usually funded through public money.
- 5.52 Impact on planning varies, according to how the LEA and other partners see the role of the LAP programme and the potential to integrate with other services. In the Newport case study area, the LAP coordinator role will be continued with funding from the LEA. In the others, the post will not continue without further funding and LAP is already part of the early years strategy. In RCT, early years provision is being reviewed and LAP is seen as part of/a complement to a range of support on offer to parents and young people, including SureStart. In Pembrokeshire LAP activity is now being seen as part of wider plans for working with Baby Groups. In Anglesey, there is less clear integration, reflecting the relatively weaker early years infrastructure in the area.

## Targeting/Engagement

- 5.53 Whilst LAP coordinators do link with their community partners to deliver LAP programmes to groups in maintained and non-maintained settings, the approaches currently tend to focus on parents whose children are already involved in early years provision in the maintained sector. It is likely that the parents who are the most in need would not necessarily engage their children in pre-compulsory education and LAP coordinators have been working to extend their activity to work with agencies that focus on support the target group, notably with SureStart, Women's Aid, Social Services and Family Centres.
- 5.54 The objective of the strategy is to make sure all young children get a good start when they begin school. As such, all children should be entitled to access the programme. One LAP deliverer commented:
- *"The ability to communicate with your child isn't necessarily reflected by class or educational achievement. Lots of parents work long hours and don't have time to learn how to play properly with their child. It cuts across all types of people."*
- 5.55 On the whole, Early Years basic skills activity is not targeted at parents who fit specific criteria. The ethos is that all parents should be equipped to support their child's development, in order that they have the necessary skills to be ready for school.
- 5.56 Nevertheless, in most areas LAP activity is focused in wards or areas where parents most in need of support are assumed to be located. In one area, the LAP programme did target activity with parents from minority ethnic communities. One example of this is with a group of parents from ethnic minority groups.

*"We looked at training all of the Adult Education ESOL tutors to deliver Language and Play, because the parents would be going in to improve their language. The children won't be there, but sometimes they are. We felt Language and Play might be something they could chat to them about, so we trained all of the ESOL tutors with the thought that they would tell the parents. We targeted six programmes in 3 schools that had nurseries that were a high proportion of ethnic minorities."*

*"We also have been working closely with the Sure Start ethnic mums group with the thought of going in, and them getting to know us and supporting us via Sure Start. We're now nearly 12 months down the line they are just about ready to start Language and Play this term. We hope that we've actually got that thought into their minds. We think we have. There was a great fear, but we then looked at, based in Newport, GEMS, who are our ethnic minority support staff. I work closely with the Home Liaison officer for two of the schools we wanted to target, and they did home visits, encouraging the parents to come and do Language and Play."*

*"We succeeded, in four venues, in getting a high proportion, and keeping them, because that was the parents we discovered through Family Learning, they were giving this huge commitment and it was too long. Their timekeeping for a whole range of reasons is different, and their family structure is different, and it's getting to know what their family life is."*

*"Frequently we've taken parents into Family Learning, and we've gone on to make something, and the parent is not familiar with using scissors or colouring. All of our indigenous parents would have those skills, but many of our ethnic parents have not had the time to play and develop themselves, so it's as if we needed to take these people back something like Language and Play or a precursor to Family Learning." (Newport LAP Coordinator)*

5.57 The impact of setting targets for the LAP programme is that coordinators are conscious that small groups and one to one activity may hamper their ability to reach their targets. In the same vein, the possibility of a large and mixed ability groups precludes some parents from attending. LAP coordinators have indicated that, whilst they appreciate targets have some use, they do not place any value on the nature of more intensive activities they may be undertaking with more vulnerable parents.

5.58 Consultations on the impact of Books for Babies indicate that libraries report an increase in children's registration figures, which correlate with the presence of a Bookstart coordinator. Librarians have been involved in the LAP training and the Bookstart coordinators regularly invite groups to the library. They also offer their own activities within the library linked to Bookstart, such as Rhyme Time sessions. This is clear evidence of partnership working and adds value to these individual strands.



### **Improved awareness and understanding of basic skills**

- 5.59 For those parents involved in LAP and Bookstart activity, there has been raised awareness in the importance of play for developing communication and listening skills. Furthermore, parents were more aware of their own role and responsibility in their child's development.

### **Displacement and deadweight**

- 5.60 Language and Play is not reported to have displaced any activity in the selected case study areas. The programme has complemented similar programmes that were operational, and has added to a package of tools available, rather than pushing anything out. As such, activity is additional. RCT thought that the programme may be just another programme similar to the Talk About Sure Start programme. However, conversely, LAP has acted as a useful progression route from their interventions.
- 5.61 It is likely that Family Programmes would have operated outside of the Strategy in some areas, but probably not to the scale that has been achieved to date. The funding of the programmes tends to have acted as a catalyst for LEAs to adopt a more long term approach to planning and delivery. However, there is limited evidence that there has been added value gained from the inclusion of programmes within the strategy. Although the potential to generate added value from this strand of activity that touches on all areas of the strategy (early years, schools and post-16/adults) is recognised, there is no clear driver to ensure that this is achieved.

### **Sustainability of Activity**

- 5.62 Language and Play will definitely continue in Newport, as the LEA have employed the LAP coordinator on a permanent contract. In RCT, it was reported that there is little room in the budget to continue without further funding. It may be possible to operate on a scaled down budget but withdrawal of all funding would it was felt have a devastating impact on delivery. Whilst capacity to deliver on a voluntary basis has been built in Anglesey, it was felt locally that it was unlikely that this would be sustained without support from a coordinator. The people that have been trained to deliver on a voluntary basis in Early Years settings were reported as often moving on quickly. This model is not sustainable in the medium or long term.

- 5.63 Books for Babies is under threat at the moment as GEST funding has been cut and Coordinator positions are not being funded in all areas – the value of the programme is being lost.

## **Conclusions**

- 5.64 Both the LAP programme and Books for Babies have been popular with both practitioners and parents since their roll out. They have also demonstrated significant progress and success in linking with other early years partners, to gain maximum value from their implementation. However, linkages between programmes are not consistent across LEAs, and consideration should be given to ensuring coherence between these strands and other early years interventions.
- 5.65 Whilst the LAP programme has been successful against its operational targets, the scale of activity needed to achieve the strategy goal is much greater than is currently supported. The current model of delivery does not allow for this scale of activity, and therefore consideration needs to be given to how the programme can realistically underpin the strategy goal.
- 5.66 The guidance provided for the programme does not specify that delivery should be targeted, however, in most areas, there is a push to work with agencies that operate in disadvantaged communities. If the emphasis of the programme is to target a smaller number of people who are most in need of support, consideration should be given as to whether the programme is sufficient to make sustained impacts on parents that may have further to travel. Furthermore, other agencies that provide links should also be included in the delivery of the programme, such as Jobcentre Plus and Prisons etc.
- 5.67 The aims of Books for Babies and Language and Play have broadly been met in operational terms. The targets set for numbers of parents and children being involved in the LAP programme has almost been reached, and almost double the number of early years workers have been involved in the training than was anticipated.
- 5.68 There is also a high level of awareness of the programme in early years settings, and both Books for Babies and LAP have proven to be very popular with practitioners and parents alike.

- 5.69 Books for Babies have also been successful in terms of the model of operation. Health visitors report that they were in need of a tool to help support the advice they provide to parents on developing their children's communication skills. The model has been successful in reaching a large number of parents. Significant value has been added to Books for Babies by the role of the Bookstart Coordinator (not funded through the strategy). Links have been made with LAP to join the initiatives; activities have been put on in libraries to engage parents further and coordinators have been able to progress parents from LAP into becoming regular library users.
- 5.70 However, there are some issues with the model of delivery for LAP. The original aim was that early years workers would be trained in the programme and would go on to deliver the programme on a voluntary basis, supported by the LAP coordinator. However, a more typical example of delivery is that coordinators are paying other early years staff to deliver the programme on a peripatetic basis. Whilst this has helped to ensure quality and consistency in delivery of the programme, it does not allow for the programmes to be embedded within early years providers, and, therefore, be sustained with minimal support.
- 5.71 In addition, the aim of the strategy is that no child begins school unprepared for learning. From a baseline of 50% of children being unprepared for learning, the objective is highly ambitious when considering the role LAP can play, and the scale at which coordinators can operate with available funding.
- 5.72 In addition to this, the context of how the programme operates within an LEA varies considerably according to the existing early years infrastructure. For example, where other funding channels exist for SureStart, and Communities First, infrastructure is strong. However, where these initiatives aren't well developed in an area, the infrastructure can be relatively weak. This impacts on how well the LAP coordinator can reach into communities and develop strategic partnership working.
- 5.73 Both Early Years strands have a role to play in the achievement of the overall strategy goal, but other interventions are also needed to help reach the target group.

- 5.74 The role of Books for Babies with the LAP programme requires some level of formalisation to ensure maximum value is gained from both programmes across areas. However, the existence of a Bookstart coordinator is crucial to sustaining these links. This is not currently funded through the strategy but posts are at risk due to reductions in GEST funding.
- 5.75 The development of the Foundation Phase offers opportunity for improved focused on language and play in early years education, but there is also a need for further intervention in the 0-3 age group. Early intervention is widely regarded by practitioners as key to developing children's potential in all skills.
- 5.76 There is also the question as to whether the LAP course is appropriate or sufficient for 'harder to reach' parents. In LEAs where there are high levels of deprivation, LAP is regarded as one of the tools in a package of measures to work with parents.
- 5.77 Training for early years staff in the importance of language and play can be provided through the role played by a Language and Play coordinator. However, regular support needs to be in place to encourage staff to continue in the delivery of the programme.
- 5.78 Currently, the model of work, within the early years sector, tends to focus work through parents contact with early years providers. However, those that are most in need of support may not have children registered at an early years provider.
- 5.79 More extensive community links need to be developed across all LEAs to ensure the hardest to reach are engaged in the strategy, and that the programmes appropriately fit their needs. Other agencies, such as Jobcentre Plus and Prisons, can provide links to those in need of support.
- 5.80 Currently, the scale at which coordinators can work is relatively small, given their capacity to deliver. It is unlikely that a model of delivery based on a voluntary basis will meet these needs, and extend the supply of LAP activity across LEAs to engage a greater number of parents.

- 5.81 Focus needs to ensure that activity reaches those in need. Development of the LAP programme should seek to integrate language and play into other initiatives further, seeking to supporting target parents of very young children and pregnant mothers. The continuation of embedding delivery of LAP courses is important within and alongside the work of health visitors, midwives, social workers, community and voluntary sector providers.
- 5.82 The Early Years Childcare Development Partnerships have a key role to play in providing networking opportunity and the strategic context within which LAP and Books for Babies activity can be further developed to extend the programme into the non-maintained sector. There are also opportunities to roll-out activity within organisations working in early years settings by NSP Training Providers, FE and the voluntary and community sector (**Section 10**).

## 6 FAMILY PROGRAMMES

### Introduction

- 6.1 The purpose of Family Learning programmes is to raise the standards of literacy and numeracy for both parents and children, and to extend parents' skills in supporting their children's development in literacy and numeracy skills. The programmes in this strand of activity include Family Literacy, Family Numeracy, workshops on literacy and numeracy and Keeping Up with the Children.
- 6.2 LEAs are able to bid for funding to deliver Family Literacy (72-96 hours) and Numeracy (45-48 hours) courses, individual workshops as taster sessions for these (2-3 hours) and Keeping Up With the Children (KUWC) programmes (12-24 hours).
- 6.3 Family literacy and numeracy courses are delivered to both parents and children, within the school setting, usually over the course of one or two terms. An adult education and early years teacher are recruited to deliver, supported by a crèche facility. KUWC courses have tended to be delivered by an adult education tutor to parents, with advice provided on the curriculum by a school teacher. Parents are offered the opportunity to get their learning accredited through the Open College Network accreditation. Adult guidance and information about opportunities for progression are given during the sessions by the tutors.
- 6.4 Keeping up with children courses are offered in literacy and numeracy and take place over 6 weeks for 2 hours a week. Assessments and accreditations are not offered. This programme includes an element of explaining the core curriculum so that parents can understand better the demands on their children and be better placed to help with homework.

## **Previous Activity**

- 6.5 The LEAs sampled have tended to operate Family Programmes prior to the introduction of the Strategy. However, delivery tended to be somewhat piecemeal, and bids for funding had been inconsistent and short term in nature. The inclusion of Family Programmes in the Strategy guaranteed that LEAs could make bids for funding over a three-year period and develop a more structured approach.

## **Management/Coordination of FPs**

- 6.6 Most LEAs manage the Family Programmes strand of activity through the Adult Education department (Newport, RCT). Others have added the Family Programmes management to the LAP Coordinator's position (Anglesey), whilst in Pembrokeshire Family Programmes sits under the Community Focused Schools Strategy.
- 6.7 In one area a co-ordinator role was created in 2003. Prior to this, the family programmes had been run by the early years team, but had not been developed within a particular framework. Thus, in this area the basic skills three year strategy funding has helped to develop dedicated posts and longer term planning, with Family Programmes being more explicitly incorporated into the LEA's programme of support for schools now.
- 6.8 In one case study area, Family Programmes activities have been incorporated into the Communities Focused Schools strategy, where Family Programmes are one of the ways in which the school can support the development of its role as a community school.

## **Funding of Family Programmes**

- 6.9 The strategy has provided 3 year funding, enabling LEAs/Adult Education to plan more effectively. The 3 year programme has made a difference operationally with providers being able to offer a clearer programme of work to schools to fit into their planning cycle.

6.10 The LEA and partners have funded Family Programmes in previous years through other routes including European funds. The following illustrates the types of other funding accessed in one LEA: the total basic skills grant received for family programmes 2003-04 is £61,761. The LEA has combined funding from the Basic Skills Agency, GEST, LEA and schools (indirectly through their free contribution). In addition to this, the LEA has also drawn down Objective 1 priority funding to assist delivery in the three priority wards areas. The biggest proportion of funding to the programme is from the BSA (60%).

## Progress/Outputs

6.11 The overall reported progress on achieving target volumes for Family Programmes has been under planned targets. Table 6.1 shows the BSA's report on activity for this strand of the strategy.

Table 6.1: Family Programmes: planned targets and reported outputs	
Targets 2003/04	Progress against targets to end of year 2003-04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Programmes in all 22 LEAs.</li><li>9,000 parents and children participating in Family Programmes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>22 applications and 18 action plans received and approved by October.</li><li>6578 parents reported as attending programmes up to April 2003 to March 2004.</li><li>18,853 parents reported as attending programmes since the start of the strategy in 2001.</li><li>173 KUWC courses run involving 2,216 parents since the start of the strategy in 2001.</li></ul>

6.12 The monitoring undertaken by Family Programme providers of the progression made by adult learners on these courses shows that, on average, 69% continue study on full family literacy programmes and 56% continue on full family numeracy programmes.

6.13 In some areas, the rate of progress has been slowed down by changes in key personnel. In one case study area, the LEA considered that developing family literacy and numeracy programmes (from a very low base) has been the most difficult of all the strands of strategy activity to implement.



- 6.14 There are local factors, including previous programmes that (pre-strategy) were not successful, creating a degree of reluctance amongst schools to engage with the new programme. In addition, four of the secondary schools questioned on this aspect of the strategy indicated that tackling 'adult' basic skills issues are not their 'core business'.

### Targeting of Activity in Schools

- 6.15 In three of the four areas, the LEA has targeted Family Programme activity with schools in areas with the highest levels of deprivation. It was felt that this approach would be more likely to capture those parents in most need of the support from Family Programmes. **Table 6.2** illustrates the approach taken in one area.

**Table 6.2: Developing approaches to the targeting family programme activity**

"We targeted specific schools through using the index of multiple deprivation. It was calculated that (with the funding available) 20 schools could be visited with the Family Literacy Programme over a two year period. The analysis of the index used data relating to numbers on single parents, lowest qualifications, deprived households, unemployment, literacy, numeracy, free school meals, (ESF) objective 1 area and Community First areas. 20 wards were identified and the schools within these areas were selected. Other local knowledge was used to spot where schools sit close to deprived areas, but did not appear to be using these criteria. The final figure selected 21 wards and 32 schools. This is over the budget allocated by the BSA, but the remainder of activity is funded by the LEA. Primary/infant schools would run Family Literacy and Numeracy. Junior and, possibly, some secondary schools would deliver KUWC programmes."

### Targeting Parents

- 6.16 Most of the case study areas selected have experienced difficulties recruiting parents from the target group, i.e. those with poor basic skills. Efforts have been made to engage parents through teachers' existing knowledge of and relationships to parents. However, in two areas, LEA staff report that there is often not sufficient demand to engage the minimum number of parents required.

**Table 6.3: School staff working to engage parents in Family Programmes**

An early year's teacher is released from activities for two afternoons per week to go into the community and speak to the hardest to reach parents. This is for various types of activity, but includes recruiting for Family Programmes. Leaflets are also distributed to target parents, and then a taster and coffee morning session is put on about three weeks before the session is due to start.

6.17 However, several respondents noted that to engage those in most need, programmes need to be sustained to reach out to target groups and build awareness across relevant networks. For example, two early years programme tutors noted the following:

- *"We have just begun to make in-roads to those harder to reach families. It takes time. Those who are easy to reach come first, but, as awareness builds, we can reach out to others. What is important is that we stay here, are not just 'flash in the pan' and then gone. If that happens we will never reach those target people". (Family Programmes tutor)*

6.18 In one case study area, the Family Programmes team offered taster workshops to help stimulate demand. Furthermore, in these sessions the tutors could signpost parents not in need of basic skills provision onto other learning, and to help ensure that the programme participants were those parents most likely to benefit from the provision. The following illustrates a successful example of an approach taken to engage parents.

## **The Benefits for Parents and Children**

6.19 Parents interviewed have highlighted a range of benefits from participation in the programme including:

- improved confidence when reading with their children;
- increased confidence to take up further learning;
- improved support for their children with homework;
- better relationship with their children;
- increased involvement with the life of the school e.g. as a result of the programmes a PTA has been set up in the school;

- progression onto college ICT courses.

6.20 In some cases the Head or other teaching staff were able to report the benefits for the parents of them taking part:

- *“When we have meetings with parents about pupil individual learning plans. Parents are more willing now, because they understand more as well.”* Head teacher;
- *“They’ve benefited; it’s given them confidence to try more and not to be afraid to speak to teachers.”* Head Teacher.

6.21 Parents also report benefits in terms of improved contact with the school, and that they feel more aware of how their children develop and learn. They also indicated that they had brushed up on areas that they felt was necessary to be able to support their children. Feedback from parents was positive in terms of the quality of teaching and learning they had been involved in. However, a significant majority of parents emphasised the benefit of the programmes for their children, rather than themselves.

6.22 The monitoring undertaken by Family Programme providers of the progression made by adult learners on these courses shows that, on average, 69% continue study on full family literacy programmes and 56% continue on full family numeracy programmes.

6.23 Family programmes providers do log the referrals made to other provision but the outcomes of referral are not tracked systematically. There is evidence from the evaluation of parents progressing onto other learning courses, and most parents indicate that the programme has revived their interest in learning, but that this has not necessarily led to further learning at this time. In a small number of those sampled (4 of 15 parents), the respondent indicated that the Family Programme had been the first stepping-stone into further developing their own skills. In all of these cases, this was initially progression on to ICT courses. However, two of the parents interviewed have reported that their involvement in Family Programmes had helped them progress on to other basic skills learning, as one of these noted:

- *“I always knew I had a problem with spelling and grammar but didn’t feel I could do anything about it until I saw this course. I do this with my daughter now, and have also started a course at the college that works on my maths. I’m lined up to do another course at the college when this one finishes. It was just what I needed.”* (Parent, Pembrokeshire).

- 6.24 Other positive outcomes reported by schools and parents are the improved relationships between parents and the school staff and in a number of cases, this has led to the schools bringing parents into the work of the school, including employment as LSAs.

## Key Issues Reported

- 6.25 **Lack of Flexibility in the Programmes:** The criteria for running Family Programmes are specific in terms of numbers in a group and course length. Family Programmes coordinators commented that the family literacy and numeracy courses were often too inflexible for the needs of many target group learners. One tutor commented on the difficulties they faced in recruiting a viable group:

- *“If we need to recruit 10 parents from a year group of 30 children, then that’s a third of the parents. It’s unlikely that that many have got a basic skills need, or even if they have, that we’ll be able to get them to come at once.” (Pembrokeshire).*

- 6.26 **Lack of Integration in the School/Community Programmes:** Feedback from schools indicates that, in many cases, Family Programmes activities are not integrated into the work of the school.

- 6.27 **Limited Interest in Accreditation:** The majority of parents spoken to weren’t interested in accreditation for the course. The focus was very much on the benefit of the course for the children, rather than themselves.

- 6.28 **Cross Sector Knowledge:** Tutors from Adult Education who support the Keeping UP with Children need to have a better understanding of the curriculum, in order to deliver the detail of the curriculum to the parents in an ‘easy to understand’ way. The coordinators for family programmes felt that at the moment, this was an area in need of development.

## Staff Turnover

- 6.29 Changes in key personnel in some areas have resulted in limited activity and lower than anticipated levels of activity in these areas. Staff turnover and the recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced basic skills teaching and NEBBS qualified staff has also been problematic.

## Keys to Success

6.30 Schools and LEAs report that the following factors are important in helping to ensure successful family programmes:

- **coordination/planning:** a co-coordinator to manage the planning and communication of programmes with schools and adult education;
- **generating the demand from schools:** enthusiastic Head Teachers that saw Family Programmes as an important part of their wide school development objectives;
- **engaging parents via LAP courses;**
- **skills of key personnel:** those engaging parents in the school needs to have the right personality, skills and experience to be able to motivate and recruit participants;
- **innovation and flexibility of provision;**
- **honesty and clarity/engaging 'right' target group:** if the underlying aim of the programme (which is partly to improve parents literacy/numeracy skills), then recruitment can lead to engagement of parents with relatively high literacy/numeracy skills;
- **promoting success stories:** using parents from target groups/areas that have enjoyed and progressed to encourage other parents to take part;
- **critical mass of target group:** running programmes in areas where there are not sufficient numbers of adults with basic skills issues;
- **working with schools to generate demand:** a close working relationship with the schools is required to recruit parents well in advance of the course, to ensure their operation is viable. In one LEA area, the Family Programmes coordinator is proposing to engage parents through a series of fun workshops outside of the school environment that will then lead to involvement in a family programmes. It is recognised that this approach is costly, but the benefit should be gained in terms of success of the targeting of the course.

**Table 6.4: Good Practice - engaging schools and parents in family programmes**

One school's positive experience of family programmes is acting as the catalyst to further activity in other schools that have historically been difficult to engage. Parents who have taken part in family literacy and numeracy courses have enjoyed it so much that they have visited another local primary schools to 'sell' the programme to other parents. The coordinator delivering the programme is also an ex-teacher, and this has again proved effective in the community. Being a former teacher the co-ordinator has the respect of her former school colleagues, and can, therefore, act as a valuable advocate for the programme.

## **Sustainability of Family Programme Activity**

- 6.31 In one area, Family Programmes are part of the Community Schools Strategy, and are, therefore, be likely to continue in some guise post 2005. Similarly, LEAs indicate that family programmes will probably continue in some format; although, withdrawal of the current level funding would be likely to reverse the progress made in developing a more structured programme and larger delivery team.

## **Conclusions**

### **Target Groups**

- 6.32 In all areas, assessment data indicates that the learners engaged do have basic skills needs, however these tend to be at the relatively higher end of need (those at Level 1) and that recruitment of harder to reach parents in the target group (those with entry level needs) is low, and certainly lower than those working in the sector would like to achieve.
- 6.33 Close working is required with the schools to recruit parents to ensure that courses will be viable. Indications are that where there has been good initial input with schools in planning and engagement process, then target parents are more likely to be recruited. Other areas report difficulty getting and keeping viable numbers because of parents not knowing exactly what the course was for (parents and children's skills).

- 6.34 More attention needs to be given to recruiting the parents who would benefit the most. This will require representation on the steering group from members of the community and voluntary sector who work with a wide range of people. It will also require a more focused effort on behalf of schools to recruit those in most need, yet least likely to engage.

### **Target Volumes**

- 6.35 Delivery against the targets is uneven and Family Numeracy and Keeping up with the Children are proving difficult to meet. The targets next year are equally challenging, and the LEA will need to increase its strategic support and delivery of the programme if they are to achieve this.
- 6.36 Some schools comment negatively about the level of understanding of some providers of the confidence/issues and other barriers faced by many parents in the target group.
- 6.37 Programmes are relatively inflexible in terms of how they should be delivered (i.e. numbers of learners, length), and don't always meet the need of parent learners. Good practice identified required improved dialogue, planning and integration with schools. Where successful programmes have been run, activity includes using LSAs or teaching staff to encourage parents to attend, and putting on taster workshops before starting the full course.
- 6.38 In most of the sampled cases, the level of Family Learning activities will not continue without ongoing external funding support. Again, cuts in GEST funding have limited the potential for family learning activities to be supported through this route.
- 6.39 Family Programmes are the main activity, where cross sector activity takes place within the strategy: bringing together early years, schools and post-16 providers. However, there was limited partnership working and strategic planning reported in three of the four areas sampled. There needs to be significant development of a more strategic infrastructure to make these links between sectors more effective. There is some good practice, but many schools are relatively passive agents and Family Programme activity needs to ensure that they seek to engage schools more effectively.

- 6.40 Furthermore, development in family programmes in England shows a stronger focus on the need for innovation and engagement in the process. For example, engaging parents through sports initiatives, such as learning maths through football. There is also a focus on delivering in community settings rather than in schools. The challenge remains to ensure that delivery does retain a focus on basic skills teaching.
- 6.41 Family programme activity is useful, but needs more sustained presence to stimulate demand for parents. There is a need to offer continuation programmes, as often supply stimulates further demand. LEAs and partners in the delivery of family programmes should consider clarification on the focus of programmes, and gaining trust through prior engagement activities, perhaps using community links.
- 6.42 There is evidence of good practice in LEAs taking steps to try and engage the 'target' group of parents the programmes are aimed at. However, both schools, LEAs and tutors report difficulties in engaging sufficient numbers of parents with a real basic skills need to be involved in the Family Literacy and Numeracy courses, to meet the funding requirements. Providers need to develop greater flexibility in terms of how they can tailor the courses to meet the needs of different groups, whilst ensuring the core focus on improving literacy and numeracy is not lost.
- 6.43 There is some evidence of parents progressing onto other courses, including adult education basic skills courses, particularly where an LEA develops an integrated programme of learning in their area. However, parents tend to become involved in the programmes to support their children primarily, rather than developing their own skills and continuing into learning.



## **7 SCHOOLS ACTIVITY – OVERVIEW**

### **Introduction**

- 7.1 Much had been done in the schools sector prior to the national basic skills strategy for Wales. Annex A outlines key initiatives. Frameworks for action in raising literacy (English and Welsh) and numeracy levels in primary schools has been in place since 1997. The basis for these strategies is that they are driven at the school level: individual schools are required to set their own targets for improvement. There is no prescription as to the amount of time taken to deliver the teaching of English or Welsh, and it is for schools to determine how best they can reach their (challenging) targets. Additional resources were made available through GEST funding to support the delivery of plans. This has led to LEAs developing local strategies to provide teachers with advice and training, which is helping to improve the quality of lessons and raise standards of pupil achievements. In this context LEAs are expected to reflect priorities and action on literacy and numeracy within their Education Strategic Plans (ESPs which are monitored and approved by the Assembly Government).
- 7.2 1998/9 was the National Year of Reading and 2000 the National Year for Maths during which time “Help Your Child Read” and “Helping Your Child with Maths” were produced by the Welsh Books Council, Techniquet and the Assembly Government. Both of these national campaigns were successful. Support for literacy and numeracy is ongoing through the continuation of these campaigns under the World Book Day and Mathcymru badges. These are managed by the Welsh Books Council and Techniquet, respectively.

### **Basic Skills Strategy Baseline and Targets**

- 7.3 The basic skills strategy acknowledged that whilst there had been some significant improvements in pupils’ performance, there were still significant numbers of children not performing at a level expected for their age.

- 7.4 The baseline data and strategy goals for activity in the schools sector are set out in **Table 7.1**. The Key Stage targets reflect goals stated in wider schools policy, for example, in *The Learning Country* and *BEST*. See **Annex A** for details. Within the national basic skills strategy, emphasis was placed on focusing initiatives on those students within mainstream school with levels of literacy and numeracy that were below that of their peers. The strategy focuses activity on this group, whereas in most cases previous initiatives focused on literacy and numeracy had tended to be directed more widely.

Table 7.1: Basic Skills Strategy Baseline, Goals and Milestones for the Schools Sector		
Ultimate goal	Baseline 2001	Milestone 2005
At KS2: All 11 year olds achieve Level 4 or above	78% 11 yr olds with Level 4 or above in English, 74% Maths, 68% Welsh.	85% of 11 year olds should achieve Level 4 or above.
At KS3: All 14 year olds achieve Level 5 or above	62% 14 yr olds with Level 5 or above in English and Maths, and 71% in Welsh.	80%-85% 14 year olds should achieve Level 5 or above.
At KS4: All 16 year olds leave school literate and numerate.	14% of 16 year olds have no qualifications.	At least 95% of 16 year olds should have qualifications.

## Strategy Programmes

- 7.5 The BSA offered a programme of activity, support and funding for the schools sector. The actual profile of activity was determined by each local authority. The BSA encouraged the LEA to review their current basic skills activity, data baseline data and ESP priorities and then identify how each of the basic skills strategy strands programmes could complement wider work. The key programmes of activity in the schools sector were as follows:
- **Primary Quality Mark (PQM)/ Secondary Quality Mark (SQM)** – the QM is intended to focus schools' attention on basic skills and improving the quality of basic skills provision, through whole-school planning frameworks, which directs approaches for planning, assessment and reporting. The original target for the PQM was for all schools to have achieved it by the end of 2004; this has been extended to March 2005. Grants are provided to LEAs to support and assess progress for schools in achieving the quality mark;

- **Key Stage 1 (KS1) Catch Up and KS2 Catch Up** – this focused on the provision of additional support to children falling behind in English and Mathematics during KS 1 (up to 7 years) and KS 2 (up to 11 years), in order that they can ‘Catch Up’ before the end of these Stages and – in the case of KS2 - prior to moving to secondary school. The prime aim of this element is for all 7 year olds to achieve Level 2 or above;
- **Modelling Excellence in Schools** – this element is intended to help LEAs spread good practice more effectively, by recognising the existing expertise of selected schools and teachers. The prime objective, here, was to produce ‘Centres of Excellence’ based on identified good practice;
- **Year 7 Catch Up Programme** – helping pupils arriving in Year 7 at Key Stages 2-3 to achieve Level 4 in literacy or numeracy. Programmes focus separately on Literacy and Numeracy, with teacher training forming a key element of the process;
- **Staff Training for Basic Skills in Secondary Schools** – focusing on how all subject areas contribute to Literacy and Numeracy skills development and embed basic skills delivery across the curriculum;
- **Key Stage 4 Initiative for Disengaged Young People** – targeted on pupils who have dropped out or are about to drop out of the education system, and intended to offer a ‘fresh’ perspective on achievement at Key Stage 4 level.

## Outputs Achieved

7.6 **Table 7.2** shows the progress made to date against key planned outputs across Wales.

Table 7.2: Schools Programmes - Key Outputs	
Targets 2003/04	Progress against targets to end of year 2003-04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of primary schools with PQM</li> <li>• 100% of secondary schools with SQM</li> <li>• 100% of secondary schools develop training plans for basic skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,092 primary schools with the PQM (66%); 21 LEAs confident of 100% coverage by the end of 2005;</li> <li>• 122 secondary schools with SQM awards 48%;</li> <li>• Secondary Training Grants for Teachers: Delivery plans received from 95% of secondary schools.</li> </ul>

## Evaluation fieldwork – case study areas

- 7.7 Sixteen primary and sixteen secondary schools were sampled as part of the evaluation fieldwork within the four case study areas. Within the 32 schools, 150 people were interviewed including Heads, Senior Management, Heads of English and Maths, Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and small numbers of pupils. In addition, 22 LEA officers working to support aspects of the basic skills strategy were also interviewed across the four areas.
- 7.8 **Table 7.3** shows the range of basic skills strategy strands in which the sample areas and schools consulted were involved in implementing, and Annex D outlines the progress reported in each area in relation to these initiatives.

**Table 7.3: Basic Skills Strategy Strand Activity observed by LEA**

	KS4 Disengaged Young People	Quality Mark	Staff Training	Catch Up	Modelling Excellence/ Bridging Units
Anglesey		Y	Y	Y	Y
Newport		Y	Y	Y	
Rhondda Cynon Taff		Y	Y	Y	
Pembrokeshire	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

- 7.9 The areas profiled have very different profiles of schools with RCT having over 150 schools in total (19 secondary), compared to Anglesey with 57 schools (5 secondary). **Table 7.4** shows the baseline position of each area in terms of the percentage of pupils at KS1, KS2 and KS3 reaching the expected levels in England, Maths and Welsh.

**Table 7.4  
Case Study area schools baseline performance data (2001)**

Area	KS1	KS2	KS3
Anglesey	W80, E77, M90	W61, E76, M75	W72, E59, M62
Newport	W*, E88, M93	W*, E75, M73	W*, E60, M57
Pembrokeshire	W86, E83, M90	W74, E80, M76	W85, E63, M64
RCT	W87, E81, M89	W72, E76, M74	W64, E57, M58
All Wales	W87, E82, M90	W71, E78, M74	W71, E62, M62
<b>Strategy target</b>	Improve by 10%	85% at Level 4	80-85% at level 5
* Performance = % of pupils in maintained schools at target National Curriculum Level (Level 2 at KS1, Level 4 KS2 and Level 5 KS3) in Welsh (W), English (E) and Maths (M) in 2001.			

7.10 In the case study areas, LEAs and schools reported that more focus had previously been placed on developing literacy than numeracy. One LEA had a KS3 strategy in place for literacy and numeracy prior to the national basic skills strategy. Accelerated Learning programmes had been operating in two of the LEAs case study areas, with one LEA focusing on literacy support for Years 2 and 6. All but two of the primary schools and 3 out of the 16 secondary schools visited had gained the Quality Mark during the strategy period. At least 7 had been awarded it prior to the strategy and had been through the renewal process during the national basic skills strategy period: 2001-2004.

## Approach to Delivery

7.11 Strategy activity is co-ordinated through LEAs who deliver funding, support and assessment/monitoring roles. Schools detail their proposed activity through plans, which are submitted to LEAs. Bids for Strategic Intervention Grants are also submitted to LEAs. Funding to support the achievement of the Quality Marks (QMs) is available through Development Grants. Some of the funding goes directly to the school, and some is retained by the LEA for advice and support to schools. Grants can also be used for staff costs, including cover teachers who work on the QM, briefing and training support from the LEA and local promotion. The following illustrates the approach taken to the implementation of the SIG programme. The Basic Skills Agency introduced the Strategic Intervention Programme in 2002-3 as part of the development work for basic skills in schools designed to address the second and third goals of the strategy. To access funding for SIGs programme (both in the initial year and in subsequent years) LEAs needed to have developed an initial application for funding and annual delivery plans, based upon an Annual Review of work undertaken. The BSA's Link Officers worked to support LEAs in developing their plans and encouraged the following key questions to be considered by each LEA in the development of these plans. The guidance clearly set out the criteria for each of these stages as follows:

- **Initial Applications:** Current literacy and numeracy performance, existing/ongoing basic skills programmes and interventions, strengths and weaknesses of current activities, priorities and rationale for action on basic skills and fit with Education Strategic Plan priorities, SMART targets including baselines and improvements targets for each initiative, approach and methods including roles and responsibilities within the authority.

- **Annual Reviews - Key questions** Does the SIG target areas of need within the LEA? Does the SIG target pupils who are under-attaining and under-achieving? Is the SIG specifically targeting the basic skills needs of learners? Have targets for improvement been identified? Are these targets SMART? Does the Delivery Plan indicate how learner progress will be measured?
- **Delivery Plans (annual):** Aims, objectives and outcomes of the work to be funded through SIGs, methods and approaches to be used, with details of how the aims, objectives and outcomes are to be achieved.

### Role of the BSA

- 7.12 The BSA developed initial strategy programmes and managed their implementation. The main model of implementation has been for the BSA Link Officers to work with LEA staff, and for those staff to implement strategy activities with schools. A few staff within schools had contact with BSA officers when BSA undertook joint monitoring visits with LEAs or when they attended BSA run events.
- 7.13 Schools were informed of the level of funding available to them and invited to produce an action plan to show how the funding would be used. At the initial phase schools were able to use the funding to release teachers to plan the additional activity which the on-going grant would make possible. Guidelines drafted by the BSA on grants were sent to all schools which outlined the goals of the national strategy and specified clearly what the funding could and could not be used for. They were revised and sent to schools again at the beginning of the second and third years of the initiative. In addition a national seminar was held for all schools to launch the initiative and a separate seminar was held for LEA advisory staff. Schools were invited to plan across the 3 years of the grant with more detail in year one and refining in subsequent years.
- 7.14 LEA staff in the case study areas report good relationships with the BSA Link Officers. The BSA Link Officer's role is highly valued, with stakeholders praising individuals. LEAs find Link Officers a useful support mechanism. The support provided to the LEA by the BSA is generally reported as very good, especially on literacy. Staff in all LEAs indicated that they would like more guidance on developing basic skills numeracy strategies and materials for both the primary and secondary sector.

## The LEA Baseline Position

7.15 The strategy monitoring and implementation model encouraged LEAs to review current action on basic skills and assess priorities before selecting those elements of the strategy that best suited local needs. In addition the LEAs were encouraged to decide how they would priorities the distribution of funding allocation within their area. **Table 7.6** provides a summary of the key priorities that LEA each noted in 2001, the main focus/aims of the basic skills strategy activities and the specific interventions (in this case SIG programmes) selected.

7.16 This illustrates the different baseline positions of each local authority area and the issues that each were seeking to address. Table 7.6 also outlines the different approaches taken at the local level and the specific interventions selected to underpin wider objectives. For example,

- in RCT the focus of SIGs was placed on activity at KS2 and over 70 schools were engaged;
- in contrast, Pembrokeshire used a wider range of programmes but in some cases, on a smaller scale with for example the Maths Bridging Units project initially focused on one Family of Schools;
- in Anglesey, the LEA noted that when the basic skills strategy was launched, there was already a large programme of work underway addressing other ESP priorities. This included work developing behaviour strategies, a learning styles programme and work with schools on embedding Investors in People. As result, there was, initially a low-key focus on the take up of the Quality Mark, as schools were seeking to embed IIP first;
- In Newport, the ESP already highlighted priorities around basic skills and some of the catch-up type interventions had already been trialled.

## **The Role of the LEA**

- 7.17 LEA officer's roles in the implementation and support of strategy activities have varied across LEAs. In some cases, a number of individuals have managed specific elements of basic skills activity. In other areas, one or two key individuals have delivered all elements of activity. The role and number of officers involved has been determined by existing resources and structures within the LEA. All case study LEAs could outline how they had reviewed their Education Strategic Plan and local performance data in planning for strategy activities, notably applications for the Strategic Intervention Grants required a clear assessment and rationale for the selection of the range of programmes and activities available.
- 7.18 Some LEA posts that have supported the implementation of the strategy programmes have been directly funded (such as managing LSAs/teaching support programmes). However, in most cases LEAs teams have accommodated the management and monitoring of basic skills strategy activity within existing resource. While some elements of the Strategy were already visible in their work, many elements were new (e.g. SIGs and supporting QM implementation). This has led to the development of new planning and communication mechanisms at the LEA level. For example, in administering and monitoring the activity of SIGs and in sharing information on the range of basic skills strategy activities which could be located in a number of teams across the authority.
- 7.19 LEAs have encouraged sharing of good practice between schools, for example, in RCT, an advisor asked a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) if they could disseminate a numeracy strategy he had devised himself. In Newport, one area LEA was facilitating a meeting of the heads of department to share good practice. Both LEAs and schools have identified the need for further LEA advisory support to schools, due to the increased activity in basic skills and a corresponding increase in demand for assistance and advice in relation to staff development, and the sourcing of materials and good practice approaches.



**Table 7.6**  
**LEA baseline, priorities (2001) and basic skills strategy interventions selected**

	<b>2001 activity and assessment of issues to address</b>	<b>Basic Skills Priority actions</b>	<b>Focus of Basic Skills Strategy Activities</b>	<b>Basic Skills Strategy Intervention(s) selected and initial funding proposals</b>
Anglesey	Pre-existing literacy strategy has improved standards of reading and writing at KS2. All school share a literacy strategy. Focus in 2000/01 on gaps between boys and girls. Guidance developed on numeracy strategy in Primary. Pupils of middle and lower ability making the least progress. Arrangements for transfer between primary and secondary schools developed, but curricula links not as well developed.	Priority given to oral and writing skills and focusing on KS3. Sharing best practice from maths bridging units trials. Focus on developing teaching methods to promote pupil's learning. All schools expected to participate in transition programmes.	Focus on schools and catchment areas whose performance is of concern (based on LEA's criteria and monitoring). Fostering better links between Yr 6 and Yr 7 (improving success of sharing good practice). Recruit a team of classroom assistant to focus support on middle and lower ability group (assessed as borderline).	Centres of Expertise: working party of teachers. Out of school initiatives: reading clubs. Catch-Up programmes: team of peripatetic LSAs. Weston spirit programme to offer access to qualifications eg OCN.
Newport	Substantial resources devoted to literacy and numeracy. Catch Up programmes for KS1, 2&3 for literacy and numeracy. Reading recovery tutor training for subject leaders. GEST cat 4 funding used for some activity but does not cover monitoring, networking or training for LSAs.	Need for a focused programme of support for those in KS2 and extra resource to monitor and ensure high quality inputs. Slow progress at KS3. Ensure those in priority groups were targeted.	A primary Catch Up coordinator Resources to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the programme over 3 years. Extend programme to wider number of schools , to include those in areas of high deprivation, basic skills achievements in the bottom 2 quartiles of performance.	Numeracy Catch Up in KS2. Numeracy acceleration at KS3. Literacy Catch Up in KS2. Literacy acceleration in KS2 20 schools.

**Table 7.6**  
**LEA baseline, priorities (2001) and basic skills strategy interventions selected**

	<b>2001 activity and assessment of issues to address</b>	<b>Basic Skills Priority actions</b>	<b>Focus of Basic Skills Strategy Activities</b>	<b>Basic Skills Strategy Intervention(s) selected and initial funding proposals</b>
Pembrokeshire	Examples of good practice eg in SQM and SEN support. Need to translate into a coherent county and whole school approach. APEX scheme developing as an alternative curriculum programme Objective 1 programme focusing on developing basic skills provision for adults in the North of the county will develop access points in primary schools via the ICT for Learning programme.		Priority of addressing transition between KS2 and 3 and Family of Schools developments. LSA recruitment and training programme. Support for schools to deliver basic skills elements of APEX programme. Need for innovative out of school initiative.	Accelerated literacy and numeracy (KS1). Training for 10 LSAs and 10 teachers. Development of maths bridging Units and schemes of work for 2 FOSs. Out of School Initiatives: Pembrokeshire Family Lego Clubs. Key Stage 4 initiatives: basic skills tutor to support the alternative curriculum and APEX programme.
RCT	Family Literacy and numeracy, SHARE project, Keeping Up with the Children activity already underway. PQM/SQM take up slow. After schools clubs (NOF funded) . Objectives 1 and Communities First programmes ongoing (in 17 of the 53 RCT wards) Social inclusion programme for disengaged young people.	Develop a strategic approach to meeting the basic skills quality mark. Develop cross curricula work in maths. Identify and disseminate good practice in numeracy. Improve KS2/3 transition and support.	SIG funding focuses on early intervention (as other funding support KS4). Target schools using BSA area data on adult literacy and schools KS1 SAT performance data: 40 schools in cohort 1. Plan for a further 40 in Year 2. Oxford Brookes Catch Up programme for 'struggling readers'. Co-delivered by a mix of trained LEA and school LSAs.	Target 25% of the lowest performing schools (and within this pupils attaining Level 2c or below) at KS1. 70+ schools. £120,000 with additional £37,2500 funding form the LEA.

## Role of Staff in Schools

7.20 Staff roles in relation to delivering basic skills vary significantly across schools, depending on school size and structures. For example, in smaller schools it is not unusual for head teachers to 'champion' the quality mark, and deliver some of the basic skills strategy activity in the school. The following key roles were noted during the consultation phase of the evaluation:

- **Heads, Deputy Heads** – these were usually the 'guiding forces' in schools – either directly or indirectly – in determining the level of overall commitment, direction and activity related to basic skills. The implementation of the QM was seen as a management function and was championed by heads or deputy heads. They also tended to act as the key contact with LEAs;
- **Literacy/numeracy coordinators** with specific roles within secondary schools played a pivotal role in implementing strategy programmes. Particularly in organising cross-curricular secondary training, leading whole school INSET to promote/disseminate strategies to other subject teachers;
- **Teaching staff** – as noted above, some schools had staff in place who had received additional basic skills training for the Catch Up programmes, and were providing basic skills support to targeted pupils. Where 'external' support was being provided, some staff might be more heavily involved in working with and sharing practice with these LSAs;
- **LSAs** – some LSAs involved in the delivery of strategy programmes were 'internal' i.e. already working for the school. In most cases, these staff were involved in activities as an 'extension' of their existing activity from working with SEN pupils or other dedicated support roles. In two case study areas, the LEAs appointed a team of 'external' LSAs that were trained to deliver Catch Up programmes and work peripatetically with groups of pupils in selected schools.

7.21 Where support was delivered by internal staff (whether classroom teachers or learning support staff), this was reported to offer a range of benefits:

- clearer lines of communication with and time for sharing learning/capacity building with other school staff;

- a trained resource for basic skills that will remain within the school over time and once funded programmes have ended;
- more opportunity to develop a better understanding of individual pupils;
- in most cases, better links with parents.

7.22 Where 'external' LSAs were trained, it was reported to offer the following benefits:

- offering resource to schools where there was no spare/internal LSA capacity to take the programme forward;
- likely to make quick progress in implementing the programme;
- offering a consistent delivery/approach across schools;
- helping to share practice between schools.

7.23 Schools have varied in their approach to placing the responsibility for basic skills activities with staff. Some Heads have led the awareness-raising themselves, while others have put extra responsibility onto the roles of literacy and numeracy coordinators or Heads of departments (mainly English and or Maths). Some Heads have made clear decisions for non-English/Maths teachers to lead on the cross-curricular activity in order to reinforce that basic skills activity is cross-curricular. Overall, schools highlight an increased awareness of the roles of staff in relation to basic skills provision, with basic skills being reported increasingly as an item on the agenda at staff meetings. Schools have stated that they are starting to see Heads of Department amend their schemes of work to begin to incorporate, mainly, literacy, but also some numeracy improvement strategies.

7.24 Greater awareness of literacy or numeracy strategies is also being facilitated through extra resources and dissemination of information. For example, numeracy coordinators in schools have received numeracy boxes to distribute to other members of staff. Others have spent time developing strategies for subject teachers to employ in their own lessons. Activities supported by strategy have boosted and changed some attitudes, regarding the working relationship between teachers and LSAs. Several schools report that staff and LSAs are collaborating much more effectively as a result of working on the basic skills programme. Furthermore, training for LSAs has helped boost confidence and raise their status.

### Issues raised relating to strategy implementation

7.25 Schools highlighted the following key issues relating to the implementation/roll-out of strategy activities:

- many schools were not aware of national strategy goals and objectives, as one Head noted; *"We did not receive overview of context, BSA role and objectives"*;
- schools were uncertain how monitoring information was being 'fed upwards' by the LEA to the BSA and Assembly, and how activity was being reported;
- a few respondents reported some initial lack of clarity of definition of basic skills and target group. One teacher noted, *"we felt lack of information at the outset"*;
- schools report some lack of joint working between individuals at the LEAs working to roll-out separate strands within a the school;
- schools have been requesting more activity to share good practice from other schools to help with implementation;
- there has been a lack of advance notice of some funding applications, especially for Secondary Training Grants. This has led to some frustration.

7.26 Certain schools in deprived areas state the difficulty of isolating basic skills needs from other issues affecting their pupils. Some head teachers stated the need for future strategy activity to focus on poorer areas. Poor basic skills are related to deprivation, and it is difficult for schools to deal just with basic skills when pupils have other problems. *"If they are serious about basic skills they need to increase the money and to target it to poorer sectors of society."*

7.27 The following two sections (**Sections 8 and 9**) report in more detail on the findings from the research undertaken in the Primary and Secondary schools.

## **GEST funding**

- 7.28 The evaluation brief posed the question of how Grants for Education, Support and Training (GEST) funding complemented the funds available through the strategy. Research participants from LEAs, schools, family programmes and early years programmes were asked to discuss feedback on this question.
- 7.29 There was mixed feedback on the relationship between GEST and basic skills strategy funding. In the primary sector nine of the sixteen schools noted that GEST funding had been available in the past for staff training in basic skills. However, with the reductions in GEST budgets, analysis of school priorities has meant that in many cases, although further basic skills training for staff is desirable, other priorities (such as child protection) have been given priority. In this respect, the support for staff training within the Catch Up model supported in for example the Newport and RCT areas has been welcomed in that it offers an opportunity for one or two staff to update their skills and knowledge of basic skills interventions.
- 7.30 In the secondary sector, four schools noted that the support from the basic skills strategy, through secondary training grants or the events offered by the BSA/LEA on basic skills helped to “plug the gaps left by the loss of GEST funding”.
- 7.31 The four Family Programmes providers sampled and Bookstart co-ordinators are supported by GEST funding. Family programmes have received funding from the basic skills strategy and Bookstart has been supported with funding Books for Babies book bags. In all case study areas, providers were concerned by the reductions in GEST funding and ending of basic skills strategy funding in 2004/05. This created considerable uncertainty about the future of these activities.

## Impact on LEA plans

7.32 The interviews with LEA staff sought to identify the impact of the basic skills strategy work on their future thinking and plans for basic skills work in their area. In all four areas, the LEA staff were positive that the basic skills strategy activities had added value to existing work and local priorities. In all areas the BSA Link Officers had encouraged the LEAs to bring the staff involved in delivery and management of programmes and other senior managers together to report on progress and inform future planning:

- in Anglesey, the LEA reports that these cross-LEA meetings had begun and future plans would be informed by the review of programme data;
- in Pembrokeshire, the LEA had taken an inclusive approach to the development and communication of strategy activities and held regular events to share reports on programmes across all three sectors of the strategy;
- in Newport, the LEAs Education Strategic plan (ESP 2002-05) already made reference to basic skills. However, in its 2003 update, the LEA made specific reference to the work underway under the strategy and noted the effective working relationships developed with the BSA, the range of intervention programmes established in all of the key stages, the potential for the loss of momentum due to problems with the recruitment and retention of key staff and the slower progress made post-16, but the noted engagement of the CCET and on the Key Skills agenda;
- in RCT, the school improvement team were, at the time of interview, meeting to review how the roles and responsibilities for basic skills support for schools could be best embedded within the advisory service. It was felt that schools' lead advisors needed to take the basic skills remit, to enable them to gain/and develop the whole school perspective on basic skills actions (rather than placing the remit with English, Maths or Welsh specialists). This proposal however, created questions of how to build the capacity of lead advisors to take this remit, when many in the team would have experience in a specific subject area (often not English, Maths or Welsh) and therefore may need to be supported to develop this role.

## 8 PRIMARY SECTOR

### Introduction

8.1 In this section, we report on the strategy activities, outcomes and plans for sustainability of the activity reported by primary schools. This covers activity in the following areas:

- Strategy Intervention Grants (SIG) funded Catch Up programmes;
- Primary Quality Mark.

### Key Stage 2 Catch Up Programmes

8.2 KS2 Catch Up has formed the key delivery programme of SIGs in primary schools. The delivery model for this has varied. **Table 8.1** shows examples of the approaches adopted in the case study areas. Key points to note are that:

- the approach taken to the development of staff resource to deliver the programmes has differed:
  - in one area activity is delivered by a team of ‘external’ or LEA appointed LSAs;
  - in two areas the programme is jointly delivered by an LEA LSA team and LSAs/teaching staff in schools;
  - in the fourth area all activity is delivered by existing staff and ‘internal’ LSAs;
- the approach taken to select schools to take part in the programmes differs. For example in one area RCT activity focused primarily on primary schools Catch Up with 70 schools involved to date (over half of all primary schools) in another area (Pembrokeshire key activities focused on one family of 15 schools, with the aim to extend and share practice with another family of schools);
- all targeting activities have the same target group i.e. those achieving 2c at KS1.



**Table 8.1: Examples of KS2 Catch Up Models**

**RCT**

Prior to the strategy, there was a history of family literacy, largely delivered by adult education providers in primary schools. In addition, some schools ran Catch Up before the strategy. £120,000 of SIG funding was made available for Catch Up as part of the basic skills strategy.

The responsibility for Catch Up rests with ESIS, supported by the Advisory Link Officer and Literacy support officer. RCT operate Catch Up through a team of 6 Learning and Support Assistants based at the LEA who are managed by the Literacy Support Teacher. In addition, the schools also train an 'internal' LSA to deliver in the Catch Up programme. Each LSA is responsible for working in 8 schools delivering one 10 minute session per week, which is matched by the school LSAs delivering a further 10 minute session each week. The head-teacher also attends the SIG training.

The reading age baseline was set using the revised Salford reading tests. The selected children are those at Level 2C at the end of KS1. The size of cohorts in individual schools are 10 children in morning sessions and 8 in afternoon sessions. To minimise burden on participating schools, the LEA LSAs undertake all the testing administration of assessments at the beginning of the project, and initial data relating to attitude to reading, knowledge of high frequency words etc.

In 2002/3, 41 schools were targeted (based on baseline data), and all participated. In addition, 7 extra sessions were provided to 3 Welsh Schools, 3 double sessions and 1 school was supported as a goodwill gesture. 379 pupils were supported.

In 2003/4, 21 schools left the project, and it was hoped they would maintain the programme themselves as appropriate. 18 schools were retained and 27 new schools came on board. In response to demand, a 'mini project' was also set up to provide limited support to 11 schools (first come first served). Although the training and materials were provided, the scheme is delivered solely by the schools involved in the project. In addition, 20 schools received maintenance support (whereby they are expected to continue the scheme without direct LEA LSA support, although telephone help and termly support visits are provided). 385 pupils are being supported in 2003/4. The total number of LSAs trained to deliver Catch Up is 100 – all of whom are delivering. In 2003 41 teachers and 41 LSAs (and the Catch Up team) were trained. In 2004, 27 LSAs and 27 teachers were trained, and up to 14 LSAs in retained schools and up to 12 LSAs in limited support schools.

The RCT Catch Up scheme is one of the largest across the UK.

**Anglesey**

The LEA decided to roll-out SIGs to all primary schools in the area. An adviser from Cynnal devised the programme. Catch Up focuses on literacy, and the Anglesey LEA trained a team of 5 learning assistants who acted as additional support for schools in the delivery of a literacy Catch Up programme. Four of the LSAs have been funded via basic skills monies with the funding for the fifth LSA coming through GEST funding.

Through consultation with schools, the LSA service is targeted according to need, both in terms of priority schools and in terms of classroom and pupil support within schools. As the intervention takes effect the support provided by the learning assistants will be provided for other schools. The programme is monitored and evaluated, and at the end of the financial year the LEA will decide how to adapt the programme and their priorities for the following year. LSAs support groups of 15-18 pupils who are under-attaining.

Schools have been prioritised by the LEA. A member of LEA staff or the Advisory Service, Cynnal - visit the school to discuss with the Head which pupils should be targeted for the Catch Up

**Table 8.1: Examples of KS2 Catch Up Models**

programme, and what areas they want to focus on – e.g. spelling, Welsh language, reading.

The LSAs then go to the school to work with 3 groups of around six pupils from years 3 and 6. A number of pupils are put forward, and the classroom assistant then selects which pupils should take part and what groups they are placed in. Pupils are selected using two reading tests, one English and one Welsh. Pupils with SEN are not included.

In most cases pupils from the same year group are in the same group, but in small schools pupils can be from a mix of year groups. Organisations of the groups and the focus of activity varies depending on the context and needs of the school.

The classroom assistant works with groups of pupils in a school and works across three schools at a time. At the end of the 6-week period, pupils are re-tested using the same reading tests in order to monitor progress. The classroom assistant then moves on to work with the next three schools.

#### **Pembrokeshire**

##### **Accelerating Literacy**

In total across the schools participating between the period May 2002 and December 2003, 51 staff mostly Learning Support Assistants, from 22 different schools had undertaken training in the delivery of Accelerating Literacy. In addition, the co-ordinator for the Catch Up programmes has visited all the schools and has given a presentation about Catch Up to all the teachers to help ensure their understanding.

Over a ten week period, Key stage 2 pupils were assessed on their reading and spelling and records were kept of their progress. Initial assessments were carried out and an individual learning programme was developed to meet the particular needs of the child.

In all cases, gains have been made in both reading and writing. Most reading ages increased by over 6 months in the ten weeks programme duration and some by two years.

##### **Accelerating Numeracy**

Accelerating Numeracy has been delivered to Year 3 children in the two Family of schools group. This has included 6 schools in one Family with 33 children and 6 schools in the other Family with 30 children. 26 staff from 12 schools have been trained in the delivery of the course.

A one days training session was delivered to the teachers and Learning Support Assistant delivering the programme. The Catch Up co-ordinator delivered an awareness raising day about the programme, and has given good levels of ongoing support. A set of resources were delivered to the Learning Support Assistants, which help enable them to deliver the programme in a coherent way. Additionally, materials were given to the pupils participating in Catch Up, such as pencil cases, to help increase their motivation for involvement.

The target group were taken out of lessons on a rolling basis so that pupils did not miss the same subjects. They were given baseline assessments, and an individual plan of activity was drawn up for each pupil by the Learning Support Assistant. Assessments have been standardised across all schools with the use of SNAPSHOT. At the end of the term, this will enable a cross school review how each school has progressed with the initiative.

#### **Newport**

**Table 8.1: Examples of KS2 Catch Up Models**

Programmes are delivered by LSAs, with children being withdrawn from normal classroom activities for short sessions, between one and three times a week, for twelve weeks. The Oxford Brookes programme is a more intensive one to one programme, whereas the ALS programme operates with small groups. All children are tested using the Salford Reading Test before and after the intervention, to monitor progress, and identify those suitable for the activity. The programme is aimed at children who receive a 2C score in their KS1 SATs results. These are considered to be children that are falling behind their peers, but have the potential to Catch Up.

The LEA collects detailed monitoring information on the progression of children involved in these activities. Whilst this was done prior to the strategy, the quality and volume has been strengthened, as LSAs are able to undertake the testing element, removing burden on teachers' time. Furthermore, the LEA coordinators also go into schools to support the collation of monitoring data.

The LEA is in the process of developing a database that records, at an individual pupil level, which activities they have been involved in and the impact on results, over their whole school career. Whilst this is not part of the strategy, the volume of information generated helps support this development.

## Impact on Standards

### Improvements in Reading Age

- 8.3 The baseline and post intervention reading test scores reported, illustrate the benefits gained for the vast majority of pupils who take part. Some participants have improved significantly more than others i.e. reading ages show an improvement of two years or more for some pupils and of a couple of months for others. The following illustrates the gains reported by one school via Catch Up programmes.

**Table 8.2: Example of Improvements in reading age reported**

The main outcome of Catch Up is a major leap in reading ages, demonstrated by value added scores.

In cohort 1 (2002/3) average gains in reading ages reached 20.8 months after 9 months. At the end of March 2003, some of the original group had caught up, and therefore, left the cohort.

In cohort 2 (at Feb 2004) average reading gains after 5 months were 10.6 months. In an alternative analysis, 75% made gains of at least 11 months and 50% made gains of at least 21 months. Boys have not gained quite as much as girls – gaining an average of 19.8 months as opposed to girls gaining an average of 22 months.

- 8.4 Data from the Catch Up programmes has been collected on a systematic basis including baseline and follow-up data on reading ages. The BSA is planning to undertake an evaluation of the SIGs programme which will draw together data on outcomes across Wales.

### Additional Benefits

- 8.5 A number of other benefits have been highlighted by teachers, classroom assistants, Heads and occasionally parents. These include:

- **improved confidence** – leading to increased participation in Catch Up sessions and in the classroom;
- **increased motivation** – there is evidence that pupils are continuing activities undertaken in the sessions at home;
- **improved behaviour and engagement** – several pupils have increased improved behaviour and engagement over the course of the sessions;
- pupils and parents also gain in **self esteem**, independence and develop a positive attitude to learning.

- 8.6 Teachers speak of improvements in attitude to reading and of better planned and more rigorous assessment procedures and thus teacher awareness of individual levels of literacy and numeracy.

- *“The SIG programme has led to development of Salford Tests as a matter of course in one school. Previous tests (NfER) were not as clear cut and Neals test took a long time to administer.”*

- 8.7 Most schools could also point to improved reading ages in a very short space of time. However, there was some concern that improvements, such as reading age could not be relied upon as accurate indicators of sustainable improvements in improved attainment.

- 8.8 In order to sustain the individual increases in reading ages, LSAs have sought to work with teachers to raise their awareness of the Catch Up programme, move pupils into structured reading sessions and continue to use the special resources.

### Barriers/Issues Faced

8.9 A number of barriers and issues were highlighted in the implementation and delivery of the programmes including:

- **lack of support post-intervention** – because some classroom assistants deliver the programme externally, and most withdrawal programmes, in some cases, the continuation of support will stop when the intervention ends;
- **lack of embedding within the schools** – although all schools are supportive of the programme, the extent to which they are involved varies – in some cases teacher liaise regularly with the LSA. The externally delivered programmes were not necessarily raising the capacity of school-based staff to help embed the programme;
- **staff turnover** – the ‘external’ LSA interviewed are all clearly committed to the work they do but have understandable concerns about what they will do once the funding for the programme they refer to as a ‘pilot’ ceases;
- **tracking outcomes** – the duration of the programme (three years) is not long enough to be able to track the effects over the longer-term. Plans are in place to evaluate the programme in terms of delivery, and also on the relationship between this intervention and other outcomes. For many this will take place during Summer 2004. However, further-lag time is needed to track outcomes at GCSE/KS4;
- **longer duration of intervention** - although there was benefit to the majority of pupils that took part, some considered that some children had started to make a small but significant improvement, but had not ‘caught up’ to their peers. It may well be that pupils need a number of interventions of this type on-going, in order more effectively reach this goal.

## Primary Quality Mark

- 8.10 The rate of progress against the PQM target has varied considerably across the case study areas from 100% to 60% of primary schools to date. In one case study area, the LEA had been a keen advocate of the Primary Quality Mark since its introduction in 1997. It was the first LEA to reach the target of 100% of primary schools holding the PQM, and the School Improvement Service has also encouraged early years providers to work towards it too. Another of the case study LEAs was the last in Wales to engage with the PQM. This was because the LEA had previously been focusing on the use of Investors in People as a key tool to school progression. Despite slower engagement, this LEA now has a positive approach to the PQM, and are confident that the remaining primary schools will gain the award by the target date.
- 8.11 LEA Officers have responsibility to support and assess activity for the PQM. For example in one area, one adviser has been allocated responsibility to co-ordinate the PQM, whilst two other advisers assess primary schools. Schools are allocated an average of 3.0 days of support to get the quality mark, backed up by training to develop the basic skills action plan.
- 8.12 Some schools were introduced to PQM through inspection visits, where reports pointed to the value of the PQM in supporting schools to develop a planning and management framework for literacy and numeracy. Most schools had been introduced to the Quality Mark via LEA contacts. The approach to engaging schools has been to:
- market the PQM based on the fact that much of what is required to meet the award can be evidenced by practices that are already ongoing in the school;
  - provide advice to schools on how to address gaps;
  - in one area, the LEA encouraged schools to focus on one area first - mainly literacy. Numeracy is then to be focused on at the reassessment stage.

- 8.13 In many cases, schools considered that the QM process formalised what they 'were doing already, anyway', in which case the QM has served to reinforce good practice, and allowed recognition of what was already being done. A small proportion of those that felt they were already doing key activities tended to see the QM as more of a drive from the LEA to achieve their targets, rather than as a mechanism which could actually support the school. Where this was the case, these schools were less likely to value renewal.
- 8.14 Schools report that the support offered to schools following a decision to work with PQM was both effective and well-received. The materials from the BSA were felt to have been very helpful guides in this process, together with advisor support.
- 8.15 Implementation of PQM was seen to be most successful where school management has driven the process and involved other staff in the process. Where this has not happened, some staff sampled were unaware of the processes behind, PQM or the value of it. This suggests that the spirit behind PQM has not been fully embraced in a small number of schools.

### **Benefits of the PQM**

- 8.16 In most cases, the advantages of the QM were clearly articulated by schools. They perceive it to be a useful tool which encourages them to focus on embedding literacy and numeracy across the school and ensuring that children are supported where there is a particular need. One Head noted:
- *"It has been a stimulus for solving our own problems as a school". (Pembroke Primary School).*
- 8.17 There is clear evidence that planning in schools has changed as a result of the PQM particularly within those schools which were not already engaging with the strategy:
- *"It has had a big impact, and the planning and procedures implemented as part of the Quality Mark has been an ongoing dynamic process ever since". (Primary school, Pembrokeshire).*

- 8.18 Schools also noted that relations with parents have improved, because the QM framework had encouraged them to improve their approach to this. For example in one school, parents now come in once a term for discussions about their child's development rather than once a year.
- 8.19 The major outcome of the PQM has been the increased level of monitoring, developed as part of the requirements of the Quality Mark and also for the Accelerating Literacy and Numeracy programmes. There is a greater level of individual monitoring, more rigorous reporting and analysis of data.
- 8.20 The PQM was felt to offer a sustainable framework, which could be embedded into school planning mechanisms. As such, it tended not to be viewed as an 'initiative' or an 'intervention'. Self review and evaluation of staff had improved as result of procedures implemented for Catch Up and PQM, and there is more consistency in this activity within and across schools.
- 8.21 Although schools were largely positive about the QM, the impact on pupil/school performance was considered difficult to establish.
- 8.22 For example, in some schools there was clear evidence that the QM had contributed to changes, such as identifying the 'middle band' of pupils (those falling behind their peers but above SEN), introducing targets setting. The QM has also encouraged additional focus on numeracy, although literacy remains a key focus (partly because so much was going on before). More resource within schools appears to be allocated to literacy and numeracy. The main benefits of the QM are summarised below:
- a reward for good practice already ongoing in the school;
  - a tool to help embed good basic skills practice;
  - a checklist, tool for reflective practice;
  - tool to support raising standards;
  - tool to encourage schools to focus on the 'middle band of pupils';
  - encouraged pupil target setting.

### **Key Issues/Barriers**

- 8.23 The main issues raised by schools or LEA staff regarding the PQM were as follows:



- **a different emphasis placed on renewal of the QM** - in one case study area, schools were clear that the standard expected ongoing review, reflection and further development. In other areas, some saw renewal as a revisit to previously evidenced activity and saw limited value to this;
- in some areas there was the apparent lack of **focus on continuous improvement** as part of the renewal process. Some schools felt that 'simply meeting the standard again' was not a good enough reason to work towards the renewal of the award;
- **pushing for 100% coverage** - a small proportion of schools sampled felt that the push for 100% was diluting the quality of the standard. These were notably schools that had been awarded the PQM pre-strategy, and were concerned that standards/rigour might drop;
- **siloism** - there are still some schools in which the PQM is not effectively driven by the Head or senior manager. The location of responsibility limited the potential for this to be a whole school approach;
- **local modification** – the fact that one area has enabled schools to focus on one area of basic skills (literacy) had a positive effect in terms of speed of engagement; however, other schools views was that it had potential to dilute the value and consistency of the award at the National level.

## Outcomes

### Improved Awareness and Understanding of basic skills

- 8.24 Awareness and understanding of basic skills has improved within school settings, particularly with teaching staff as a result of strategy activities. A positive result of this has been that teaching staff were often more engaged with the work of learning support staff (whether 'internal' or 'external'), and better informed of the progress and performance of targeted pupils.

### Displacement and Deadweight

- 8.25 Where withdrawal from the classroom takes place, in combination with less well integrated 'external' support, there had been some expectation that withdrawal from class would displace subject learning. However, class teachers report that this has not been the case, and improved reading age or numeracy skills combined with increased confidence, lead to improved contributions and engagement in core subject lessons.
- 8.26 The basic skills strategy has offered additional support, both through mechanisms, and the additional resource (funds, expertise and personnel). As such, the work of the Strategy has significantly boosted what was already in place. The focus of the strategy has placed a new emphasis on the target group. The PQM has encouraged schools to consider the effectiveness of their infrastructures for strategic planning and management. Although much of the activity/policy had been in place prior to the strategy, schools identify that the PQM adds value by drawing separate elements together helping them to focus on priorities and evidence progress.

### Sustainability of activity

- 8.27 Most schools have intimated that they will continue to work with the PQM, since this has now been embedded in school practice, and that this will underpin basic skills strategy across the curriculum, since the model offers a holistic and flexible approach to planning, organisation and management.
- 8.28 Schools that had received funding from the LEA for an LSA, indicated that there was uncertainty with funding. Whilst the LEA has a three-year commitment from the Assembly to fund the strategy, the LEA operates on annual funding policy.
- *"I employed a new LSA to focus on Catch Up, but don't know whether I'm getting the funding again this year. She's brilliant and I don't want to lose her, but she needs to know where she stands. I appreciate they (the LEA) can't give money unconditionally, but a bit more planning time would be useful – a three year commitment would be workable."*

- 8.29 Where Catch Up was externally/LEA driven intervention, it is less likely to have been developed in a way that can be sustained within the school. In some cases the external model had delivered outcomes that encouraged schools to engage/fund development themselves. However, in other schools, the fact that the programme had been externally funded has created expectation that this would continue.
- 8.30 The BSA made funding available for SIGs and Secondary Training for 3 years up to March 2005. Schools and LEAs were made aware that their grant would be sustained at the agreed level for this period so that forward planning could take place. This was greatly welcomed at the launch of each programme. Yet, the approach to the longer term funding of the Strategy came in for some criticism, as schools (interviewed in March 2004) felt unable to plan beyond this year, due to the lack of clarity regarding funding strategy and other related funding (including monies used to employ LSAs) beyond 2004/05. Some LSAs trained were in SEN support roles. Many schools were not clear on what their allocation funding for LSAs would be, and faced the potential to lose trained resource available to support future basic skills delivery.
- 8.31 Next steps support for the PQM has also been requested, mainly in relation to sharing knowledge of effective practice and other Catch Up interventions, especially in numeracy.
- 8.32 The basic skills strategy has very clear linkages to other national and schools policy and priorities. However, in several cases schools were not clear about these linkages and in the absence of links, there is a danger that schools may not address basic skills targets in an integrated way. The basic skills strategy activity needs to continue to be clearly placed within the wider schools policy context and this needs to be reinforced not only by the work of the basic skills strategy, but also in other statements about schools policy, that can also help communicate where these linkages are.

## 9 SECONDARY SECTOR

### Introduction

9.1 In this section we report on the strategy activities, outcomes and plans for sustainability of the activity reported by secondary schools. This covers activity in the following areas:

- Strategy Intervention Grants (SIG) Catch Up programmes;
- Secondary Quality Mark;
- Strategy Intervention Grants (SIG) KS4 programmes for disengaged.

### Context

9.2 The earlier work of the Assembly Government to raise standards in schools has been developed over the recent years to target Key Stage 3. A programme of resources to support schools in the delivery of the curriculum in the early years of secondary education has been devised and a number of guidance materials have been issued. Initial guidance was set out in *Aiming for Excellence in Key Stage 3*, published in October 2002, and since then more specific guidance has been issued on raising standards in literacy and numeracy using a whole-school approach.

9.3 Further materials, focusing on Key Stage 2/3 transition, are in the pipeline and are scheduled for publication later this year. The Aiming for Excellence programme has been developed by a Steering Group comprising representatives from the Education and Training Department together with partners in ACCAC, Estyn and other interested organisations.

9.4 The representation of BSA senior management on the Steering Group has been key to the development of this work. They have ensured that the programme, and the various BSA initiatives e.g. Strategic Intervention Grants and the Secondary Training Initiative, fit strategically with each other and that there is no overlap or duplication

---

## Strategy Intervention Grants (SIG) Programmes

### Catch Up KS3

- 9.5 The most common strand of SIG funding that has been implemented in secondary schools is the Catch Up programme for KS3. Two out of the four LEAs implemented the Catch Up programme. One LEA trained existing LSAs within the school to deliver the programme, while another recruited and trained groups that worked peripatetically. Year 7 pupils have been assessed using a range of tests, and small groups were selected as being suitable for the acceleration programmes. These pupils are withdrawn from mainstream class, and given extra time on literacy and/or numeracy by the LEA trained tutor/LSA.
- 9.6 In some cases, LEAs provided support in terms of buying in the relevant software for schools to implement and providing training to LSAs to use it, and also, gave guidance on the types of pupils to target.
- 9.7 Schools mainly aimed to target pupils who achieved a high level 3/low level 4 in SAT results at the end of year 6, and whose reading ages were between 7-10 yrs (for Year 7). In the main, schools were confident they had targeted the right set of pupils who have benefited the most from the programme. Most were well aware that the programme was designed for the band of pupils 'just below average' and not in the SEN category. An example of a school's approach to the Catch Up programme is highlighted in **Table 9.1** below.

**Table 9.1: Activity undertaken as part of the Catch Up KS3 programme**

The school applied for a grant to run a 12 week pilot project using the 'Read On' method for Year 7 pupils with a reading age between 10 and 12 years. Raising pupils' reading age by 6 months was set as a target. A delivery plan was developed, setting milestones for identifying the group, informing parents, assessment and evaluation of the process. Pupils were given 15 minutes of support with the LSA per day. From recorded results, the percentage of pupils with a reading age lower than their chronological age decreased from 58% in September 2002 to 44% in June 2003. In addition, pupils were given a spelling book - sponsored by funding made available for the QM - which provides additional support for literacy in all lessons and aims to assist pupils to help themselves. This strategy is part of a range of activities the school has implemented as part of the whole school literacy policy.

- 9.8 Where schools have an external LSA coming into the school on a rotational basis, staff have identified one group to be withdrawn on a rolling timetable for lessons each week. Where existing LSAs employed within one school have been trained, support was more integrated and often pupils would have shorter inputs every day. Where specific needs had been identified from testing within groups, and pupils supported with work tailored to their needs, progress was more significant. LSAs noted that where they collaborated with the English/Maths teacher on the skills needed to underpin work done in mainstream class, rather than just mirroring the curriculum, the programme was more effective. It is in this respect that some schools that had external LSAs, struggled with embedding the programme to achieve fully integrated support.
- 9.9 Some 'external' LSAs interviewed felt quite isolated: "I felt the school did not know my role and I felt isolated". However, in most cases, LSAs and teachers have taken the initiative to share good practice and methods. Where LSAs were already a fully integrated staff member, the sharing of good teaching practice has been much greater, and additional support has become part of mainstream teaching.
- 9.10 Schools, within one LEA, have used the additional strategy funding to provide intervention for Years 8 and 9. Schools have seen the benefit of the Catch Up, and have seen the need for continuation in later years as one programme is not necessarily enough for some pupils. All schools visited in the LEA have plans to undertake some extra monitoring for older pupils in order to track needs and progression from Year 7. In a few schools, targeting the right pupils was initially an issue, as one SENCO noted:
- *"We realised in the first instance we were not targeting the right pupils. Several had special needs and only around 15 out of the 26 made good progress. We realised we had been a bit arbitrary in selecting pupils by only using the Year 6 reading results sent from the primary schools".*
- 9.11 In this school, the SENCO worked with the literacy coordinator in the school, and they developed a questionnaire, which they gave to relevant staff. This assisted them in choosing a better cohort of pupils second time around. In the second year of the initiative, nearly all pupils have made good progress.

- 9.12 The role undertaken by the LSAs in schools has developed considerably in recent years and the profile and respect for LSAs in schools has been changing. One case study LEA has supported the continuing professional development of LSAs by negotiating with the FE college a series of courses to ensure progression. In addition, 50% of the cost of training LSAs has been reimbursed to schools for this financial year. As a result, 109 LSAs are now engaging in training this year, with the majority working towards qualifications including Foundation Degrees, Certificate of Learning Support, Certificate for Teaching Assistants and NVQ levels 2 and 3.

### Secondary Quality Mark

- 9.13 At the school level, responsibility for taking forward the SQM has varied and may be led by the Deputy Head/Head, a member of senior staff e.g. literacy co-ordinator and a small group of school staff. In all cases, support from the senior management team in the school is considered crucial in driving things forward. However, one teacher felt that a member of teaching staff was better placed to lead activities by virtue of having more time to focus efforts. Handing responsibility over to a group of school staff has benefits in terms of:
- ensuring greater awareness throughout the school;
  - a greater likelihood for sustainability since activity is not reliant on one person.

**Table 9.2: An example of an approach to the Quality Mark**

The approach to the Quality Mark in one school has involved a team of staff to take responsibility for implementing the Quality Mark. Support for the QM was initially given by the Head and Senior Management Team who then gave responsibility to the Literacy Co-ordinator to take forward. Working with a group of core staff in the school, the co-ordinator held regular meetings to look at the approach to achieving the Quality Mark. The team meets regularly to take stock and discuss the next steps.

In addition, the group has presented the work done on the Quality Mark to the whole school. This has raised the profile and awareness of basic skills across the school. Giving responsibility to a group of staff in this way has been positive, as:

- it ensures that activities under the banner of the Quality Mark are not dependent on one person, thereby ensuring greater sustainability over time;
- it hands over responsibility to teachers themselves to consider innovative ways to tackle literacy within their subject areas.

- 9.14 In one LEA, £3,500 was available to each school to help them develop their SQM action plan and to gather evidence. During the assessment year, each school received a further grant of £2,400 to support the work needed to gather the evidence. This has primarily been used for release time, in order for the basic skills co-ordinator to audit current practice against the QM ten point criteria, to identify those areas that need strengthening or formalising, and to develop the Action Plan.
- 9.15 Each school going through assessment has advisor support from the LEA in the form of initial assessment and formulating the action plan, supported by interim meetings and reviewing of progress.
- 9.16 Schools who worked towards the QM, during the life of the strategy noted that the initial meeting with the LEA advisor was an extremely useful exercise in terms of assessing where the school was at, and now the school could further develop in order to meet the criteria.
- *“It’s a good basis for audit, in terms of finding out where you’re at, where you need to go and how you’re going to get there...it’s a really good form of self-evaluation and it’s good to be able to acknowledge the good practice that exists”.*
- 9.17 Support has also included advice on the renewal process. However this appears to be a weaker area in terms of schools knowledge. Procedures for continuous improvement do not appear to be as clear.

## **Benefits**

- 9.18 The most common benefits and added value of working towards gaining the QM have been cited as:
- improvements in cross-departmental activity;
  - streamlining of senior management activity and helping schools unify and strengthen their focus on planning and giving them frameworks;
  - recognition of the efforts schools had been putting in previously;
  - assistance for schools struggling to achieve a balance of both literacy and numeracy strategies;



- providing a mechanism for schools to address basic skills problems – schools often claim that they always had the baseline data, but did not know how to use it to solve their own problems.

9.19 Working towards the QM has enabled schools to work other strategy strands into the delivery plan or frameworks developed. In particular, schools have been able to use grants available for secondary training to address needs across departments.

**Table 9.3: Example of integrating activities through involvement with the QM**

A Newport secondary school received a secondary training grant, and had recently renewed the Quality Mark, as well as delivering the Catch Up programme. The numeracy coordinator spent a day at another school attending their INSET numeracy day, which she found invaluable. This enabled them to pick up other ideas and information for their own training day. The numeracy coordinator, who was quite a new teacher, fronted the day and devised the activities. The head teacher also commented that it had a positive effect for the teacher professionally, and had contributed to her CPD. A separate training day was held for literacy. As a result, cross-curriculum activity and support is taking place. The Literacy Coordinator highlighted: "What we try to do across the curriculum is to mix the departments. At the moment, we're working with the Science Department, and then we will feed back to the Heads Department, and ask them if they feel there are any pupils that they feel would benefit from literacy support, for example, and develop that. The idea is that we would work out formally with all staff and decide what they actually need for their department. We have also had literacy and ITT training as well, which was after school, things that I'd been taught in the training. Quite a lot of questions were raised at the INSET training day."

In this respect, the school is now reaping the benefits for having laid the foundations for a whole school approach to planning via the QM and blending strategy activities.

9.20 There have been some mixed messages concerning the focus of pupils to be targeted. In some cases, schools initially targeted pupils with SEN rather than the 'middle band' of pupils in mainstream. This tended to be the case in schools that obtained the Quality Mark pre-strategy. It is now felt that schools are clear of the target group. Nevertheless, this has led to some resentment in schools that were initially approved for the QM, but upon subsequent reassessment were informed that they had not been targeting the right pupils. It was felt that the BSA had 'changed the goalposts'.

9.21 In one school, a whole-school approach to the Quality Mark was adopted to address the literacy needs of all its pupils. The school was then disappointed at being criticised for not being able to evidence that they had been working with a particular group of 'basic skills' pupils.

- *“Schools had started to do a considerable amount of work in literacy and numeracy. Yet when they were working with their support adviser they found that they didn’t have the things that the QM criteria asked for in a particular way, although they had been working hard to develop literacy across the school. They had not targeted this particular group of pupils the BSA was interested in, so it meant they had to go back and start from scratch with some things. Although they had been working with these pupils in the same way as all other pupils, they didn’t have the evidence in the way the BSA wanted, because the Quality Mark required starting points and monitoring and measuring of those pupils.”*

9.22 Despite some concern expressed about clarity of the target group, the majority of evidence suggests that the Quality Mark process has encouraged schools to focus specifically on the basic skills cohort.

### **Monitoring and Tracking**

9.23 Monitoring and evaluation at the school level has been guided by both the SQM and requests for data from the LEAs. There has been increased use of a range of assessment tools and their application in a more systematic way. The use of monitoring has been more rigorous.

9.24 In return, schools have felt the benefits of this through having a clearer and more accurate picture of both ‘distance travelled’ and performance. Indeed, while initially, such mechanisms were applied for the target groups of pupils only, there is evidence of schools now applying these approaches to monitoring across the school. One Head Teacher noted that staff now really valued monitoring, when in the past, this was resisted as an ‘additional chore’.

9.25 All schools visited had established systems in place to record pupil assessment prior to involvement with the Quality Mark. However, in some cases, activities such as after school clubs have encouraged schools to monitor and track specific cohorts of pupils. In one school where this was undertaken, the evidence obtained was considered to be a powerful motivator in engaging staff and pupils alike, as progress could be clearly evidenced.

- 9.26 There is evidence that the QM is helping to embed basic skills within school strategies, positioned within the wider school context to improve teaching, learning, and behaviour. In many schools, basic skills is included within school and department development plans and is linked to the performance management of teachers.
- 9.27 Some elements of the QM are considered harder to embed than others and most of the schools (both those working towards and those that have achieved the QM) felt that consolidating basic skills practice across the whole school continues to be a challenge.
- 9.28 This is particularly difficult in the secondary schools where there are a larger number of staff to engage and competing curriculum pressures. In two schools it was felt that it was harder to embed numeracy rather than literacy, as literacy is used in most subject areas.
- 9.29 In a small number of cases, teaching staff felt that activity has not yet been developed across the curriculum. Where this was observed, the QM was considered to be the remit of certain staff only.
- *“It tends to be something discrete... affecting certain members of staff, although the best schools do have sessions where they present the Quality Mark as an element within the strategy and they deliver that to all staff so all staff know about it.”*
- 9.30 However, the involvement of a wider range of staff via the secondary training grant initiative is reported to help engage a wider range of staff in basic skills activity.

## Secondary Training Grants

- 9.31 The majority of secondary schools consulted have also received grants for staff training around basic skills. This has been used in a variety of ways including INSET training days for literacy and numeracy, developing numeracy boxes and packs for other subject teachers, implementing software for helping identify pupils with basic skill needs e.g. Success maker, extra workshops for helping teachers plan for literacy and numeracy strategies and general awareness raising.

9.32 Delivery plans for teacher training have been developed and worked into school action plans, most often by the literacy and numeracy coordinators. The grants have been used to fund a wide range of activities including:

- training days e.g. 'Stepping Out' INSET day to support development of Speaking, Listening and Thinking Initiative, or whole-staff training days on Numeracy/Literacy;
- workshops to disseminate information and training to faculty reps for improving basic skills through subject teaching;
- time for planning literacy/numeracy strategies;
- there has been a particular focus on training teachers at Key Stage 3. In many schools, there is a planned teacher release and in-house training development groups which are co-ordinated by literacy and numeracy co-ordinators. To support the in-house training, the LEA has used strategy money to deliver seminars on the use of numeracy across the curriculum;
- Heads of Departments attending workshops provided through strategy money then delivering in-house sessions to disseminate skills and knowledge gained from these courses to other staff;
- funding visits to other schools, supply cover, materials and resources e.g. for compiling numeracy boxes.

9.33 **Table 9.4** below highlights how one school has used the Secondary Training Grant.

**Table 9.4: An example of activity undertaken as part of secondary training**

One secondary school visited has utilised monies from the Secondary Training Grant to develop strategies to promote literacy across the curriculum. Activities were taken forward by a team of staff within the school, including:

- the SENCO who has responsibility for basic skills in the school;
- a history teacher;
- a science teacher.

Initially the staff attended a BSA external event. They then developed a range of activities that they could trial in the core curriculum subjects that they were teaching. The group has met regularly to discuss progress and share good practice. This approach attempted to build cross—curricular capacity to build literacy skills in the school. The future aim is to disseminate good practice with a view to taking activities forward across all school subjects.

9.34 In some instances the LEA has provided some advice on producing a delivery plan. LEA advisors have attended INSET training days as well as organised events in schools linked to basic skills provision e.g. writing weeks.

### Outcomes and Benefits

9.35 Activities undertaken as a result of taking part in the training initiatives have included:

- developing strategies to target and monitor pupils e.g. reading age measurement in Key Stage 3;
- purchasing resources to deliver reading and handwriting tasks at 'basic skills club';
- visiting other schools in the county to identify good practice in improving basic literacy schools that can be cascaded across key staff (English, Welsh and Modern Foreign Language Heads of Department);
- attending external BSA courses on literacy and numeracy.

9.36 As such the training grants appear to have been used in two key ways:

- focusing on developing a basic skills activity in the school that is evaluated and good practice disseminated;
- attendance at external training courses/events.

9.37 There is limited evidence of specific benefits resulting from the Secondary Training initiative to date, as much of the training planned had not yet, or has only recently taken place. Although it is early days, one INSET trainer reports:

- *a 'sea change in the approach to basic skills among staff'.*

9.38 One co-ordinator of the Accelerating Literacy and Numeracy programmes commented that across the schools in this area, the development of the LSAs in terms of skills and confidence has been a great contributing factor to the success of the basic skills agenda:

- *"all teachers have made very positive comments on the work of the LSAs who have kept excellent records on pupils...were very organised...and confident" (Accelerating Literacy and Numeracy coordinator.)*

### Issues and Barriers

9.39 A number of issues raised by schools and LEAs in relation to the grants were:

- timetabling activity;
- problems in developing the plan and perceived lack of guidance;
- submitting plans and application referral;
- relatively low level of grant.

9.40 The dissatisfaction of one school with the process was reflected as follows by one LEA member of staff:

- *“I emphasise that schools did feel that they were jumping through hoops to fill the plan in; they were doing it already or it was (already) mentioned in a strategy somewhere in the school. So it was just a matter of putting things down to draw down money... are finding it difficult to compartmentalise what the BSA want and to put that in a box separate from what they are doing as a whole school.” LEA Adviser.*

9.41 In the BSA’s view, the actions needed to develop teachers’ skills in supporting basic skills across the curriculum were not being undertaken by most schools and were not included in existing planning. The BSA’s aim was to increase the focus on basic skills and to ensure that the grant was used to pay for additional development opportunities for teachers. The BSA had a role in reviewing plans for approval and in many cases identified that planned activity did not meet expected criteria – training for staff. The concerns expressed by the BSA illustrate the importance of the monitoring and approval process, and the need to ensure that LEAs are also well briefed and understand the objectives of the programme.

## Key Stage 4 Initiative for Disengaged Young People

- 9.42 Two schools visited have implemented this programme, which involves taking a group of 16/17 young people from Year 10 and offering them work placements two days a week, and providing a reduced curriculum for the other three days of the week. Time in school has been spent on increased literacy and numeracy support, life and communication skills. In one school, pupils attended mainstream classes. In the other school, pupils worked separately in the Learning Support Unit. There was some operational linkage between the schools and wider 14-19 pathfinder networks activity, but there was not a clear strategic link between the basic skills strategy work and these wider initiatives.
- 9.43 Funding for this initiative has been spent on increasing LSA support and subsequent training, materials and resources, and an IT package. Funding for staff time has also been included to account for the increase in planning time. Staff did note that the programme is extremely resource intensive and not enough time had been dedicated to planning, which is a crucial factor. The staff and pupils were in praise of the scheme, and communication between staff and the young people had improved considerably. Links with employers were good. In addition, staff had seen improvements in attendance and motivation. Putting literacy and numeracy into a vocational context has been a critical factor in enabling pupils to see the link between education and employment and the need for good basic skills. Although there had been some discussion between the two schools, they noted that improved communication at the early stages would have highlighted good practice.
- 9.44 The second school visited had faced difficulties in implementing the programme. This was down to various factors including:
- poor provider engagement where tutors clearly had not had enough briefing as to the problems faced when working with disengaged young people;
  - staff turnover;
  - pupils being separated from mainstream class;
  - not enough literacy and numeracy put into a practical context for pupils to sufficiently engage pupils.

9.45 However, staff were keen to see the programme continue and the new coordinator has planned to address these problems. Curriculum content has been amended and the new coordinator was looking at placing pupils in some mainstream classes. The success of the initiative in the first school showed the potential gains to be made. **Table 9.5** highlights how the school approached the delivery of the initiative:

**Table 9.5: Activity in relation to the KS4 Disengaged Young People Initiative**

Staff spent a good deal of time from the outset developing links with local employers and planning the reduced curriculum. Pupils were found a work placement in an area of their choice such as car maintenance or hairdressing, which they undertook on Mondays and Fridays. Pupils would then attend school Tuesday to Thursday, taking part in a reduced curriculum, which included literacy and numeracy support, science and communication/life skills. All young people selected for the programme were given a mobile phone. A lot of thought went into planning the content of the curriculum to ensure it contained vocational elements. Both staff and pupils were in praise of the scheme because:

- Attendance and motivation increased. In particular communication improved due to use of mobile phones – pupils can phone if they aren't going to attend classes. In addition Mondays and Fridays were cited as good days for the work placement as these are days when pupils feel less motivated to attend school.
- Pupils are beginning to see the link between good literacy and numeracy skills and employment. This has been cited as due to the vocational element of lessons.

9.46 Participating pupils that were interviewed were very positive about the programme: For example, one noted

- *"It's been loads better since I started (on this project). It's made a difference that I don't have to come in on a Monday and a Friday and that I can do something I like....I'm doing car maintenance and working with classic cars in particular"* (KS4 pupil).

## Outcomes

### Impact on Planning

9.47 In terms of strategy activities having an impact on planning or changes in approach to the management of basic skills provision, schools cite the QM as having been the most effective tool for self-review and evaluation. Secondary Heads are also perceiving changes in attitude amongst subject teachers regarding the use of LSAs through the Catch Up programme and have seen the beginnings of a change in culture in terms of integrating extra support within mainstream curriculum.



9.48 In addition, being able to bid for Secondary Training Grants has pushed schools to look at staff training needs and integrate this into whole school delivery plans where necessary.

9.49 The majority of schools report a considerable improvement in pupil monitoring techniques: through buying in software, increased or more effective use of existing methods or more systematic monitoring. Some schools have used the funding as a means of re-allocating resources in order to begin monitoring other year groups, as well as tracking the effects of the Catch Up programme.

9.50 Participation in strategy activities has enabled schools to look at their monitoring methods and make better use of what they have. Often schools already had a significant amount of baseline data but had not had the time or capacity to make use of it. Secondary schools also cited making better use of information from primary schools as an outcome of better monitoring procedures and the development of a shared language around assessment.

9.51 However, there are some instances where basic skills activity has been a separate activity and where measures have not been taken to embed good practice.

- *“I get management time for being head of department but I mean basic skills is an extra isn’t it? I wasn’t given extra time for basic skills over and above what I have now”.*

### **Impact on Standards**

9.52 Raising standards is more likely to be evident in the medium to long term and the strategy is too early in its development to provide concrete outcomes in terms of increased standards.

- 9.53 However there are indications to show that foundations have been laid in order for attainment to increase, and to continue to do so in the future. The Catch Up programme is providing significant results in reading, comprehension and spelling, while improvements in basic numeracy and mental maths are being perceived over short spaces of time. Schools are in no doubt that intensive intervention makes a difference to those pupils needing extra support. However there is not enough strong evidence yet to show if this would be the only intervention needed. Indeed, comments from teachers suggest that some pupils will need further support to maintain progress.
- 9.54 Schools have definitely seen the benefit of intervention programmes such as Catch Up but recognise that it is one part of wider intervention aimed at improving attainment and can only contribute to the bigger picture of basic skills initiatives taking place in schools.
- *“We have seen over the last 3-4 years that the mean scores have improved over the three tests used (CAT, spelling tests and young schools spelling tests). 5 years ago scores were around 93, now they are near to a 100. For us this is a significant increase. Part of this is down to the refocus on literacy and numeracy in primary schools but the extra resources from strategy has meant we can concentrate on more difficult challenges.”*
- 9.55 At the time of interview, the majority of schools felt that it was too early to tell whether improvements in specific basic skills provision was having an impact on attainment in core subjects (core subject the indicators are the key measure used to monitor the national strategy). Expectations are however good. Furthermore, tracking systems had been improved to report on those students participating in strategy programmes and on outcomes achieved e.g. in SAT tests/GCSEs.

## **Improved Awareness and Understanding of Basic Skills**

- 9.56 Staff note that pupils, especially in primary schools are generally well aware of the importance of literacy and numeracy, reinforced by the setting of individual targets. There has been increased communication with parents as a result of strategy initiatives – in particular via the Catch Up programme, which has seen schools write to parents explaining their child’s involvement as well as highlighting improvements in reading ability.

## Displacement and Deadweight

9.57 Schools do not report that basic skills strategy activity has displaced other activity. Schools have benefited where several strategy activities have been integrated with other initiatives, streamlining procedures rather than displacing activity. One school noted:

- *“there has been no displacement – it has dovetailed with what we were doing already i.e. SEN provision, transitions work and within the role of coordinators”.*

9.58 The majority of schools had some plans for improving literacy and numeracy strategies across the curriculum and saw the strategy as a means of channelling and developing their ideas. Although there is evidence to suggest that schools would have undertaken some activity, most agree that without the strategy, the impetus would not have been there to implement activity at the speed achieved and that the consistency of approach developing within and across schools adds further value.

## Sustainability of Activity

9.59 Where schools have seen the benefit of the Catch Up programmes and have some means of continuing the programme through internal resources, the majority plan is to do so.

9.60 The QM has given many schools recognition for efforts they were already making and in this respect, schools will continue to strive towards improving basic skills and furthering literacy and numeracy policies. However many were not aware of how the QM process would continue and foresaw that if LEAs or government pushed different objectives, they could lose momentum on basic skills.

9.61 Many schools were not in a position to run programmes such as the Catch Up without continued funding, some will look to fund them through their own core funding. One school noted

- *“we are shifting our budget around to fund an LSA who can deliver the same programme after receiving training from the LEAs LSA”.*

## 10 POST-16

### Baseline Capacity

#### Further Education

- 10.1 There is a long history of basic skills development in FE, with low-level ongoing activity, which was rarely acknowledged or profiled. In recognition of this, the introduction of the Basic Skills Support Development Fund (BSSDF) in 2000 aimed to assist and develop basic skills support policies and structures in FE, for those on main-stream courses with identified literacy and numeracy deficiencies. The £2.5m funding from FEFCW and NC-ELWA was provided to develop provision for this support. All four colleges interviewed in this research agreed with the findings of the BSSDF report<sup>22</sup>, that the fund had been most effective in terms of establishing clear roles and responsibilities for basic skills support co-ordinators and champions in vocational programmes, along with creating clearer systems for assessing need and providing support.

#### Training Providers

- 10.2 The baseline position in the work based training provider sector is that of the 120 organisations contracted to ELW and Jobcentre plus, 60 have contracts to deliver basic skills. Some providers have offered dedicated Life Skills courses or Skills Build courses for several years, and many have also focussed on the Key Skills content in work based learning programmes. However, basic skills dedicated support has been difficult to incorporate into learning programmes due to funding policy that encourages the delivery of discrete basic skills programmes (funded for a maximum of 13 weeks).

#### Voluntary and Community Sector

- 10.3 There are 22 Councils for Voluntary services in Wales, four Voluntary Sector Bureauxs and two Workers Education associations in North and South Wales.

---

<sup>22</sup> Evaluation of the Basic Skills Support Development Fund 2002-2003. Dysg. 2003.

10.4 Parts of the Voluntary and Community sector, especially in the more urban areas of the South and South West have long had an awareness of the need for basic skills development. However, needs identification and capacity to deliver were reported as relatively absent prior to the strategy. An audit of provision and need was commissioned by the Swansea Skills service in 2002, in the Basic Skills Provider database.

10.5 Baseline capacity has built on this, and in February 2004 it was reported that 122 voluntary sector organisations have been involved in training 595 people via grants to providers. Eleven CVCs have been supported by development workers.<sup>23</sup> The incidence of Communities First areas and the role of development workers in particular has significantly affected the capacity to assess areas of need and to signpost if not deliver in given localities.

### **Employers**

10.6 The degree to which employers have traditionally engaged with basic skills training for the workforce varies. Evidence from the case studies included as part of the evaluation, shows that prior to the strategy there was a very low level of awareness of the issues of basic skills and knowledge of how literacy and numeracy can affect overall performance. The larger employers are more likely to have a structured skills training programmes, but again, very little if any engagement with the basic skills agenda. For small employers, there is very little evidence that they are able to support basic skills activity due to issues of cover and funding.

### **Strategic and Operational Objectives**

10.7 The overall aim of the strategy at post-16 level is to “decrease significantly the number of adults with poor basic skills”, through:

- continuous promotion of the importance of basic skills;
- action plans and target setting;
- effective improvement programmes;
- new literacy and numeracy qualifications.

---

<sup>23</sup> BSA Draft Delivery Plan 2004-5

10.8 The approach taken to achieve these outcomes has been to appoint organisations to delivery 5 National Support Projects (NSPs) in delivering specified programmes of work.

10.9 **Table 10.1** shows the spend on post-16 sector activities across the four years of the strategy 2001-2005. The largest areas of spend have been on the teacher training for basic skills teachers and the Employer Pledge and workplace programme.

<b>Table 10.1: Spend on basic skills strategy programmes in the post-16 sector 2001-2005</b>	
Post 16 Quality Mark	£813,298
Tripartite Award and supporting course	£436,258
Training and Qualifications Framework for Basic Skills Teachers	£250,711
Teacher Training for Basic Skills Teachers	£1,354,030
Workplace Basic Skills Strategy and Employer Pledge	£1,014,185
Strengthening basic skills teaching in Training Organisations	£546,454
Strengthening basic skills support in FE	£425,309
Strengthening basic skills in Voluntary & Community organisations	£598,216
Supporting ESOL/EAL programmes	£125,242
Supporting Strategic Planning for basic skills in CCETs	£13,600
Financial Literacy and Consumer Education	£200,370
Strengthening Welsh language in the National Strategy	£259,236
Total	£6,036,910

10.10 Activities for the post-16 programme for 2004-05 include:

- engaging a further 35 employers in the Employer Pledge;
- every post-16 basic skills provider will meet QM standards by 2005;
- offer Level 2 teacher training to work based training organisations;
- strengthening of ESOL/EAL during 2004-05;
- launch of new Welsh medium adult literacy curriculum;
- phase 4 of the promotion campaign, which focuses on adult recruitment;

- complete and review the Tripartite Course pilots and produce a Tripartite Award specification;
- extend Level 2 teacher training and pilot the delivery of the Level 3 and Level 4 basic skills teaching qualifications;
- continue delivery of core curriculum training for basic skills teachers.

## **Role of the BSA**

- 10.11 A designated BSA officer oversees all the sector NSP activities. The Basic Skills Agency has closely managed the activity of each NSP and each NSP co-ordinator is required to report regularly on progress, and clear proposed activities to ensure that the messages to providers and outside agencies are consistent. The project officers within the Basic Skills Agency act as conduits between the NSPs, sharing ideas and opportunities as they arise.

## **Role of NSPs**

- 10.12 The NSP FE provides basic skills advice and support to Further Education colleges, and aims to strengthen the services colleges provide to students who lack the basic skills they need to achieve their vocational and academic goals. The NSP undertakes audits of current practice, conducts awareness raising amongst senior staff, and offers a 3-5 day consultancy for each college tailored to individual needs. The NSP also helps to identify support materials for the development of basic skills in a vocational context. The NSP for FE initiated an FE network to enable information exchange, progress and development opportunities; sharing best learning, teaching practice and dissemination of materials. Partnerships with colleges in the North and South of Wales were developed to facilitate this network.
- 10.13 The NSP Quality Mark promotes the post 16 Quality Mark and supports providers to achieve it. The NSP QM currently has five consultants who provide advice, support and training to providers. The NSP also arranges regional workshops for providers committing to the QM, and for those coming up to renewal of their QM. Once a provider commits to the QM process, they receive visits from an advisor as requested, backed up by consultancy reports and support materials.

- 10.14 The NSP for Training Providers has worked with Elwa and Jobcentre plus funded training providers who are contracted to deliver basic skills to learners, to encourage a greater level of awareness and support for learners who are on designated vocational training programmes or who have been referred to training providers through Careers Wales. This is approximately 60 organisations out of a total of 220 across Wales (33%). The NSP aims to improve the capacity of training organisations to provide effective, high quality, basic skills teaching which is relevant to the vocational context in which the training provider operates. This is achieved by a programme of advice, training and support.
- 10.15 The NSP Voluntary and Community offers awareness raising training for paid staff and volunteers and a signposting service to local training providers. The NSP Voluntary and Community co-ordinator works closely with Community and Voluntary Services (CVSs) and individual agencies to ensure appropriate operational management of the NSP in supporting the strategy in the sector. The BSA has designated a funding allocation for development workers to raise awareness and assess a scale of need and supported regional conferences for the sector.
- 10.16 The NSP Workplace works to promote and develop the Employers Pledge in Wales. Employers are invited to sign the pledge thus committing them to support its employees in improving their basic skills. The NSP offers additional help in assisting the employers to develop a basic skills strategy and action plan.
- 10.17 The Pledge is available in all parts of Wales to small, medium and large employers in the public or private sector. The NSP also provides training for providers to build their awareness of the Employer Pledge and workplace delivery. The NSP is working with employers and providers and the TUC to help forge links between partners early on in the action planning stage. This enables employers to have a clear understanding of the purpose of basic skills provision, the benefits to the company and the cost of provision. The employer is then given consultancy advice from the advisors of the NSP in terms of the steps they need to take in order to embed awareness and stimulate demand.



- 10.18 The Employer Pledge action plan has to be in writing and available to everyone that works for the company, say specifically that helping employees improve their basic skills is a commitment of the whole company or organization and include an assessment of need. It must have clear and specific aims and objectives, include the measures to be taken to help employees improve their basic skills and set a timescale for achieving objectives.

### Strategic Coordination - The Role of CCETs

- 10.19 At a national level, Elwa have responsibility for the strategic co-ordination and funding of post-16 education, and have requested CCETs to develop plans of delivery to meet the regional needs.
- 10.20 The extent to which a strategy on basic skills is incorporated into the CCETs, sampled in the four case study areas, varied greatly. Two of the CCETs are very clear on their future delivery plans, and two lack evidence of a strategic plan relating to basic skills.
- 10.21 **Tables 10.2 and 10.3** illustrate examples where detailed plans are available, and show considerable focus and priority setting for adult basic skills within Pembrokeshire and Rhondda Cynon Taff.

**Table 10.2: Example (1) CCET basic skills plans**

In Pembrokeshire, there is a priority given to the basic skills agenda, and a number of key activities have been identified by the CCET:

- complete ongoing mapping of basic skills providers;
- continue with collaborative basic skills Quality Mark initiative;
- ensure local provider commitment to mainstreaming basic skills delivery in all forms of learning;
- support the BSA in promoting basic skills in the workplace;
- engage with CCET employer liaison group to identify the key skills need within each sector.

This is evidence of a good level of engagement with the Basic Skills Strategy activity, and with the particular issues such as training for tutors, quality of provision among providers and stimulating activity in the workplace. There was good knowledge of the Quality Mark and the purpose and benefits of this for the wider stakeholders, such as learners and jobcentre Plus. In addition, there was good support for the employers pledge and for the value of the pledge to the businesses of Pembrokeshire. There is good level of partnership engagement between Pembrokeshire college, Pembrokeshire Local Education Authority, Jobcentre Plus, private training providers and the voluntary and community sector. The CCET has developed a basic skills task force to give a particular focus on basic skills in Pembrokeshire.

**Table 10.2: Example (2) CCET basic skills plans**

In Rhonda Cynon Taff, a new partnership is being developed that will include, the Social Inclusion function of the Local Authority, Jobcentre Plus, University of Glamorgan, Learndirect, Career Wales, College Morgannwg and the voluntary and community sector. There is acknowledgement that the strategy is influencing action in connection with basic skills. In addition, the strategy has encouraged the local authority to sign up to the Employers Pledge.

A number of key priorities have been set these include:

- establish a dedicated group to co-ordinate and deliver basic skills;
- establish a baseline in workbased, further education & adult education and school improvement;
- establish baseline figures of people undertaking basic skills training in the workplace;
- increase number of people undertaking basic skills activity in the workplace;
- obtain funding for a basic skills co-ordinator;
- obtain additional funding for deprived wards, for learners with disabilities and to increase ESOL provision.

The CCET identified the need for a basic skills co-ordinator to have the responsibility for the post-16 sector, much like LEA co-ordinators within the local authorities supporting the implementation across the pre-16 strands.

- 10.22 Of the two other areas, one of the CCETs is lacking a Chair at the moment, and as a result, is lacking in any formulised strategy and direction. It considers its self to be “in a state of flux” (CCET co-ordinator). In the other, awareness of the strategy was CCET activity focused on two specific sectors skills. However, the issues regarding the basic skills needs of these particular workforces had not been considered. Voluntary and Community providers involved with basic skills strategy activities noted that although they have a place on the regional CCET boards, there is often no clear coherent message from the CCET about the potential role of this sector.

### **Strategic coordination – the role of other national partners**

- 10.23 The strategy is engaging with a wider group of national stakeholders including Jobcentre Plus and the Probation Service and to some extent at a local level through CCETs and other basic skills networking forums.
- 10.24 Consultations with national partners highlight the issues regarding the inadequacy of basic skills provision for both Jobcentre Plus and the Probation Service. Both agencies have reported inadequate provision in terms of the type of basic skills provision available for their client base, and an inadequate pool of providers from which they can source their provision.

- 10.25 For the Probation Service, the particular issues are about raising awareness among Probation Service staff, and increasing the understanding of the needs of the clients among providers as well as how to include more mainstream provision.
- 10.26 For Jobcentre Plus, the key issues reported relate to the need to develop basic skills support for, notably, those jobseekers that are not on New Deal who are younger than 18 and not on any training.
- 10.27 The Wales TUC Learning Services Team also works to address basic skills needs in the workplace through the development of workplace union learning reps (ULRs) and promoting the workplace learning to employers and unions. The TUC was working with the BSA prior to the start of the national basic skills strategy. At this time the Assembly Government's Wales Union Learning Fund was also starting, supporting a range of activities including workplace basic skills programmes and the development of ULRs as brokers for basic skills learning. At this time sourcing basic skills provision was an issue, as there were only 2-3 providers that the TUC and partner unions had worked and felt confident in supporting the union in their workplace learning projects. These providers became very stretched to meet the increased demand for basic skills provision generated by ULR activity. During the lifetime of the strategy the TUC has had contact with the BSA and NSP Workplace. Unions are encouraged to write the Employer Pledge into their WULF bids and basic skills materials for ULRs also promote the benefits of encouraging employers to work towards the Pledge. TUC Learning Services have also assisted with the development of Action Plans in those cases where the links between the employer pledge and the TUC/union input has been made.
- 10.28 The TUC positively support the Employer Pledge programme and report the potential for closer working to ensure that employee representatives are appropriately involved in the pledge process. A key area of focus is to ensure that the employee/learner voice is effectively represented in the development of Action Plans and that the role of intermediaries such as ULRs in engaging and supporting learners is highlighted (employers experience of engaging learners in the workplace are discussed later in this section).

- 10.29 The TUC also report that the range of providers that they are now working with and have the ability to respond to the demand for basic skills provision generated by unions in the workplace has increased. However, capacity constraints, notably caps on funding growth, mean that these providers are not able to offer provision unless it is at the full cost to the employer: a cost which the vast majority of employers are not willing to pay.
- 10.30 National partners indicate that there needs to be closer working between these national agencies to ensure coherence in strategies and shared understanding of priorities and actions. Furthermore, given that many of the providers are contracted by to deliver basic skills for more than one agency, more coherent strategies will help engaged providers in these plans as national basic skills strategies develop. Further detail of the basic skills activities of the national partners is shown in **Annex B**.
- 10.31 A good example of joint planning between agencies has developed in North Wales between the BSA, Elwa, Jobcentre plus and the Probation Service. Agencies have come together at the regional level to develop a joint document, "A strategic Approach to post-16 Basic Skills in North Wales" (June 2004). This document outlines an analysis of basic skills needs and provision in the area, a statement of the role of each partner and sets out the shared vision and key actions for partners in developing basic skills in the region.

## **Key Activities**

### **National Support Project for Further Education**

- 10.32 The NSP has provided advice and consultancy to all 24 college. Eleven FE colleges in Wales have progressed to Phase 2 of the project and developed their own organisational basic skills action plan. The process is continuing in eight of these colleges, and contact has been established with the remainder. A further five colleges have requested advice and consultancy via their action plan, and there are a further six to complete their plans.

- 10.33 Three Basic Skills Co-ordinators' network meetings have been initiated and are now held once a term. They are considered valuable opportunities to informally share experiences on issues relating to basic skills in the sector, FEI delegates interviewed report that the meetings were both positive and worthwhile. NSP FE advisory meetings are also reported positively and have the added advantage of promoting a "holistic" view of basic skills developments by the NSP FE project.
- 10.34 English and Welsh versions of the "Good Practice Guide" advice and consultancy units have been produced and disseminated to the colleges, along with all the other NSPs and BSA, in the hope that they will be useful resources for assessing the direction of work in progress and allow for feedback. In the colleges, these are useful materials as tools of reference and training for staff internally. As part of the "Good Practice Guide" a human resources study is being reassessed to better inform the design of job descriptions for Basic Skills and Key Skills tutors.
- 10.35 Joint proposals have been accepted for a working group from NSP FE, FE Co-ordinators, Estyn and the BSA to explore how the Key Skill "Improving own Learning and Performance" can be used to assist learners to take responsibility for improving their own literacy and numeracy skills.
- 10.36 Discussions on how best to utilise and support an NSP FE micro website are ongoing and the FE networks – but groups value this development as a opportunity to access published materials.

### **National Support Project for the Post-16 Quality Mark**

- 10.37 The Post-16 Quality Mark is building momentum in progress towards its goals after a relatively slow start. However, there is some concern that those providers, who have not yet engaged with the QM process, are likely to be "hard to reach", and therefore, may require significantly greater resource in terms of recruitment and engagement if they are to achieve the QM.
- 10.38 There are currently 44 holders of the Post-16 QM in Wales. These can be disaggregated by sector as follows:

**Table 10.4: Post-16 Quality Mark Awards to date by sector**

Local Authority Adult Education Service	7 + 1 awaiting renewal
College	19+ 1 awaiting renewal
Prison	3
Training Organisations	8
Voluntary Organisations	1
ESOL services	2
Special schools with provision for 16-19 year olds	2
Total	44

10.39 During 2003-04, achievements of the NSP included:

- 12 programmes achieved the QM – 11 supported by the NSP;
- 5 Programmes renewed, 4 of which were supported by the NSP;
- Swansea CVS became the first voluntary and community organisation to achieve the QM;
- 7 regional workshops for providers, plus 1 meeting for those renewing the QM. A total of 113 participants from 70 organisations attended;
- Revision and translation of all QM support materials;
- Development and achievement grants awarded to 62 organisations;
- Advisory visits to 55 providers;
- 12 development grants approved;
- Networking activity with NSP FE, NSP Vol & Com and NSP Training.

### **National Support Project for Voluntary and Community Sector**

10.40 All CVCs and Voluntary Bureaux in Wales have been revisited in the last three months. Contact is being made with Communities First areas via CVCs, and training grant opportunities highlighted. CCETs have been approached by development workers and awareness raising presentations have been requested by several.

10.41 During 2003-04, the NSP showed a high level of activity and interaction with the individual CVCs and organisations in the sector. The spread of contact and capacity is encouraging, and, shows over time, positive development. Achievements for the year included:

- CVC conferences;
- training grants and awareness and other training to 595 people;
- development project established with the probation service;
- Writing Web Training (4 out of 5 courses delivered with 32 attendees);
- Fast Track/Initial Assessment Training for Probation Service (One course to date with 7 attendees).

10.42 The NSP is continuing to make progress in strengthening basic skills support in the voluntary and community sector. There is slower progress reported in the North of Wales than the South, especially in the primarily Welsh speaking North West.

10.43 Twelve CVC conferences have been arranged for voluntary and community agencies from April 2004 until Feb 2005. The introduction of the conferences has encouraged four of the North Wales CVCs to work together to present a combined event. This is seen as an innovative development that could be extended to create a training partnership in future.

10.44 Development workers have been appointed through Communities First funding, and are working across three regions: South Wales, Mid Wales and North Wales. An additional worker has been appointed to work with the Dyfed Powys Probation Service with an application to roll this out for the whole of Wales.

10.45 All providers across the sector were invited to bid for training grants. 16 basic skills Providers applied for grants, and staff from 120 voluntary organisations were involved in the first round. 595 people accessed training. Although this was mostly in respect of awareness training, 66 individuals progressed to gain the C&G 9282 basic skills teaching qualification. A second round of training has encouraged more providers to apply for grants. To date, 23 applications have been received totalling £99,900. 149 organisations have been involved in training 583 people.

### **National Support Project for the Workplace**

10.46 Outputs achieved for the NSP workplace show a good level of activity in view of the difficult nature of the work. Initial employer enthusiasm in the basic skills training of their workforce is notoriously difficult to maintain, due to factors such as funding, time off work for training, shift working and stimulating interest among employees. However, despite these difficulties, progress to date against the specific targets show that:

- 227 employer visits were made in 2003 - 2004;
- 59 employers have signed the pledge covering a combined workforce of 88,200;
- 7 employers have lapsed, due to inaction;
- 49 action plans have been produced;
- 22 action plans have been approved by the BSA;
- 7 pledge plaques have been awarded;
- 56 staff have successfully completed the employers pledge teacher training.

10.47 To date eight in ten employers that have signed the pledge have developed an action plan, and a third of action plans have been reviewed positively at the six month stage, leading to the award of the employer pledge.

### **National Support Project for Training Providers**

10.48 The main outputs of NSP have been to provide advice, support and to raise awareness of basic skills issues, teaching practice and opportunities available among providers by holding seminars and conferences to encourage best practice and information sharing.

- 17 seminars have been completed to date with a total of 250 participants;
- advice and consultancy to 35 organisations;
- 33 visits carried out to organisations;



- 8 training packs produced;
- demonstration teaching sessions delivered;
- 7 topic guides produced.

10.49 Work based training providers report that they have developed their capacity to deliver basic skills through improving their organisational plans to include development and review of basic skills, improving assessment methods and accessing materials referenced to the core curriculum. However, providers report difficulties translating this to increased support for learners primarily because of constraints in accessing teacher training for tutors and in the constraints to funding integrated or sufficient provision for those in need for basic skills support, with the 13 weeks funding rule stipulated by Elwa compounding this issue.

#### **Improving Access to Qualifications - Development of the Tri-Partite Course**

10.50 The aim of the Tripartite Course is to prepare young people and adults for a Level 1 qualification in literacy, numeracy and I.T. and has been written to cover all the skills, knowledge and understanding needed at this level. It is aimed at learners who are at the top of Entry 3 or the lower end of Level 1.

10.51 The course includes core elements to enable a tutor to teach the literacy and numeracy and I.T. skills at this level. In addition, there are a range of optional modules to reinforce and review the skills in different contexts such as: Health, Sport, Job-search, Driving, Family Learning/Parenting, Financial Literacy, Citizenship/Current Affairs, Wales Europe and the World. There will also be vocational modules including Health & Safety, Skills for Retail, Skills for Care, Skills for Construction.

10.52 It is expected that most learners would require 240 to 300 teaching hours to learn and feel secure in all of the Level 1 literacy, numeracy and I.T. skills.

- 10.53 It is proposed that to gain the Tripartite Award, candidates will need to obtain Level 1 certificates in each of the three disciplines of literacy, numeracy and I.T. and, in addition, will need successfully to complete a personal overarching assignment which demonstrates competence in the use of the three disciplines including writing, speaking and listening. It is proposed that the Level 1 certificates which will be recognised are the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy certificates and a range of I.T. certificates currently approved by ACCAC. Details of the overarching assignment, guidelines and assessment criteria are being produced by the Basic Skills Agency in collaboration with WJEC.
- 10.54 Early findings from the evaluation of the tri-partite course (commissioned by the BSA) are very positive with retention good and demonstrating added value of the course in engaging new learners in basic skills learning. The learning sessions promoted peer support in particular and motivating learners because of the personal study element and because of the opportunities to study using IT. The programme has been piloted in a number of areas and sectors, with positive results. In particular, positive outcomes were delivered in one prison, where tutors noted a higher level of motivation as offenders could choose how to learn and what to focus on their study.
- 10.55 During the national evaluation consultations Probation and Jobcentre Plus partners indicated a high degree of interest in the new course and proposed qualification, seeing the Tripartite as a potential route to engage learners: learners that partners report they have traditionally faced difficulties with their basic skills training.
- 10.56 The **Table 10.5** illustrates the benefits reported by an employer visited that was involved in the Tripartite pilot.

**Table 10. 5 Employer feedback on the  
Tripartite Course workplace pilot**

A workbased group of basic skills learners began with a basic skills literacy course initiated through the organisation signing the Employer's Pledge. The group initially worked towards the national qualification in adult literacy then on to the numeracy qualification. This group was then invited to be involved in a pilot of the Tripartite course. The employer reported a range benefits from the basic skills training programmes. Although the paperwork has been a challenge for some, the upskilling was felt to have made a big difference to the smooth running of the organisation. Communications have improved and increased skills lead to increased confidence. This has meant that these workers were participating more workplace improvement processes and contributing ideas. One learner on Tripartite reported that, as a result of his involvement in the course and his manager's knowledge of the programme, he had been asked to collect and analyse some information relating to a workplace issue. He said that in 30 years of work he'd never been asked to do something of this nature, nor had he previously had the skills to contribute to processes at work in this way. This had made him feel very positive about his job and the training officer note the following about the basic skills group:

- *"they were negative generally about training and their experience (on the basic course) has improved that aspect, this has helped to opens doors for them to other aspects of our work-based training"*

## Feedback from providers/organisations

### Post-16 Quality Mark

10.57 The vast majority of providers consulted were positive about the QM process, and the support that they received from the BSA. Early gains in the achievement of the QM were made by providers in the local authority/community based sector with a longer history of basic skills delivery. Similarly, in the FE Sector, there was more of a history of provision of basic skills. However, it was agreed that achieving the Quality Mark allowed an objective examination of process, highlighting areas for improvement in delivery and support.

**Table 10.6: Case Study of the Value of the Quality Mark to a Training Provider**

Large training provider based in Newport and delivering to around 850 learners. Prior to engaging with the basic skills Strategy, the company was mainly concerned with delivery of National Traineeships and Modern Apprenticeships. ELWa approached them, with regard to delivering basic skills, on the basis of it achieving a complementary Estyn report for other areas of learning. In order to deliver basic skills they realised that they needed to secure appropriately skilled staff with the right attitude, and to invest in facilities for delivery to small numbers of students. Working towards The Post-16 Quality Mark provided the framework for building capacity, and they received a high level of support from the NSP.

**Table 10.6: Case Study of the Value of the Quality Mark to a Training Provider**

Learner numbers were limited at first and this had some effect on progress towards achieving the QM, but after 9 months the company feels that it is well on track to achieving the award within a further six months. For this provider, the recognition that the QM will give them from is important, but they see the main benefit in terms of developing the QM process within their organisation. They have also started delivering a manufacturing course in the workplace, and their QM experience has helped them to identify and address basic skills needs amongst workers. One of the issues faced in building basic skills capacity was that of attracting and retaining skilled staff to deliver their provision. They found that the training programme for staff was not always available when they would have liked it, and sometimes places became available at short notice. However, the provider now has two part-time tutors, and has extended their activities via Learndirect. Retention rates on their programmes are high: thanks in part to delivering to small groups using laptop computers. *“It has helped us to see that there is a big (basic skills) need out there – it’s unbelievable”.*

10.58 All of the providers interviewed were very positive about the level of support that they had experienced from the NSP. However, all of these providers had been proactive about engaging with the QM, and consequently, had a high level of commitment to the process. The NSP notes that there has been increased engagement by many providers who were initially less involved in basic skills delivery. However, several issues remain. Key issues/barriers faced:

- slow progress means that the initial target that all post-16 basic skills providers will achieve the QM will not be met;
- it has been difficult for some private providers to achieve the QM, if they have only a small client base;
- there has been some overlap between Estyn and QM, in terms of assessment requirements (the BSA and Estyn have been working to address this);
- there is some reluctance to engage as there is no clear picture as to who will drive QM and be the champion for it in the future.

## NSP FE

10.59 The Basic Skills Development Fund (BSSD) was initiated by Elwa prior to the national basic skills strategy. Thus at the start of the strategy colleges were at different stages of development in relation to basic skills. The delivery of NSP support has been able to respond flexibly to the support needs and focus of different colleges. Examples of activity reported during the case study visits are as follows:

- appointments, via BSSD funding and with NSP support of basic skills Coordinators, to work specifically in their colleges to raise awareness and integrate practice throughout the college structure e.g. INSET and CPD, and also, through the delivery structure;
- human resources audit of basic skills activity;
- individual staff designated or seconded as basic skills experts working concurrently with the Learning Support Units.

10.60 All FE colleges are now involved in mandatory initial assessment; all students in college are screened on entry to courses and learning support is offered in Learning Centers. One college noted that already there had been a 50% increase in the number of students supported with basic skills needs from 200 to 300. This illustrates that much of the focus and increased activity relates to students already on or hoping to access courses (other than basic skills).

10.61 The extent to which there has been increased activity with adults who's primary objective is basic skills learning is less clear, although Family Programmes monitoring data indicate that over 13,000 adults have progressed onto other Family Literacy or Numeracy programmes, data on the overall picture on take up of basic skills courses is not available. The development of learner database by Elwa via the LLWR offers the potential for this data on basic skills learners to be collected more systematically.

10.62 Awareness raising continues in sessions via INSET in all the colleges sampled. This is generating a demand for basic skills qualifications, which at present cannot be accommodated.

10.63 Course materials provided by the BSA are perceived to be of excellent quality and easily accessible. Many have to be amended to suit the particular needs of individual courses and tutors, but they are widely valued by the FE staff interviewed.

10.64 A drawback has been the lack of resources in Welsh. Translating and modifying texts adds further to the demands on resources.

10.65 All the colleges sampled showed good examples of cascading information and practice throughout. This includes participating in networking activities, promoted by the NSP, helping develop a more cohesive approach.

10.66 Key issues and barriers to the development of provision include the following:

- capacity constraints, with colleges are not able to meet the demand for basic skills support as identified through assessment and a lack of experienced/trained basic skills tutors;
- career/employment structures – basic skills staff are often part time, and on temporary contracts, which limits the scope to extend provision;
- the current level of core funded skills activity was supplemented by the NSP QM grants. Colleges reported concern for sustainability of work developed under these systems, post 2005;
- a need for further understanding of the integration and streamlining of key skills and basic skills delivery;
- scope to improve sharing of information on learners with basic skills needs, for example: on transition from school to post-16 provision – it is possible that the QM could provide a process to record and share this information with other agencies, organisations and employers;
- some resistance amongst other teaching staff to integrate basic skills as part and parcel of their responsibilities and other teaching;
- staff also expressed concerns about being suitably trained and skilled to support the basic skills learner.

## **Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations**

10.67 The nature and scope of the formal and informal learning/training opportunities delivered directly by voluntary sector organisations are wide and varied, so the nature of the support given by the NSP has reflected this individual and diverse need. The take up of NSP support from the sector was initially slow, but is gathering momentum. This has been aided by the training grants and project grants that have been used to develop specific materials and gain qualifications. Some of the CVCs have limited resource to support the NSP roll out their activities in their sector and have had little real support.

- 10.68 Progress has been good in South Wales. Coverage has been achieved in terms of awareness raising, materials development and development worker support, Swansea CVC attaining the QM and Powys CVC developing a signposting strategy. There has been less prominent development made in North Wales. Conwy, whilst actively engaged in the agenda have not achieved their potential. One CVC had initial contact from NSP but has not yet been able to engage fully. There is confusion in the voluntary agency about how to implement action on basic skills and they report that they need more support and guidance to make effective progress.
- 10.69 The value of the NSP to the Voluntary and Community sector organisations has been significant in beginning to develop activity needed across this diverse sector. A major issue is how to sustain this momentum.
- 10.70 There is a very low base of activity in North Wales with some uncertainty as to why the NSP has not had a greater influence there. In Flintshire a development worker has driven the NSP activity, and four CVC's in the North East have created a partnership to better address the Basic skills issues there. More clarity would be welcomed by all those consulted to in the sector as to plans for the future. A clear message is the lack of resources, to capacity build from within to develop their own basic skills provision; or to spot/refer individuals with basic skills needs to existing provision.
- *“Our approach to the strategy is very positive and pro-active, and we have received excellent support from the NSP. I am concerned though, that now awareness has been raised and as a CVC we are mindful of the sustainability issue”.*

**Table.10.7: Example of issues the range activity, NSP voluntary and Community Sector development workers – South Wales**

The aim of the NSP vol/com development worker is to develop relationships with the sector groups across the region, to identify training and support needs and develop signposting and delivery options for those with a skills deficit is their remit. Activity in the sector includes:

- organisations in Ceredigion generally have high level of awareness of basic skills, however local organisations report that clients are resistant to attending FE based provision;
- In Pembrokeshire the basic skills strategy activity is supporting the training of trainers working in the Mental Health sector to develop both awareness and training capacity group of mentors developing their capacity to support basic skills learners;
- In SE Wales voluntary organisations have identified that some of their own groups and sub groups had members with basic skills needs which they aim to support;

- Newport CVS has reviewed the basic skills support needs of their fund raisers, those participating in management committee development programmes and the Communities First teams

In many cases, sector organisations are aiming to develop partnership with basic skills providers to provide community based location of courses. However in some cases these have not yet been developed, mainly due to constraints faced by providers in meeting needs, but also due to some differences in opinion of the type of programme needed by learners.

### **National Support Project for Training Providers.**

- 10.71 As a result of the awareness raising sessions, the consultancy support and the increased access to training and development materials as well as the support provided by the NSP for the Quality Mark, there is evidence that the assessment of basic skills needs and the support given to learners is improving.
- 10.72 Training providers engaged by the NSP are incorporating basic skills support as part of the learning support offered to students studying on the Skills Build preparatory training, or other National Vocational Qualification frameworks in order to ensure that poor basic skills students can meet the requirements of the course curriculum. Many providers now incorporate basic skills in their business and quality plans as well as focusing on their own staff development and include basic skills on staff appraisals.
- 10.73 Tutors interviewed are developing specialisms in basic skills teaching and have reported an increase in morale. The strategy and the consultancy support has increased the profile of basic skills tutors within training organisations and has encouraged organisations to focus on continued professional development of the tutors.
- 10.74 However, there are a number of issues which still concern training providers:
- accessing appropriate teacher training;
  - stimulating demand for basic skills;
  - the need to match funding requirements to meet basic skills delivery needs;
  - increasing the quality of resources.



- 10.75 Although some providers have accessed level 2 basic skills teacher training, there are issues about continuous professional development and the ability of providers to access Level 3 training and Level 4 basic skills teacher training for their staff. These courses are being piloted in 2004/05. Training providers need to be included in communication channels that update teachers and providers on training courses and course availability.
- 10.76 Currently, further education colleges are unable to meet the demand for basic skills teacher training. Places on courses are limited and often felt to go to FE staff before places are released to outside providers. Because of the limited access to training, training providers are finding it difficult to source appropriately qualified staff to meet the demand that has been generated for basic skills teaching courses.
- 10.77 The capacity to deliver training to tutors should be developed within a broader context of continuous professional development and with a greater degree of inclusivity among training providers per se. There is a need to encourage a greater degree of joint working between colleges so that training opportunities can be equally available. Strategies to deliver the work based training curriculum, work place basic skills support as well as sharing ideas on how the cost of training delivery can be more integrated. An example of a model operating at Sussex College was reported, which operates as a training hub for all basic skills providers and is linked in with the CCET to ensure a joined up approach to basic skills teacher delivery.
- 10.78 Providers report issues regarding referrals of learners. Providers are not clear how learners basic skills needs are assessed. It is assumed that there is potential for those in referral networks Careers Wales to refer a greater number of learners for dedicated basic skills support.
- 10.79 Providers have consistently reported that the funding criteria stipulated by ELWa is not sufficient to enable providers to adequately support learners with basic skills needs. The requirement is that a learners progress by completing the accredited level in 13 weeks. Providers who are supporting learners through Work based Learning programmes reported the difficulty of delivering an accredited basic skills qualification along side the main qualification in this time frame. Best practice models encourage providers to contextualise the basic skills support and embed the learning within the qualification framework.

10.80 The NSP has been particularly helpful in sourcing course materials and in assisting training providers develop course materials which are relevant to learners. In general, there is agreement that materials are relevant to the audience and that the inclusion of ICT based materials is attractive to the learner. There have been comments however, about the fact that the Tool Kits developed for the sector may begin to go out of date. In addition, there has been some concern over the lack of appropriate materials for Entry Level students as well as materials which support the provider and the learner in progression from Level 1 to Level 2.

### National Support Project for the Workplace

10.81 There is clear evidence from the study fieldwork that employers would not have considered the implications of poor basic skills in their workforce and on the company's performance without the awareness raising activity and support provided by the NSP Workplace. Prior to the support from the NSP, many employers would admit that they knew there were certain issues regarding literacy and numeracy, but most had not clearly articulated what the skills issues were, nor how to go about dealing with it.

- *"There are so many people who work here and because of what they do, don't need good levels of reading and writing...so in the past, they've been left to get on with it. People just thought they were poor communicators or something. But now, we're taking a much more of an active role in their training". (employer).*

**Table 10.8: Developing workplace activity – contextualising materials**

This large employer has current arrangements with a college to provide their occupational training framework which includes elements of basic welding, basic electrical and mechanical skills. In order to ensure that employees can take part fully in this training, there is now an integral basic skills training course delivered as part of the training package.

There have been difficulties faced in encouraging staff to participate in basic skills training programmes. The review illustrated the need to contextualise the training materials to more closely reflect activity in the workplace. The NSP working with the provider have developed the basic skills training which has been more successful in engaging and retaining learners: training for workers now includes a process of developing 'method statements' that helps staff demonstrate their understanding of the health and safety issues at work.

- 10.82 Consultations with 18 employers supported by the NSP Workplace illustrate the work with a range of employers who, as a result of the support are engaging in some form of basic skills planning or delivery. Many employers are embedding a range of activities as a result of their Employer Pledge Action plan. This includes developing spelling dictionaries, basic skills awareness sessions for managers, developing awareness of basic skills during induction and appraisal, and delivering basic skills courses for staff.
- 10.83 The extent of the actual employer engagement ranges from:
- still in the early stages of developing an action plan;
  - developing an action plan but very clear on the proposed activity;
  - delivering basic skills learning as a result of the support;
  - have delivered basic skills learning as a result of the support and is unsure of where to go next.
- 10.84 Half of the employers visited noted some difficulty in moving through the action plan stage to delivery. The remainder had progressed well and were pleased with the early outcomes. A key factor inhibiting employer progress was the lack of public sector funding available for provision.
- 10.85 Some of the employers interviewed that have signed the pledge were still in the early stages of developing action plans for a number of reasons. There are often changes of personnel responsible for developing the action plan. As a result of this, the purpose of the action plan and understanding the roles and responsibilities of drawing up an action plan can be lost. As a result of the lack of co-ordination internally, some employers were taking longer than expected to get their action plans completed. On average the NSP reports that action plan completion has taken six months.
- 10.86 There were specific issues raised by large employers: two Local Authorities, noted specific difficulties with engaging with sub-contracted staff and the departmentalised nature of local authority services. An NHS employer reported difficulty in planning across the huge range of occupations, all with many different skills levels and many of which have their own sector specific training requirements and opportunities.

10.87 Planning to embed basic skills within this framework took more time than expected. Barriers to progressing plans in a prison were linked to internal service culture, available resources, and the lack of time available for staff development as well as the willingness for staff to admit they have basic skills deficiencies.

- *“This is a huge problem for us...how to encourage at a local level, prison officers to admit they have a learning need when they are supposed to be managing the wing and maintaining security”.*

10.88 Two employers reported difficulties with the extent of information required in the action plan in order for it to be approved by the BSA, especially where staff were new to the basic skills agenda. In these cases staff do not feel that they had the knowledge and skills to develop an effective action plan. Whilst there have been good levels of support from the NSP, some employers found the detail required in the action plan to be too great.

- *“I’m expected to go into detail about the venue arrangements and the number of students who will be participating and I don’t even know how we are going to do the awareness raising sessions yet”. (employer)*

10.89 Although slow progress is reported as frustrating for these employers, it is clear that the NSP is working to encourage employers to embed awareness about basic skills across the company rather than push for quick wins. This has to be considered as a positive outcome as it ensures that the mechanisms for sustaining basic skills activity are being developed. For instance, we see in many action plans:

- provide training for Learning Representative and Learning Mentors, including training in raising awareness of basic skills;
- design literature to raise awareness of basic skills issues amongst managers;
- design literature outlining provision for training and support for basic skills available to employees.

10.90 Action plans are required to show how the employer will move to a position where activity becomes embedded in company policy and practices. Therefore, employers are expected to demonstrate how they will do this by looking at:

- personnel/recruitment needs (if appropriate);
- raising awareness;

- review of documentation;
- training needs;
- training courses;
- marketing;
- resources;
- monitoring and evaluations.

10.91 This can be daunting for employers who often have limited capacity to give to this amount of work, and whose initial motivation for engagement is in addressing the specific needs of certain workers.

10.92 The development of workplace sector specific basic skills training resources requires considerable input and expertise to achieve. Fostering effective links between providers and employers has been a key role of the NSP to ensure a greater level of understanding of the needs of the employer and the environment in which the learners are working.

10.93 Across the sample of employers visited, there were several examples where basic skills training activity has been undertaken, in several cases progress with action plans has been slow. An example of this is given below:

**Table 10.9: Developing workplace activity – issues on engaging learners**

At a large employer, the NSP activity and pledge has generated a good deal of interest and support for developing basic skills in the workplace. However there is no formal training section that has responsibility for career development on site. The employer has worked closely with a local college to deliver dedicated basic skills provision. Many employees who have basic skills needs work on shifts so the staff discussed the best time to deliver basic skills, when the shifts have come to an end and when production was generally at its lowest and the cost to the company in lost production would be limited.

The opportunity to receive basic skills training was presented as an option to staff. The employer held a launch day on site with the help of the college and employees were encouraged to come and receive information about how they could brush up their skills. There was some initial interest, and approximately 30 people attended with a total of 12 going progressing to participate in learning. One student left the course but 11 have continued and a small number will continue to complete the course and gain accreditation. However, there has been no momentum generated within the existing workforce. There is no-one responsible for stimulating ongoing referrals within the workforce. Whilst the workforce is organised and has a Union Learning Representative (ULR), there has been limited dialogue between the ULR, management and the provider. Another launch day was tried and the numbers of people referring themselves was too small to continue the release from work. As a result the activity is unlikely to be sustained because of low levels of take-up from the workforce.

- 10.94 Case study examples illustrate that sustainability of the progress made in basic skills awareness, policy and practice relies on the employer developing a model which encourages employers to learn and embed the learning culture. The greater the level of integration with existing structures such as training, induction, health and safety etc, the greater the likelihood that support will be maintained and not just drop away. Therefore, the issue becomes one of a greater level of support for employers during their action planning stage, and the development of a process which allows a more flexible approach to action planning stage. This could involve a two step process for those organisations new to basic skills, where the first stage focuses on the internal communication and understanding of key management staff and employee representatives of basic skills to work towards making the pledge. The second stage then builds this to focus on action planning.
- 10.95 This has implications for the NSP in terms of their ability to meet the needs of existing employers already engaged, stimulating more involvement among new employers and monitoring progress of those who have begun delivery against approved action plans.
- 10.96 Employers are seeking further support and encouragement to be able to progress their action plans. This could be either via the NSP role, the local network of providers or from other organisations and other employers who are also developing actions plans. For example, in the NHS, there are a few sites involved in the development of action plans and there is an opportunity to discuss various approaches and ideas. There remains a key role in ensuring quality from the centre, however there is a potential role for other organisations to play a larger role in generating commitment to the pledge and supporting. In England for example, the regional development agencies (RDAs) have a role in generating demand for workplace basic skills activity and support regional brokerage programmes. These include a variety of activity including providers developing shared capacity to promote and deliver workplace basic skills programmes.

- 10.97 The NSP has also initiated activity via sector networks, including making contact with SSCs. Common sectoral agendas can stimulate joint working and the sharing of ideas, and opportunities for employers to work together to develop a more cohesive strategy for their sector, which would then have a greater potential for mainstreaming. For example, in the prison service there is a requirement that all new prison officer recruits are trained to NVQ level 3 in Custodial Care. It is anticipated that a proportion will have basic skills needs.
- 10.98 Work with the SSCs and the SSDA has begun with the BSA to develop a joint bid to WEFO during 2004/05 to develop activity (see cross-cutting activity in Section 4: European Programmes). The SSCs do report however that there has been limited scope to date for strategic engagement in Wales on the basic skills strategy and as such, although they have a UK-wide remit, their activity to date has been developed in England, via the DfES/Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit's (ABSSU) Workplace Advisory Group that helps to inform and report on policy and practice on workplace basic skills.
- 10.99 In addition to sectoral models, employers note that potential to work together through other mechanisms. For example, prison service staff are represented by the Prison Officer Association, the Local Authorities by Employers Organisation for Local Government. There are opportunities to work with these representative organisations to promote the workplace basic skills agenda. An example of this model is shown below of how TUC Learning Services and union learning representatives have worked to support the employer pledge and action plan process.

**Table 10.10: Example of partnership working with public sector employers**

Local Authorities are moving forward with basic skills activity because of the ability to use a number of supporting agents and funding streams. Cardiff County Council are working with their Lifelong Learning Department and working with Union representatives to support the work. There are supporting structures within Local Authorities which aid the delivery of basic skills provision and Cardiff County Council are bidding for the Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF). The local authority is targeting the Waste Disposal section which has a high level of need for literacy and numeracy skills development.

There are similar activities at Pembrokeshire County Council where some employer/union activity is supported by WULF funding and is to be delivered in partnership with the Community Education service. Although both employers are still at the action planning stage to work towards the pledge, a clear strategy is developing to review basic skills issues in recruitment awareness raising to delivery.

- 10.100 Although there has been a great deal of effort and progress in developing employer's awareness about basic skills with robust action plans being drawn up, basic skills delivery in the workplace is still in the early stages of development. Furthermore, there are concerns that progress made to date might not be sustained. There are a number of reasons for this:
- demand in the workplace for basic skills training by employees is low making course viability problematic;
  - referrals onto basic skills provision is a sensitive issue requiring specific skills and awareness;
  - funding of basic skills is problematic and is preventing up-take.
- 10.101 One employer is developing a strategy which should embed basic skills awareness among line managers, and will be supported through a combination of in house resource development and external college provision. However the delivery of this model has paused due to lack of confidence from line managers in assessing the levels of basic skills in their colleagues, and ultimately in advising staff to do something about their poor basic skills.
- 10.102 The feedback from employers notes that for some, where there is limited existing resource within the firm to drive the Pledge and action plan forward (for example SMEs with no training manager), or a very large scale operation across multiple sites, developing the action plan can pose a considerable challenge.
- 10.103 Previous research into the development of workplace basic skills delivery<sup>24</sup> has stressed the importance of voluntary participation. Successful programmes have been supported through other incentives such as Individual Learning Accounts or by engaging staff via word of mouth and with appropriate encouragement from trained Union Learning Representatives. These findings stress that although employer commitment to addressing basic skills in the workplace is a key facilitating factor, crucially, the employee needs to be motivated and supported to engage in basic skills provision.

---

<sup>24</sup> Basic Skills in the Workplace, LSDA, 2001.



- 10.104 The lack of direct funding to employers for training creates barriers at the point of delivery. Colleges are looking to develop a greater level of focus within their dedicated learning support units, but funding to do this remains an issue. The college interviewed, for example, tried taking a proactive role in stimulating demand for basic skills training, but have been unable to take it any further because of the lack of funding available to pay for the training. From an advert placed in the local newspaper, interest was generated but there has been no uptake of the training due to the lack of funds. As a result, the colleges lose momentum and employers disengage from the process.
- 10.105 Individual Learning Account Wales (ILA Wales) were re-introduced in Wales in 2003 to provide some financial support from learners aged 18 or over who's highest prior learning achievement is Level 2 or below. Grants of up to £200 are available in support of a range of registered learning providers. The awareness of this and other funding routes such as CLAs (see below) and WULF need highlighting to employers engaged via pledge activity.
- 10.106 In addition to this there are potential opportunities to expand the service available to individual businesses through the Company Learning Accounts schemes, which are supported by ELWa advisors by offering free consultancy support to ascertain training needs and to contribute to some of the training and development costs.

## Outcomes across the Post-16 sector

### Penetration of activity in the workplace

- 10.107 The NSP workplace has signed 59 employers to the Employer Pledge. **Table 10.11** shows that from data on 54 employers that have signed the pledge, a third are small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs are defined here as having less than 200 employees). The total number of businesses engaged is small relative to the total number of business units in Wales. However, SMEs represent 99% of that total. Looking at the data in terms of employees, the combined workforce employed in companies that are signatories to the Pledge is 88,500. This represents 5% of the total workforce in Wales.

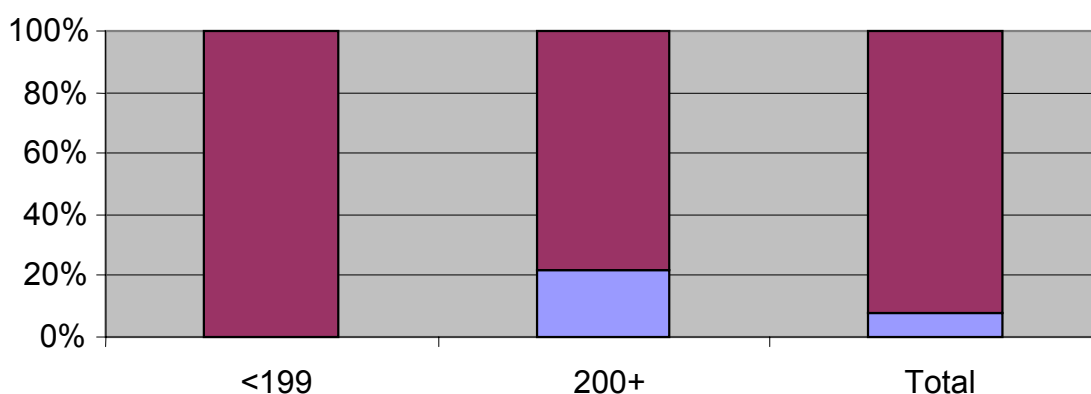
<b>Table 10.11</b> <b>Businesses<sup>25</sup> by size, units and number of employees, all Wales and employers signed to the Basic Skills Employer Pledge</b>				
	<b>Employer Pledge Signatories (2004)</b>		<b>All Wales (2001)</b>	
Size: Number of employees	Number of Units	Number of Employees	Number of Units	Number of Employees
<199	17	1976	87986	763117
200+	37	86543	629	316251
Total	54	88519	88615	1079368

- 10.108 Looking at the engagement of employees working in large employers, **Figure 10.11** shows that 27% of all employees working in large organisations are working for employers that have signed the pledge to date.
- 10.109 This indicates that if there is continued focus on engaging large employers, that a target of say 50% of the workforce in workplaces covered by the pledge will be relatively easy to achieve in the next 12-18 months with the current level of NSP resources.
- 10.110 However, this does not ensure that the strategy goal of improved adult basic skills will be achieved, and further resource will be needed to ensure that engagement of employers (and employees) is translated into basic skills learning outcomes.

---

<sup>25</sup> VAT registered businesses - Annual business inquiry workplace analysis, ONS 2001.

**Figure 10.1: Penetration of Employer Pledge (2004)  
percentage of the workforce covered, by employer size.**



### Improved Awareness and Understanding of basic skills

10.111 Awareness has definitely improved across the range of providers as well as within organisations. The basic skills agenda has begun to move away from being viewed solely as a dedicated form of delivery and is no longer seen as solely a specialism or support function which sits outside of mainstream learning provision. Other national partners, such as Jobcentre Plus also recognise the value of the Quality Mark in determining the providers which are dedicated to giving good quality basic skills provision, and in the future will look to award contracts for basic skills delivery to those that have achieved the Quality Mark status.

### Impact on Planning

10.112 The work of the basic skills strategy has promoted

- awareness about needs of students, job seekers and adults in the workplace;
- NSP led initiatives which have collectively raised awareness, increased focus on planning for basic skills, focused on the quality of the teaching;

- Encouraged integration with current curricula as well;
- information sharing and best practice delivery.

10.113 There is evidence of new strategies within FE colleges being developed to improve access into the workplace for the workplace basic skills tutors. For example, one college basic skills co-ordinator is working more closely with the business and commercial centre to increase the number of employers who they could work with. This has resulted in increased demand for basic skills learning which is now incorporated within a wider training and skills programme. The role of the NSP Quality Mark has been to help improve the quality of basic skills teaching by offering providers access to resources advice on developing individual learning plans and embedding basic skills into other learning programme. The consultancy support offered through the NSP FE has produced a greater level of understanding of the benefits of the Quality Mark, and has afforded providers a greater level of confidence in what can be achieved.

10.114 There has been more intensive activity in the FE colleges and LEA/community based lifelong learning sector in terms of integrating activity with the work basic skills co-ordinators through INSET, CPD and following on training. This has then been cascaded to the classroom or learning support unit: integration of the skills embedded in the core modular structure of FE courses is now taking place. Activity across the sectors has also been supported by the work of the NSP QM.

10.115 Activity has been lower amongst Training Providers and the Voluntary and Community sector, and not all providers/sector organisations in these sectors have been engaged to date. This has been partly affected by the ongoing reviews of Work based Learning (WBL) and Adult and Community Learning (ACL). The WBL review lead to some providers being unsure as to the future of their contracts. The work of the WBL and ACL reviews seek to improve the coherence of the frameworks within which providers operate and offer the potential to clearly reference basic skills within that wider framework. The ACL framework development proposes to strengthen the partnership working and strategic planning between ELWa and partners to link provision into RSEN and other priorities, develop Learning Networks and address cross-cutting themes such as bilingual delivery, e-learning and basic skills.

**Table 10.12: Example of basic skills capacity development supported by NSP: Pembrokeshire College**

The college offers a range of provision including full and part-time Higher Education, vocational training including, workbased learning and training, Skills Build and Modern Apprenticeships. There are approximately 2,000 full time students currently studying at the college and 800 part-time students.

Prior to the strategy, the screening for basic skills was very low. However, the college has fully engaged with the basic skills agenda and has reported significant changes in awareness and activity in terms of identifying and supporting learners who have literacy and numeracy needs.

The Quality Mark encouraged a cross college approach to basic skills and as a result, the Senior Management Team were encouraged by the basic skills co-ordinator in the college to support delivery of awareness raising sessions to all key staff including teaching staff, careers advisors, IT support staff and library staff. In particular, there has been a focus on Key Skills support staff, in order to ensure good links with the basic skills learning support.

The number of learners who are now identified as having a basic skills need has risen by 100 to 300 students this academic year. This is largely due to the college obtaining the Quality Mark and the greater level of awareness among all staff at the college. This has had an impact on the resources of the learning support unit, and they have successfully bid for European Social Funding money which will be used for recruitment of more staff. Issues were reported concerning non accredited basic skills support. The cross college approach is stimulating a greater need for basic skills support to be contextualised and this cannot be delivered by the Learning Support Unit, but rather has to be developed by the subject specialist teachers. Support for this approach to basic skills in terms of materials and funding was reported as an issue.

Additional activity is being developed through the NSP Workplace and the college has committed three tutors to carry this work forward and they have been on the employers pledge training course. They are concerned that the take-up for the Employers Pledge is low in Pembrokeshire and are targeting SME's.

The college is networked with the CCET and operates a Pembrokeshire Task Force which is a splinter group of the CCET. They have delivered twenty awareness raising sessions to outside partners and providers including Jobcentre Plus frontline advisors and are keen to work with the Probation Service to develop specialist provision.

The level 2 training has been piloted at Learning Pembrokeshire, the LEA based basic skills programme, and they plan to deliver the City and Guilds Level 2 training to outside partners and providers, although this will require additional funding. In addition, the basic skills staff have requirements for their own CPD which at the moment has not been met.

The college reported that the demands from each of the NSPs have not displaced any activity, but it has struggled to engage with all the requirements coming at once.

### **Increased demand for basic skills provision and qualifications**

- 10.116 Activities included in the strategy have and will continue to increase in the supply of basic skills learning activity in the further education, private training providers interviewed. However, there is no formal way of reporting on the actual level of capacity developed, either in terms of numbers of programmes or staff in posts.
- 10.117 Increased activity is mainly driven by increased assessment leading to the recognition of basic skills needs or existing learners, and demand from the workplace remain low at this stage.
- 10.118 There is a lack of confidence amongst providers that they can easily meet large increases in demand at this time, although plans are in place to develop provision. Constraints are mainly related to:
- lack of funding for expansion;
  - current shortages in suitably qualified staff.

### **Improved Quality of basic skills teaching**

- 10.119 The remit of the National Support Projects is not to assess the quality of the delivery of basic skills teaching, so the ability to comment on improved quality of provision is currently limited. Providers report that they feel that development has lead to increased quality, most notably through embedding basic skills curricula.

### **Displacement and Deadweight**

- 10.120 Across the post-16 sector providers do not report that involvement in sector activities has had any displacement effect.
- 10.121 In the FE sector, colleges report that development activities would have continued in the direction they were before the strategy, but would have not have the drive to make the impact that they have had over the last three years.

## **ESOL/Medium of Welsh**

- 10.122 An ESOL/EAL steering group has been established in 2003/04 and is reviewing ESOL needs across the range of other strategy strands.
- 10.123 There is a gap reported in the provision of basic skills in Welsh notably, of those interviewed in the Voluntary and Community sector who report a lack of Welsh Language materials and support, particularly in the North of Wales. Welsh curriculum development is now complete and was launched in Summer 2004 and Welsh assessment tools are being piloted. Section 4 reports on other outputs from the strategy in relation to the development of Welsh policy, curricula and materials. The demand for provision and materials in Welsh continues to be high and future strategy needs to consider the role of other partners with remit to develop Welsh language teaching materials (such as ELWa) and ensure coherence of coordination of these activities.

## **Sustainability of Activity**

- 10.124 The consultancy advice and support provided by the NSPs has been a great enabler for providers to progress their basic skills agenda. It has offered
- training opportunities;
  - increased dialogue across staff team;
  - increased the sharing of good practice.
- 10.125 In the FE sector the basic skills development work will undoubtedly continue, but the pace of change may diminish.
- 10.126 NSP work has encouraged better and more effective networking between providers e.g. Pembrokeshire skills network working together to develop on-line screening and recording. The NSP Workplace has worked either directly with employers or has worked in partnership with the local providers. However, issues remain that there has been limited joint working between sectors, e.g. further education and private training providers.

- 10.127 The development of employer action plans is encouraging employers to take a long term view of basic skills training, and providers are increasingly engaging in the process. However, activity in the workplace will struggle to be maintained without the support provided by the NSP Workplace. Indeed the learning to date has been that there is demand for NSP activity to be more intensive with employers to help them progress action plans and maintain momentum. Furthermore, FE funding caps limit the extent to which the sector is willing and able to extend its capacity to drive the demand for workplace learning.
- 10.128 Consultations highlight that only a small amount of activity in the Voluntary and Community sector will continue without further external support
- 10.129 Increased focus on continuous professional development, driven by the QM process will ensure that providers are aware of the need to build internal capacity in order to deliver basic skills, however this needs to be matched by increased capacity to deliver teacher training.



## 11 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

- 11.1 The basic skills strategy for Wales established an ambitious programme of activity across all age groups in Wales. This is a unique approach within the UK home countries.
- 11.2 The three years strategy has set in train programmes and development that will take, in some cases, several years to embed fully across the country. The aim of the evaluation at this stage, was to assess whether the strategy to date had **laid the foundations** for the achievement of strategy goals.

### Conclusions

- 11.3 Overall, the Basic Skills Strategy for Wales has been successful in achieving good progress in each of the sectors targeted. The programme of work has built awareness, action and further commitment to tackle basic skills by people and organisations across a wide spectrum of activity.
- 11.4 To ensure the sustainability and continuation of this work, further national policy focus and strategic development is needed to ensure progress is made towards the Assembly's goals for addressing basic skills.

### An all age strategy

- 11.5 The all age strategy has been ambitious, with over 25 strands of work started across the three years. However, we conclude that action across all three sectors (early years, schools and post-16) is necessary and valuable in ensuring that the strategy impacts on the wide range of agencies that need to be engaged to secure effective action on basic skills. There is potential to improve understanding of the work ongoing across the sectors, to ensure that participants have a better sense of the **sum of the parts** of the national strategy and what it aims to achieve across all sectors.

- 11.6 In developing future plans, consideration needs to be given to the distribution of funding across the sectors. The scale of need identified in the early years and post-16 sectors suggest the need to distribute, resource across the three sectors more evenly. To date almost 50% of funding has been in the schools sector.

## **Monitoring**

- 11.7 Activity in the early years schools sector has worked well to focus on specific target groups and ensure activity is truly focused on teaching/improving individual's basic skills in priority groups. However, ongoing support and monitoring is needed to ensure that the focus continues to be placed upon target groups.

## **Key Success Factors**

- 11.8 **The role of an expert agency:** Central to the success of the strategy to date has been the role played by the BSA's team, the model of implementation, the complementary range of strands of work that have progressed development on a range of fronts and the access to resources (funding, expertise and materials). However, this has lead to some stakeholders viewing the strategy as 'the BSA's'. There is a continued need for a role to be played by an expert agency to support effective implementation of future strategy, in order to help maintain consistency and coherence across strands of activity. However, the planning and management of the strategy needs to be more clearly driven by the Government, and longer-term plans need to focus on mainstreaming funding once effective local and national infrastructure is developed to manage and monitor programmes in the medium term.

## Tools/interventions

- 11.9 **A range of complementary interventions:** The key tools and interventions that form the programme of strategy activity are generally reported by participants as effective. In most cases, schools, colleges and providers value the Quality Mark as an effective way of developing coherence and embedding strategic thinking about basic skills. However, the other activities of the strategy (capacity building, Catch Up programmes etc) complement this to provide much needed additional resource and access to expertise, to ensure that organisations make progress in addressing the basic skills needs of their learners.
- 11.10 **Focus on sharing practice:** Courses and interventions such as LAP and KS2/3 Catch Up have also been found to be effective. Schools indicate ongoing demand to source and implement effective interventions, especially in numeracy. There is considerable scope to extend and develop mechanisms for sharing of good and effective practice.
- 11.11 **The focus on planning and analysis:** The implementation model which seeks to encourage LEAs, schools, providers and employers to assess where basic skills needs exist, and develop plans and actions to address these, is welcomed, (i.e. the strategy is not overly prescriptive in how it expects agencies to respond) and should continue to form the basis for future work. This approach offers flexibility at the local level to respond to need. This has helped with the engagement of organisations in strategy activities.
- 11.12 **The role of the Quality Mark in continuous improvement:** The Quality Mark has helped develop consistency in the approach taken to the engagement and to the development of planning and capacity building. In some cases, the QM is not seen or valued as an improvement tool, but just as a standard to reach. In other cases, however, the QM is being used as a vehicle to review and develop action on basic skills. There has been limited sharing of cross-sector practice and knowledge about Quality Mark activity.

## Sector Impacts

- 11.13 **Building a strong base for future work:** The strategy programme has achieved its aim of laying the foundations of awareness, engagement and planning to develop/address basic skills across several sectors. Good foundations exist in the early years sector work and in the FE sector. In FE pre-existing activity was already in place, but the focus of the strategy work on cross-college awareness and planning has had a noticeable impact on the development of basic skills in a wider range of FE settings. However, the foundations are relatively weak in the voluntary and community sector.
- 11.14 **Placing emphasis in the target group:** In the primary and secondary sectors, literacy and numeracy strategies were also underway prior to the strategy. However, the basic skills strategy has contributed specifically in shifting focus to action and interventions for the target pupils in mainstream. In the majority of cases observed, schools indicate that they will continue basic skills interventions in some way. However, across many schools the resource to do this is scarce or vulnerable to changes in other funding.

## Deadweight

- 11.15 **Encouraging additional activity:** There is some, but not a significant amount of deadweight within the outputs achieved to date, as the majority of activity would not have happened anyway. Progress has been made at a much faster rate than if the strategy had not been in place, and the quality and consistency attained would not have been achieved. The main areas of concern regarding deadweight is that within Family Programmes.

## Learners from ethnic minorities and people with disabilities

- 11.16 One of the evaluation questions posed by the National Assembly Government was “to what extent has the strategy engaged people from minority ethnic groups or people with disabilities?” The national strategy does not have a specific focus on target groups (such as area or learner type). However, within the strategy programmes, there have been a number of activities supporting the development of provision for different learner groups: the BSA has delivered three training courses for basic skills teachers on basic skills support for those with learning difficulties and in the LAP programme EAL materials have been developed.

11.17 During the course of the evaluation fieldwork, delivery partners and participants were asked about clients/learners in these groups. A small number of respondents (nine) made specific reference to work that they were doing or hoped to do to ensure that people from minority ethnic communities or with disabilities were able to access the provision or programmes being supported by the strategy. The following examples were noted:

- Newport LEA LAP had made contact, through the Genesis project women's advisors, with a group of women from a wide range of nationalities and ethnic minorities. Through this link a group of 30 women from whom English was not their first language participated in the LAP programme;
- RCT LEA LAP targeted all ESOL tutors to train them to deliver LAP to the minority ethnic parents working in six programmes based in 3 schools;
- 3 CVCs noted their links with a wide number of minority ethnic community groups and organisations supporting people with disabilities. The CVSs recognised their role in promoting the basic skills agenda throughout their networks to raise awareness of basic skills needs and local developments/opportunities to access provision;
- Coleg Menai noted that activities supported by the strategy had not yet fully addressed the needs of ESOL learners and recognised the need to review their basic skills plans to ensure that ESOL needs were referenced throughout;
- a librarian commenting on Bookstart in Newport noted that the materials provided via the Bookstart and Books for Babies programmes were in English and Welsh, however, there were communities in the area with large numbers of parents for whom English or Welsh is not their first language who were effectively excluded from the activities of the basic skills programme;
- a SENCO in a secondary school in Anglesey noted that the support they gave to refugee children was outside of the scope of the basic skills strategy intervention programmes as, for example, their levels of English were so low that they would not have benefited from the Catch Up model. These pupils were separately supported by the authority's Multi Cultural Service (EMMS);

- Anglesey LEA: there has been no analysis of the data on ethnic minority learners or people with disabilities as part of the design or review of strategy activities at the LEA or school level.

11.18 The feedback illustrates that:

- as there has been no explicit focus on the needs of people with basic skills from ethnic minorities communities or people with (physical) disabilities, there is some but limited work in these areas;
- some action to engage parents from ethnic minority communities has been underway, notably where there are existing strategies and networks to facilitate this. There is less evidence of activity to date with disability organisations. There are a number of examples of good practice in working with ethnic minorities in the LAP programme;
- the voluntary sector offers the potential to promote the basic skills agenda to ethnic minority communities and disability organisations through existing networks.

## **Scale of the need**

11.19 **A significant challenge:** Despite the good progress made, the review of activity to date indicates that there is still much more to do. In all sectors, the scale of need is considerable. Although the pace of change instigated by the strategy has been a catalyst for action, in several areas the volume of activity to date is small, relative to the scale of the challenge.

## **Sustaining the Progress Made**

11.20 **Building on progress:** A key challenge at this stage of the strategy is that much of the good work developed to date is not sustainable without further additional funding. In addition, the model of capacity building in some cases (training early years workers and learning support assistants) relies on the input from people whose own job roles are vulnerable to turnover/loss of funding. The BSA has been encouraging a focus on sustainability, and good models do exist. However at this point in the activities of many strands of the strategy are threatened by the prospect of no further funding.

## Developing the Strategic Framework

- 11.21 **A lack of strategic forum post-16:** In some cases, the lack of sustainability of basic skills activity is compounded by gaps in wider strategic framework that supports progress. This is particularly the case in the post-16 sector where Training Providers, especially have limited incentive to increase their basic skills capacity. A local planning forum is needed to help improve the co-ordination of the development of provision to meet the needs of learners engaged in diverse settings: FE, community, workplace, schools and workbased/vocational training.
- 11.22 **Developing the role of CCETs in co-ordinating:** Initial planning assumptions were made at the start of the strategy about the role of CCETs in providing part of the supporting strategic infrastructure. A lack of certainty about Elwa contracting and funding for basic skills provision has meant that there have been few market drivers encouraging training providers to engage. In this context, the NSP for training providers has performed well to engage all of the training providers currently contracted to deliver basic skills, but there needs to be a shift in the context in which basic skills is prioritised in the sector to drive progress in meeting the needs of learners on vocational programmes, including the 14-19 curriculum.
- 11.23 **Great potential, but a diverse range of support needs:** In the voluntary and community sector, development has been uneven across Wales as the strength of the infrastructure/sector and their capacity to engage with the strategy also varies. The development of the awareness of basic skills issues across the sector has generated a level of interest and activity that cannot currently be sustained, nor is it clear how activity in the sector currently underpins strategy goals. In the longer term, there is huge potential for the sector to develop its role, particularly in identifying/spotting, referring and providing ongoing support to people with basic skills needs (support to access provision and to progress and support). The **development of capacity in the voluntary and community sector at this stage needs to be developed within a more clearly define framework/strategy, linked into assessment of need** (e.g. of service users), supply (the capacity of local providers to respond to demand generated) and the potential for organisations to develop their own capacity to teach basic skills learners.

- 11.24 **Capacity constraints in FE:** In the FE sector, the range of development activity, and the expansion in basic skills work that this has generated, has led to current capacity constraints. Planned increases in the volume and range of basic skills provision is hampered by the lack of trained and suitably experienced teaching staff. Furthermore, the caps on funding inhibit basic skills providers from offering workbased provision to employers, unless this is at full cost.
- 11.25 **Embedding basic skills in Education Strategic Plans:** At the LEA level advisory teams have been actively supporting the work of the basic skills strategy in a number of ways, and the nature of local engagement in the different strands of the basic skills strategy was clearly a reference to priorities noted in LEA Education Strategic Plans (ESPs). The BSA has encouraged LEAs to review progress, and, at a senior level, evaluate outcomes to inform future planning. This has begun to happen, but action on basic skills is not yet clearly embedded/referenced in ESPs in most cases. Guidance from the centre, combined with dissemination cross-LEA of the outcomes achieved to date is needed to help encourage development of strategic planning (ESPs) and cross-sector with early years and post-16 provision.
- 11.26 **Embedding within early years:** In the early years sector, activity is generally well linked into a wider strategic and operational framework of the LEAs, EYCDPs and SureStart (where appropriate), although, again, this picture is not uniform. The role of the LEA is critical to help ensure that the focus of the early years work is linked to underpinning basic skills and preparedness of education. However, success in engaging the target group has been achieved through working closely with others supporting parents. The LAP co-ordinator has been central to driving the links between the maintained and non-maintained sectors. However, posts are not being renewed, and the capacity built to date is under immediate threat of being lost.
- 11.27 **Developing a demand/needs led model:** There has been less strategic development noted with the increase in family programmes activity. There is considerable scope for these activities to draw together early years, schools voluntary and community and post-16 providers to build on each of the strands of strategy activity, but this has not generally been the case.



## Components of the Strategies

- 11.28 The review of the strategy has included consideration of its components in terms vision/purpose, objectives, work programme, human resources, rewards and incentives, structures, information and decision making.

## The Pace of Change

- 11.29 The speed of implementation and progress has been variable in some strands but generally good. Some activities have been slower to implement than planned as the expected pace of change has been too ambitious. The programme of work has a strong model, which seeks to achieve goals through increased awareness, the development of policy and action plans. These factors are key to developing sustainable activity.
- 11.30 The sequencing of development is also critical. Supply of and demand for provision need to be developed in tandem. However it is crucial that demand does not quickly outstrip supply as the work done to engage parents, other learners and employers will be wasted and create resistance to future action.

## Data and reporting on performance indicators

- 11.31 **Annex F** reports on the findings of a task group that meet specifically to discuss the measures and indicators used to report on the strategy goals. Consultation with those engaged in the work of the strategy both directly and indirectly, reports the need to improve feedback on strategy progress and how activities contribute to these wider goals. Currently, the main statements of progress report on activities and volume outputs, rather than the outcomes of these activities.
- 11.32 The basic skills strategy goals and milestones provide a useful framework to define the overall aims and objectives for the strategy. The schools targets are clearly referenced to Wider Learning Country/BEST targets. The goals and target framework needs to be strengthened in order to:
- ensure consistency in measurement over time;
  - improve share understanding of the vision for the strategy, and how it complements/supports other policy and targets;

- improve the indicators used to ensure that they more accurately reflect the required measure;
- develop the mechanisms by which the data on strategy goals, baselines and milestones are specified, reported and communication.

11.33 Specific recommendations include the need to:

- review the **early years measure** and consider the development of more appropriate data sources (such as school baseline assessments);
- schools measures: this needs to be reviewed in the light of the recommendations of the **Daugherty Review**. If teacher assessments are to be used, consider the implications for revising the baseline data using the revised measure;
- **Key stage 4**: agree the most appropriate measure (potentially using the scale of need survey data for the 16-19 cohort or boosting the LFS);
- **adults literacy and numeracy** – National Assembly to plan for a repeat survey in 2007/8, using the same measurement criteria;
- develop a set of **intermediate outcome indicators** that bridge the aspirational goals and operational targets (set in the basic skills strategy workplan);
- establish a **basic skills data group** a sub-group of national basic skills to oversee the specification, development and reporting on basic skills data and strategy goals, seeking input from policy teams and other national partners.

### Workplan

11.34 The organisations engaged in the strategy, value the focus of a discrete programme of work, managed and delivered by the BSA as an expert body, able to draw together best practice and help ensure consistency across activities and strands.

## Structures

- 11.35 Lessons learned from the implementation and review of similar strategies in the UK illustrate the importance of tackling a range of factors: that tackling basic skills is made a stated national objective and that this is reinforced through funding and policy statements and decisions. This is clearly happen beginning to happen in the post-16 sector with the Skills and Employment Action Plan (SEAP) outlining where action on basic skills underpins wider skills and employment goals. However, the explicit statements on basic skills are not as marked in the early years and schools sectors.
- 11.36 There is a need to develop the mechanisms that engage the wide range of Assembly Government policy teams that the work of the Basic Skills Strategy helps to underpin, notably education, 14-19 and early years. Similarly, the mechanisms to share data and plans with other national partners need to be developed to engage at the strategic level: ELWa, Jobcentre Plus, the Probation and Prison Services and the SSCs.

## Priorities for Action

- 11.37 In this context, the key priorities for the next phase of the strategy are as follows:
- clarifying the focus on **priority** groups;
  - develop **government structures** for the reporting and design of future activity;
  - continue building **provider (early years, schools and post-16) capacity** to deliver basic skills outcomes.

## Policy Focus – Target Groups

- 11.38 Given that the scale of need is much greater than the current strategy can seek to engage, future strategy needs to consider options for placing increased focus on tackling basic skills within key target groups. Targeting can be achieved through the definition of:
- **Type** – for example, clients defined by the agency they are in contact with as job seekers, ex-offenders, parents etc;

- **area/location** – targeting basic skills in locations where basic skills needs are known to be high;
- **by level of basic skill need** – defined by (now more standards set) assessment of basic skill level (this has been the focus of intervention in schools, but not with adults);
- **age cohort** – there is considerable consensus that early years intervention, particularly, 0-3 is an essential area of focus for future strategy.

11.39 Cutting across each of these groups, there is a need to ensure continued development of resources for welsh speakers, to ensure equality of access. Within future funding allocation and guidance the focus on priority groups needs to be increased and addressed.

11.40 We recommend that the strategy remains all age and all area. Limiting the strategy to an area based initiative will have a potentially damaging effect of perceiving basic skills needs as only an issue affecting deprived areas. Whilst prevalence is higher here, basic skills needs exist across the country. The current strategy encourages organisations involved in the strategy to consider all their pupils/learners/services users and identify those with basic skills needs. This is a principle that should be retained.

11.41 The core challenge amongst the adult population in Wales is the proportion with literacy or numeracy needs at Entry Level 3 (below NVQ level 1 equivalence). We recommend that this group are the priority learners. (for work with adults

11.42 For young people, the BSA's planned evaluation of the SIG programme should help report on the effectiveness of interventions focusing on learners just below their expected national curriculum level in core English, Maths and Welsh. Although the scale of need, total number of young people in this target group, is not known. In all sectors, monitoring is required to ensure that activity is focused on the target group, and that providers funding and systems encourage providers to improve the basic skills of those learners.

## Developing Government Structures

11.43 The current strategy has been driven by the Training and Skills Policy Division, the BSA and the National Strategy Steering Group (which is chaired by the BSA). The input from these partners has been instrumental to the success of the strategy to date. However, to ensure that future activity is supported effectively across government, and via the range of agencies needed to ensure future success, the structures that drive the basic skills strategy need to be stronger within the Assembly Government. This includes:

- an inter-departmental group reporting on basic skills activity cross-government;
- a forum for national partners to report and co-ordinate basic skills plans and strategy, including the involvement of the Probation Service. Jobcentre plus, Elwa and Sector Skills.

11.44 A key partner in the post-16 sector is Elwa. Their current remit includes action on basic skills, but they also deliver a wide range of priorities on behalf of the Assembly. The SEAP outlines proposed priorities for Elwa regarding basic skills. To help ensure that these priorities are translated into action, specific focus needs to be placed on the capacity and resource that Elwa needs to develop to ensure effective delivery of its remit on basic skills. The recently announced decision to bring Elwa within the Assembly Government by March 2006 offers an opportunity to further develop joined-up approaches on basic skills in the post-16 sector. However, in the short term [2004-06], action is needed to maintain the momentum achieved to date.

11.45 Developing cross-government structures also needs to include specific focus on developing the monitoring, evaluation and reporting around basic skills. The process needs to be developed, whereby policy customers agree the specific measures, goals, intermediate outcomes and outputs they require to monitor and report on future strategy.

11.46 The monitoring and evaluation framework needs to be specified and planned to review the impact of the strategy as a whole in the next 3-5 years. Given the complementarity of many of the strands of work (QM, SIGs and teacher training), it is not proposed that individual strands are reviewed, as isolating specific contribution of each strand is unlikely to be achieved.

## **The Role of the BSA**

11.47 The BSA has been a key agent for change; in driving strategy development and delivery, data collection, the review of progress, quality assurance and dissemination of good practice. The design of future strategy needs to include consideration of the future of this role. Consultations with partners highlight the value of the role the BSA has played, both strategically and operationally. However, if the scale of activity increases in future programmes of work, current resources of the team would need to increase to support the model of the programme management currently used (relatively hands on). In the longer term, it would be desirable to build capacity within organisations in Wales to fulfil some of the functions carried out by the BSA team options including:

- building capacity within the assembly to drive review strategy/policy and report on outcomes;
- building LEA, Elwa/CCET capacity to undertake and quality assure activity.

11.48 Some of this has clearly begun, but is not developed sufficiently for transition at this stage. Future plans need to include development activity to work towards this position and the stages of development/models of joint working required to achieve it.

## **Building Provider Capacity**

11.49 At this stage of the strategy, a key constraint is the limited capacity and staff resource in early years, schools and noticeably post-16 to meet the needs of the strategy. Proposals are underway for Elwa to work with the BSA to plan to address this. Addressing constraints in expanding provision, notably tutor capacity should be the key priority in the short term. There are a number of inter-related factors that inhibit growth in tutor numbers:

- access to teacher training courses;
- part time, insecure posts limit scope for professional development and providers to invest in staff training;
- a lack of joint planning.

- 11.50 Consideration needs to be given to the capacity in organisations in the early years and schools sectors to continue the basic skills activity begun under the strategy. In schools, much of the strategic commitment is in place, but frontline capacity development is threatened, because of the turnover of staff and vulnerability of posts. There needs to be a strengthening of the strategic input of reviewing and embedding the cross- sector strategy at the local level, with reference to other education plans and priorities.
- 11.51 In the early years sector, there is some strategic commitment that will drive LAP activity forward, but this is not uniform. Again, much of the frontline resources are threatened by loss of funding. Some activity will continue, but there needs to be co-ordination to drive forward and add value. If the early years sector is to fulfil its role in meeting the challenge in this sector, then policy and resources are needed to support structured and long term intervention. Notably, the role of LAP co-ordinator is critical to success in this area. There is potential to increase the integration of the early years work with SureStart and the Communities First teams. However, to ensure an all Wales and educationally focused programme, the responsibility for the early years programmes needs to be with the LEAs, but required to work in close partnership with those supporting deprived communities.

## Recommendations

- 11.52 **Recommendation (1) national strategy:** that the Assembly Government work with national partners to agree Phase 2 of the national all age basic skills strategy for Wales. [National Assembly Government].
- 11.53 **Recommendation (2): additional resources:** The scale of the challenge indicates a further programme offering additional resources is required to maintain the momentum achieved to date. [Assembly Government].
- 11.54 **Recommendation (3): a discrete funding programme:** discrete funding is made available for basic skills to LEAs, schools and post-16 providers to continue developing capacity and good practice. Any future support and funding should be linked to the achievement and renewal of the Quality Mark to demonstrate that interventions are focused at the basic skills target group. [Assembly Government].

- 11.55 **Recommendation (4): focus on priority groups:** given the scale of need Phase 2 should prioritise activity with 0-3s, those falling behind at KS2/3/4 and adults at Entry Level 3. [Assembly Government].
- 11.56 **Recommendation (5) improve ownership/involvement of the strategy cross-government.** Use the Assembly's policy integration processes to bring together an inter-departmental management group of key policy partners in Early Years, school improvement, 14-19 youth policy and training and skills to develop phase 2 of the basic skills strategy, and also with other national partners [Assembly Government, Elwa, Jobcentre Plus and OLSU and SSC reps].
- 11.57 **Recommendation (6) use the Quality Mark as a key tool:** the Quality Mark should be continued to be used the process by which organisations are encouraged to assess basic skills activity within their organisations and develop policy/action. Those achieving the Quality Mark across sectors should be encouraged/incentivised to work together to share practice. Funding and contracting policy should incentivise providers to achieve and retain the Quality Mark, and use it as a quality improvement tool. [BSA, Elwa, LEAs]
- 11.58 **Recommendation (7) co-ordinate capacity building at the local level:** Elwa, the Assembly and CCETs work to develop a more consistent approach to working with basic skills providers to plan and co-ordinate the development of basic skills provision using the model developed in North Wales as an example of good practice. The new frameworks developed from the review of WBL and Adult and Community Learning should also encourage this. [Assembly Government, Elwa, CCETs, provider networks]
- 11.59 **Recommendation (8) focus voluntary and community sector activity on outcomes:** Strengthen the framework within which basic skills development and planning in the voluntary sector takes place. Ensure that the framework refocuses activity in the sector on outcomes (i.e. learners in provision and improving their basic skills) is well linked to other localised capacity building plans (e.g. see recommendation 7), and specifies the unique role that the sector plays in spotting and supporting basic skills learners. [Assembly Government, Elwa, WCVA].



- 11.60 **Recommendation (9) joint planning for basic skills teacher training:** joint planning is needed between the government and key partners to identify the demand for, supply of and funding for basic skills teacher training. This should include initial and CPD teacher training at in the pre- and post-16 sectors. [Assembly Government, the BSA, HE providers, teaching unions].
- 11.61 **Recommendation (10) improve data and reporting:** Improve the co-ordination between partners on data specification, data collection, analysis and reporting on early years, schools and post-16 basic skills indicators. Improve communication to stakeholders on progress against the national basic skills strategy and other related basic skills strategies [Assembly Government, Elwa, WLGA, Jobcentre plus, Probation Service, SSDAs].
- 11.62 **Recommendations (11) building the basic skills capacity of statutory agencies:** the current model of implementation focuses on the BSA's role in the design and monitoring of activities. This model should continue to ensure quality checks in the implementation model. Furthermore, Phase 2 of the strategy needs to include an assessment of the support needed to develop the capacity/expertise needed in LEAs and CCETs to plan, co-ordinate and sustain basic skills programmes or provide advice and guidance to schools and providers on basic skills. [Assembly Government, Elwa, WLGA, Jobcentre plus, Probation Service, SSDA/SSCs].
- 11.63 **Recommendation (12) quality and inspection:** Develop joint working between the BSA, Elwa and Estyn to develop coherence in the inspection and quality assurance frameworks for early years, schools and providers to ensure consistency in the way in which basic skills policy/practice is reviewed, reported and shared. [Assembly Government, Elwa, Estyn, BSA].
- 11.64 **Recommendation (13) embed the LAP co-ordinator role:** the role of the LAP coordinator needs to be developed and embedded within the work of other Early Years interventions. Specific funding is needed to continue to develop this post over a further 3-5 years. This should be via LEAs to ensure that there is close linkage between the educational development focus of LAP and the Foundation phase. However, closer links need to be developed with SureStart and EYCDPs to ensure that LAP programmes are developed in the non-maintained sector to sure outreach to parents and children [Assembly Government, WLGA, LEAs, Surestart, ECYDPs].

- 11.65 Recommendation (14) review funding model for Family Programmes:**  
Family Programmes need to be reviewed. Currently the model is supply driven, and does not effectively engage with target parents. Their delivery offers the potential to bring together LAP/early years providers, adult basic skills providers and schools. However, the current funding model does not encourage flexibility. The funding model needs to be reviewed and revised to ensure that delivery is more clearly driven by need and demand from schools and others in community settings. [Assembly Government, BSA, Family Programmes providers].
- 11.66 Recommendation (15) review funding incentives for post-16 providers:**  
Review funding arrangements that restrict training providers to the delivery of 13 week programmes, and the funding and capacity constraints that prevent, for example, providers responding to employer demand basic skills provision. [Assembly Government, Elwa, Jobcentre plus, Probation Service].
- 11.67 Recommendation (16) ensure consistency across referral routes:**  
Develop understanding and awareness of the approaches taken to basic skills screening and assessment tool used in careers and guidance settings to help improve shared understanding of the needs of those being referred through Gateways, Probation and Jobcentre Plus routes. [Assembly Government, BSA, Elwa, Jobcentre plus, Probation Service, Careers Wales].
- 11.68 Recommendation (17) develop the Tripartite course and award:**  
Complete the piloting of the Tripartite course, and evaluate the value of the course to learners. Compare with other adult basic skills courses to identify the added value/benefits of developing the award. [Assembly Government, BSA, ACCAC, Elwa, Jobcentre plus, Probation Service].

- 11.69 **Recommendation (18) Stimulating workplace basic skills activity:** Continue to promote the Employer Pledge to a larger number of employers, focusing on large organisations (200+) in the medium term. Strengthen that the Pledge process to effectively engage the learner/learner representatives. Stimulate the market for workplace basic skills provision and encourage employers to progress their action plans by securing ring fenced funding for the delivery of basic skills provision in the workplace Ensure better linkage of Pledge activity to other funding available for workplace/worker learning (ILAs, CLAs, Learning Workers and WULF). [Assembly Government, Elwa].
- 11.70 **Recommendation (19) Focus on sector needs:** Encourage a greater focus on the development workplace basic skills capacity to meet needs in key sectors. Work with Sector Skills Councils to identify where basic skills needs are key priorities for sectors. Work with SSCs, others in sector networks and unions to facilitate sector collaboration in the development of workplace basic skills solutions: materials, awareness campaigns and teaching resources. Work with government departments and other public service providers to identify and plan to address how basic skills needs prevent the achievement of other services targets. [Assembly Government, Elwa, SSC].



## **ANNEX A**

### **CONTEXT FOR THE BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY LINKED ASSEMBLY & NATIONAL PARTNER POLICY**



## Pre-school Education

A baseline perception survey asked Head Teachers in primary schools about the skills of young people on entry to compulsory education. This study highlighted concern that the levels of skill of many children are not sufficient for them to take advantage of their schooling. In addition, the perception from these teachers is that levels of skills are declining over time<sup>26</sup>.

The Estyn annual report (2003) concluded that the language, literacy and communication area of work had not developed as effectively as other areas of learning in pre-school education, and that “nurseries and playgroups should do more to structure their activities to build on the communication skills that children need before they start school”<sup>27</sup>.

The same research also asked teachers to rank the activities that parents can undertake (most usefully) with their children aged 0-3 to help prepare them for school. A wide range of activities were felt to be key: those ranked most highly were ‘talking to babies/young children’, ‘listening and responding to young children’ and ‘play with their babies/young children’. This finding stresses the importance of language and play with babies and toddlers.

## The Learning County – Foundation Phase

The early years element of *The Learning Country* details the proposals for the implementation of a new Foundation Phase that would extend from the age of 3-7. This phase would replace the current early years and Key Stage 1 curricula, providing consistency in style and content of early years learning between the ages of 3 and 7. Provision will also be extended so that all children have access to a free nursery place from the age of 3.

It is considered that in both early years and Key Stage 1, there is an over emphasis on formal learning, with children generally being given tasks to do whilst sitting at tables, as opposed to learning through well planned, practical play. “More needs to be done to improve the overall round growth and development of our children.... We need to provide an appropriate curriculum and experiences that will help young children reach their potential.”<sup>28</sup>

The seven areas of learning in the Foundation Phase proposed would be:

- Personal and Social Development and Well being;
- Language, Literacy and Communication Skills;
- Mathematical Development;
- Bi-lingual and Multi-cultural Understanding;
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World;

---

<sup>26</sup> Survey into Young Children’s Skills on Entry to Education (2002) Basic Skills Agency/Welsh Assembly Government.

<sup>27</sup> Estyn: Op Cit.

<sup>28</sup> The Learning Country – Foundation Phase

- Physical Development and;
- Creative Development.

Reference is made to basic skills under the language, literacy and the communication skills element, with the emphasis lying on speaking and listening skills, as a sound basis for future success in reading and writing.

## **Communities First**

'Communities First' is a comprehensive approach to area-based regeneration which applies to the 100 most deprived wards in Wales. It was launched on 31 March 2000, with the publication of an initial consultation paper. That document set out the principles behind the Communities First policy framework. These are:

- that a non-prescriptive, community-centred approach to community regeneration is needed, targeted at the most deprived communities in Wales;
- that regeneration and community renewal should meet the needs and priorities identified by those communities themselves in order for renewal to be sustainable, and;
- that long-term commitment from the National Assembly, local authorities and other key agencies is required to promote real partnerships at local level.

In some LEAs, early years activity has linked into Communities First wards to try and target activity in the most deprived areas in Wales. By appending activity in these areas, the basic skills strategy can aim to reach those in most need.

## **National Play Policy**

In 2000 the National Assembly for Wales commissioned 'The State of Play: A Review of Open Access Play Provision in Wales and the Play 2000 Grant Scheme'. The report was based on a survey of Local Authorities and Voluntary Agencies concerned with children's play across Wales. At their meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2001, the National Assembly for Wales' Health and Social Services Committee accepted the State of Play report and the recommendations it contained within it. The first two recommendations were of particular significance:

- the first called for the development of a coherent policy framework for Wales;
- the second proposed that Local Authorities and the Voluntary Sector should be encouraged to develop play policies and strategies for implementing them.

The Play Policy is:

- an unequivocal statement of the vision for a future where all children of Wales, and their play needs, are given the highest regard and they are provided with play opportunities of quality;



- an agreed definition of play, and provides a framework of values and principles that are consistent across Wales;
- raises awareness and contributes to a shared understanding of the fundamental value of children's play and the integral role of play in all children's well-being, learning and development;
- contributes to the creation of an environment of change, where all with an interest in the play needs of children, as well as those whose work has an impact upon children's lives, share an understanding of both the contribution that they make, and also the contribution of others;
- provides the context in which the focus of Government's vision for the play needs of children is realised through change, innovation and long term strategic development;
- promotes a new way of thinking about and working with children. This includes defining their play needs and identifying ways of meeting them, providing the basis for the development of a strategy for the allocation of resources, to deliver both a universal entitlement to play, and, also, strategically in response to identified play needs.

The play policy is the building blocks for the development of the Foundation Phase curriculum, and hence the integration of basic skills within it.

## **Primary Sector**

### **The Learning Country: Foundation Phase 3-7 Action Plan**

Focuses on enhancing the quality of provision by partnership working, the development of an all-Wales 'Training Framework' for all individuals working with young children, more effective links between home, education and care and a clearer focus on monitoring and evaluation;

### **Literacy and Numeracy Strategies**

Before the implementation of the National Basic Skills Strategy in 2001, there had been a range of actions taken across Wales to improve literacy and numeracy. The notable ones amongst these were a focus on raising standards through the development of frameworks for action in literacy (1998) and numeracy (1999) and in curriculum developments.

Frameworks for action in raising literacy (English and Welsh) and numeracy levels in primary schools has been in place since 1997. The basis for these strategies is that they are driven at the school level: individual schools are required to set their own targets for improvement. There is no prescription as to the amount of time taken to deliver the teaching of English, Welsh or Maths, and it is for schools to determine how best they can reach their (challenging) targets. Additional resources were made available through GEST funding to support the delivery of plans.

The most recent annual report from Esysn<sup>29</sup> notes that, overall, learners are achieving higher standards, with Key Stage 1 and 2 targets for achievement being met. It is also noted that local literacy and numeracy strategies developed at Key Stages 1 and 2 have been central to helping schools raise standards. However, in 2001-02 the proportion of young people achieving at Key Stage 3 had not reached national targets (70%) in English and Maths in 2002<sup>30</sup>. Secondary schools have been encouraged to work more closely with feeder primary schools to build on successful literacy and numeracy strategies, and help ensure more effective transitions between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

'Raising Standards of Literacy' (1998) and 'Raising Standards of Numeracy' (1999) both point to the importance of local strategies through LEA strategic plans and school development plans, in raising standards at KS2. Mechanisms to achieving raised standards are INSET, whole school planning and assessment, GEST funding (grants for education support and training) and funding targeting on literacy, numeracy and ICT. From 2003/04, GEST included funding for raising standards at KS3 in the secondary sector.

---

<sup>29</sup> The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales 2001-2003. Estyn 2003

<sup>30</sup> Estyn 2003 Op Cit

## **Raising Standards of Literacy in Primary Schools**

*A Framework for Action* (Estyn 1998) describes the essential features of the Government's policy for improving standards of teaching and learning in Wales. The framework extended summer literacy schemes, and asked each LEA in Wales to draw up a local literacy strategy. The framework was intended to be a strategic approach and recognised that the work going on in schools is more likely to be successful when it can be reinforced by partners engaged in a wider strategic framework, which promotes the importance of developing reading skills at all ages. This includes work to support:

- *Lifelong Learning – the Framework supports the Learning is for Everyone (LIFE) Green paper* – Recognising that the schools and lifelong learning agendas come together in Family Literacy activities. In 1998, the Framework expanded Family Literacy Initiatives to cover every LEA area in Wales. It also introduced the first phase of a Family Numeracy Initiative for Wales;
- *National Year of Reading* – in 1998 the National Year of Reading highlighted the importance of reading across the UK. In Wales, this included the appointment of a National Year of Reading Co-ordinator to identify initiatives that could be used on a continuing basis in order to ensure that the Year had the 'greatest possible impact on standards of literacy in the long term';
- *Study Support* – As part of the Framework £13 million was made available in Wales for homework clubs, holiday schemes and other out of hours learning through the New Opportunities Fund. "What the summer literacy scheme experience has shown is that a focus on basic skills provides an effective means of harnessing these new opportunities very effectively";
- *A Range of Partners* – the Framework emphasises that in placing the work of schools within the broader policy framework, the range of organisations that are able to assist schools in raising standards of literacy can be expanded. Partner agencies within this have included:
  - *The Basic Skills Agency* – to work in partnership with LEAS to accredit schools via the Quality Mark;
  - *Training and Enterprise Councils and EBPs*;
  - volunteer reading schemes – which have proved effective by placing partners e.g. employees, volunteer sector bodies and young people in schools to provide concentrated support to small groups of readers.

Under the Framework, every school was required to draw up a local strategy to enable its school to evaluate its approach to the teaching of literacy, place classroom teaching at the heart of school-based literacy strategies, and set targets for improvement.

## **Building Excellent Schools Together (BEST)**

**BEST** Stressed that a key action is to ensure sustained focus on effective teaching literacy and numeracy in primary and secondary schools. *Better Wales* and the *Plan for Wales* (2001) give prominence to basic skills and set targets for achievements in family literacy programmes (setting targets for parents and children participation), and targets for improving adult literacy and numeracy. They aim for over nine in ten adults having functional literacy by 2004, and more than six in ten adults having functional numeracy by this date. The Government undertook a number of actions to give effect to the BEST White paper which included:

- additional resources for literacy including:
  - £2.5 million to support the development of LEA literacy and numeracy strategies;
  - £900 to every school in Wales with over 30 pupils for books and other aspects of literacy policies;
  - £10,000 to Library Authorities for literacy work in schools and to support LEA strategies;
- piloting summer literacy schemes.

## **Secondary Sector**

In addition to the Literacy and Numeracy strategies noted above, related schools policy includes the following:

### **Extending Entitlement**

Outlines the Assembly Government strategy for ensuring that all young people can make best use of the opportunities available to them. The detailed strategy sets out youth policy, building on and strengthening mechanisms between the Assembly, Local Authorities, voluntary services, schools and health services. The provisions of the Learning and Skills Act in 2000 provided powers for Local Authorities to develop the range and quality of the support network on offer to young people, including working with existing partnership such as YOTs and CCETs. A guiding principle of the new framework is the effective engagement of young people in the design and delivery of services aimed at meeting their needs. Many of the aims and objectives of *Extending Entitlement* are similar to those within the National Basic Skills Strategy, particularly in providing effective support for those in most need or at risk, with a positive focus on achievement and emphasis on capacity building.

### **Communities First**

Focuses regeneration activities in localities, and is a non-prescriptive framework for targeting support in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. This approach places emphasis on local authorities to develop appropriate local responses. The aims of Communities First include building the confidence and self esteem of these communities and encouraging education and skills training for work.

### **Better School Wales**

The Better Wales strategy follows wide-ranging consultation and discussion with the public, private and voluntary sectors, and also with groups representing minority and equal opportunity interests, all of whose comments have been highly influential. The plan highlights what the Assembly needs to do to create an advanced economy with a greater capacity to generate wealth and good quality jobs. The role of the private sector is central here, and there is a commitment to fully engage business in taking forward the programme, and developing it over the coming years. The strategy also states the ambition of building a thoroughly modern and responsive public service sector in which improved performance is delivered, year on year.

The aim is to fashion a business environment where job creators, innovators and entrepreneurs can flourish, where jobs are created in areas of most need and best use is made of the talents and motivation of a highly educated, skilled and adaptable workforce. Wales cannot allow the creation of a 'knowledge underclass': all young people must be given every chance to fulfil their potential. The plan is

designed to take full advantage of the broader economic and tax measures proposed by the UK Government to promote a dynamic enterprise culture.

The plan emphasises a deep commitment to developing better communities: places where people want to live, work and play; where people have access to economic opportunities, a pleasant and safe environment, and active and inclusive social networks.

While all actions need to contribute to the overall vision, the strategy is presented under 5 key action areas:

- better opportunities for learning;
- a better, stronger economy;
- better health and well-being;
- better quality of life;
- better, simpler government.

### **A Framework for Work-Related Education for 14-19-Year-olds in Wales**

This document sets out a framework for work-related curriculum (WRE) for 14-19 year olds in Wales. The Framework recognises that “WRE plays a central role in preparing all young people to make a full, effective contribution to adult and working life”, and sets out a number of learning outcomes for students in which WRE has a central role. It is intended that the framework will:

- enable students to reach higher standards of achievement;
- enable employers to gain more satisfaction and reward through their involvement directly in education;
- enable schools and colleges to be more confident of the quality of their teaching.

The framework identifies three categories for activities in which students and teachers can work with employers, TECs, EBPs, Careers Companies and LEAs:

- opportunities that should be provided for all full-time students aged 14-19;
- opportunities of which at least two should be experienced by full-time students aged 14-19;
- extra opportunities which would benefit students aged 14 to 19.

The Framework therefore states that:

- all 14-19 year olds should have work experience;

- all 14-19 year olds should have the opportunity to be involved in at least two of the following activities:
  - enterprise activity;
  - mentoring support from employers;
  - vocational or vocational-related courses;
  - direct inputs from employers into the curriculum or coursework assignments.

## Post-16 / Workplace

### Skills and Employment Action Plan

The design and delivery of the Basic Skills Strategy for Wales will be significantly influenced by the policy context in which it sits. The Skills and Employment Action Plan<sup>31</sup> (SEAP) Consultation Document. In the current SEAP consultation document, the commitment to basic skills is reiterated by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

- *“My ambition is for Wales to be a world-recognised Learning Country where.....the numbers of people with poor basic skills and with no qualifications fall to below the UK average.”*

The draft plan has as its first priority to improve the levels of basic literacy, numeracy and IT skills in the workforce (i.e. for qualifications at Level 1 in these areas).

In relation to adult basic skills SEAP acknowledges the need for more trained staff to deliver basic skills learning, and the importance of *a sturdy framework of professional qualifications for basic skills practitioners*, supported by appropriate training opportunities. It commits ELWa to working with the BSA to:

- produce proposals by March 2005 for improving the effectiveness of provision (building on the pilot Tripartite Award) and devising targets for achievement.
- put in place an action plan for the recruitment, training and career development of basic skills practitioners.

The document also reaffirms the commitment to provide basic skills provision to those on probation, through collaboration between the Probation Service, ELWa and the Basic Skills Agency.

### The Learning Country<sup>32</sup>

The Learning Country sets out the strategic vision for development of learning in Wales up to 2010. With regard to adult basic skills, the document confirms the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to improving standards of literacy and numeracy:

- *“Sustain the strategic approach established for Wales to raise standards of literacy and numeracy - taking full account of the complementary programmes to lift basic skills generally, and with all such programmes in nurseries, primary*

---

<sup>31</sup> Consultation Document on the Skills and Employment Action Plan 2004, Welsh Assembly Government. May 2004

<sup>32</sup> The Learning Country – A Paving Document. A comprehensive education and lifelong learning programme to 2010 in Wales National Assembly for Wales, 2001.



*schools and secondary schools, and post-16 providers obtaining the Strategy Quality Mark by 2004”.*

The document also stresses the need to achieve a joined up approach to pre and post-16 initiatives on basic skills:

- *“None of these problems will be overcome without the closest collaboration between schools together with further and higher education, training providers and employers”.*

### **Wales – A Better Country<sup>33</sup>**

The revised strategic aims for the Welsh Assembly Government (and successor to betterwales.com) have as their vision for lifelong learning:

- *“Ensuring all our children and future generations enjoy better prospects in life, and are not landed with a legacy of problems bequeathed by us.”*

This includes commitments to basic skills in terms of:

- Eliminating the basic skills gap through funding the Basic Skills Agency and its strategy for Wales to 2005 (subject to the results of this evaluation);
- Piloting free skills training for adults up to NVQ Level 3.

The latter commitment has led to the establishment of the Learning Worker Pilot in Llanelli. Run for 18 months from January 2003, the programme offered free accredited learning to employed people in the area, up to NVQ Level 3. The pilot, supported through Wales Union Learning Fund grants, is currently being evaluated.

### **Skills Concordat Agreement**

The Skills Concordat, signed in October 2003, sets out a joint commitment by WAG, CBI Wales, the Wales TUC and ELWa, to improving workforce skills in Wales. A key strand of the document is an agreement to strengthen efforts to overcome basic skills problems in the workplace.

---

<sup>33</sup> *Wales: A Better Country – The Strategic Agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government.* Welsh Assembly Government. Sept 2003.

## ELWa Policy

ELWa includes basic skills within 'Essential Skills', which it defines as: *"Skills that we should all have, regardless of personal, social or economic circumstances, recognising that these will change over time."* Within the ELWa Corporate Strategy<sup>34</sup> the vision for delivery of Essential Skills is:

- *"To equip everyone over 16 with essential skills, to enable them to fulfil their potential in their personal lives, their work and their communities."*

Within its Corporate Plan<sup>35</sup>, ELWa is committed to developing thematic Learning Networks addressing bilingualism, e-learning, basic skills and management development. Pathfinder Networks are due to be launched during 2004.

Within the ELWa Operational Plan<sup>36</sup>, four key aspects of Learning Development in relation to basic skills are prioritised:

- review key skills support for work based learning and implement a programme to increase the ability of providers to deliver key skills in a work based learning context;
- gather reliable data on basic skill needs through the LLWR<sup>37</sup> from September 2004;
- develop proposals with the Basic Skills Agency to improve the effectiveness of basic skills provision and produce targets for improvement of achievement rates;
- work with the Probation Service to improve the basic skills of those on probation.

Much of the focus of delivery for basic skills is at a local (CCET) level. ELWa is committed to creating Planning Fora by bringing together all post 16 providers through regional committees and CCETs, to produce Regional Action Plans.

Planning Fora are charged with ensuring that their action plans raise the profile of basic skills and standards in general by:

- Assessing a scale of need;
- Setting realistic and challenging targets that are consistent for Wales;

---

<sup>34</sup> The National Council for Education and Training for Wales – ELWa Corporate Strategy. 2002.

<sup>35</sup> *Corporate Plan, 2004-07*, ELWa. 2004

<sup>36</sup> *Operational Plan 2004-05*. ELWa 2004

<sup>37</sup> Lifelong Learning Wales Record – replacing the Individualised Student Record (ISR) as the main information record of funded learning. The LLWR will allow tracking of an individual's participation in learning across their lifetime.

- Creating diverse and innovative learning opportunities, backed up by staff recruitment and training;
- Establishing protocols for quality assurance;
- Agreeing milestones to assess progress;
- Allocating resources;
- Designing procedures for monitoring and reviewing outcomes.

ELWa is also currently undertaking a review of Workplace Learning, which aims to produce a more strategic approach to delivering vocational learning and more closely reflect demand from employers. The review, due for completion in Autumn 2004, may have implications for funding basic skills provision through training providers.

At a regional level, ELWa North Wales produced a Regional Essential Skills Strategy in 2002/03, and has worked in collaboration with the Basic Skills Agency and Jobcentre Plus to develop a strategic approach to basic skills. In its guidance on Regional Statement of Needs and Priorities (RSNP) for 2004/5, ELWa North Wales states that: *“basic skills remains a priority in North Wales and ELWa expects CCETs and learning providers to recognise this”*.

ELWa SE Wales puts supporting the Basic Skills Strategy as one of its eight priorities for 2004/5, whilst ELWa SW Wales prioritises basic skills support through the essential skills strand, for example, at a local level through support for the Carmarthenshire Basic Skills Strategy, funded through the Learning Challenge Fund. Other Learning Challenge fund projects include:

- Powys CCET, to improve basic skills provision within Powys by providing a quality framework to support a network of partnering organisations in needs identification and delivery, and widening community access to basic skills training

### **Future Skills Wales (FSW) 2003 Generic Skills Survey**

The FSW project comprises surveys of employers and residents across Wales, concentrating on generic skills issues, including literacy, numeracy and ICT.

The FSW employer survey shows that employers report skill deficits amongst school leavers in communication, showing initiative, numeracy, literacy and understanding customer needs.

The residents' survey shows that 21% of all working age individuals in Wales have no qualifications, with much higher proportions amongst older age groups and those in workless households.

**Table A1: Proportion of Individuals Without Qualifications**

	%
All Individuals	21
Age	
16-24	14
25-39	15
40-54	24
55-64	33
Those in Workless Households	37

Source: FSW Residents Survey 2003. MORI/Experian BSL

In terms of the policy implications of FSW findings, the project identifies the scale of the challenge facing the Welsh Assembly Government and the Basic Skills Agency in tackling basic skills issues. WAG is committed to reducing the proportion of working age adults with no qualifications to less than 10% by 2010. The FSW household survey suggests that the current level is around 20% and that those without qualifications are least likely to recognise that qualifications are required by employers.

### **Sector Skills Network**

Proposed actions within the SEAP include agreeing Sector Skills Agreements with the Pathfinder SSCs in Wales<sup>38</sup> by the end of 2004. These will include action to address basic skills needs by embedding the Employer Pledge. Agreements will be rolled out to cover all sectors by the end of 2005.

- At a UK level, Asset Skills, the SSC for the property, housing, cleaning and facilities management sector, is currently establishing a cross-sector basic skills project.

### **Wales Union Learning Fund**

The Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) aims to promote and embed activity in trades unions that support the WAG's objective of making Wales a learning country. The fund is intended to support effective and sustainable activity by trades unions and their partners, which promotes lifelong learning in the workplace, and builds a strategy for competitiveness, employability and inclusion.

One of the key aspects of WULF is the ability of learning representatives in the workplace to access non-traditional learners, and engage those with basic skills issues through a peer to peer approach.

---

<sup>38</sup> The first Sector Skills Councils, i.e. Construction Skills, E-Skills, Skillset and SEMTA

## **Communities First**

Communities First offers an area based approach to regeneration of some of Wales' most deprived communities. Launched in 2000, one of its aims is to support capacity building in disadvantaged communities, and to equip individuals with the skills needed to take part in the development of their own community.

Much of the focus of basic skills activity in the community sector has been focused on Communities First wards, and, especially, those where a development worker has been employed by the relevant NSP.

## **Company Learning Account (CLA)**

The Company Learning Account initiative has been developed to provide flexible, customised business support with minimum bureaucracy.

Although primarily targeted at management development, the scheme incorporates a skills diagnostic, which leads to the development of a company learning plan. This covers all aspects of staff development, skills and training needs, and could, therefore, include basic skills development.

The CLA has recently concluded its pilot phase and it is planned that the current take up of 80 businesses will be extended to 250 by the end of 2004-05.

## **Individual Learning Account Wales (ILA Wales)**

The Individual Learning Account was reintroduced in Wales in 2003 as ILA Wales, to provide some support to learners aged 18 or over whose highest prior learning attainment is level 2 or below.

Grants of up to £200 are available, in support of a range of learning with registered providers.

## **Workforce Development Account**

The SEAP Consultation document proposes the development of Workforce Development Accounts as a means of supporting workplace learning, including a 100% intervention rate for basic skills training. All companies participating would commit to the basic skills Employer Pledge or liP or both.

## **ANNEX B: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**



## Evaluation Methodology

The methodology includes four local area case studies that seek to look at the activity of the strategy across all three sectors (early years, schools and post-16) within a locality. The aim of the research is not to compare and contrast these four areas, but to illustrate how the management and delivery of the various strands of the strategy are working in practice, and how they contribute to the overall goals of the strategy.

## Case Study Selection

**Table 1** outlines the research activity planned in these strands. The areas have been selected to reflect a mix of rural, urban and Welsh speaking areas. In addition, this selection includes areas where there is a broad range of activity taking place across the various strands of the strategy. The four areas selected for inclusion in the evaluation were Anglesey, Newport, Pembrokeshire and Rhondda Cynon Taff.

<b>Table 1: Evaluation Research Activity in each Case Study Area</b>	
<b>Strategy Programme Area</b>	<b>Research activity</b>
Management and Co-ordination	<b>Consultations with managers/coordinators including<sup>39</sup></b> (as appropriate) Director of Education, LAP /family programmes coordinators, LEA advisors, Training provider network rep, Jobcentre plus and Probation Service managers, Voluntary Sector network rep, CCET chair.
Early Years: LAP, Books for Babies, Family Literacy & Numeracy	<b>Two early years centres:</b> interviews with centre managers, tutors, parents, possibly Health Workers that have distributed B4B.
Primary Schools: PQS, SIGs: modelling excellence	<b>Four primary schools:</b> interviews with the Head Teacher/Deputy Head; interviews with 3 teachers directly involved.
Secondary Schools: SQM: SIGs, Secondary Training	<b>Four secondary schools:</b> Interviews with 3 teachers responsible for basic skills testing and provision, interviews/focus groups with up to ten learners.
Post-16 Quality Mark National Support Projects for FE, Training organisations, voluntary and community and the Workplace	<b>Four basic skills providers</b> including college, adult education provision & vocational training providers. Interviews with centre manager (basic skills) & at least two tutors from each centre, tutor questionnaire. <b>2 Vol/community sector orgs</b> benefiting from NSP <b>Four employers<sup>40</sup></b> involved in the pledge <b>2 providers for Probation and Jobcentre plus</b> <b>2 WBL providers</b> who do not offer basic skills

## Research Activity: Early Years and Family Programmes

<sup>39</sup> NB staff in different areas have different roles/job titles

<sup>40</sup> Includes telephone interviews with 1-2 employers showing interest, but not engaging in the Employer Pledge



In undertaking the fieldwork for the evaluation, consultations were carried out with key individuals and selected providers in each of the four case study areas. The fieldwork was undertaken between April and June 2004. Guidance was sought from the LEA as to which centres would provide useful feedback on the implementation of the Strategy. Consultations were held with the following individuals and agencies in for each area:

- 4 Language and Play Coordinators;
- 4 Bookstart Coordinators;
- 3 Health Visitors distributing the Books for Babies;
- 4 Sure Start managers or co-coordinators;
- 6 Family Programmes Coordinators and Family Programmes tutors;
- Visits to eight Early Years Centres. These included consultations with:
  - 6 Heads/Senior managers;
  - 5 LAP Tutors;
  - 3 other Early Years;
  - 25 parents (13 on LAP and 12 on family programmes).

### **Other Activities – Early Years**

- Attendance at Early years events, where these fitted within the timing of the fieldwork;
- Consultation with Bookstart;
- Attendance at Early years Advisory Group Meeting;
- Attendance at LAP Coordinator Network meeting.

### **Schools**

A programme of consultations took place across the schools setting. Following initial discussions about potential nominations for, and the agreed sample of, four primary and four secondary schools per area, LEA officers contacted schools to request participation. 20 interviews were undertaken with staff from the four LEAs including interviews with – key policy staff (School improvement managers and ) and senior advisors. Discussions took place with the BSA and LEA staff to provide an overview of the schools participating in strategy funded activities. The discussion led to the selection of schools that had:

- been involved in a range of activities;

- represented both those that had made good progress and others that had made less or average progress in order to ensure that a range of experience was represented;
- following agreement of the sample, the LEAs contacted their schools to request their involvement.

Interviews were arranged with 8 schools in each LEA, with opportunities to meet with head teachers, deputy head teachers and other management staff; literacy/numeracy co-ordinators where these existed, or staff with co-ordination roles for BS; teaching staff; LSAs and pupils.

Fieldwork was undertaken between March and May 2004.

## **Primary Schools**

The following people were consulted across the 16 primary secondary schools:

- 16 Head Teachers;
- 2 Deputy Heads;
- 2 SEN Coordinators;
- 9 Literacy Coordinators;
- 4 Numeracy Coordinators;
- 20 LSAs (13 of which were specifically involved with the SIG Catch Up while others provided more general support for targeted pupils);
- 9 class teachers;
- 1 basic skills Coordinators.

## **Secondary Schools**

The following people were consulted across the 16 secondary schools:

- 12 Head Teachers;
- 12 Deputy Heads;
- 6 WEN Coordinators;
- 12 Literacy Coordinators;
- 7 Numeracy Coordinators;

- 22 LSAs (13 of which were specifically involved with the SIG Catch Up while others provided more general support for targeted pupils);
- 12 class teachers;
- 10 groups of pupils involved in Catch Up or additional literacy/numeracy support – 45 pupils in total;
- 2 basic skills Coordinators;
- 1 Learning Support Coordinator;
- 1 KS4 initiative manager.

## **Post-16**

Interviews were held with project representatives from all of the post-16 NSPs. In addition, the sample was selected to engage providers and organisations that had participated in NSP activities that were located in one of the four case study areas, where possible.

However, the NSPs do not have a local brief, and, as such, activity was not always present in the areas selected. Where this was the case, providers from areas with similar characteristics (eg rural/urban) were selected. Again the aim was to include in the selection, providers and organisations that had made good progress, those were 'average' progress had been made, and in some cases where some but limited outcomes to date had been achieved. Additionally, to reflect the range of experience of providers/employers that had been supported by NSP activities.

### **National Support Project for the Further Education Sector**

Of the 24 FE colleges across Wales, four were identified for inclusion in the evaluation. These were from each of the evaluation case study areas. In the colleges, interviews were undertaken with the basic skills co-ordinator, the Learning Support Unit managers/representatives, and in some cases representatives of the skills fora that the colleges were involved in.

### **National Support Project for the Post-16 Quality Mark**

In line with the target for this NSP, which states that all substantial post-16 basic skills programmes in Wales should achieve the Quality Mark by the end of 2004, the majority of the training providers and FE institutions visited had been awarded or were working towards the Quality Mark and had experienced some support from the NSP. In this sense, the QM provides a cross cutting theme for the Post-16 sector. Those managers that were specifically responsible for the development of the QM within their programme/organisation were consulted as part of the interview programme.

## **National Support Project for Training Providers**

Eight providers were visited as part of this activity with the initial intention of visiting two providers in each of the Local Authorities. As activity was not equally represented across the Local Authority areas included in the evaluation, the sample was extended to incorporate activity in all the regions in Wales.

## **National Support Project for the Voluntary and Community Sector**

"The sector is large, wide ranging and far reaching"<sup>41</sup>. There are 22 County Voluntary Councils (CVCs), who work with 23,000 voluntary organisations in Wales. Twenty nine percent of their work is education and training related. Eleven individuals from CVS organisations and independent agencies across the four case study evaluation areas were seen, as were two development workers whose work spanned the South East and South West of Wales.

## **National Support Project for the Workplace**

Sixteen employers sampled to take part in the evaluation. Responses from fourteen are represented in this evaluation. The two remaining employers were had been initially engaged in the Employers Pledge but felt that they had not advanced far enough to be able to comment. The sample includes a wide range of sectors and occupations and skills levels within the workforce. As activity was not equally represented across the case study areas included in the evaluation, the sample was extended to incorporate activity in all the regions in Wales.

## **Other Activities**

A total of six basic skills Agency events were also attended as part of an underpinning of the contextual nature of the Agency's work in the post-16 sector. These were:

- Swansea CVS conference;
- FE network meeting;
- Probation services meeting – to explore the context for development of basic skills in the probation service;
- QM development meeting;
- Employer Pledge Teacher Training Course;
- Tri-partite—attended one of the training sessions for the Tri-partite Course in order to obtain the views of tutors running the pilot of the Tripartite Course.

---

<sup>41</sup> National Support Project for Basic Skills in Voluntary and Community Organisations

## **ANNEX C:**

### **POST 16 NATIONAL SUPPORT PROJECTS (NSPs) OVERVIEW OF OBJECTIVES AND KEY ACTIVITIES**



## **National Support Project for Basic Skills in Further Education Colleges**

The aim of the NSP is to provide basic skills advice and support to Further Education colleges, and aims to strengthen the services colleges provide for students who lack the basic skills they need to achieve their vocational and academic goals. The activities of the NSP include:

- Baseline assessments of existing practice in FEIs;<sup>42</sup>
- Awareness raising at a senior level;
- 3-5 day consultancy according to institutional need;
- Identification of support materials for practitioners.

Targets for 2004-05 include:

- Implementation of action plans in all 24 FEIs in Wales;
- Production and dissemination of good practice guides;
- Establishing effective links with external networks;
- Improving support for recruitment and training of basic skills staff in FEIs.

## **National Support Project for Quality Mark (QM)**

The Basic Skills Agency supports the Post-16 Quality Mark through issuing grant support for post-16 providers to achieve the QM. The NSP supports providers by offering advice, support and materials, along with organised events to share good practice and facilitate networking amongst providers.

The target set out for the Quality Mark (as opposed to the NSP) in the basic skills Strategy is that all publicly funded organisations should hold the quality mark by 2004. The NSP took as its target that all substantial post-16 basic skills programmes should achieve the Quality Mark by the end of 2004.

2004-05 targets for the NSP include building on a baseline of 33 QMs previously awarded, by supporting an additional 36 programmes in achieving the standard. These should include:

- 20 FE institutions;<sup>43</sup>
- 4 Local Authority providers;
- private training providers;
- 6 ESOL Programmes (included in the above targets).

During 2004-05, the NSP is to arrange six regional workshops for “Hard to Reach” programmes (mainly amongst private training providers) and for new programmes, most notably in the Community and Voluntary sectors.

---

<sup>42</sup> Further Education Institutions

<sup>43</sup> However, in terms of target setting there is an issue here that individual programmes within a FEI can achieve the QM and so each FEI could potentially be awarded a QM either for a single programme or a collection of programmes. In some examples, such as Coleg Menai, more than one QM has been awarded.

## **National Support Project for Voluntary and Community Sector**

The Voluntary and Community (V&C) Sector NSP aims to provide advice and support for voluntary organisations and community focused services which work with clients who may have basic skills problems. The purpose of the project is to increase the capacity of these organisations and services to help their clients within the context of the organisation's activities. Objectives of the NSP include:

- Awareness raising of basic skills amongst the voluntary and community sector;
- Building capacity in the V&C sector, through staff and volunteer training;
- Dissemination of advice and best practice;
- Introduction of grants for V&C organisations, to support planning.

## **National Support Project for Training Providers**

The main aims and objective of the NSP for Training Providers are to improve the capacity of training organisations to provide effective, high quality, basic skills teaching which is relevant to the vocational context in which the training provider operates. Specific objectives of the NSP for Training Providers have been to:

- maintain the national support project training providers;
- develop materials to support basic skills teaching in training organisations;
- increase the competence of basic skills staff in training organisations to:
  - identify and assess basic skills needs;
  - plan basic skills learning using Individual Learning Plans and reviews;
  - use a range of teaching approaches, and resources/materials;
  - ensure that the basic skills teaching is relevant to the vocational training.

## **National Support Project for the Workplace**

The overarching main aims and objectives of the NSP for the Workplace are to reduce the number of adults in work with poor literacy and numeracy skills by encouraging employers to include basic skills provision as part of training and development delivered to their employees.

The initiative is underpinned by the Employers Pledge, which employers from both the private and public sector are encouraged to sign up to. As part of the pledge, employers are required to develop action plans which details the level of need



within their workplace and the actions to be taken to address the need. This development activity is supported by the NSP through advisor visits to ensure an understanding of the requirements of the action plan.

## **NC ELWA**

Currently, ELWAs have responsibility for funding post-16 education, and will take on the funding of the provision for the Probation Service next year. Funding mechanisms will need to be reviewed more closely to match the issues and priorities being generated at the policy level to ensure greater national and local engagement with the strategy.

Consultation with ELWAs indicates a need to develop a succession plan for the year 2005, and the need for a greater level of partnership working with the BSA to help ensure this. Currently, activity in the field is being stimulated and supported by the BSA and ELWAs do not feel in a position to respond to the increase in demand.

ELWAs receive their remit in terms of basic skills priorities from the Welsh Assembly and, currently, this is a broad remit which requests that ELWAs increase the effectiveness of basic skills provision. There are opportunities in the future to have a more focused set of objectives on basic skills. Data sharing is an issue across all sectors. Investigate possibilities of generating a more robust mechanism of data collection, use and referral. Intervention in the market for the supply of provision, funding drivers needed to encourage providers to develop flexible response to employer-led demand for basic skills in the workplace. This may be implemented by:

- ring fenced funding for workplace delivery;
- development of workplace basic skills co-ordinators posts in college;
- development of tutors that specialise in workplace delivery.

**ANNEX D: OTHER BASIC SKILLS ACTIVITY IN WALES**

**POINTS RAISED BY PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICES,  
JOBCENTRE PLUS AND Elwa IN RELATION TO CURRENT BASIC  
SKILLS ISSUES AND PRIORITIES**



## **Other Post-16/Adult Basic Skills Activity in Wales**

### **Provision in Prisons**

The prison service in particular needs to focus on how basic skills provision can be improved for offenders in prisons. Many offenders leave prison having participated in courses, such as Enhanced Thinking Skills courses, drug rehabilitation course or Anger Management courses. Participating in these may form a part of a requirement of the Sentence Plan. In addition, there are long waiting lists for accessing education. Consultations in the prison service indicate considerable interest in the development of the Tri-Partite course, and can offer good potential to move effectively address the basic skills needs of prisoners.

Evidence from the pilot project, which included activity in HMP Parc, demonstrated the usefulness of the Tri-partite award in engaging offenders through the personal study. It also highlighted, however, the additional demands on the tutors in prison as access to resources for offenders is limited, because internet access is not allowed. If the award is rolled out to prison education departments, support for prison tutors and the sharing of ideas across prisons is essential. This presents challenges to the prison service, particularly in the current climate where networking between prison staff is limited, and especially across private prisons. The potential for development is also hampered by the lack of availability of qualified tutors, access to basic skills materials and Information Technology.

### **The Probation Service – Current Developments**

The Probation Service is working towards the development of its own internal strategy for Wales headed up by a steering group that is developing plans at a regional level in partnership with ELWa regional co-ordinators. The Probation Service and the Prison Service have merged to form the National Offender Management System (NOMS), which offers opportunities to both agencies in terms of the management of offenders through the criminal justice system.

Currently, there is a lack of information flow from prison to Probation, particularly regarding the basic skills needs of offenders. The Steering Group is looking into way in which this can be improved.

Within the Probation Service itself, there is a good deal of awareness raising and development of appropriate provider capacity needed to progress basic skills for offenders. Currently, the Probation Service uses its own dedicated providers, which have limited capacity. Consultations highlight the potential for a greater level of integration with mainstream providers, but, at the same time this requires a development of provider understanding of the needs and learning styles of this client group.

There are examples of good Probation Service and provider engagement in North Wales in particular. Partnership working with NACRO in North Wales has developed over a number of years and the expertise of NACRO staff in

understanding the needs of the client has produced good results for both ex-offenders and for the basic skills targets of the Probation Service. With management of basic skills for offenders coming under the control of ELWa in 2005, the Probation Service have concerns that autonomy in contracting providers at a regional level will be lost as funding for offenders becomes centrally controlled.

Progression against targets last financial year was successful, but this year targets have increased four fold, and, as a result, will be difficult to meet within current practices.

The strategic development of the basic skills work in Wales for the Probation Service could be assisted by the development of the BSA's National Support Project for the Probation Service. The main areas of planned activity include:

- identifying basic skills issues pertinent to the National Probation Service and offenders;
- identifying difficulties/barriers experienced by the client group with regards to basic skills, and developing workable solutions;
- identifying training requirements to support basic skills issues within the National Probation Service and organising accordingly;
- developing and disseminating embedded basic skills courses into probation service work;
- developing and disseminating a directory of good practice initiatives running in probation areas with appropriate case studies;
- liaising with NPS area basic skills providers to ensure:
  - appropriate courses for probation clients;
  - the offer of opportunities for basic skills progression into other useful courses;
  - progression into work skills supported courses<sup>44</sup>.

### **Jobcentre Plus**

Jobcentre Plus provision is currently under review. Current provision is a six month programme available for New Deal job seekers who are aged 18 or over. This type of provision is not suitable for all jobseekers and there is no provision for those aged under 18.

---

<sup>44</sup> Information taken from the BSA website recruitment page

Activity and progress underway in basic skills development in the probation service is not formally reported into the work of the Basic Skills strategy/assembly. JobcentrePlus is in the process of piloting a new Short Intensive basic skills (SIBS) course of 8 weeks duration and is exploring the possibility of including the Tri-partite award as part of the provision. The issues faced are very similar to those in the Probation Service in that, current provision struggles to adequately engage jobseekers. The SIBS course in England have very high rates of attrition and jobseekers, who are independently assessed by providers, are referred to alternative providers, and end up going round the system numerous times. A greater level of accountability needs to be integrated and provision needs to be developed which is more flexible, imaginative and engaging.

There are good examples of JobcentrePlus working more closely with stakeholders in the local community which needs to be endorsed as the way ahead. In Pembroke, there is partnership working facilitated through the CCET, between the further education college and a private provider.

JobcentrePlus has its own set of basic skills targets that are not currently reported at an all Wales level.

## **ANNEX E**

### **OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS REPORTED IN THE FOUR CASE STUDY AREAS (as at April 2004)**





### LAP (as at April 2004)

LEA	Funding (£)	March 2005 Targets	Progress to Date 2003/04
Anglesey	39,600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 300 parents in LAP programmes</li> <li>• 300 children in LAP activities</li> <li>• 40 early years trainers trained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 140 parents have attended the LAP programme</li> <li>• 160 children supported</li> <li>• 15 LAP programmes delivered</li> <li>• 40 + potential trainers trained</li> </ul>
Newport	55,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400 parents in LAP programmes</li> <li>• 400 children in LAP activities</li> <li>• 12 early years trainers trained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 328 parents attended full programme</li> <li>• 374 children attended full programme</li> <li>• 104 parents and children attended LAP workshops/taster sessions</li> <li>• 42 LAP programmes delivered</li> <li>• Team of 12 trainers established</li> </ul>
Pembrokeshire	44,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 300 parents in LAP programmes</li> <li>• 300 children in LAP activities</li> <li>• 60 LAP groups to run during year (LEA target)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33 LAP courses run</li> <li>• 297 adults &amp; 360 children attended LAP courses</li> <li>• 14 families have received 1:1 support</li> <li>• co-ordinator hours increased from 22 to 37 to meet demand for LAP</li> <li>• 7 additional part-time trainers employed, total of 10 now employed</li> </ul>
Rhondda Cynon Taff	66,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 600 parents in LAP programmes</li> <li>• 600 children in LAP activities</li> <li>• 40 early years tutors to be trained</li> <li>• 50 programmes to be delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 376 parents and 384 children recruited (June 2003-June 2004)</li> <li>• 50 early years teachers/supporters trained from wide range of organisations.</li> </ul>

**Family Planning/KUWC (as at April 2004)**

<b>LEA</b>	<b>Funding (£)</b>	<b>March 2005 Targets</b>	<b>Progress to Date 2003/04</b>
Anglesey	FP: 25,199 KUWC: 9,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 parents &amp; 30 children in family literacy programmes</li> <li>• 30 parents and 30 children in family numeracy programmes</li> <li>• 40 parents in KUWC programmes</li> <li>• 100 parents and 100 children in workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 parents and 20 children supported through the Family Literacy and Family Numeracy programmes</li> <li>• 31 parents and children in KUWC programmes</li> <li>• 113 parents and 115 children attended workshops</li> </ul>
Newport	FP: 57,599 KUWC: 10,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <sup>45</sup>xxx parents &amp; xxx children in family literacy programmes (tbc);</li> <li>• xxx parents and xxx children in family numeracy programmes (tbc);</li> <li>• xxx parents in KUWC programmes (tbc);</li> <li>• xxx parents and xxx children in workshops (tbc);</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 parents/15 children in Family Literacy programmes</li> <li>• 7 parents/7 children in Family Numeracy programme</li> <li>• 49 parents in KUWC courses</li> <li>• 136 literacy/numeracy workshops at KS1,2,3 delivered via LEA advisers</li> </ul>
Pembrokeshire	FP: 46,761 KUWC: 15,000	48 parents & 48 children in 6 family literacy programmes 24 parents and 24 children in 3 family numeracy programmes 180 parents in KUWC programmes (9 literacy & 9 numeracy courses) xx parents and xx children in workshops (tbc);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55 parents/62 children in Family Literacy programmes</li> <li>• 6 parents/10 children in Family Numeracy programme</li> <li>• 34 parents in 4 KUWC courses</li> </ul>
Rhondda Cynon Taff	FP: 112,442 KUWC: 24,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 parents and 150 children in 15 family literacy programmes funded by BSA</li> <li>• 90 parents and 90 children in family numeracy programmes funded by BSA</li> <li>• 300 + parents in KUWC programmes</li> <li>• 450 + parents and children in workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family literacy – 18 programmes, 137 parents/ children (including some GEST funding)</li> <li>• Family Numeracy - 18 programmes – 82 parents and children</li> <li>• 32 programmes - 181 parents/children</li> <li>• Workshops – 45 with 299 parents recruited</li> </ul>

<sup>45</sup> Where there is no target data, at the time of this evaluation there was no agreed target data.

**PQM/SQM (as at April 2004)**

<b>LEA</b>	<b>Funding (£)</b>	<b>March 2005 Targets</b>	<b>Progress to Date 2003/04</b>
Anglesey	PQM: 6,731 SQM: 4,346	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of primary schools with PQM</li> <li>• 100% of secondary schools with SQM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 62% of primary schools have achieved the PQM</li> <li>• 60% of secondary schools have achieved the SQM</li> </ul>
Newport	PQM: 7,620 SQM: 7,260	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of primary schools with PQM</li> <li>• 100% of secondary schools with SQM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% Primary Schools have achieved the PQM</li> <li>• 1 Early Years setting – playgroup; 1 in progress</li> <li>• 63% of secondary schools have achieved the SQM</li> </ul>
Pembrokeshire	PQM: 11,049 SQM: 7,260	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of primary schools with PQM</li> <li>• 100% of secondary schools with SQM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98% of primary schools have achieved the PQM</li> <li>• 75% of secondary schools have achieved the SQM</li> </ul>
Rhondda Cynon Taff	PQM: 18,796 SQM: 18,876	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of primary schools with PQM</li> <li>• 100% of secondary schools with SQM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 76% of primary schools have achieved the PQM</li> <li>• 78% of secondary schools have achieved the SQM.</li> </ul>

SIGs (as at April 2004)			
LEA	Funding (£)	March 2005 Targets	Progress to Date 2003/04
Anglesey	68,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch Up programmes established in 20 schools (Sept – March 05) involving 4 support teachers funded by SIGs</li> <li>Target for improvement of at least 6 months in reading, understanding and spelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch Up programmes established in 15 schools (up to December 03) involving 5 support teachers funded by SIGs. 12 more schools to be supported up to Summer 04.</li> <li>Analysis of pupils progress not yet complete</li> <li>Evidence suggest that they will reach target of 750-930 pupils over the 2 years</li> <li>Numbers of schools in lowest quartile has decreased.</li> </ul>
Newport	75,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch Up programmes established in 20 primary schools and 8 secondary schools. Literacy Year 3/7/8; numeracy Year 3 and 7.</li> <li>160 pupils KS2 literacy;</li> <li>200 pupils KS3 literacy;</li> <li>xxx pupils KS2 numeracy (tbc);</li> <li>xxxx pupils KS3 numeracy (tbc);</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Review and delivery plan for each Catch Up strand completed by 28.5.04.</li> <li>Pupil progress tracked with detailed analysis of the impact of each type of intervention.</li> <li>Training programmes for LSAs maintained and evaluated</li> </ul>
Pembrokeshire	87,000	<p>Accelerating literacy programme established in 12 additional primary schools;</p> <p>Accelerating numeracy in 3 families of schools (20 schools total);</p> <p>Introduce popat for year 3 children in 2 schools;</p> <p>Train LSAs;</p> <p>Extend the boys' writing squads into 2 families of schools; maintain in third family (Pembroke);</p> <p>Disaffected youth basic skills programmes in xx secondary schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerating literacy: 27 staff from 10 schools trained; 90-100 pupils supported; 26 schools now have staff trained to organise &amp; deliver programmes; Welsh medium training &amp; support operating in 5 schools</li> <li>Accelerating numeracy: 26 staff from 12 schools trained; 63 pupils supported;</li> <li>Secondary school reading projects: 1 LSA trained, 33 pupils participated; all made gains in reading;</li> <li>Boys writing squad: 80 participated, all year 6 pupils subsequently achieved level 4 against SATs criteria; writing anthology produced;</li> <li>Disaffected pupils: 5 secondary schools plus PRU took part</li> </ul>
Rhondda Cynon Taff	120,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catch-up programmes established in 29 new schools</li> <li>6 SLAs employed for 3<sup>rd</sup> year; appoint 1.2 additional LSA for one year to work in 46 schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training for school staff – 80 participants + top-up</li> <li>27 schools in main project + 17 school retained follow-up support for the 20 schools leaving the project; 11 additional schools decided to become involved and have been supported.</li> <li>Total no. of pupils involved – 378</li> </ul>

### Secondary Training (as at April 2004)

LEA	Funding (£)	March 2005 Targets	Progress to Date 2003/04
Anglesey	20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers given basic skills support by LEA</li> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers receive basic skills literacy training in schools</li> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers receive basic skills numeracy training</li> <li>• Literacy and numeracy good practice materials produced and disseminated by LEA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery Plans lacked clarity and focus in 2002/03 in terms of basic skills training, for teachers and 4 referred back to school</li> </ul>
Newport	30,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers given basic skills support by LEA</li> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers receive basic skills literacy training in schools</li> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers receive basic skills numeracy training</li> <li>• Literacy and numeracy good practice materials produced and disseminated by LEA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Reviews/Delivery plans produced by all schools 28<sup>th</sup> May 2004</li> <li>• Detailed information provided on progress, planned INSET and reviews. Evidence of marked increase in cross-departmental activity in numeracy/oracy/thinking skills as well as literacy.</li> </ul>
Pembrokeshire	30,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers given basic skills support by LEA</li> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers receive basic skills literacy training in schools</li> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers receive basic skills numeracy training</li> <li>• Literacy and numeracy good practice materials produced and disseminated by LEA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Reviews/Delivery plans for 03-04 produced by all schools</li> </ul>
Rhondda Cynon Taff	69,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers given basic skills support by LEA</li> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers receive basic skills literacy training in schools</li> <li>• 100% of KS3 teachers receive basic skills numeracy training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly all teachers in schools have received some basic skills training but depth of training varies from school to school</li> </ul>

**Post 16 QM (as at April 2004)**

<b>LEA</b>	<b>Funding (£)</b>	<b>March 2005 Targets</b>	<b>Progress to Date 2003/04</b>
Anglesey	Na	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support for all organisations</li> <li>• Increase number of programmes that hold QM to xxx (tbc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coleg Menai – 2 of the 43 programmes have achieved the QM. ESOL programme due to be assessed</li> <li>• Hyfforddiant Gwynedd Training Programme due to be assessed in June/July</li> </ul>
Newport	Na	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support for all organisations</li> <li>• Increase number of programmes that hold QM to xxx (tbc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QM assessment visits planned</li> </ul>
Pembrokeshire	Na	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support for all organisations</li> <li>• Increase number of programmes that hold QM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 organisations hold the P16 QM</li> </ul>
Rhondda Cynon Taff	Na	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support for all organisations</li> <li>• All post 16 FE centre and Training Organisations to acquire the QM by December 2005</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All providers working towards the QM</li> <li>• 3 programmes with QM</li> </ul>

## **ANNEX F**

### **DATA GROUP REPORT**





## **Evaluation Basic Skills Strategy for Wales**

### **Data Group Meeting: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2004**

#### **Introduction**

This paper sets out the key points from discussion of a one-off task group of national partners convened to inform the evaluation of the Welsh Assembly Government's national basic skills strategy. The group discussed the data collection requirements in relation to the information needed to report on progress and outcomes of the strategy goals.

#### **Background**

The strategy has a set of headline goals and a range of operational targets. A key issue emerging from the evaluation scoping phase was that the overall goals of the strategy will not be achieved within its three year timeframe. A conclusion arising from the scoping phase was as follows:

- “an outcome from the national evaluation needs to be the design of a longer-term evaluation framework, showing the links between outputs and outcomes reported via BSA monitoring, the BSA's strand level evaluation, the national evaluation, the evaluative work of others e.g. Estyn and national level data collected by WAG, NC-ELWa and other partners.”

#### **Activities of the Data Group**

To seek to progress this objective, the basic skills strategy evaluation steering group agreed to the following actions:

- (A) the evaluation consultations undertaken by YCL with national partners (May-June 2004) to include discussion of:
  - what national partners would like to see in the future in terms of monitoring the strategy goals/aims/objectives;
  - the existing processes that are in place that monitor the strategy (e.g. ILR, national surveys of basic skills needs, schools stats).
- (B) a meeting of statisticians and policy colleagues to be convened to discuss:
  - the feedback from national consultations under point (A) above;
  - on data collection issues regarding existing data collection systems;
  - the processes that would need to be in place to enable effective data gathering.

## **Members of the Data Group**

The following key individuals were identified as members of that group:

- Jacquie Nicholls - Training, Skills and Careers Policy Division;
- Glynn Jones - Welsh Assembly Government FE and HE Statistics;
- Steve Hughes – Welsh Assembly Government Schools Statistics;
- David Bailey – Elwa analytical services;
- Rhiannedd Pratley/Sandra Morton– BSA;
- Jo Cutter – York Consulting Limited.

Other invitees to the group included:

- WLGA;
- ECAD.

## **Key points**

Table F1 summarises key points discussed in relation to the goals, measures and data sources of each of the strategy goals. These were as follows:

### ***Early Years baseline***

The Teachers' perception survey is not a formal measure/assessment. There was no standard test/assessment available at the time of the baseline. There are currently no plans in place to update this survey given the concern over the robustness of the survey, questions remain as to the value of a repeat exercise.

### ***Availability of data – schools***

The basic skills strategy goals for schools have been set in reference to wider targets set out within The Learning Country. Basic skills goals will need to be aligned to the outcomes of the review of education and The Learning Country, which is likely to lead to a rationalisation of targets.

KS1-3 measures use the core subject indicators. KS2 and KS3 test data may not be available in the near future if tests are withdrawn as a result of the Daugherty review. If KS2/3 test data is not available, then teacher assessment data could be used. Proposals are underway to strengthen the reporting under this measure for Years 6 and 9. Proposals also include Year 5 skills tests (which are likely to include literacy and numeracy elements).

### ***Disaggregating data***

Data reported is a composite score on speaking and listening. LEAs have been encouraged to review and disaggregate this data to help the analysis of the specific priority areas for the activities funded by the basic skills strategy. For example some LEAs have focused on oracy where this was found to be a particular weakness.

### ***Key Stage 4 measure***

At Key Stage 4, the achievement of formal qualifications is used as a proxy measure for literacy and numeracy as there are no specific tests of literacy and numeracy available. There are differences on the data reported on school leavers versus that collected from young adults in the Labour Force Survey. LFS is self reported own recognised qualifications. Schools data currently reports 3% of those leaving school at age 15 do so without holding formal qualifications. Young adults self report this measure as 14% without qualifications.

### ***Adult literacy and numeracy***

The data reported here for the baseline measure (from the International Literacy survey - ILS 1997) is being updated through the 'scale of need survey', commissioned by the BSA, and funded as part of the National Basic Skills Strategy in 2004. The data from the scale of need survey uses will not be comparable to the 1997 survey. England and Wales have adopted new national literacy and numeracy frameworks, and these formed the basis for the design of the scale of need survey. The scale of need survey 2004 is comparable to a similar survey undertaken in England in 2003, but not the 1997 ILS. Data reported in 2004 suggests an increase in the scale of need over lifetime of the strategy. However, the different basis for reporting needs to be understood/explained.

### ***Other***

The national pupils database is being developed that will track pupils over their time at school, including those moving between schools. This database could be developed to include data on interventions (Newport LEA have developed a similar tracking model).

There is currently no systematic overview of the scale of basic skills needs in early years and schools as there is no system for data collection that reports on those in the basic skills target group, how many are in this group, how many are being supported and the interventions that support them.

There is currently limited data on post-16 basic skills capacity, for example, on the numbers of adult learners in provision (dedicated and support integrated) and the improvement made in their basic skills whilst on provision. The BSA did

collect directly from post-16 basic skills providers in Wales (FE, FP, Workplace, Voluntary sector) BSA on provision by type including ESOL, numbers in programmes: discrete and support, basic skills staff. This data collection activity stopped when Elwa was created. Elwa is currently developing the LLWR (an individual learner record). This is an administrative database that drives funding attached to individuals. It has been developed to report on basic skills assessment data on learners at the start and end of programmes. It will roll-out for FE/WBL/SFCs providers in 2004/05 and for ACE providers in 2005/06. Once established, data will be 'real time' for FE and WBL providers. SFCs will report once a year. Key challenges remain to ensure that this data accurately profiles learners and provision. Concerns relate to the following:

- the quality of data from providers on basic skills assessments. A first report on data specified in 2003/04 will be available in Autumn 2005. However, the data specification to providers for the 2004/05 year has been updated and this will report in 2006;
- what will be funded as basic skills provision and support;
- ELWa and WAG are developing the reporting specification for LLWR, which will include reporting on basic skills. This reporting could also be developed to include reports on basic skills learner profiles.

### **Future data/information requirements**

During the evaluation fieldwork, a range of partners were asked what future data/information they would need/like to see reported on the basic skills strategy. The key points made were as follows:

- regular reporting and dissemination of updates on strategy goals/milestones;
- agreeing and reporting on intermediate objectives to show improvements in the supply of and demand for basic skills provision;
- reporting on programme outputs and effectiveness;
- more data on the profile of those in need/learning (age gender, ethnicity, basic skill level);
- clarification on the role of partners in data collection and reporting and the proposal of a basic skills a data group to take developments forward.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

The basic skills strategy goals and milestones provides a useful framework to define the overall aims and objectives for the strategy. The schools targets are clearly referenced to wider Learning Country/BEST targets.

The goals and target framework needs to be strengthened in order to:

- ensure consistency in measurement over time;
- improve share understanding of the vision for the strategy and how it complements/supports other policy and targets;
- improve the indicators used to ensure that they more accurately reflect the required measure;
- develop the mechanisms by which the data on strategy goals, baselines and milestones are specified, reported and communication.

Specific recommendations:

- review the early years measure and consider the development of a more appropriate data sources (such as school baseline assessments);
- schools measures: review in the light of the recommendations of the Daugherty Review. If teacher assessments are to be used, consider the implications for revising the baseline data using the revised measure;
- Key stage 4: agree the most appropriate measure (potentially using the scale of need survey data for the 16-19 cohort or boosting the LFS);
- adults literacy and numeracy – National Assembly to plan for a repeat survey in 2007/8, using the same measurement criteria;
- develop a set of intermediate outcome indicators that bridge the aspirational goals and operational targets (set in the basic skills strategy workplan);
- establish the basic skills data group to oversee the specification, development and reporting on basic skills data and strategy goals, seeking input from policy teams and other national partners.

**Table F1:**  
**National Basic Skills Strategy Goals**  
**Data sources and commentary on measures and data collection.**

<b>Ultimate Goal</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Comment</b>
No child begins school unprepared for learning.	Baseline data: Head teachers perception survey	Not a formal measure/assessment – no standard test/assessment available.
At KS1: All 7 year olds achieve Level 2 or above <sup>46</sup>	KS1-3 measures use the core subject indicators	
At KS2: All 11 year olds achieve Level 4 or above	KS1-3 measures use the core subject indicators	KS2 and KS3 test data may not be available in the near future if tests are withdrawn
At KS3: All 14 year olds achieve Level 5 or above	KS1-3 measures use the core subject indicators	KS2 and KS3 test data may not be available in the near future if tests are withdrawn
At KS4: All 16 year olds leave school literate and numerate.	Baseline measure from the labour force survey LFS	Formal quals used as a proxy measure as no specific test of literacy/numeracy available at KS4. The LFS is self reported own recognised qualifications Schools data on those leaving without formal quals at 15 currently reports 3%. Data on schools performance indicates 95% leave with qualifications.
All adults have literacy and numeracy skills that mean they can function and progress in work & society	Adult Scale of Need Survey commissioned. Will report summer 2004	Not comparative with 1999 data as 2004 survey uses new national curricula as framework for design. As such data reported indicates an increase in the scale of need over lifetime of the strategy

<sup>46</sup> In English, Welsh and Mathematics