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Foreword

Our primary schools are a success story. The best are the best in the world. They are a joy to visit and a credit to our nation.

I believe that what makes good primary education great is the fusion of excellence and enjoyment.

Excellent teaching gives children the life chances they deserve.

Our system must not fail any child. High standards – especially in literacy and numeracy – are the backbone of success in learning and in life. Our primary education system must not write off any child through low expectations.

Enjoyment is the birthright of every child.

But the most powerful mix is the one that brings the two together. Children learn better when they are excited and engaged – but what excites and engages them best is truly excellent teaching, which challenges them and shows them what they can do. When there is joy in what they are doing, they learn to love learning.

Different schools go about this in different ways. There will be different sparks that make learning vivid and real for different children. I want every primary school to be able to build on their own strengths to serve the needs of their own children. To do this, they will work with parents and the whole community; they will think creatively about how they use the skills of everyone in the school.

And they themselves will take responsibility for making what they do better all the time. I want every school to drive its own improvement, to set its own challenging targets, and to work tirelessly to build on success. However good our schools are, for the sake of our children they can always be better.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Clarke'.

Charles Clarke

Executive summary

Primary education is a critical stage in children's development – it shapes them for life. As well as giving them the essential tools for learning, primary education is about children experiencing the joy of discovery, solving problems, being creative in writing, art, music, developing their self-confidence as learners and maturing socially and emotionally.

Primary education in England is in a strong position with improving results and good comparisons internationally. We want to build on that success, and challenge primary schools to take the lead themselves in going further.

We want schools to continue to focus on raising standards while not being afraid to combine that with making learning fun. **Our goal is for every primary school to combine excellence in teaching with enjoyment of learning.**

SCHOOL CHARACTER AND INNOVATION

Ofsted reports show that the best primary schools combine high standards with a broad and rich curriculum. We want all schools to have this aspiration and to:

- **Develop the distinctive character of their schools** by, for example, developing strengths in sport or music or special needs or working very closely with the local community.

- **Take ownership of the curriculum**, shaping it and making it their own. Teachers have much more freedom than they often realise to design the timetable and decide what and how they teach.
- **Be creative and innovative** in how they teach and run the school.
- **Use tests, targets and tables to help every child** develop to his or her potential, help the school to improve and help parents and the public to understand the progress of the pupils and the performance of the school.

The Government, for its part, will:

- **Support innovation** and offer more scope for school autonomy.
- **Keep a strong focus on standards** by maintaining the target for 85% of all primary school children to reach Level 4 at Key Stage 2 as soon as possible, because we know that performance at age 11 has such a huge impact on how children are likely to do later in life.
- **Change the local target setting arrangements** so that in future the target-setting process will begin with schools setting their own targets for each child, with LEA targets being set afterwards.

- **Provide primary schools with better performance data** and challenge them to match the achievement of the best schools in similar circumstances to their own.
- **Maintain high national standards at Key Stage 1, but trial a new approach to assessing seven-year-olds** where tests underpin teacher assessment and feed into a single overarching teacher judgement rather than being reported separately.
- **Make sure that the achievements of all children, and of inclusive schools, are recognised**, by improving value-added measures so that schools get credit for the performance of all children, including children working below the level of the tests, many of whom may have special educational needs.
- **Examine ways in which an overall assessment of a school** – taking into account its character as well as its performance – **might be included in the performance tables.**

EXCELLENT PRIMARY TEACHING

Excellence in teaching and enjoyment of learning is at the heart of what we are doing. Literacy and numeracy remain vital, but we want all schools to be able to offer their pupils a rich and exciting curriculum, in which every subject is taught outstandingly well. We will:

- **Build on the success of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies** by helping teachers to get a deeper understanding of the Strategies and improving the support they provide on speaking and listening, strengthening phonics, and building and applying mathematical skills.
- Use the **new Primary Strategy** to extend the sort of support provided by the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to all of the foundation subjects. The Strategy will draw on our programmes for developing **modern foreign languages, PE and school sport, music, the arts, and creativity.** It will also help teachers use ICT to support good learning and teaching.
- **Develop schools' and teachers' own professional ability** to lead improvement. Schools will increasingly identify and help design the kind of support they need.
- **Challenge schools that do not perform as well as they should**, compared to others in similar circumstances.

LEARNING – A FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

Learning must be focused on individual pupils' needs and abilities. We will:

- **Use the Primary Strategy to help develop assessment for learning**, which enables knowledge about individual children to inform the way they are taught and learn.
- Support local education authorities, schools, teachers and classroom assistants in providing a **tailored approach to support children with special educational needs, gifted and talented children, and groups whose needs may not have been properly**

addressed in the past – such as those from minority ethnic groups.

- **Make sure that children are supported at points of transfer and transition**, especially as they move into primary school and as they move on to secondary.

PARTNERSHIP BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Good primary schools know that working with parents and the community and thinking beyond the normal school day is vital to helping children get the best from their learning.

- **Partnership with parents is powerful in supporting children and helping family learning.** We will help schools work with parents by giving good information – like new packs that explain what children are learning in each year of the Primary Strategy – and by linking up services for parents better.
- **Extended schools support children's learning** by taking a broader approach to it; and knit schools into the fabric of their community. Activities outside school hours help give children pleasure in learning, and support high standards.
- **Behaviour is a critical issue.** We will support schools in teaching positive behaviour for all children, as part of the Primary Strategy, built into the way teachers teach in the classroom; and give extra support to the children that need it most.

LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

Our strategy cannot succeed without good leadership.

- **The National College for School Leadership** develops leadership at all levels. The Primary Strategy's Leadership Programme, developed with NCSL, will use Consultant Leaders – serving heads – to support other headteachers.
- **Every school will have the chance to be part of a wider school network.** Primary schools are relatively small organisations. That brings great strengths but heads and teachers do not always have as many opportunities as they would like to learn about different ways of doing things. Networking and collaboration are a powerful force for supporting leadership, innovation and improvement.
- **A new 'Leading Practice' programme will build on the beacon school initiative.** It will reward particular strengths in a school. Schools will be able to assess themselves and propose that they are ready to be recognised. LEAs will work with schools to look at how 'Leading Practice' can support networking arrangements so that good practice is shared effectively.
- **Every LEA will have a Primary Strategy Manager to provide a one-stop shop** support service for primary schools.



WORKFORCE REFORM

Workforce reform gives schools the flexibility to give children more individual attention; to free teachers to teach; and to use people for their specialist skills. These will all help raise standards.

- **Teacher and support staff numbers are growing fast**, and the quality of teachers and teaching is improving.
- **Primary schools are already making great strides on workforce reform.** Our survey shows that the use of support staff has increased in 7 out of 10 primary schools over the last three years. 97% of headteachers said that the increase had improved learning and teaching.
- **The challenge now is to use the National Agreement to develop the use of support staff to reduce teachers' workload and support better learning and teaching.** Primary schools are already beginning to use teaching assistants, under the supervision of teachers, to cover or take whole classes. Training for higher level teaching assistants will provide more quality assurance and flexibility.
- **The National Agreement will also help cut bureaucracy**, especially through the new Implementation Review Unit – serving headteachers who scrutinise policy.
- **A national team with dedicated staff in every LEA will support workforce reform.**

REALISING THE VISION

Government and its partners have a role in helping make sure this strategy can be realised.

- **LEAs have the job of providing support services to primary schools;** helping and, where appropriate, challenging schools to improve and raise standards; and giving leadership to parents and teachers in their area.
- **We will ask LEAs to use their consultants more flexibly**, to support the new strategy.
- **Schools need stable and predictable funding arrangements.** For 2004-05 our aim is to ensure that all schools can expect a reasonable per pupil increase. It is important that workforce reform, in line with the National Agreement, can be sustained.
- **We will continue to work with teachers, headteachers, local authorities, governors, parents and pupils** to make a reality of our vision of an excellent and enjoyable primary experience. We will be speaking to 6,000 primary headteachers directly during the year, as part of our continuing series of primary headteacher conferences.

Introduction

OUTSTANDING PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1.1. Primary education is a vital stage in children's development, laying the foundations for life. But it should also be a hugely positive, rich experience for all children in itself.

1.2. Our leading primary schools are among the best in the world. They are characterised by high standards in literacy and numeracy; a rich, broad and balanced curriculum; a happy, safe and supportive atmosphere, with a strong commitment to helping all children succeed whatever their background or abilities; and they have strong relationships with parents and the community.

1.3. In these schools, children are engaged by learning that develops and stretches them and excites their imagination. They enjoy the richness of their learning – not just learning different things, but learning in many different ways: out-of-doors, through play, in small groups, through art, music and sport, from each other, from adults other than teachers, before school, after school, with their parents and grandparents, formally and informally, by listening, by watching, and by doing. They develop socially and emotionally. They

take pride in their learning and want to do well.

1.4. These outstanding schools make this possible because they offer rich, exciting programmes of learning. Their school curriculum – developed and taught through the professional abilities of the leadership team, and each teacher and teaching assistant in the school – gives each school its own distinct identity and ethos, which reflects a good understanding of and close partnership with the wider school community. Excellent schools are themselves learning places – the staff learn and develop, and the curriculum changes and improves over time. They use all the resources available flexibly and imaginatively, especially their staff.

1.5. Most importantly, in outstanding primary schools, there is no sense of a tension between high standards and exciting learning. Children have the chance to learn in a range of different ways – but all of the learning and teaching is of a high quality, and is planned and managed so that every child is supported and challenged.

1.6. By offering every child – whatever their own individual characteristics – the chance to achieve their full potential, these schools achieve high standards for *all* children, giving them foundations for future learning, and for success in life.

1.7. These wonderful schools exist in every type of community in England. We are determined that every primary school in England can and should be such an outstanding primary school. That is the central ambition of our policy.

A STRONG AND THRIVING SECTOR

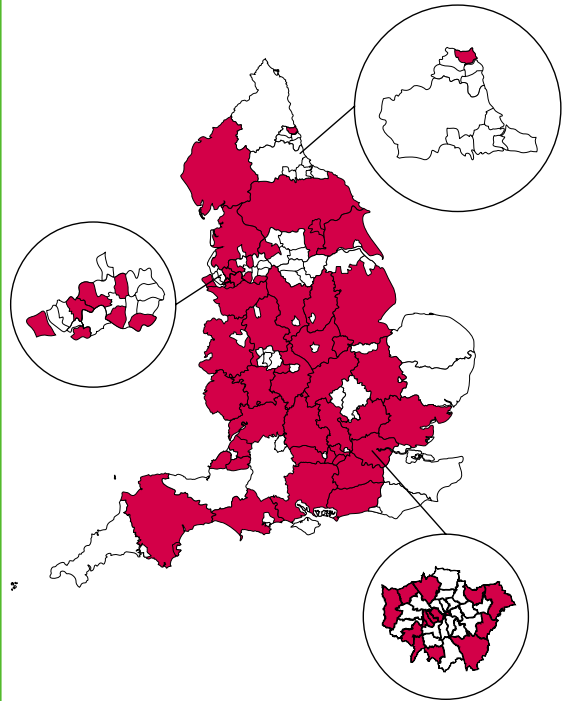
1.8. We know that our vision for the future of primary education can be realised, both because some extraordinary schools

already achieve this, and also because the excellent work which goes on in many thousands of primary schools up and down the country shows what can be done. Thanks to the work of primary headteachers, teachers, support staff, and pupils, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have resulted in dramatic improvements in these basic building-blocks of learning across the country, giving all our children a better chance of success. The maps below show the dramatic improvement in results in English.

LEAs where 75% of children reached Level 4 in English in 1998



LEAs where 75% of children reached Level 4 in English in 2002



1.9. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, David Bell, in his annual report for 2001-02, said that:

"Standards have risen because the quality of teaching is better. Our inspection evidence shows more good teaching and fewer poor lessons than ever before. It is no longer unusual for an inspection team to report no unsatisfactory teaching at all during the week of an inspection."

1.10. He pointed out that standards had risen faster in primary schools than in secondary schools. And his report names over three hundred primary schools out of those inspected this year alone as 'outstanding'.

1.11. The PIRLS study,¹ which shows that English 10-year-olds are among the best readers in the world – third, after Sweden and the Netherlands – confirms that our primary schools are not just improving relative to past performance, but are world leaders. England's most able pupils are the highest scoring out of all the countries participating in the survey. It also found that schools in England have the highest use of real books in the classroom and use longer books with chapters rather than short extracts, text books and reading schemes.

1.12. Ofsted have also celebrated the success of schools that make a broad and rich offering to their students. HMCI's annual report drew attention to schools

that achieve high standards across the full curriculum, by offering a programme that is broad, exciting and challenges pupils across the full range of national expectations. The Ofsted document *The Curriculum in Successful Primary Schools* looked in more detail at some of these.

1.13. Our document is about building on the successes of recent years to strengthen the performance of the whole system still further, so that all our children are offered the best possible primary education.



¹ *The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*, conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics and published in March 2003. More details can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>

THE CHALLENGE

1.14. We have talked to around 2,000 headteachers across the country during the first series of primary headteachers' conferences about how to build on this success. We believe that one of the best ways will be to look to primary schools to take more of the initiative – for teachers to be able to lead improvement themselves, through their own professional abilities. We want schools to feel freer to take control, and to use that freedom to:

- **Take a fresh look at their curriculum, their timetable and the organisation of the school day and week, and think actively about how they would like to develop and enrich the experience they offer their children.** They should take account of the individual needs of



all children in the school, the local context, the particular skills and enthusiasm of the staff, the distinctive ethos of the school, the resources available in the wider community, and also their knowledge of good practice and of what delivers results.

- **Set a trajectory for continuous and sustained improvement in rates of progress in literacy and numeracy from 2003 onwards,** based on challenging but realistic targets for the progress of each child in the school. We want schools to continuously improve the teaching they offer, so that the added value they give to children rises. And we challenge every primary school to be systematic and rigorous in using evidence to improve teaching, and to set appropriate targets for individual pupils, and monitor their progress.
- **Commit to a programme of professional development for all their staff,** aligned with the school's improvement plan and building on the principles and practice of effective learning and teaching embedded in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. We challenge school leaders to work actively to develop their own skills and those of all the staff in the school.
- **Look beyond their own school and learn from others,** by getting involved in networking arrangements, to share and develop good practice.
- **Review their strategies for involving parents in their children's education.**

- **Embed the teaching of positive behaviour into the fabric of learning and teaching in the school**, using the new training and resources to help work with others to manage behaviour and attendance problems.
- **Review the way in which they use all the resources available to the school**, both inside the school and in the wider community, taking full advantage of adults other than qualified teachers, under the National Agreement on Workforce Reform, and drawing on the widespread good practice in flexible use of the workforce that already exists in the primary sector.

1.15. Primary schools already review their performance and make forward plans. We want them to use this process to focus on their own school improvement. We will support schools in a range of ways described in this document. But the challenge for the Government is:

- **To enable schools to lead their own improvement**; and
- **To ensure that schools are properly accountable** for their performance, and that there is decisive intervention and support where standards are at risk.

School character and innovation

Summary

Primary schools are very diverse, each with its own distinct identity. We intend to help them build on their diversity, and their ethos. Schools should feel empowered to develop their own rich and varied curricula. We will try to cut burdens on schools, and encourage and support them in being innovative. Tests, targets and tables play a vital role in helping to raise standards, but we must be ready to adapt and shape them to do their job better.

SCHOOL CHARACTER

2.1. Primary schools are enormously diverse. The largest primary schools have over 800 pupils. The smallest are taught by a single teacher. And primary schools are closely integrated into their local communities. The overwhelming majority of primary schools also act as Early Years settings, offering the Foundation Stage in nursery and reception classes. This means that every primary school already has its own individual character.

2.2. There are many ways in which schools can build on and develop their identity. Some do it through organisation of the school day; the way they use adults in the classroom; or a particular underpinning set of principles for the way things are taught and learnt in the school. For example, the ethos of faith schools reflects their religious character. Some schools are

strong in supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Other schools excel in music, drama or sport. Good schools build on the characteristics of the community they serve – for example, reflecting a high ethnic minority population, or acting as the focus for a village community.

2.3. The wide school curriculum is the most powerful way in which schools express their distinctive character. The 31 successful primary schools that Ofsted looked at in detail were successful because they took ownership of the curriculum, shaped it and made it their own, so that they could offer their children excellent teaching and a rich experience that was unique to their school. They did this while still using the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and while following the statutory requirements of the National



Curriculum. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) document, *Designing and timetabling the primary curriculum*, gives practical guidance on how schools can do this.

2.4. Our aim is to encourage schools to take control of their curriculum, and to be innovative.

FREEDOM AND EMPOWERMENT

2.5. The National Curriculum and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies can either be seen as a springboard for teaching, or as a set of constraints. Views on this have fuelled an active national debate.

2.6. Teachers already have great freedoms to exercise their professional judgement about how they teach. But many teachers believe that either the Government, or Ofsted, or the QCA effectively restrict

that freedom. The great majority of the enquiries received about the new Power to Innovate have involved 'innovation' which is already allowed for all schools. A large number of complaints made to the Department about the burden of the curriculum turn out in fact to be about details of the Schemes of Work, which are optional.

2.7. A central message of this document is that teachers have the power to decide how they teach, and that the Government supports that.

2.8. Similarly, with lesson planning, there is no particular format or length required by Ofsted or local education authority (LEA) inspections. A short piece of lesson planning guidance – signed by the Secretary of State, by David Bell and by Ken Boston of QCA – is attached to this

Existing and planned freedoms

Within the curriculum, teachers and schools have the freedom to decide:

- **How to teach** – the programmes of study state in outline what is to be taught, but not how it is to be taught. Schemes of Work are an optional tool – schools can ignore them, adapt them, or pick and choose between them. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, though they are supported strongly, are not statutory and can be adapted to meet schools' particular needs. Ofsted will recognise and welcome good practice.

Existing and planned freedoms – continued

- **Which aspects of a subject pupils will study in depth** – the requirement is that schools cover the programme of study, but it is for individual teachers to decide which aspects they wish to emphasise. For example, they may choose to cover some aspects in a single afternoon, and turn others into work lasting a whole term.
- **How long to spend on each subject** – it is for schools to decide how they are going to organise their timetable. QCA guidance suggesting how much time should be allocated to each subject is not statutory.
- **How to arrange learning in the school day** – there is no requirement for subjects to be taught discretely – they can be grouped, or taught through projects – if strong enough links are created between subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills can be used across the whole curriculum.
- **To use sections of previous or later programmes of study** – some pupils' learning needs will be better matched by programmes of study from earlier or later Key Stages.

As far as the teacher workforce, pay and conditions are concerned, headteachers can:

- Shape their workforce in accordance with current and planned flexibilities offered in the **National Agreement** between the Government, employers and school workforce unions.
- Make use of available **national pay flexibilities** by giving additional main scale points for excellence, or offering recruitment and retention allowances.
- Employ **teachers without qualified teacher status** where they have skills and experience to offer.

Around governance and school organisation, they can:

- Vary, from September 2003, the **number of school governors** on the governing body.
- Change **school session times**, having consulted on them (though there should be 380 half-day sessions each year).

Around funding, they can:

- Fund **school federations** as if they were a single institution.
- Use most categories of **Standards Fund** as they think best to raise standards in the school.



document as an annex, and states clearly that plans need not follow a set format, and that there is no harm in using commercially-produced plans (if they are of good quality), or sharing and adapting other teachers' plans in order to keep planning time to the necessary minimum.

2.9. In this as in other areas, we need to support teachers to use the freedoms they have innovatively, in order to raise standards. The Department has established an Innovation Unit to foster innovation and to help spread knowledge about the successful things that schools have done. The recent Education Act also introduced the Power to Innovate, which allows all schools and LEAs to apply to the Secretary of State for exemptions from any regulatory requirements in education law which stand in the way of yet higher

standards and further innovation. More details about the unit, and about Power to Innovate, can be found at: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/innovation-unit

2.10. We wish to extend these freedoms and flexibilities still further, to offer more scope for school autonomy.

TESTS, TARGETS AND TABLES

2.11. Some teachers question whether it is possible to exercise their curricular freedom, because of the priority the Government attaches to improving literacy and numeracy. But as Ofsted reports have shown, it is not a question of 'either', 'or'. Raising standards and making learning fun can and do go together. The best primary schools have developed timetables and teaching plans that combine creativity with strong teaching in the basics.

2.12. Basic skills are important. There are seven million adults in this country who do not have basic literacy and numeracy skills and have been denied the opportunity to fulfil their potential. They provide the moral case for ensuring that we offer every child the foundation of strong literacy and numeracy skills. Since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and of national targets, schools in the most deprived areas have seen the greatest improvement in performance. These schools serve the very children who were previously let down by the school system – and to fail them would be to fail those who could least afford it.

Case Study: St Joan of Arc, Bootle

"At St Joan of Arc Catholic Primary School, the main issue has been how to achieve high standards and a broad and balanced curriculum in an area of severe deprivation.

High standards in Key Stage 2 tests in the core subjects are essential because children in challenging circumstances need to have high self-esteem and resilience if they are to break out of what is often generational low achievement. You also need high standards in other areas of the curriculum because you cannot divorce one area from another. The skills and knowledge are required in all areas.

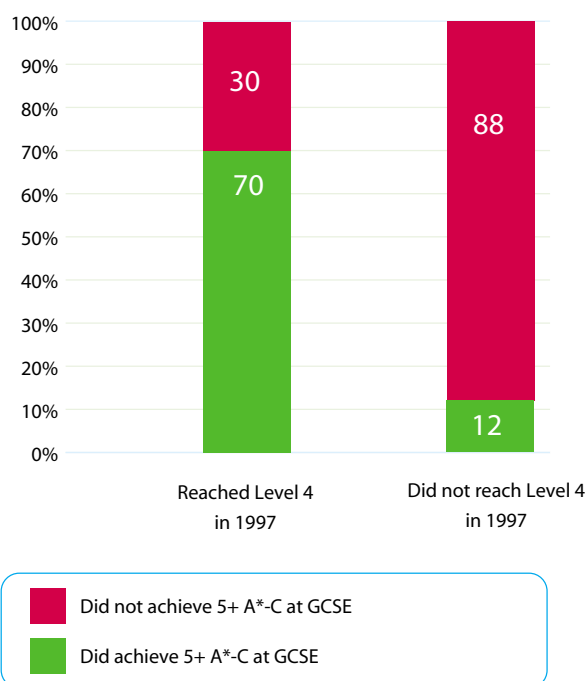
The curriculum needs to be exciting. In our case, this means building in quality not quantity so that children learn first hand. The curriculum needs to widen children's perspectives, so links to the English National Ballet, to theatre groups and others are essential. We have acquired two minibuses so that classes can make visits and build in opportunities for enrichment. This all means that we are talking about a deeper level of learning that often frees up time for other opportunities."

Steve Sanderson, headteacher

2.13. Achieving Level 4 at the end of primary school improves a child's prospects at secondary school and their future life chances. 70% of pupils who achieve Level 4 at Key Stage 2 go on to get five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C. Of those children who did not achieve Level 4 in 1997, just 12% achieved five GCSEs at grades A*-C last summer.

2.14. So Level 4 really is the door to success in secondary school and beyond. A child who is at Level 3 can read a range of texts, but a child who is at Level 4 can read between the lines, use inference and take an overview of the whole story. That is why we have set a nationwide target for 85% of pupils to reach Level 4 at Key Stage 2.

Importance of achievement at Key Stage 2



2.15. **Tests** for every child mean that teachers and parents can track the progress of every single child. They help to identify those pupils that need extra support as well as those who need to be stretched and given more advanced work. No child should be overlooked – every child matters.

2.16. **Targets** show what we need to achieve, provide clear focus and provide an important means of measuring progress and improvement. Every person, every team and every organisation that wants to succeed sets goals and targets. And we want schools to succeed.

2.17. **Performance tables** – particularly now that value-added measures have been introduced – enable all of us to assess the performance of individual schools and to look at where schools have

made a real difference to the learning of our children. They give solid proof and real recognition of what teachers are achieving. As part of a wide range of relevant information, they help parents choosing schools for their children. Easy-to-use information must continue to be available to everyone, not only to a privileged few.

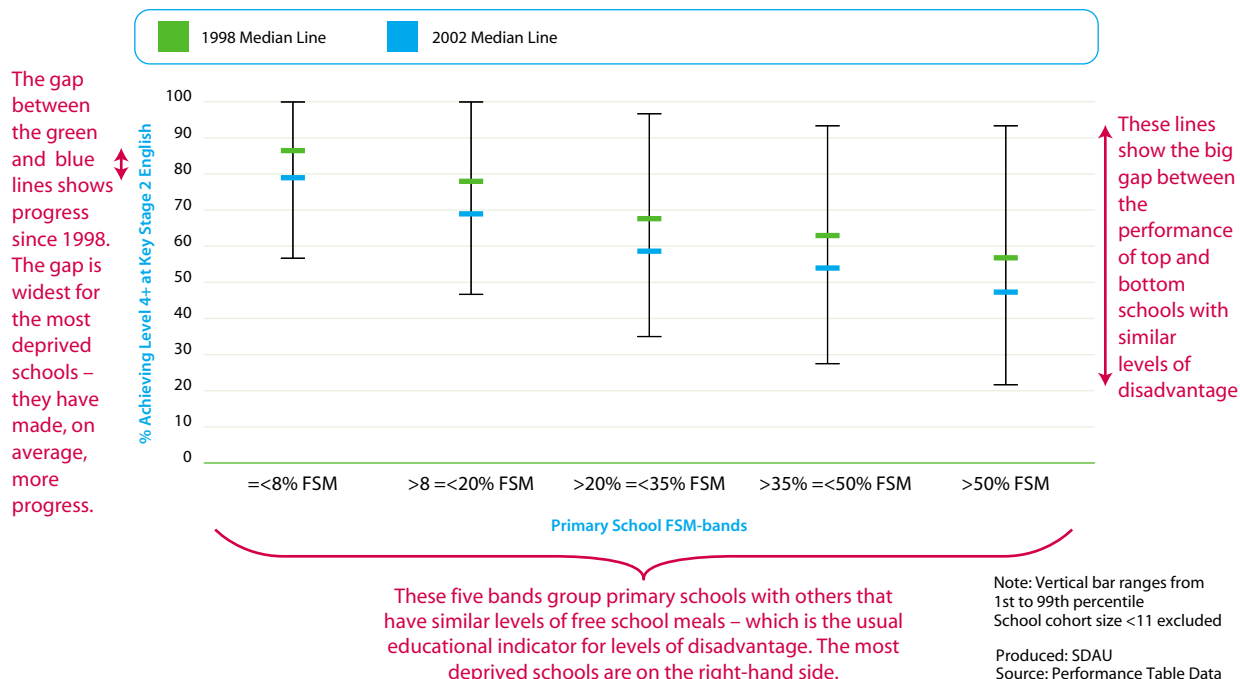
SETTING TARGETS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

2.18. The Secretary of State has said that testing, targets and tables are here to stay. But he has also said that we are open to sensible suggestions about how they might be refined and improved to help teachers do their job better still. Earlier this year Ministers met and talked with primary headteachers in a series of conferences up and down the country. They shared our ambitions for raising standards but they wanted us to consider changes that would help motivate them and their staff to achieve the improved pupil performance we all want to see.

2.19. Some questioned whether the 85% target at Key Stage 2 was achievable. But 85% is not an arbitrary number. We have looked at the current set of Key Stage 1 results, and at what different rates of progress would mean for these children's results at Key Stage 2. Disadvantage needn't stop schools from doing well. The chart below shows that for schools with similar proportions of pupils receiving free school meals (FSM) the range of achievement is very wide. If all schools achieved as well as the best schools in



Percentage of pupils in maintained mainstream schools achieving Level 4+ at Key Stage 2 (English) by primary school free school meal bands



similar circumstances, we would easily reach 85% nationally. Moreover, most children who do not achieve Level 4 are just below the expected level, at Level 3, needing to make just a little more progress to get them to that higher level.

2.20. So maintaining the 85% target is right – both morally and educationally. But we do accept the need here to make changes in the way that the overall 85% target affects individual schools. Headteachers told us how, because of the pressure for LEA targets to follow national targets and for school targets to follow LEA targets, schools are sometimes ending up with targets which they do not ‘own’. They set targets for their pupils and school only to be told to reset them because they do not fit in with or add up to the LEA target. That demoralises teachers, and, more importantly, does nothing to raise standards.

2.21. It is vitally important that schools set targets which they can believe in and genuinely work towards – which are stretching, but are also realistic. Only in that way will they be a powerful tool for helping schools to take control of the school improvement process, and drive their own development based on good information. **So in future the target-setting process will begin with schools setting their own targets, with LEA targets being set afterwards.**

2.22. We want every primary school to review its performance and to set targets for Level 4 and Level 5 up to 2006 which are:

- Child-based: taking account of the prior attainment and expected progress of individual children.
- Stretching: as a general rule, each cohort should make more progress than the one before. This approach will

enable schools to take into account the different starting points of different groups of children. In a particularly challenging year, for example, although the raw results may not rise, the aim should still be to improve the contribution the school makes to the children's learning – the added value.

- Owned: understood by the school, including governors and pupils, and having a visible life and meaning in the classroom and in assessment.

2.23. For schools that have lower levels of attainment – in particular those below 65% – the targets they set should show a trajectory for improving performance at least to this level as soon as possible. Schools should also compare their performance against other schools in similar circumstances – with similar prior attainment and levels of FSM – as they set their targets. Schools performing at lower levels should be aiming at least to reach average levels of performance for schools in similar circumstances.

2.24. LEAs have an important role in sharing performance information with schools, challenging them to set targets that are stretching, and supporting them in achieving the goals they have set themselves.

2.25. Our aim is to ensure that over the country as a whole, at least 85% of 11-year-olds reach Level 4 in literacy and numeracy as soon as possible, and to improve rates of achievement at Level 5. We hope to achieve this by 2006; but we

know that it will be through sustained year-on-year progress at school level, driven by locally-set, thoughtful, individual targets, that these national improvements will be made.

ASSESSMENT AT KEY STAGE 1

2.26. Good-quality assessment is essential for planning children's learning, based on their performance, so that they are stretched to achieve to their full potential. The standards that children achieve at the age of seven, particularly in reading, are strongly associated with future progress, and we are determined that children be assessed rigorously and effectively at this age. Key Stage 1 assessment is also essential in helping schools measure their own progress and effectiveness, and in providing a basis for measuring future progress – 'value-added'.

2.27. We do not accept that the tests and tasks which are set to children at the age of seven, at Key Stage 1, are too difficult or stressful for children to do. Children are set a reading task, which involves reading to the teacher, and two writing tasks. These tasks can be done any time between January and four weeks before the end of the summer term. They also do a reading test, a spelling test and a mathematics test, which can be sat any time during the month of May, in order to fit with normal classroom activities. These tests and tasks generate levels for each subject, which are reported alongside the teacher's own assessment of the child's progress. They are given to parents, but not published in tables.

2.28. These Key Stage 1 assessment arrangements offer teachers the flexibility they need to assess younger children effectively. The tests do not have fixed time limits; the whole class doesn't need to take them at the same time; and teachers can choose that lower-achieving children do the tasks, but not the tests (which might demotivate them), and that higher-achieving children skip the tasks and just do the more challenging tests. We believe that flexible tests like these are a valuable tool for teachers in judging the progress that children are making against rigorous standards, so that they can plan learning that meets their needs and stretches and develops them.

2.29. We know that teachers set children similar tests – for example, regular spelling tests – and tasks – for example, regular reading to the teacher – throughout the year, and use them to judge the progress children are making. But we also know that there is some concern about the prominence given to this particular set of tests. At our headteacher conferences, headteachers argued that a teacher's overall, rounded assessment of a child's progress through the year (taking into account the regular tests and tasks that children do) was a more accurate guide to a child's progress at this age than their performance in one particular set of tasks and tests.

2.30. Our first priority is to make sure that standards continue to rise consistently at Key Stage 1. Assessment must be as good as it can possibly be at helping teachers

assess children's learning accurately and rigorously so as to plan the best possible learning for them. We want to see whether an approach which focuses more on teachers' judgements about pupils' progress throughout the year can do this.

2.31. We propose to trial, in 2004, an approach that uses testing to underpin teacher assessment, rather than having the two things alongside each other. Teachers would still use tasks and tests, from a range set by QCA, to help them make their assessment, but rather than the marks from one set of tests having particular status, the results from all the work done throughout the year, including these tests and tasks, would be used by the teacher to make one comprehensive judgement about a pupil's progress and attainment. This would also have the benefit of making information for parents clearer, with one 'level' for each child in each subject area, instead of two.

2.32. Each LEA would moderate the assessments teachers make – as they do now for the marking of the tests – to make sure that teachers' judgements are consistent. The trial will be designed to look at whether this system ensures really robust and comparable results, that can be used as a basis for value-added; and at how it affects workload.

REPORTING RESULTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

2.33. It is right that children with special educational needs should have their achievements and progress recognised, and that they are not left out of our drive

to improve standards for all. Many children with special educational needs – including many who have statements – are capable of average or even very high achievement, and it would be wrong to stigmatise them as incapable by omitting them from reporting.

2.34. We do not want to ‘write off’ any child; but we also want to recognise the achievements of inclusive schools properly. At present, value-added calculations do not reflect the achievements of some pupils with special educational needs. A lot of headteachers raised this in the discussions. They have a valid point. Therefore, we propose to extend and refine the coverage of value-added calculations, including the use of P scales, which measure the progress of children working below National Curriculum levels, so that the value of a school’s work with pupils with special educational needs is properly recognised.

2.35. We have also considered possibilities for omitting certain defined categories of pupil from the performance table results for Level 4, where there is wide agreement that they cannot hope to attain the expected levels, even with the best possible teaching and help. We know that drawing any such line is fraught with difficulty. We want to be quite certain that we would not be omitting any child who might be capable of reaching Level 4.

2.36. New information, available next year, will mean a pupil’s type of special educational need can be defined better. Using these new categories, we could consider omitting children with severe or profound and multiple learning

difficulties from the tables. This group of children is relatively small – in the low thousands across the country – and they will often be in special schools. They are very likely to be disapplied from taking the test already, though they are still included in performance tables. We are not convinced that removing these children

P scales

The P scales are a set of indicators for recording the achievement of pupils with special educational needs who are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum. The scales are designed for pupils who are working well below the level of their peers. There is a P scale for every National Curriculum subject.

The P scales are split into eight different levels with P1 being the lowest and P8 the highest. The first few levels (P1-P3) are not subject specific. For example, the indicator for performance at P1(ii) is that: “Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, for example grasping objects briefly when these are placed in their hand. They may give intermittent reactions, for example, sometimes showing surprise at the sudden presence or absence of an event or object.”

from the tables would be the right thing to do; but we will be consulting on this so that we can hear teachers' views and consider carefully what the best way forward would be.

OFSTED

2.37. We are interested in ways of offering clearer information to parents about the rounded achievements of schools – for example, the breadth and richness of their curriculum, or the extent to which they are inclusive. One possible idea would be to include a headline judgement from the most recent Ofsted report on the school, which represents an assessment of the whole offer the school makes to its pupils, in the performance tables. We would have to think carefully about this, especially as for some schools Ofsted reports might be five or even six years old. Another possibility might be to offer more information in the tables about how schools compare to other schools in similar circumstances. We welcome views on these possibilities, and other suggestions about how the assessment framework could recognise these broader qualities. We are also consulting on the features of the performance tables for 2003 – you can offer views at: www.dfes.gov.uk/performance/tables

2.38. Ofsted's new inspection framework, which will be introduced from September 2003, requires inspectors to evaluate the extent to which the curriculum 'provides a broad range of worthwhile curricular opportunities that caters for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all pupils.

In *The curriculum in successful primary schools*, Ofsted explains this change in the context of encouraging schools to use their own professional judgements, and make full use of curriculum flexibilities, in order to take ownership of the curriculum. We want to emphasise that Ofsted is actively encouraging a new culture of innovation through this new framework. Many headteachers we consulted in drawing up this document told us that they had made changes which they thought Ofsted might not recognise, but found instead that they were applauded.

2.39. We believe that combined with giving ownership of the target-setting process back to schools, and emphasising the value that schools add to pupil progress, Ofsted's approach will help empower schools to offer children the rich and exciting curriculum they deserve, and through that rich curriculum to continue to drive standards upwards.



Excellent primary teaching

Summary

High standards and a broad and rich curriculum go hand in hand. Literacy and numeracy are vital building blocks, and it is right to focus attention on them. But it is important that children have a rich and exciting experience at primary school, learning a wide range of things in a wide range of different ways. Our new Primary Strategy will support teachers and schools across the whole curriculum, building on the lessons of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, but moving on to offer teachers more control and flexibility. It will focus on building up teachers' own professionalism and capacity to teach better and better, with bespoke support they can draw on to meet their particular needs. There will be extra support and challenge for the schools that need it most.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY

3.1. Children's entitlement to a rich, broad and balanced set of learning experiences can only be guaranteed if they have firm foundations for their learning. Literacy and numeracy cannot and should not supplant a broad and balanced curriculum, but they are children's key to the wider world of learning. High standards in literacy are a particularly strong predictor of later successes.

3.2. Because of this, efforts to improve standards in primary education have focused strongly on literacy and numeracy. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have, according to all those who have evaluated them, been strikingly successful at

improving the quality of teaching and raising standards in primary schools. But we need to embed the lessons of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies more deeply – at present, evaluations show that too many teachers do not have a deep understanding of the Strategies, which hinders them from adapting and shaping them to their own pupils' needs.

3.3. We also need to make sure that we are building on the gains that have been made in literacy and numeracy – developing the Strategies still further, and not losing sight of important fundamentals like the value of discrete literacy and mathematics teaching through the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson.

Next steps to support literacy and numeracy

Schools have made highly effective use of the guidance and support provided by the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and many teachers have grown in confidence in teaching English and mathematics. To build on the improvements in recent years, the Primary Strategy intends to sustain this support for teachers in helping the children in their classrooms.

The immediate priorities for literacy are:

- Building teachers' confidence in planning over a sequence of literacy hours.
- Securing the place of speaking and listening both as a key foundation for literacy and also as an essential component of all effective learning.
- Further strengthening the early, systematic teaching of phonics and emphasising its continuing importance in the development of spelling in years 2, 3 and 4. We will shortly be publishing a report on a Departmental seminar on phonics, held earlier this year.
- Further promoting the use of ICT as a tool for improving the teaching of literacy.
- Encouraging, through training and the dissemination of best practice, children's access to the widest range of high-quality texts.

For mathematics, the priorities are to ensure that children:

- Build on and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills.
- Become numerate thinkers.
- Apply their knowledge and skills to solve increasingly complex problems.
- Use mathematics to reason and explain.

We will:

- Continue to fund five-day courses to support teachers' own subject knowledge in mathematics.
- Provide guidance on key pedagogic practices to raise standards in mathematics, developing skills of questioning, demonstrating and modelling, and children's written presentational skills.
- Promote and support development of materials to support more able children and to tackle underachievement in mathematics for children with special educational needs.
- Continue to address how to teach effectively the aspects of mathematics that children find hard, such as division, proportion and multi-step problems.

A WIDER STRATEGY FOR PRIMARY LEARNING AND TEACHING

3.4. In the best schools, teachers are using their understanding of the principles behind the literacy and numeracy strategies to adapt them to their particular schools' needs. They also have the confidence to develop their own exciting school curriculum, underpinned by excellent learning and teaching across all subjects.

3.5. We want a new approach that will help more schools and teachers to develop the detailed understanding and confidence to apply the principles of good learning and teaching across the whole curriculum, in a flexible way. The box below shows our proposed principles of learning and teaching, on which we are consulting at the moment. Headteachers at our conferences welcomed them, and we want to put the principles at the heart of our new Strategy.

The principles of learning and teaching

Good learning and teaching should:

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

Learning and teaching across the curriculum

The Primary Strategy will develop a framework for learning and teaching across the curriculum. The framework will propose the range of learning skills, knowledge and understanding that children should develop as they progress through primary school. It will help teachers to map the development of different learning skills against the opportunities offered by the different curriculum areas. Bringing together the development of learning skills and progression across the subjects in the National Curriculum will help schools to shape and define their individual whole school curriculum, and make sure that children are acquiring a really wide range of skills as they learn.

3.6. The focus will be on building teachers' capacity to manage really effective learning and teaching across the curriculum, rather than on presenting identikit blueprints for teaching. This means that the main tool of the new Strategy will be continuous professional development, which builds teachers' own skills.

3.7. A wide range of teaching strategies will be developed and supported, and we very much want schools to be in the lead in working with the new Primary Strategy Manager in each LEA to design the package of support and development which fits with their own priorities for school improvement and development. There will be:

- **Continuous professional development opportunities** for all adults working in our schools, and for building a "school team" approach. We will continue to provide training in the teaching of literacy and mathematics, and will also offer opportunities for teachers to develop their expertise in other subjects.
- **Support from consultants**, who will support teachers, not just in literacy and numeracy, but also in cross-cutting skills like assessment for learning, use of ICT and e-learning, behaviour support, and curriculum planning and development. They will also offer support for the foundation subjects, so as to offer active help in designing a broad, rich and engaging experience for children.
- **A leadership development programme**, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, will mean serving headteachers supporting others in curriculum planning, enrichment, and in continuing to improve learning and teaching throughout the school.
- **Materials and training to support better use of ICT** as a teaching tool. We have been piloting the use of interactive electronic whiteboards in literacy and mathematics lessons in six LEAs, and will be spreading the results of the pilot and giving advice and guidance about effective use of this kind of technology in primary classrooms.



Creativity

The QCA materials, *Creativity: Find it, promote it*, provide information and case study examples in order to encourage teachers to promote pupils' creativity. These materials can be found on the QCA website: www.ncaction.org.uk

Over three years, the creativity project investigated how teachers can promote pupils' creativity across all National Curriculum subjects at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. The conclusions confirm that, by making only small changes to their existing planning and practice, teachers can promote pupils' creativity through the National Curriculum and existing teaching frameworks of the Primary and Key Stage 3 Strategies. The project also showed that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills were enhanced.

The website describes how promoting pupils' creativity can:

- Improve pupils' self-esteem, motivation and achievement.
- Develop skills for adult life.
- Develop the talent of the individual.

Teachers found that when they actively planned for and responded to pupils' creative ideas and actions, pupils became more curious to discover things for themselves, were open to new ideas and keen to explore those ideas with the teacher and others. Promoting creativity is a powerful way of engaging pupils with their learning.

- The Strategy will also give help with building **support for positive behaviour** into the way teachers teach – Chapter 5 gives more details.

3.8. All these approaches will support teachers in developing their learning and teaching skills across every curriculum subject, so that high standards across the whole curriculum and enrichment of children's experience can go hand in hand. And the Primary Strategy will dovetail with work to support particular subjects, for example through our **National Modern Foreign Languages Strategy**, which aims



The National Languages Strategy for England – Languages for All: Languages for Life

Our Languages Strategy, launched in December 2002 set out our agenda for transforming the country's capability in languages, which includes delivering an entitlement to language learning for pupils at Key Stage 2 by 2010.

Networks of schools will work together in a range of ways, using a range of expertise to develop language learning, often with Specialist Language Colleges supporting primary schools. Schools will be helped to build up a cadre of specialist teachers and other adults in order to deliver primary language learning, and in providing curriculum guidance and materials. Learning after school, in clubs, will play a significant part in the Strategy.

Case Study: Early Language Learning in Liverpool

Liverpool's bid for European Capital of Culture in 2008 includes a commitment from the City Council to fund nine Centres of Excellence in primary schools (three each of French, Spanish and German) over three years. The first schools began teaching their language to all their pupils from Nursery to Year 6 in September 2001. Each school benefits from its own advisory teacher and foreign language assistant. Class teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants participate in the pupils' lessons and have their own after-school language classes from expert colleagues. Each school has a link school abroad. Reception pupils watch as their partner classes learn numbers 1-20 alongside them through video conferencing, and pupils have been working with 'electronic big books' through a trial whiteboards scheme.

to make a reality of the aspiration that by 2010 all primary pupils will have an entitlement to learn a foreign language; our programme to identify the **key priorities for music education**, including our aspiration that all primary pupils at Key Stage 2 will, over time, be able to learn a musical instrument if they wish; and our **PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy**, the aim of which is that 75% of

pupils will be receiving two hours of quality PE and sport in and outside school by 2006 (and, eventually, that all young people will do so).

3.9. The Strategy will also work alongside other programmes that help schools make the most of arts and cultural opportunities – including the Museums and Galleries Education Programme, and Creative

Museums and Galleries Education Programme

We are working with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to develop and implement a joint strategy (2003-06) aimed at encouraging effective learning through sustainable relationships between the museums and galleries sector and schools. With an investment of over £20 million, the strategy will address elements such as partnerships between the cultural and education sectors; dissemination of good practice; teacher training, and capacity and training for increased education provision amongst museum and gallery staff.

Case Study: “Word Power” at the Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester

The project used the turbines and engines housed in the Power Hall to develop literacy sessions alongside local primary school teachers and literacy

advisers. After tours of the displays and information sessions, pupils were engaged in carefully differentiated literacy activities at various sites and displays. Children were encouraged to use the displays to collect word banks and develop creative writing. Visits were free to all primary schools within Salford LEA, who also provided literacy packs for a half term’s follow-up work, which were carefully constructed to provide word, sentence and text level activities inspired by the initial visit and the collections. Museum education staff worked to provide packs tailored directly to teacher needs, and the project illustrates how effective partnership working can produce resources of real value and relevance to the classroom.

The project is now being extended across all Greater Manchester LEAs.

Partnerships – and with out-of-hours learning, and study support. Boxes throughout this chapter give more information about particular programmes of support for different areas of the curriculum.

3.10. To take support for particular subjects further, Charles Clarke launched a consultation document on 28 March which asked for views on how subject specialism could be better supported, including by subject associations. That



document was focused on secondary schools, but we believe that subject specialisms are important for primary schools too, and are very keen that primary teachers should contribute to the consultation and offer thoughts on how subject specialism in primary schools can be supported and developed. In particular, we would like to consider:

- The role of the subject associations in supporting lead subject teachers in primary schools, and what more they might do.
- The way in which the National Centres of Excellence that are being set up in mathematics and science can best work with primary teachers, offering experiences which fit the primary environment.
- The role of Advanced Skills Teachers in primary schools.

- The extent to which more dedicated subject-specialist teaching may be helpful in primary schools, particularly in certain subjects, like modern foreign languages, music, and PE and sport.

3.11. We believe that as part of the increasing support across the whole curriculum from the Primary Strategy, support for teachers in particular subjects will offer them a wide range of opportunities for continuous professional development which will help to strengthen learning and teaching in primary schools. Support for subject specialism through the Primary Strategy will help to make 'informed professionalism' a reality.

CONTINUING TO CHALLENGE SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE: TARGETED SUPPORT

3.12. Encouraging schools to have a broad and rich curriculum, and to take more responsibility themselves for school improvement, doesn't change the priority we attach to raising standards. For schools which are underperforming (by which we mean those which add significantly less value for their pupils than average levels for schools in similar circumstances) there will still be pressure to address and challenge their weaknesses, using tried and tested approaches; and there will continue to be a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

3.13. We want to have a sharper focus on underperformance, wherever it is found. We will bring together the targeted



PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy

The PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy is being delivered by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport through eight distinct but interlinked programmes: the Specialist Sports College programme; the School Sport Co-ordinator programme; national PE and school sport professional development; the Step into Sport programme; targeted support for gifted and talented young athletes; a school club links programme; the QCA's PE and school sport investigation; and targeted support to enhance school swimming. Over the next three years, from April 2003, the Government is investing over £1 billion to transform PE and school sport, including school sport facilities, across England.

The aim is to increase the percentage of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75% by

2006 (and, in time, to move to 100%). More information on the strategy is available at www.dfes.gov.uk/pess

Case Study: Creating a Specialism

At Mountfields Lodge Primary school, Adele Hickley is a Primary Link Teacher who is released from her teaching responsibilities twelve days a year to develop her role in co-ordinating physical education and out-of-hours school sport. The release time is used flexibly, to enable Adele to access local courses as part of the National Training Programme for School Sport Co-ordinator Partnerships. Through this, Adele has developed her subject leader knowledge in curriculum planning and assessment, and this has contributed to her generic skills as a primary teacher. Adele has also been supported by a local secondary teacher, who, as the School Sport Co-ordinator, has been able to help Adele develop the primary school's out-of-hours learning programme.

support that the Primary Strategy offers for learning and teaching, with approaches developed through Excellence in Cities to tackle deprivation. The Intensifying Support Pilot, working in the thirteen LEAs with the largest numbers of underperforming schools, has been doing this successfully. To take this further, we

are going to look at the funding set aside for targeted work with primary schools, and think about how it can best be used to make sure that all schools get the support they need. As we do this, we will maintain and develop the Excellence in Cities primary programme that is already operating.

Identifying the key priorities for music education

In the White Paper *Schools Achieving Success*, the Government pledged that, over time, all primary school pupils who wanted to should have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. We want to extend the statutory entitlement for music provided by the National Curriculum to include instrumental, vocal taster and foundation sessions for all pupils, followed by a period of free or low-cost instrumental tuition in small and larger ensemble groups.

Case Study: Sound Start

The Sound Start project in Croydon offers groups of up to 30 children the opportunity to learn together for a year. Classes are team taught by Music Service staff and a class teacher. Aspects of the National Curriculum, including

the development of singing skills, are covered so that tuition can take place during music curriculum time. Two primary Advanced Skills Teachers for music are helping to develop the project. This began as a band project at Elmwood Junior School, and training is being cascaded to other staff and eight projects covering strings, woodwind, brass, percussion, recorder, keyboard and guitar have started. Three projects have already performed at Fairfield Hall.

At the end of the year, pupils are offered small group tuition with specialist music teachers. They have the opportunity to continue their ensemble training through the Music Service-organised area string, band, guitar and recorder workshops, and popular music centre.

3.14. Some of the funds may also be used to meet general needs – for example, to help strengthen leadership throughout the sector, to support gifted and talented children in every school, or to underwrite the introduction of modern foreign languages at Key Stage 2.



Learning – a focus on individual children

Summary

Learning must be focused on individual pupils' needs and abilities. Assessment for learning is a powerful tool for making sure that learning fits individual needs. A focus on individual children will help to mainstream support for children with particular needs. Focusing on individual children's learning also means making sure that their progress is not hampered by school structures – making transfer and transition into primary school, between schools and years, and into secondary school as smooth and successful as possible.

FITTING LEARNING TO DIFFERENT CHILDREN'S NEEDS

4.1. Every teacher knows that truly effective learning and teaching focuses on individual children, their strengths, their needs, and the approaches which engage, motivate and inspire them.

4.2. The new Primary Strategy will actively support more tailoring of teaching to individuals. Most schools already use assessment for learning, which at its simplest is the idea that knowledge about individual children informs both the way they are taught and the way they learn. Assessment helps teachers set targets that genuinely reflect individual pupils' skills, abilities and potential, and can also help

them plan effective teaching. Some of the most effective practice involves children themselves in thinking carefully about their own progress – so that they are able to assess themselves, and work with teachers to set their own targets for improvement.

4.3. The Department's assessment for learning project aims to improve teachers' understanding and use of assessment for learning, and to ensure that schools get the most helpful data possible to do it, including through the 'autumn package' of information that is sent to schools.



4.4. Workforce reform will also be critical to helping teachers focus more attention on individual children's needs, with more adults in the classroom, and more time for teachers to plan and assess children's work.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

4.5. Increasing the focus on individual children will serve every child; and it will be the single most important force in mainstreaming (without diluting) the support that is given to pupils with special educational needs. Ofsted's latest report for 2002 confirms that the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies continue to have a positive impact on the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and that the framework provides a clear

Case Study: Developing assessment for learning by involving pupils

"I think I'm ready for my 'Target Met' sticker!" At Wyndcliffe Junior School, Birmingham, children are expected to share responsibility for identifying learning targets and knowing when they have been met. Satinder has had a series of positive comments about her effective use of dialogue in her narrative writing, both through her teacher's comments in guided writing and from written comments on her work. She is confident in taking the lead in suggesting that this writing target has been met and will discuss this with her teacher before they agree the next step in her learning.

At Chase Terrace Primary in Staffordshire, children regularly work in pairs to review their work, using prompts which they have drawn up with their teacher at the start of the unit of work. Children are learning, through careful and thoughtful teaching, to be "positive critics" of their own work. By using specific prompts, "Remember today we are looking for..." the teacher focuses the children's self assessment carefully. Children read their partner's work, highlight relevant aspects and then discuss what has been achieved. The headteacher believes the school's culture of including children in carefully-planned peer assessment has a significant impact on learning, attitudes and behaviour.

structure for planning and assessing their progress. Their report also confirms that almost all pupils with special educational needs are included in the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson. The increasing use of teaching assistants in primary classrooms has also significantly improved the support given to children with special educational needs.

4.6. However, we remain concerned that the percentage of pupils below Level 3 has not decreased in recent years, despite this support. In response, we have developed a model of intervention for children experiencing difficulties in literacy or mathematics, based on three waves:

- Wave One: The effective inclusion of all pupils in a high quality, daily literacy hour and mathematics lesson (Quality First Teaching).
- Wave Two: Small group, low-cost intervention – for example, booster classes, springboard programmes, or other programmes linked to the National Strategies, like Early Literacy Support (ELS).
- Wave Three: Specific targeted intervention for pupils identified as requiring special educational needs support.

4.7. This model will help children early by making sure that they get the support they need in the classroom, while still giving those who need it an entitlement to a supportive, effective programme. We will report on new developments for

those who need special support in an SEN Action Programme due to be published later this year.

GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN

4.8. We need to take particular steps to serve the needs of gifted and talented children. This is integral to the Primary Strategy. Ofsted reports that provision is now good or better in almost half of primary schools and satisfactory or better in some 90% of primary schools. We need to build on the exemplary practice that already exists and strive towards consistently higher standards, so that all schools focus on consistently high expectations, and effective classroom differentiation by teachers across all subject areas. Provision for gifted and





talented children will be built into all subject strategies, including those for PE and sport, music and modern foreign languages.

4.9. We will encourage LEAs to support their primary schools consistently in working with gifted and talented pupils, and to develop groups and networks of schools that can work together to improve the range and quality of what they offer.

4.10. National support for gifted and talented children includes the national summer schools programme, World Class Arena, the optional teacher assessment tasks replacing extension tests, and our pilots of advanced learning centres. We expect the Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth to offer primary programmes from 2004-05, and in London, GATE A (the gifted and talented

education arm of the London Challenge), will offer regional support across all 33 LEAs.

MINORITY ETHNIC ACHIEVEMENT

4.11. Our education system must support all pupils well and not unintentionally discriminate against any particular group of pupils. Though many pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are already achieving at the highest levels, there is still a great deal to do. On the whole, children from Black Caribbean, Black African, Pakistani and White working-class backgrounds are still performing significantly less well than those from other groups. There is evidence too that black children, and particularly Caribbean heritage children, are up to four times more likely to be permanently excluded from school, and risk the longer term effects of disengagement from learning. And worryingly the performance of Black Caribbean pupils appears to get worse compared with that of other pupils as they go through primary school.

4.12. In March this year the Department issued *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils*, which consults on what can be done to help improve the performance of those from minority ethnic backgrounds. It identifies the following characteristics as key to schools successfully addressing this issue:

- Strong leadership, with headteachers and managers leading a strategy that is applied across the whole school.

- Effective learning and teaching, including in particular support for bilingual pupils.
- An ethos of respect, with a clear approach to racism and bad behaviour.
- Parental involvement, with parents and the community encouraged to play a full part in the life and development of the school.

4.13. Once again, a whole-school approach which focuses on meeting pupils' individual needs, and on using detailed information to set stretching and appropriate targets for each pupil will help to mainstream support for all pupils, whatever their level of need or ability, and whatever their sex, background or ethnicity.

BUILDING ON THE EARLY YEARS – THE FOUNDATION STAGE

4.14. The opportunity for all four year olds and, from April 2004, all three year olds, to participate in free, high quality early education provides a firm foundation on which to build future academic as well as social success.

4.15. A key part of our success in raising standards in primary school has been the professional force of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy – all experienced teachers – working alongside LEAs with support through training, guidance and materials of high quality. As part of the new Primary Strategy the professional force will be expanded to include experts

who will support LEAs in their responsibilities for the Foundation Stage.

4.16. As well as improving the training and support available for LEAs working with Foundation Stage providers, the extended role of the Primary Strategy will also bring benefits in helping ensure continuity of learning and teaching between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

We know that any transition from one stage of learning to another presents challenges for teachers. That is why we have worked from the beginning to try to ensure continuity between the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage and the Key Stage 1 programmes of study. Reception teachers can teach the elements of the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson flexibly over the day,



and are advised to have both lessons in place by the end of the year. The Foundation Stage Profile will give Year 1 teachers important information about children coming into their class, and help them plan effectively to meet their needs.

4.17. But we want to understand better whether there are still difficulties about the transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1, and whether teachers need more support. We want to hear the views of headteachers, and teachers of reception and Key Stage 1 classes. We will look closely at Ofsted evidence on early years teaching that will be available later this year.



4.18. In the medium term, we will:

- Identify good practice in this area and promote Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers on the basis of that good practice.
- Trial and develop an 'Early Years and Parents' project, to provide enhanced support to groups of children during the transition from Early Years settings to reception classes and Key Stage 1. The involvement of parents will be an important aspect of this support, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

TRANSFER AND TRANSITION

4.19. Schools and pupils face similar issues of transition as pupils move between key stages, or transfer between schools. Some will move from infant to junior school, or into a middle school, or will move schools for other reasons. It is important that schools have a range of strategies for dealing with difficulties around transfer and transition at all levels, to make sure that they do not lead to discomfort, disaffection or lost learning.

4.20. It has been an explicit objective of the Key Stage 3 Strategy to address the issue of transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. The recent Ofsted report *Changing schools – an evaluation of the effectiveness of transfer arrangements at age 11* noted that the early stages of the Strategy were prompting better liaison between primary and secondary schools about aspects of teaching. We have made good progress in improving the mechanisms for transferring data on

pupil progress between schools so that secondary schools can assess the needs of their new pupils better.

4.21. We will be publishing research later in the year conducted by the University of Cambridge which will provide evidence on which to base further work. The principles of learning and teaching set out in Chapter 3 will help ensure continuity in learning across the phases of education. The Key Stage 3 Strategy and the Primary Strategy will work together to support schools so that they can draw upon the examples of best practice available.



Partnership beyond the classroom

Summary

Excellent primary schools know that the work they do outside the classroom – with parents and the community, and on tackling vital issues like behaviour and school transport – is critical to helping children get the best from their learning. Partnership with parents is critical to helping children achieve as well as they possibly can; and closer links with the community, particularly through extended schools, help school and community to help each other. Primary schools have a critical role in teaching children positive behaviour, and must be supported in building strong approaches to behaviour into the way they teach and into the ethos of the school. Primary schools are also key to supporting children's health, including through the approach they take to school travel.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

5.1. Parents have a huge influence in setting aspirations and expectations for their children, and in stimulating their learning. Professor Charles Desforges' work (for the Department for Education and Skills, 2003) suggests that parental engagement can account for up to 12% of the differences between different pupils' outcomes, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development studies estimate that family social background accounts for 29% of variation in student achievement.²

5.2. There is a great deal of good practice in schools in working closely with parents (for example, through parent-teacher associations, regular meetings, and home-school contact books) and in involving parents in children's learning, through programmes like the Community Education Development Centre (CEDC) Share project, and the INSPIRE project, as well as through more regular activities like advising parents on reading with their children or helping them to learn their times tables.

² OECD figures come from PISA study, 2001. More details can be found at www.pisa.oecd.org

The INSPIRE project

INSPIRE (Involving School Parents in Reading and Maths) is a highly successful (average 87% of families involved) cost-effective parental involvement initiative run by Birmingham LEA across 345 of the city's primary schools and nurseries. It aims to improve home-school relationships and raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. 61% of schools reported that INSPIRE had led to longer-term raised attainment in literacy (through reading ages) and mathematics.



5.3. Different schools' approaches to parental involvement vary, but in general our primary sector is strong, compared with both secondary schools and other primaries internationally, at working with and engaging parents. Special educational needs provision is often particularly effective at engaging parents. The Department supports schools in involving parents closely through well-established initiatives like Home-School Agreements; by providing information to parents about their children's education (including the well-received parents' website: www.parents.dfes.gov.uk); and by offering schools guidance on involving parents.

5.4. There is also a great deal of work going on to engage parents as part of Sure Start, which takes a multi-agency approach to engaging parents very early. Levels of engagement during the early years are generally higher, with some evidence that some parents believe that once children go to school, it is mainly the school's job to educate them (in a tracking survey, around 23% of parents said they believed it was 'mainly the school's responsibility' rather than being 'mainly the parents' responsibility', or 'a shared responsibility').

5.5. It is right for detailed parental involvement strategies to be developed locally, so that they really meet local needs. But we also want to be sure that there is some consistency in the quality of the offer available to parents; and that where joining-up is needed, it happens (for example, in making sure parents get

the help they need with barriers to their involvement that are not obviously linked to education, like housing or drug problems). Support should be co-ordinated through local preventative strategies, which bring together all those agencies responsible for services for children, young people and families.

5.6. Taking this as a starting point, we believe that parental engagement work should:

- **Build on Sure Start and other Early Years programmes, particularly as children transfer from Early Years settings to school, so that it is clear to parents that they still have an important role.** Support for parents at key transition points can help to make sure that they remain engaged and informed across difficult joins, including at the beginning of school. We propose to trial support for parents during the transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1, focusing on children at risk, as part of a new 'Early Years and Parents' project.
- **Support parents in helping their children learn – through family learning projects and also support for parenting skills.** Parents should be offered access to a wide range of family learning programmes, including both 'traditional' family learning, and also parenting skills courses. There are many successful programmes in operation; the challenge at local level is to make sure that parents know about them and can access them. To support the Primary

Strategy, packs and videos are being developed for parents to borrow from school libraries, to explain what children are learning in each school year, and how parents can help them at home.

'Early Years and Parents' project

We propose to trial a project in Primary Excellence in Cities areas aimed at those children who start primary school with significant disadvantages in the areas they most need for success at school – language and communication, attention skills, reading and writing, and social skills. The project will focus particularly on very close working with parents.

The project will:

- Target the neediest children in the neediest schools, building on the work of Sure Start local programmes, where they operate.
- Bridge the transition from early years settings to primary school, and from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1, working within the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 curriculum, but offering those children who need it extra structure and adult attention.
- Bring experts – leading teachers – to work with teachers and other staff in schools and early years settings.
- Support parents in developing their children's skills.

- **Take a multi-agency approach to supporting parents in engaging with their children's learning**, and making sure parents' difficulties can be dealt with in the round. Being able to refer parents on to other understanding services – for example, debt-counselling – can have a real effect. Multi-agency training, with different professionals being trained together in how to support parents, could work powerfully to support this; and we are keen to look at the impact of home-school link workers. Extended schools, described in more detail below, will be effective in bringing support together.
- **Make it clear that parents have responsibilities too.** Parents must understand their responsibilities for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and behave well when they are there.



Case study: Learndirect at St Paul's Church of England Primary School

The **learndirect** centre at St Paul's Church of England Primary School in Loughborough was established in April 2002. It provides a welcoming and friendly environment for users of all ages and offers a variety of ICT learning opportunities, including enrolment on **learndirect** courses.

Catriona Kelly, acting centre manager, says: "Parental involvement has always been good at St Paul's, but the **learndirect** centre is really helping us to attract parents who are traditionally harder to reach. This takes time and we are using our UK Online status to operate taster 'Parents Online' sessions. The knock on effect of this really benefits the school, with more parents volunteering to help with their own children's IT sessions." This involvement has also been boosted by family and paired learning IT sessions which the school has been running for several years, which often encourage adults to progress to further learning. In its first year, the centre enrolled seventy learners from the local community on over one hundred courses.

LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY – EXTENDED SCHOOLS

5.7. As well as working closely with parents, primary schools must be closely linked to their local communities. They are and should be a community resource; and they can also benefit from those around them. Many make use of skilled adults from the local community – from volunteers from local businesses who read with children, to local police officers or firefighters who give talks and demonstrations about what they do. Many offer services to the community that go beyond their core educational function – childcare, adult learning, or meeting-spaces for local groups. Interchange between schools and the community benefits everyone and helps local people see the value in their local schools.

5.8. Extended schools support standards because they take a wider approach to supporting children's learning, with more opportunities for out-of-hours learning, and because they help build schools into the fabric of the local community. They offer easy access to a range of educational and other services for children, families and other members of the community. The Government's aim is that, over time, all schools will provide at least some of these services, and some schools will go further and offer a comprehensive range. The Department is already funding a major roll-out programme over the next three years from 2003-04. The programme has two main strands:



- Creating a network of “full service” extended schools – with at least one in every LEA in England by 2006. Each full service school will offer a prescribed core of childcare, study support, family and lifelong learning, health and social care, parenting support, sports and arts facilities, and ICT access.
- Support for LEA-level strategic planning to bring together community needs and services, and support for local management to establish and run extended services.

5.9. Extended schools, as part of wider local preventative strategies, will have a particularly strong role in supporting children and families at risk. The Green Paper on Children at Risk, which will be published later this year, will give more details.

STUDY SUPPORT

5.10. Study support (out-of-hours learning) covers a wide range of learning activities outside normal lesson time and young people participate voluntarily. It can include sport and outdoor activities, the creative arts, and clubs to develop interest and aptitude in areas such as mathematics, ICT and languages.

Playing for Success

Playing for Success (PfS) is a high profile study support initiative. Through PfS the Department and its partners, which include the FA Premier League, Football League and the two Rugby bodies, have established out-of-school hours study support centres at top football and other sports grounds. The centres focus on raising literacy, numeracy and ICT skills amongst Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils who are underachieving or in danger of doing so. 88 clubs are committed and 78 have opened centres so far. Our target of 100 centres by 2006 is likely to be exceeded. All four national evaluations have shown significant gains amongst children attending. For example, the latest evaluation published in April 2003 found that primary children's numeracy scores had improved by 17 months.

5.11. Study support makes a major contribution to the Government's strategy to raise educational standards. It also increases pupils' enjoyment of and engagement in their primary education. Research evidence shows that participation in study support can make a real difference – not only in respect of improved behaviour and attendance, motivation and self-esteem, but also establishing positive attitudes to learning which lead to increased attainment and ambition. Study support activities are particularly effective in easing the transition for pupils from primary to secondary.

BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

5.12. During the primary phase, children should learn to attend school regularly and punctually and behave well when they are there. This includes respecting others, working attentively and co-operatively, taking turns and avoiding conflict. As well as being valuable in their own right, these good habits prevent problems when children transfer to secondary school. While there is already a lot of good practice, primary school staff rate training in how to promote positive behaviour as one of their highest priority needs. This needs to cover teaching positive behaviour for all children, as well as working with children who show early signs of behaviour and attendance problems.

Case Study: Supporting good behaviour through out-of-hours learning

When the current headteacher of Robin Hood Primary School in Nottinghamshire took up post there were concerns about poor standards of behaviour, attendance and attainment. Low self-esteem was considered a problem for the majority of pupils. In partnership with The Manor School and Sports College, an extensive programme of out-of-hours learning was introduced, including football and basketball clubs.

Attendance on the programme has been linked to a whole-school rewards system, so good behaviour and hard work in class are required for attendance at all clubs. In

order to build on the interest generated, the headteacher now involves both children and their parents in decisions about what clubs should run. Some parents are particularly appreciative of the role the clubs play in extending the school day from 8am to 4pm, reducing their childcare costs.

Participation in the programme reaches 90% in some weeks, and staff report increased self-esteem amongst both pupils and their parents. Furthermore, Key Stage 2 results have improved to the extent that the school has recently received a School Achievement Award.

5.13. Teaching **positive behaviour for all children** means supporting good behaviour as part of the way children are taught. Primary schools will be able to draw on curriculum and training materials, which will be piloted in 25 LEAs. Working with these LEAs, we will:

- Produce curriculum materials for developing social, emotional and behavioural skills and fund schools to plan and manage their use and network with other local schools.
- Produce tools that schools can use to review their approach to behaviour and attendance, and materials to support the development of whole school policies, including those to combat bullying.





- Progressively make available behaviour and attendance training materials for schools.
- Fund a network of school-based leading behaviour teachers, and the secondment of one leading teacher per LEA to work with existing behaviour support teams in target schools where behaviour is a key issue.

5.14. We will also focus on **small group interventions** for primary pupils who need extra help in developing social, emotional and behavioural skills with parallel support for their parents and carers. In the 25 pilot LEAs we will fund specialist staff to develop small group work sessions for children in schools, also engaging parents and carers. This will complement other kinds of intensive support for primary

schools and pupils facing the greatest challenges, including Learning Mentors and multi-agency BEST teams.

5.15. The focus on managing behaviour in the classroom as part of learning and teaching will help schools to promote good behaviour as part of a whole-school approach, developing a school ethos where children know, wherever they are in the school – in the classroom, in the playground, in the corridor, in the dinner hall – what is expected of them and how they ought to behave. Citizenship in primary schools – particularly active citizenship, where children act as peer mentors or playground helpers to look after other children – can have a powerful impact on behaviour, and teach children practical lessons about responsibility and respect and care for others. Good management of out-of-hours learning, and of the ‘informal curriculum’ – time just before school, playtimes, and lunchtimes – is also critical to improving behaviour.

SCHOOL TRAVEL AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

5.16. If schools are to reduce the risk of accidents and widen participation in activities outside the normal school day, then they need to consider travel and access issues. Schools should work with the LEA to produce a school travel plan, which will allow them to identify their unique issues and potential solutions. Much of the work needed for a school travel plan, and later its maintenance, can be incorporated into the curriculum,

offering a valuable opportunity for pupils to influence the environment around them.

5.17. Approaches to school travel can also promote a healthier lifestyle for pupils. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is supported by the National Healthy School Standard, a joint initiative between the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health, as part of which local Healthy School Programmes provide support to schools in becoming healthier places for pupils and staff to learn and work.

Leadership in primary schools and the power of collaboration

Summary

Leadership is vitally important. School leaders, leadership teams and governors must be supported to be as good as they can be. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) provides important support for leadership; and the dedicated leadership programme as part of the Primary Strategy, which we hope in time to roll out to all primary schools, focuses on empowering headteachers to lead excellent learning and teaching across the curriculum. One of its most important features is the involvement of the Consultant Leaders – serving headteachers who work with others to support them. Networking and collaboration are important tools for supporting both leadership and school improvement, and we want to make sure every primary school has the chance to be part of a network. These networks should be the focus for the work of the Consultant Leaders; and will also be linked closely to a new 'Leading Practice' programme which will build on the work of the primary beacon schools.

EXCELLENT PRIMARY LEADERSHIP

6.1. Leadership is critical to school success. No part of our strategy for primary schools will be successful without excellent leadership from headteachers and their leadership teams.

6.2. Chapter 2 highlights the enormous (and valuable) diversity that exists in the primary sector. We know that managing a large urban school is very different from leading a small rural one, where the

headteacher may also be teaching full-time. There are, however, some common characteristics of excellent primary school leaders:

- High expectations for what they want their school to achieve for its pupils, both in terms of achieving high standards through a rich experience, and of the school's values and ethos.



- The professional expertise and self-confidence to lead the whole school team in building and improving a curriculum combining rich content with a wide range of learning and teaching strategies, and reflecting the values, ethos and context of the school.
- Being systematic and rigorous in using evidence to inform the development of teaching, and in particular ensuring there is a system in place throughout the school for setting appropriate targets for individual pupils and for monitoring their progress.
- Running their school as a learning community, with staff development embedded in the way the school is run, and with an outward looking attitude, ready to learn from others' good practice.

6.3. The quality of school leadership continues to improve every year. In its latest report, Ofsted judged leadership and management to be good or very good in 84% of schools, up from 54% in 1997-98. Concerns have been expressed about the number of applications for headteacher posts. But, while this needs to be monitored carefully, not least in terms of the quality of applications, the actual number of headteacher vacancies has declined over the last couple of years.

6.4. However, as we ask more of schools – so that they can offer more to children – we must make sure that we continue to support the school leaders who will make a reality of our shared vision. This is increasingly important as we offer more autonomy to schools, and ask them to take more control of what they are offering and how. We need to support heads in developing professional self-confidence so that they do not focus on 'complying' with the National Curriculum or the Primary Strategy, but on actively shaping both, to meet their own children's needs and improve their outcomes. The National Agreement, which offers time for leadership and management to those with management responsibilities, should help. Another very powerful tool will be headteachers and school leadership teams supporting and learning from each other.

6.5. It is important that we consider the whole of the school's leadership. In particular, the role of school governors, who offer their own time to help schools raise standards, must not be forgotten.

Governing bodies have a key role to play in school improvement and as part of the leadership team they can help to set appropriate achievement targets, make the best use of resources and make sure all staff have access to professional development opportunities.

NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

6.6. During the two years since its initial launch, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) has developed an innovative programme of leadership development opportunities for school staff and associates. One of the main features of the National College programmes is

Case Study: Advanced Skills Teachers supporting leadership

Sue Webb at Priory School in Slough was in one of the first cohorts to become Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs). She believes that the professional development she has had as part of the programme has made her a confident and valuable member of the Senior Management Team at her school, able to play a valuable part in contributing to the leadership of the school. Acting as the Creative Partnerships Coordinator, she led a project designed to use works of art as a stimulus to a cross curricular delivery of the foundation subjects.

Sue says: "Having spent a term planning, the project is now into its second term of actually working with the children and the results are incredible. The children are enjoying this way of working so much and are learning in so many different ways. It is a joy to see their faces and watch them attending lessons and tackling new challenges

with such enthusiasm. The staff, who worked so hard in the planning stage, are enjoying their teaching so much more. Walking around the school you will see rich, stimulating, high quality lessons, motivated, confident children and evidence on display of everyone's achievements.

For me, the AST role is one of the best things to happen to teaching ever. Instead of the only way forward for excellent teachers being the move to deputy and then headteacher, and losing direct daily teaching contact with children, they are now able to lead from within the classroom. I believe that part of the success of this project so far is that it has been lead by a teacher – someone who is in the classroom and who is going to face any challenges and difficulties along with everyone else. It's an example of an Advanced Skills Teacher leading the way."



that they support leadership throughout the school, not just individual headteachers. In September the College will be launching its 'Leading from the Middle' programme, for subject leaders, which will make a major contribution to developing the skills of middle level leaders in schools over the next few years. Supporting distributed leadership is key not just to helping schools make use of all the leadership resource they have, but also to developing the school leaders of the future.

6.7. The NCSL's Leadership Development Framework establishes five stages of leadership development (emergent, established, entry to headship, advanced and consultant), with a range of programmes at the various stages.

DEDICATED SUPPORT FOR LEADERSHIP AS PART OF THE PRIMARY STRATEGY

6.8. The NCSL is working with the Department to provide leadership training

to underpin the Primary Strategy. In 2003, primary schools in every LEA are being invited to take part in the Leadership Programme funded by the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and developed with the support of the NCSL. It will initially focus on schools identified as particularly needing additional support – but in time it will cover every primary school.

6.9. The programme focuses on leadership techniques for developing and improving teaching and learning across the school. It covers strategies for monitoring and observing teaching so that support can be targeted on those staff that need it most, and the use of performance information to track children's progress so that their individual needs can be supported. The focus is on enabling schools to develop their own monitoring and review systems to help them drive their own improvement self-sufficiently.

6.10. At the heart of the programme are the Consultant Leaders. These are serving headteachers who support those on the programme, offering advice but also challenge to help them look at their own systems and structures and think about what might be done better.

SUPPORTING PRIMARY SCHOOLS THROUGH COLLABORATION

6.11. We are confident that the Consultant Leaders will be a particularly valuable part of the programme, because they will support schools in learning from one another.

Examples of different types of collaboration involving primary schools

- **Federations** have a formal commitment to work together to raise standards through a legal change in governance arrangements. Some pump-priming funding is available to help establish federations, and there are a number of proposed federations that include primary schools. Schools can find more information at: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/federations
- **Excellence in Cities** partnerships, including **Education Action Zones** and **Excellence Clusters**, use school collaboration as a mechanism for getting the most out of other programmes to support schools in difficult circumstances. Headteachers particularly prize the collaborative aspects of Excellence in Cities programmes.
- **Specialist Schools** also offer primary schools an opportunity for collaboration. Many specialist schools share their expertise with partner primary schools, in particular language colleges which support modern foreign languages in primary schools, and sports colleges which support primary sport.
- **Outreach between special and mainstream schools.** Many primary special schools already provide outreach to mainstream schools, for example through sharing of expertise on working with children with a particular SEN, or with behaviour management.
- **Networked Learning Communities**, which have to put forward a clear programme of activity, around one or more specific and significant objectives or subjects, to enhance pupil achievement through pupil, staff and leadership learning, within and across the participating schools. The focus for the learning is decided by the schools themselves in the light of their needs and particular situation.
- **‘Breakthrough’ Groups**, a proposed pilot using a model which has been successful in the National Health Service. The potential of the model lies in its rigorous application of data to track changes and improvement, and the iterative process of problem mapping, solution design, testing and solution redesign. We propose to use this model for the next round of the Intensifying Support Pilot (described in Chapter 3) but it is also a model which groups of schools themselves might wish to adopt, and which we would be keen to support.

We know that collaboration between schools:

- provides schools with support structures, which are particularly valuable during times of change.
- Offers benefits to pupils and staff, creating an environment for powerful teaching and powerful learning.
- Encourages innovation and the spread of good practice.

6.12. Collaboration may be more or less formal, ranging from informal information exchange on an ad hoc basis to the legal establishment of formal governance arrangements. There are a wide range of collaborative projects which offer opportunities to primary schools.

6.13. We believe that schools benefit particularly from networking

arrangements that are tightly focused on helping schools learn from one another; but that different models are right for different schools, and for different purposes. But not all primary schools have access to a network or collaboration at the moment, and they should.

6.14. These networking arrangements will often be most effective when schools themselves are in the driving seat. But LEAs are well-placed to co-ordinate the arrangements that exist, and help to bring schools together, so that every primary school has the chance to benefit from working collaboratively without forcing a 'one-size-fits-all' model on everyone, or cutting across existing partnerships that are working well.

LEADING PRACTICE

6.15. This fits well with asking LEAs to take forward arrangements for identifying 'Leading Practice', following on from the beacon schools programme. We know that many schools have been concerned that without any dedicated funding, the benefits of the beacon programme may be lost. We have listened to these concerns and thought carefully about our planned arrangements for replacing primary beacon schools.

6.16. We intend to develop a new 'Leading Practice' programme for primary schools, with common national criteria and branding. It will be focused on identifying outstanding work in particular areas, within schools that are performing well



across the board – for example, a school might be recognised for its leading practice in managing behaviour; in Key Stage 2 science teaching; in Foundation Stage practice; or in working with parents. The criteria will be built into a self-assessment model like those that many schools already use, so that schools themselves can judge when they are ready to apply to have their leading practice recognised. The LEA, using the national criteria, will have a role in assessing the applications, but more importantly, in working with the ‘Leading Practice’ schools to look at how they can be built into local networking arrangements so that the focus is on how they spread their good practice to others across the networks.

6.17. The involvement of LEAs in a co-ordinating role will also mean that the work of the Consultant Leaders can be married up with networking arrangements. The Primary Strategy Manager in each LEA will, through his or her work on the new Strategy, and close work with the school improvement service, be responsible for making sure that the way the Consultant Leaders are used fits sensibly with the various networking arrangements within the LEA.

6.18. This means that schools can develop diverse networking arrangements which meet their different needs, but that the LEA will take responsibility across the board for making sure that the arrangements are coherent, that every school is offered some networking

opportunity, and that the range of networks each fit sensibly with mechanisms for spreading ‘Leading Practice’, and for supporting leadership. LEAs will be asked to describe how they will do this as part of their LEA compacts with the Department.

Managing school resources: workforce reform in primary schools

Summary

Workforce reform will be a vital part of a continuously improving primary education system. Freeing teachers to teach and making sure that every child has the support from adults that they need in order to succeed could not be more important. Primary schools are in a good position to make the most of workforce reform, and we will support them in doing so. We also expect empowered primary leaders to look carefully at how they use all their resources across the school.

REMODELLING THE SCHOOL WORKFORCE

7.1. Primary schools are in the lead on workforce reform. They make excellent use of teaching assistants and other support staff and know the value of adults other than teachers in the classroom. In a survey carried out by the Department,³ seven out of ten of the headteachers asked said that they had more than one member of support staff for each teacher in the school; and that the number of hours worked by support staff in the classroom had increased over the last 3 years. 97% of

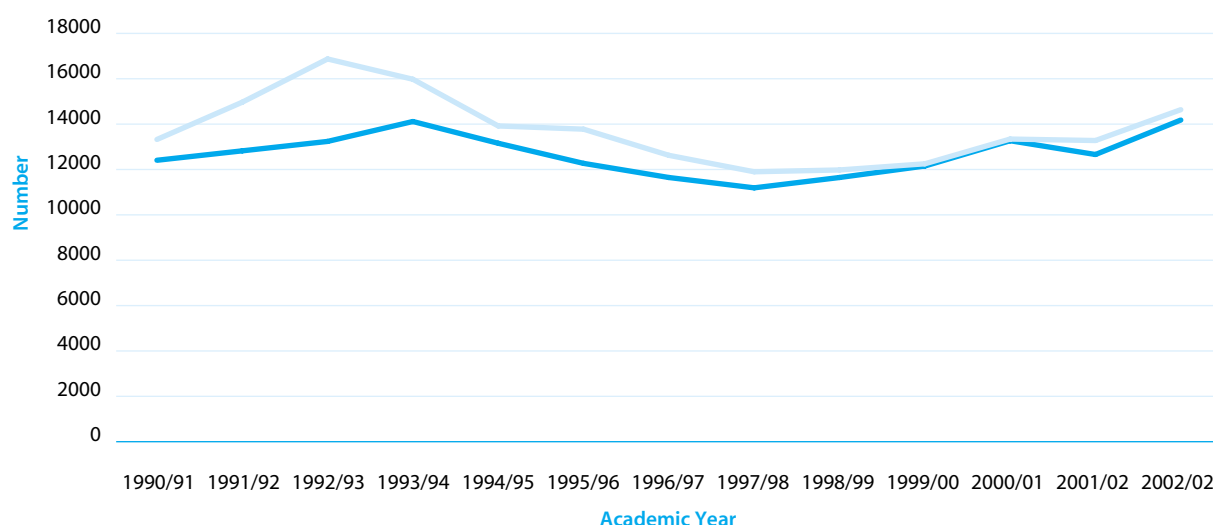
those said that the increase had improved learning and teaching in the school. These figures begin to demonstrate both the strides that have been made, and the potential of workforce reform.

7.2. In addition, teacher numbers are growing and the quality of teachers and teaching, according to Ofsted, is improving:

- Since 1997, the full-time equivalent number of primary teachers has increased by 3% – from 200,000 to 205,900 with part-timers up by 27%, at a time when pupil numbers have declined by over 2%.

³ The poll was carried out by Continental Research in April/May 2003. Over 600 primary headteachers and deputy headteachers across the country were asked about their use of support staff.

Recruitment to primary initial teacher training against allocated places in England: Academic Year 1990/91 to 2002/03



Source: TTA

- Primary recruitment targets have been met or exceeded in virtually every year over the last decade, as the graph above shows.
- We expect Ofsted's forthcoming report on initial teacher training (ITT) to signal that standards of primary ITT are good and getting better.

7.3. Taken together, the distance the primary sector has already travelled and the strength of the teaching force mean that workforce reform presents a particularly valuable opportunity for primary schools. With growing numbers of increasingly well trained support staff, including teaching assistants, teachers have the opportunity to stop doing those tasks which distract them from the vital processes of teaching, planning and leading children's learning.

7.4. The National Agreement aims to make sure that increasing numbers of support staff, and ICT, are used in a way which helps improve standards and also reduces teachers' workload so that they have more time to spend on their most important tasks. Our survey showed that the way support staff were used strongly influenced the effect they had. Almost all headteachers thought that support staff used for learning and teaching raised standards. Over half the headteachers thought that more administrative staff helped reduce workload; and seven out of ten thought that staff supporting behaviour and attendance reduced teacher stress.

7.5. Workforce reform goes hand in hand with curriculum enrichment. Higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs), working under a framework of supervision and direction

The core elements of the National Agreement on Workforce Reform are:

1. Phased changes to the teacher's contract, published for consultation:
 - Routine administrative tasks removed from September 2003.
 - Limit on cover from September 2004.
 - Guaranteed non-contact time from September 2005.
 - Leadership and management time for those with management roles.
 2. More support:
 - There are 50,000 (70%) more support staff in primary schools this year than in 1997, and the trend will continue.
 - Standards for higher level teaching assistants have been published for consultation alongside regulations clarifying safeguards.
 - Induction training materials for all support staff will be available from September.
 3. Less bureaucracy
 - Training for bursars is rolling out, with certificate level training particularly aimed at primary schools. 90 primary bursars have already been trained.
 - The Implementation Review Unit has been established with a panel of serving headteachers, who have real power to influence the design and implementation of national policies.
 - Jointly agreed primary lesson planning guidance (attached as an Annex).
 - Communications – fewer mailings, and enhanced electronic services.
 - Data collection – removing duplication with an agreed common basic data set.
- More details of the agreement are available at:
www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling

from the teacher and headteacher, can not only free up teachers' time, but can also bring a wealth of expertise to help bring the curriculum alive. The Department has asked the Teacher Training Agency to develop a training programme for Higher Level Teaching Assistants. This training must be rigorous enough for the responsible role intended and be designed to support the classroom teacher – who will remain responsible for the learning programme – in raising pupil achievement. It will be piloted this year, and more widely available from April 2004.

7.6. We are confident that primary schools will continue to lead the workforce reform agenda, and will embrace the promise of the agreement. They are in a very strong position. But we know that there are also particular challenges for primary schools in taking the next steps on workforce reform:

- Schools are starting from different positions. In many schools, creating 10% planning, preparation and assessment time (non-contact time) for teachers by 2005 will mean significant changes, because at present they have very little non-contact time.



- There are particular issues for small and rural schools. In small schools opportunities to redistribute work are limited because there are fewer staff. We will actively support small schools in collaborating with others to share staff

(perhaps specialist teachers or teaching assistants) in order to help create non-contact time.

7.7. We also know that schools are reluctant to take what they perceive as radical steps, like using teaching assistants to lead whole classes. Our survey showed that 96% of schools use teaching assistants to work with individual pupils, and 99% to work with small groups. Already, one in ten of the schools surveyed are using teaching assistants to cover classes in the absence of teachers; and almost one in twenty use them regularly to lead whole class groups. It is clear that there are already the beginnings of a move towards using teaching assistants in these more flexible ways, even before our support for HLTAs has been put in place. We expect the Agreement to make this kind of use of teaching assistants easier and more common.

Case studies: Creative use of staff

In one of the 31 schools visited by Ofsted in researching *The Curriculum in Successful Primary Schools*, a teaching assistant ran a knitting club in which pupils knitted clothing to dress dolls and teddies for charity. The activity was so popular it was attended by almost half the pupils in the school, including many boys.

In a large urban school, in which a third of the pupils were learning a musical instrument, pupils played together in string, brass and woodwind ensembles.

In addition, the music co-ordinator taught a class, but was given regular non-contact time to train and conduct the 80-piece orchestra.

In other schools, swimming, French, Italian, painting and ceramics also benefited from specialist inputs from part-time teachers. In the case of the art activities, the part-time teachers co-operated with the class teachers and planned their input to complement the topics the pupils were studying.

SUPPORT FOR WORKFORCE REMODELLING

7.8. Change must be led from within, in a way which makes best use of resources and meets schools' needs. But remodelling will often require collaboration between schools. LEA remodelling facilitation teams will help with this, working closely with the Primary Strategy team, particularly the Consultant Leaders. This will be integrated closely with the approach to networking outlined in Chapter 6.

Lent Rise: Case Study

At Lent Rise Combined Primary School in Burnham, the teaching assistants lead class groups to deliver Additional Literacy Support (ALS) and Further Literacy Support (FLS). At Key Stage 2, teaching assistants work with half the class whilst the teacher works with the rest of the class in the ICT suite. Those involved with the early years also take half classes for practical work in partnership with the teacher. The school also uses one member of support staff to do all photocopying to reduce the administrative burdens on the teachers.

The teaching assistants contribute to assessment procedures and deliver tests. They have also developed their own handbook which explains their role to new staff and parents.

7.9. And at the national level, a 'national remodelling team' will take responsibility for the overall development and quality assurance of training and guidance to support remodelling. Again, the emphasis will be on continuous professional development – building capacity and confidence so that teachers and headteachers can shape their own approach to workforce remodelling and to the management of more diverse teams of people in schools.

7.10. We heard from headteachers at the primary conferences that their main concerns about school remodelling were about resources. In his statement on school funding on 15 May 2003, the Secretary of State made it clear that workforce remodelling would be a priority for future funding, and that the Government would ensure that it could be sustained.



Realising the vision

Summary

This document has laid out a great many challenges for primary schools. But it is not enough for Government to set challenges. It must work actively – with local government and others – to support schools in making the vision a reality. The challenge is to do this in an empowering, rather than a directive, way. LEAs and consultants are an important part of the picture; and we know that resources from Government are critical to supporting primary schools. We also know that unless we have a real dialogue with teachers and headteachers, and work with them to develop the vision and plan how we take it forward, we cannot succeed.

SUPPORT FROM LEAS

8.1. In order to make a reality of this vision, we need to support it at all levels. Schools are, of course, the ones who will make all the difference. But the experience of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in particular has shown the difference that a committed 'field force' at LEA level can make. We want to support schools at this level, and make sure that the 'field force' is coherent and well co-ordinated so that they can best serve the needs of schools and pupils.

8.2. External support and challenge to primary schools to improve the quality of learning and teaching can provide both opportunities for innovation and economies of scale. Within the primary sector LEAs have a critical role in:

- Providing local strategic **leadership** and setting a vision for improved performance.
- Working with schools to analyse performance and identify strengths and weaknesses – **supporting and challenging schools** which are underperforming or at risk of failure and developing the leadership role of high performing schools.
- **Facilitating school networking** and federations to support school improvement and to develop innovative ways of remodelling the school workforce within and across schools.
- **Joining up beyond-the-school services** that impact on pupils, such as social services and area regeneration initiatives, so that there is greater coherence in provision.

8.3. Primary schools should also be able to access a range of support for school improvement from other middle tier providers of services.

SUPPORT FROM CONSULTANTS

8.4. Literacy and numeracy consultants have been key to the success of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and will continue to play a vital role as we consolidate the gains and make progress towards the 2006 targets. We want to make sure the new Primary Strategy is well placed to work with and through an extensive and well regarded professional team. As we have set out in the preceding chapters, we believe that the consultants' role should increasingly be to offer bespoke services to schools, helping them to build their own capacity,

rather than being seen as directing things from outside.

8.5. We will maintain the existing level of support for consultants until the end of the current spending review (2003-06), and work with LEAs and help them use their consultants more flexibly to support the priorities outlined in the new Strategy – with support for curriculum planning and development, for assessment for learning, and for all of the foundation subjects. There will be more contrast between bespoke support offered to successful schools, and more directive challenge and support for underperformance. Consultants will also be used to support networking.

8.6. The role of the new Primary Strategy Manager in each LEA will also be very important, as he or she takes responsibility for making sure that support for primary education is well co-ordinated and accessible.

RESOURCES TO UNDERPIN OUR STRATEGY

8.7. We know that our strategy cannot succeed if it is not properly resourced. We have raised the level of spending on education – and on primary schools – radically in recent years. Real-terms spending per primary and nursery pupil has risen by over 20% on average since 1997-98.

8.8. One common complaint about this extra funding was that a lot of it came in ring-fenced pots. We have responded to that concern by radically reducing the



number of ring-fences. We know that this has caused some turbulence in the system, particularly alongside local authority funding changes.

8.9. In his statement on school funding on 15 May 2003, the Secretary of State recognised the particular circumstances of 2003-04, both because of the extent of changes in the system for funding schools, and the one-off pressures relating to teachers' pensions and National Insurance. To ensure that these special circumstances do not adversely affect schools, he gave LEAs and schools jointly additional flexibility to use their devolved formula capital funding to support revenue expenditure this year, where all other options had been exhausted.

8.10. For the future, he reassured schools and LEAs that next year's settlement will offer them a clear and stable platform on which to deliver high standards of education. Many of the changes that have been introduced in 2003-04 will cause less turbulence in 2004-05. The Department's analysis of this year's settlement will underpin the introduction of changes to education funding for 2004-05.

8.11. The key priority will be to make changes that mean schools can all expect to receive a reasonable per pupil settlement in 2004-05. The Department will discuss with representatives of local government, teachers and headteachers, how best to ensure that:

- There are sufficient education funding increases for every LEA.

- The right balance is struck between support through general grant and through ring-fenced and targeted grant.
- We have confidence that schools and pupils will receive the money intended for them.
- The right balance is struck between in-school and out-of-school provision.
- Variations in the budget increases received by different schools within each LEA are appropriate and fair.
- Workforce reform, in line with the National Agreement, can be sustained.

8.12. The intention is to ensure that changes are in place in good time to allow schools and LEAs to plan for 2004-05 and so provide increased predictability and stability in school funding.



8.13. Many headteachers raised questions at the primary conferences about the split between funding for primary and secondary schools. The Department bases the split of funding in the Education Formula Spending system on the latest budget information from local authorities collectively. So the split reflects what authorities collectively are doing, which has shown a slow shift towards primary. Between 1997-98 and 2002-03 the assessment per pupil rose by 28% (in cash terms) in the primary sector as against 25% in the secondary sector.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

8.14. We know that our strategy will only succeed if we work in close partnership with those who will actually deliver it – with local authorities, schools,

headteachers, teachers, governors, parents, and pupils. We have set out our vision, but we want it to be a shared vision, so we welcome comments and views to help us shape our activity as we take it forward.

8.15. The vision set out in this paper builds on the series of primary conferences which we held in the spring, at which we took the views of primary headteachers from a wide range of different schools. We listened carefully to what they told us, and have reflected their views not just in what we have said about our strategy in this document, but in the substance of it.

8.16. We will be holding further conferences for primary headteachers over the summer and autumn, and hope to have spoken to at least 6,000 heads directly by the end of this year, and taken their views about our strategy. We also welcome written comments, which can be emailed to primary.document@dfes.gsi.gov.uk. And we intend to spread the dialogue more widely through online discussion on teachernet, on the Talking Heads site, and elsewhere.

8.17. This document is just the starting point for that vital dialogue, which will shape the future of primary education. We believe that this document begins to offer a blueprint for the future, but the building blocks of future success have been laid by teachers and headteachers, as they have driven the dramatic



improvements that have taken place over the last decade and more. It is they that will carry on building on that success. We know that they must share in the planning as well as in the execution if the project is to be as successful as our children deserve it to be.

Planning Guidance

Dear Colleagues

This guidance has been produced with teachers and headteachers to help reduce the time teachers spend on lesson planning. It is designed for your own reference and to promote discussion, leading, where necessary, to changes in practice.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers study of Teacher Workload (2001) found that most teachers would like to spend less time on planning. It also suggests that teachers produce more documentation than is necessary in the belief that it is required by Ofsted or LEA inspectors. This leaflet sets the record straight about what is expected by national authorities.

Planning is an essential aspect of teachers' work. All teachers need to plan what they will teach and how they will teach it, but spending excessive amounts of time on long, detailed plans does not necessarily lead to better learning and teaching. There is no prescribed format or length. For example, all that is specified in the Ofsted framework is that "teachers plan effectively, using clear objectives that children understand".

Teachers' time should be used for aspects of planning that are going to be useful **for their own purposes**, and which have a direct impact upon the **quality of learning and teaching**. Teachers should not spend time producing documentation that does not meet these two purposes. Nor should any teacher feel they have to start with a blank sheet when planning for the week ahead. As in other professions, experience can and should be shared. Collaborative planning can be liberating, supportive and effective. There are also many resources available that provide useful starting points and greatly reduce planning time.

It is hoped that where practice is already in line with this advice, schools will be reassured. Where it is not, schools should be encouraged to review their practice and this will hopefully lead to a consequent reduction in workload.

In summary, the effectiveness of teachers' planning should be judged by the quality of learning and teaching in lessons and the progress pupils make over time.



Charles Clarke



David Bell



Ken Boston

TEACHERS – EFFECTIVE PLANNING – LESS PAPERWORK!

How to cut unnecessary work in planning...

- **Your plans are for you and other professionals working with you.**

Occasionally, others will need to see your planning. When Ofsted inspectors arrive they will look for clear objectives that show your intentions for what children will learn and how these objectives will be achieved. Inspectors will not expect to find a particular model or format for planning; they will be much more interested in the impact of planning on your teaching and the children's learning.

- **You do not need to work alone when you are doing your planning.** Work with other colleagues, draw on their specialist knowledge and involve teaching assistants where possible. Share out the planning between you if this is practicable. It will save time and stimulate discussions.

- **You do not need to start from scratch with a blank sheet of paper.** Good quality plans are already available, such as National Numeracy Strategy Unit Plans and National Literacy Strategy medium term plans and planning exemplification, plans written by colleagues and plans on the web. For medium-term planning, the QCA schemes of work contain the detail you need for each subject. It is not necessary to write things out again; QCA schemes, for example, can easily be converted into lesson plans if accompanied by post-its, notes and annotations to add detail of your own. Planning in this way will meet with Ofsted's approval providing it has a positive impact on learning and teaching.
- **As you write your plans, think about what you are going to assess.** Be selective, focus on the key aspects of learning that you wish to assess, and highlight these on your plan. Then use a simple system for recording children's progress. Link curricular targets to your plans for groups of pupils and some individuals.

The use of ICT can reduce planning time substantially in the long term. It makes it much easier to share plans with colleagues, and also to re-use, copy or adapt plans.

HEADTEACHERS – HOW TO HELP MAKE PLANNING MORE EFFICIENT...

- **It is important to monitor the quality and impact of teachers' planning.** This does not mean that you need to see everyone's plans each week. Looking at plans is one part of a strategy for improving learning and teaching. You might sample plans with a focus on particular year groups or subjects, linking this sampling with lesson observations and discussion with teachers. This will also help you to identify particular teachers who need extra support.
- **Build ICT capacity in the school.** Although some teachers may be reluctant initially to use a computer for planning, the long-term benefits for workload and classroom practice are beyond doubt.
- **A standard form of presentation is not a necessity and can cause unnecessary work for teachers!** It is more important to ensure that key elements of planning are consistent across all classes. As teachers become familiar with these, they can concentrate on the content of the plans rather than their presentation. Common key elements make it easier to share and monitor plans.
- **Encourage teachers to use and adapt existing plans.** Plans that have been used effectively in the past or high-quality materials available from different sources, such as the National Numeracy Strategy Unit Plans and National Literacy Strategy medium term plans and planning exemplification, can be adapted to meet the needs of the class. Less time is then spent on duplicating plans.

www.teachernet.gov.uk/remodelling