THE NUFFIELD REVIEW OF

14-19

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Annual Report

2004-05

This Report is also available electronically at the website address below.

Contact details

Professor Richard Pring
Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training
University of Oxford
Department of Educational Studies
15 Norham Gardens
Oxford OX2 6PY

Tel   +44 (0)1865 274037
Email   info@nuffield14-19review.org.uk
Website   www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk

THE NUFFIELD REVIEW OF

14-19

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Annual Report

2004-05

Geoff Hayward, Ann Hodgson, Jill Johnson
Alis Oancea, Richard Pring, Ken Spours
Stephanie Wilde, Susannah Wright

October 2005

Contents

Figures and Tables

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the many individuals who contributed to this Report. In particular:

- The Nuffield Foundation for funding the Review and for hosting the many working days and meetings
- Catrin Roberts at the Nuffield Foundation for her advice and support, and Velda Hinds, also of the Nuffield Foundation, for her continuing administrative support
- Joanne Hazell, who has managed the Review throughout the year and the production of the Annual Report
- Ewart Keep, who, despite having resigned from the Directorate because of pressure of work, has continued to support the Review
- David Egan, whose advice on developments in Wales has been essential for the Review
- Martin Roberts for undertaking the case study of an LEA
- The Advisory Committee, chaired by Sir David Watson, for their invaluable advice and support (listed in Appendix VIII)
- The members of Strand I of the Review whose papers and contribution to the discussions of evidence are incorporated in Chapter Three of the Report, listed in Appendix X
- The following contributors to Strand II of the Review (Chapter Four of the Report): Dan Hayward and Stephanie Sturdy
- The members of Strand III of the Review, who are listed in Appendix X and whose contributions and papers have been incorporated in Chapter Five of the Report
- The members of the Core Group, listed in Appendix IX

Foreword

This second Annual Report of the Nuffield 14-19 Review concentrates on examining more deeply the three main questions raised in the first Report. What are the aims of education in the 14-19 phase? Which of our young people are participating and progressing within the current system?   How could the system be changed to enable more of them to do so?

Provisional answers, based on a mass of detailed evidence and analysis, are beginning to be formulated and are contained in this Report. However, at this stage the authors present them only tentatively, aware that the complexity of the issues is such that the ideas need to be thoroughly tested before the widest possible audience of expert opinion. Thus, the consultative style that has been so much a feature of the Review will continue into its third year, together with further commissioning of evidence and research.

Complex the issues certainly are, yet certain themes are emerging with great clarity. One is the lack of connection between policy and rhetoric on the one hand and what is actually happening on the other. Despite the high-profile initiatives of successive governments, for instance, the amount and quality of vocational learning have declined over the last twenty years. Another is the increasing polarisation between different institutions and the way in which this starkly reflects social inequality.

However, the Report suggests that there are grounds for optimism in some of the innovative and collaborative work taking place at local level. Part of the work of the Review will be to capture and record as much of this as possible, and to make it more widely known over the coming year.

Anne Sofer
Trustee, Nuffield Foundation

October 2005

Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction

The Nuffield Review

The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training for England and Wales was launched in October 2003. It is designed to be independent and comprehensive. Every aspect of 14-19 provision is included – not only the current concern about qualifications reform, but also the aims which should underlie such reforms, the appropriate learning experiences of young people, the connections between education, training and employment, and the institutional framework.

The Review is led by a Directorate of Richard Pring and Geoff Hayward from the University of Oxford's Department of Educational Studies; Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours from the Institute of Education, University of London; Jill Johnson from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS); and Ewart Keep from the University of Warwick Business School. They are assisted by three research officers, Alis Oancea, Stephanie Wilde and Susannah Wright. The project manager is Joanne Hazell.

The Review comprises an extensive network of people drawn from schools, further education (FE) colleges, higher education institutions (HEIs), teachers' unions and professional associations, employers, private training providers, voluntary organisations and government departments and agencies. A list of the many people involved is given in Appendices VI, VII and VIII. In this way, the Review draws upon a wide range of research and experience in the development of its findings and analysis. At the end of each of its three years, the Review produces an Annual Report which summarises the issues as seen by the Directorate in the light of the evidence obtained. The findings and analysis of the Review remain, especially at this stage, tentative and provisional. They are put forward with a view to stimulating debate and inviting critical scrutiny from the readers of the Annual Report. In such a complex and controversial matter as the development and reform of the 14-19 system of education and training, it is unlikely that any group of people can arrive at 'the right answer' or have total confidence in the proposals they make. At the same time, the Review can have better grounds for confidence if the views expressed have been subjected to and have survived open and rigorous criticism. It is in this spirit that the second Annual Report has been written.

Issues and questions

The first Annual Report suggested that, at a time of intense activity over the 14-19 phase of education and training, careful scrutiny was required of: the purposes which underpin the changes within this phase; the provision of learning experiences; the progression or otherwise of young people; the performance of the learners and of the system of education

and training; the institutional framework and policy mechanisms which drive its behaviour; and the policies which shape the practice.

The key findings from the first year of the Review, which were set out in the overview of the first Annual Report, were:

1. The Review recognises the importance of debating and articulating a broad educational vision and a clear set of values and purposes to underpin 14-19 education and training which go beyond the current focus on skills, economic relevance and measurable targets.

2. Participation rates amongst 16-19 year-olds have not increased for a decade and a significant proportion of young people continue to leave the education and training system early. As a consequence, England and Wales still compare unfavourably with other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in terms of participation rates.   Increasing participation and retention is not just a curriculum problem. It concerns also:
    *   the relation of student choice to the demands of the labour market and to the currency of qualifications gained;
    *   institutional arrangements which too often restrict flexibility and progression.

3. Young people's decisions (over pathways, courses or employment) and the factors that affect them are complex and poorly understood. In particular there is much to be learnt about the needs of the significant minority of young people who are disengaged from formal education and training, but for whom the labour market continues to provide low-paid, low-skilled jobs which require few, if any, formal qualifications.   To re-engage them, close attention must be given, first, to their voices as they make clear their concerns and aspirations, and, second, to enriching learning experiences.   To this end, lessons must be learnt from past and present initiatives which have succeeded but which are excluded from mainstream education.

4. There is the danger of polarisation between the academically successful on the more prestigious pathways (with clear progression routes into higher education (HE) and employment) and those on the 'weakly vocational' pathways (where progression is not clear and many drop out). Reform of 14-19 education and training must reverse this polarisation. To aid this, more in-depth qualitative studies are required on the hidden selection which takes place within different kinds of post-16 institutions. In addition, the false dualism between the academic and the vocational, which distorts the aims of education and leads to the devaluation of practical forms of learning, must also be constantly challenged.

5. The quality of work-based and work-related learning is uneven, despite the importance increasingly and uncritically attached to them in the development of more flexible patterns of learning and qualifications. Getting a more accurate picture

of the different patterns of work-based and work-related learning is urgent, if these are to contribute to the improved quality of learning.

6.   Partnerships between schools (of all kinds), colleges, HE, employers, private learning providers and funding agencies are crucial for the development of 14-19 education and training. But such partnerships have to overcome the fragmentation of a system arising from a competitive ethos and different funding arrangements.

7.   Problems arise in the 18-plus examinations from the attempt to meet very different demands – to provide criteria for entry to HE, to inform employers of applicants' competences, to reflect on what has been learnt, to provide incentives, to make the system accountable and so on. The extent to which such diverse purposes or functions can be served within a unified framework of qualifications needs to be explored.

8.   A key absence in the debate about 14-19 education and training is the role and responsibility of employers. For example, the complex pattern of employers' involvement in 14-19 education and training is not clear. It is important to clarify their contribution to work-based and work-related learning, their use of qualifications, their involvement in education and training partnerships, and their needs for different levels of skills. Both the gathering of scattered data and the collection of new data (region by region and occupational sector by occupational sector) are key tasks to be undertaken.

9.   There has been too much discontinuity of policy (for example the failure to draw lessons in 1988 from the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative or TVEI) and too many abortive attempts to reform qualifications (for example the Dearing 16-19 Report's recommendations for qualifications reform). Experience demonstrates the difficulties in changing a complex and inter-related system of institutions responding to different demands and stakeholders. There is a need to examine the most effective way of managing change, including the limited role of target-setting and the use of various 'levers' and 'drivers'.

10. There is currently no statistical information available that covers the whole of the 14-19 phase in a coherent way. This limits our ability to investigate patterns of progression of young people through this part of the education and training system and the factors that affect their decision-making at key transition points.

Given these emerging issues, the Review was to be guided in its second year by the following overarching questions.

1.   What educational values and criteria should guide future 14-19 developments?

2.   What additional data do we need in order to understand more thoroughly learner movement and performance within the emergent 14-19 phase and how might these data be obtained and used to inform policy and practice?

3.   How might we make further use of international comparative data as a lens on 14-19 system performance in countries across the UK?

4.   What kind of curricula and learning experiences might be needed in the 14-19 phase to meet the needs and aspirations of all young people and of the wider society?

5.   In what ways has the learner's voice been articulated in relation to research, policy and practice in 14-19 education and training, and how might young people's contribution in these areas be enhanced?

6.   What institutional arrangements might be necessary to underpin clear and effective progression routes for all 14-19 year-olds?

7.   How far will current government reforms address the underlying issues affecting equity, participation, progression and attainment in an emerging 14-19 phase?

8.   What can be done to strengthen vocational education and training and to what extent can this be achieved by current or proposed reforms?

9.   What lessons about policies, policymaking and policy implementation for the 14-19 phase can be learnt both from the past and from the different policy processes in and across the countries which make up the UK and beyond?

10.   How might we measure performance – across the 14-19 system as a whole; at the level of individual institutions; and at the level of young people themselves?

To answer these questions, the Review was organised into three strands:

Strand I: Aims, Learning and Curriculum (questions 1, 4, 5 and 7)
Strand II: Participation and Progression (questions 2, 3, 7 and 10)
Strand III: Institutional Dimension of 14-19 Education and Training in England (questions 6, 7, 8 and 9)

As so often happens, the pursuit of goals itself transforms the conception of the goals themselves. These questions guided the beginning of the respective investigations. But, in many respects, those investigations took on a life of their own, in some cases going beyond the questions as posed or posing other, more appropriate ones. Therefore, the account of each Strand, in Chapters Three, Four and Five, instead of directly answering the above questions, refines or rephrases them and lists the key issues and provisional conclusions which relate, directly or indirectly, to the original questions.

Chapter Two

Context

Context

The first Annual Report listed in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 the relevant government publications, strategy documents and qualifications changes in England and Wales over the last ten or so years. These have been updated in Appendix II of this Report. They reflect a great and often bewildering number of initiatives, some not very long-lived. They reflect, too, a growing difference between England and Wales as similar problems are tackled in different ways: for example, in the development of the Welsh Baccalaureate, the wider range of studies in the Welsh core curriculum and the greater involvement of the community in the development of the Welsh Learning Pathways.

The last year has seen yet further government publications and policy developments. Clearly the most significant ones in England have been the publication of the report of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)-commissioned but independent Working Group on 14-19 Reform, chaired by Mike Tomlinson, which published its final report (the Tomlinson report) in October 2004; and the response to this report in the recommendations of the DfES White Paper *14-19 Education and Skills* and the DfES Green Paper *Youth Matters* – both published in 2005.

The Tomlinson report argued for a unified system of qualifications and a "strongly collaborative approach" to the delivery of that system. As is explained in Chapter Five, the report had six key proposals: a vision of a modernised upper secondary curriculum which would be inclusive; a unified multi-level system of diplomas and credit for all 14-19 year-olds; programmes of study conducted around core and main learning; assessment for learning rather than for accountability; performance measures at 18/19 related to a geographical area to encourage institutional collaboration; and a long-term process of reform. The report received widespread agreement from schools within both the state and the independent systems, from FE colleges, from HE and from employers. And indeed, in anticipation of the report, many collaborative ventures were taking place within the system.

The White Paper *14-19 Education and Skills*, published in February 2005, argued for a stronger foundation at Key Stage (KS) 3, a strong core 14-19 and a new system of diplomas. It was seen by most commentators as a deep disappointment. By insisting upon the preservation of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and the General Certificate of Education (GCE) at Advanced Level (A Level) as independent awards in their present form, the government would seem to have rejected the idea of a unified system of qualifications. Furthermore, most commentators interpreted the creation of separate vocational routes from the age of 14, leading to specialised Diplomas, as a reinforcement of a divided system.

Not long before the first Annual Report was completed, the DfES produced a Green Paper, *Youth Matters*, which heralds the provision of more opportunities, challenges and support for young people.

The DfES White Paper *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners,* published in July, 2004, though mentioned in the first Annual Report, came too late for proper reference. But it is important for what has subsequently happened. Among other proposals, it encourages greater institutional autonomy and self-determination – increasing specialist schools and academies with their own admissions arrangements and streams of funding. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), HM Treasury and DfES White Paper *Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work* (published in March 2005 and described as "closely linked to the proposals in our recent White Paper on education and training for 14-19 year-olds", p.10) speaks of applying "the principle of contestability as an important way of driving up quality". It can only be assumed that "contestability" means greater competition between providers to meet learners' needs. However, at the same time, the 2005 DfES White Paper seeks to promote greater collaboration in order to increase choice of provision for l4-19 year-olds, in particular the offer of vocational education.

Meanwhile, there have been a number of developments with regard to qualifications affecting 14-19 year-olds. These include at advanced level the restructuring of the Advanced Subsidiary Vocational Certificate of Education (ASVCE) and Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) to fit within the same structure as their 'academic' counterparts for first teaching in September 2005. New applied GCSEs are being offered in a number of areas, including subjects which have traditionally been seen as part of the academic curriculum, (e.g. English and English studies, French, geography, history and science), with a view to making these subjects more accessible and relevant to young people's concerns, and in several vocational subjects General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) are being phased out. The Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (university award – Level 3), first awarded in 2004, is now recognised for funding and Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) points, relating to the content of the wider Key Skills and the communication Key Skill.

Hence, the context within which the Review is working is one of mixed messages: greater autonomy leading inevitably to greater fragmentation, on the one hand, and yet exhortation to greater collaboration, leading in some cases to 'federations' of schools on the other; attempts to strengthen vocational awards, and yet doing so by assimilating them to the academic structure; proposals for a more unified system in the Tomlinson Report, and yet the creation of a deeper divide in the 14-19 White Paper.

At the end of the first year of the Review, there was widespread hope that, following the Tomlinson Report, there would be promise of a step change towards a coherent 14-19 phase in terms of a more unified system of qualifications, the development of more holistic learning programmes, greater collaboration between providers, greater flexibility and choice

for young people within a single framework and a more formative approach to assessment. Many feel that these hopes have not been realised, despite the continuing output of policy statements and developments of qualifications.

There are many different contexts within which policy operates, local, sub-regional, regional and national, and they are not always in tune with each other. What, however, has been brought to the attention of the Review, is the way in which much creative work in schools and colleges, supported by WBL providers and voluntary organisations, is being pursued at the local level, often against the grain of national policy. All this seems to many a continual busyness without a clear overall vision to shape the changes.

Following devolution of responsibility for education and training, interesting differences between Wales and England are emerging – although many of the problems identified in this Report are shared. The developing system in Wales is dealt with in detail by David Egan in his account of the 14-19 Learning Pathways programme[1]. But also arising is a more unified system of qualifications, reflected in the Welsh Baccalaureate, and a more deliberate fostering of collaborative partnerships – which England might scrutinise with profit.

---

[1] Egan, D. (2004, 2005)

Chapter Three

Aims, Learning and Curriculum

(Strand I)

Aims, Learning and Curriculum

Introduction

This chapter addresses central issues, which emerged from the first year of the Review, concerning the aims and values which should shape the learning experiences of those educated and trained post-14, and how these aims might be translated into the curriculum. The chapter arises from widespread discussion and consultation. It draws extensively upon evidence presented by inspection and other reports, upon concurrent work of such bodies as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), upon visits to schools, colleges and local education authorities (LEAs), and upon a wide range of research relevant to the Review. Much of that evidence is gathered in papers commissioned by the Review and available on the Review's website (www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk), or is referred to in the footnotes. Throughout the year, evidence and the tentative analysis and findings have been critically examined by a Core Group of teachers, head teachers, college principals, those involved with community and voluntary education, curriculum developers and researchers (see Appendix IX).

However, in an area where there is much divergence of views, the Review can do little more than present these views, point to the evidence where it exists and come to only tentative and provisional conclusions. These, it is hoped, will facilitate a wider, better-informed and more vigorous public debate about these important matters. This will take place in the third year of the Nuffield Review in a series of conferences and seminars.

Synthesising the evidence and discussions is not easy. It has been attempted, however, in what would seem to be a logical progression, even though that might not reflect the chronological order in which the ideas emerged. But here, as elsewhere, the 'logic of reporting' rarely reflects the 'logic of discovery'.

Hence, the chapter first draws attention to conflicting **aims and values** that underpin 14-19 education and training, and then to the historical **context** in which such considerations are made. To put it bluntly, we have been here before many times. Why, then, are these matters still a matter of controversy? The Review has tried to make explicit the many different **background concerns***, whether justified or not, which keep the public debate alive and vigorous. Before embarking on the **curriculum response***, in the light of recommendations received and practices witnessed, the Review has paid attention to the **learner's voice***, difficult though that is to generalise. The **curriculum response** spells out principles for the organisation not only of content but also of pedagogy. A strong message to the Review has been the failure of government and others within the system to attend to how best young people learn and are motivated to continue with their formal learning. The

remaining sections bring out the consequences: the role of the **assessment** and **qualifications** framework, the professional role and training of **teachers**, and the **institutional framework** (although this is dealt with at length in Chapter Five).

What has been made apparent to the Review is that, despite the many barriers which are identified in this chapter, there are schools and colleges, utilising the available qualifications and collaborating together and with voluntary agencies, which are seeking innovative and imaginative solutions. A system which appears rigid and unbending can respond to the different needs of young people as these are identified within schools and colleges. Indeed, the Chief Inspector of Schools in England predicted that

> practice might outstrip policy … schools and colleges are beginning to do more of the things that were envisaged [in Tomlinson] … There will come a point where we [ask]: Does the qualifications infrastructure now reflect emerging practice from the ground up?[2]

However, it is clear from the evidence brought to the Review that such "emerging practice" runs counter to much policy and requires a great deal of effort.

1. Aims and values

Government policy in England and Wales is reflected in a series of Green and White Papers and other documents within the last decade. Several overall policy aims affect 14-19 education and training:

- raising of standards particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy;
- greater social inclusion and participation;
- increased numbers progressing into HE;
- improved vocational training especially through a newly vamped apprenticeship system;
- increased choice of qualifications and institutions;
- greater involvement of employers in providing education and training, as is reflected in the responsibilities bestowed upon the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

On these there is broad agreement between England and Wales. Where Wales differs, under its ambitious 14-19 Learning Pathways programme, is in its commitment to fundamental reform of 14-19 education and training as a key element in the growing distinctiveness of its post-devolution education system.

But much more needs to be said about these as **educational** aims. 'Aims' embody the values to which we are committed and which underpin practice. They reflect the kind of life which is thought to be worth living, the personal qualities worth developing and the sort of

---

[2] Ford, L. (2005)

society worth creating. Everyone will agree about the importance of raising standards; the real argument concerns what count as 'standards', for 'standards' relate conceptually to the values which one believes are worth pursuing. Greater social inclusion and participation are important, but only if it is inclusion and participation in something which is judged to be worthwhile – and not everyone agrees that participation in the learning experience on offer is worthwhile for all young people. Hence, it is important to dwell awhile on what it means to call these, or anything else, **educational** aims.

'Education' has both a descriptive and an evaluative meaning. It is descriptive when it refers to whatever packages of teaching are presented to the students – a grammar school education, the education systems of the UK, the education (not mere training) of teachers. But, in many respects, that descriptive sense is parasitic upon the evaluative sense where we talk approvingly of an 'educated person' or when we contrast 'education' with 'indoctrination' or mere 'training'. 'Education' is attributed to those activities and attainments which are judged to lead to an improvement of the person in terms of knowledge acquired, understanding achieved, skills mastered and values developed. In other words, the **aims** of education (as opposed to training for specific skills or jobs) lie in the introduction to a form of life which is judged to be worthwhile – which is consonant with the dignity of being a person, howsoever that is conceived. And, therefore, the establishment of educational aims – what counts as an educated person in our society – is part of a much bigger moral debate.

That moral debate has two interrelated focuses.

The first focus is upon what it means to be and to grow as a person – the distinctively human qualities which should be nurtured. These would include:

- **capacity to think, reflect and reason** – the relevant concepts and tools of enquiry which enable young persons to understand the physical, social and moral worlds they inhabit;
- **qualities which dispose them to act** in particular ways: **intellectual virtues**, such as 'concern for truth' or 'respect for evidence', and **moral virtues**, such as 'respect for different lifestyles' or 'tolerance of opposing viewpoints';
- **practical know-how**, or what the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) referred to as 'capability'[3];
- **appreciation of problems and issues** which affect us all, such as those concerned with 'environment and sustainability', or 'conflict within a multicultural society';
- **ideals** which inspire, which enable young people to dream of a better world, and which give the strength to strive for what they see to have supreme value;
- **economic viability**, that is the knowledge and skills which enable them to get fulfilling employment and to contribute to the material well-being of society;
- **international and global perspective** on the issues which affect our lives.

---

[3] RSA (1986)

The second, but interconnected, focus is upon the kind of society which young people, through their educational experience, might help create and sustain. The creation of a democratic, economically viable, socially vibrant, artistically flourishing, morally collaborative society – if that is what is wanted – depends upon the kind of education received by that society's future citizens. R.H. Tawney referred to the formation of a 'common culture, because, without it, it is not a community at all'[4]. This society-oriented dimension of education has been recognised in the incorporation of 'citizenship' in the educational experience of all young people, including both 'political literacy' and engagement with the wider community[5].

However, people disagree about the details of each of these, and so we cannot escape continuing **deliberation** about the aims of educational activities – the knowledge (theoretical and practical) worth developing, the exact virtues to be nurtured, the practical competencies expected, the significant problems to be examined, the interests and ideals to be pursued, and the competencies required of adult life.

Such disagreements of aim were reflected in the protracted arguments over the creation of the National Curriculum concerning the content and purpose of English (is there a canon of good literature to which all young people should be introduced?[6]) and of History (should there be a concentration upon British history or a wider understanding of world events in terms of their roots in the past?[7]). Furthermore, such disagreements continue to be at the heart of deliberations about the appropriate educational experience for young people aged 14-19: the extent to which their interests should shape the learning experience, the value attached to practical and vocational education; the place of the humanities in the education of all young people; the emphasis upon enterprise (a new virtue) and economic relevance; the interpretation of such key skills as functional numeracy and literacy; and the institutional framework (selective or non-selective) of educational provision.

Therefore, it is important, not only in the Review but also in policy development and practical application of policy, to ask constantly:

> What counts as an educated 19 year-old in this day and age?

In particular
- What knowledge and understanding (in different degrees depending on ability and interests) should all young people be helped to develop?
- What are the qualities and virtues which should be nurtured?
- What social competencies should be taught in preparation for adult life?
- What interests should young people be enabled to develop to enrich their lives (in, for example, the arts and sports)?

---

[4] Tawney, R.H. (1931)
[5] Crick, B. (1998)
[6] Cox, B. (1995)
[7] Phillips, R. (1998)

- What skills, knowledge and guidance do all young people need in order to choose a career which will be fulfilling and make them economically viable?
- What ideals of achievement and commitment should they be invited to respond to?

In addressing the questions posed above, the Review has noted the poverty of language in which these deliberations are so often conducted, especially through government papers, albeit also reflected in professional debates. This is seen at the trivial level in the way that words become fashionable as though they offer a new-found solution. The most recent one is 'stretch', which appears 63 times in the 2005 DfES White Paper[8], and in such simplistic notions as 'realising potential' (one does not need a theological grasp of original sin to understand that not all potentials should be realised). The language of inputs and outputs, of curriculum delivery and targets, of performance indicators and audits, is not that of aims and values through which one explores the meaning of personal development and fulfilment.

In particular, 'language left idling' is reflected in, first, the false dichotomy between 'academic' and 'vocational'; second, the 'elastic use of skill'; third, the unreflective advocacy of 'progression'.

Much hangs on the distinction between 'academic' and 'vocational' in the shaping of government policy and in the attribution of esteem to different educational routes. And yet these terms and the distinction between them remain unexamined. One definition of 'academic' in the longer Oxford English Dictionary is dry and boring, which surely is not what the government means (although that might well be the perception of many learners). 'Vocational', on the other hand, is constantly confused with 'practical' or 'experiential'. Thereby, in rejecting the vocational in favour of the academic, an important tradition of practical and experiential education is undermined. There is little debate about the characteristics of good-quality vocational **education**, as opposed to vocational training related to occupational standards.

Again, 'skill' is applied indiscriminately to practical attainments such as bricklaying, social accomplishments such as communicating and mental qualities such as thinking. When all mental accomplishments are described as skills, that word has little value. The paradigm case of a skilled person is the craftsman who is able consistently to undertake a task which requires practical ability learnt from 'doing' and perfected through repetition. Such practice meets standards specific to that task or job. Those skills can be applied more or less intelligently, with greater or less knowledge, though such intelligent application would not itself be a skill. Skill in that sense is not applicable when one talks of communicating or thinking critically (except in the more trivial sense of, for example, training in and practising 'eye contact' or 'voice projection'). This 'elastic' use of 'skill' introduces to quite different domains the notions of skill training. What is appropriate for the development of practical competence is not so in relation to 'communication' or 'thinking'.

---

[8] DfES (2005a)

Again, 'progression' is used as though it is self-evidently clear, and yet whether a particular change counts as progression depends on the value attached to what is being progressed to. Moving from Level 2 to Level 3 may well be regression, if the learning experience is off-putting or if the learning at Level 2 is not built upon and transformed into a more complex mode of understanding or practising.

It would be foolish for the Review to presume it knows the answers to the questions about aims raised in this section. As changes occur in society and as publicly available knowledge develops, so too will what is considered worth teaching change. The Review, therefore, intends to clarify these aims and values further through widespread discussion with teachers and other stakeholders. Such discussions must recognise:

- the demands of social justice in the creation of a system which is inclusive of everyone – especially (because too often their distinctive needs are not taken into account) those with special needs or from different social and ethnic groups;
- the broader cultural context which shapes, through the media and other ways, the values and consciousness of young people and of the social world which they are entering;
- the precondition, in any such deliberation, of open, disciplined and evidence-based discussion at every level of education, including the classroom.

2. Context

In identifying (and arguing about) such aims and values, and in seeing their application to the development of education and training, the Review has noted that similar questions and issues are being raised by other bodies. Indeed, much is happening.

The WAG has begun to tackle the issues through its 14-19 Learning Pathways programme, linked to the new Welsh Baccalaureate. The more flexible 'pathways', comprising a wider menu of course and qualification choice for young people, will be made possible through the clustering of collaborating providers in each of Wales' LEAs. A learning core, including the study of Wales in its historical, contemporary and international context (an element influenced by the International Baccalaureate), ensures a broad and humanistic general education for all, whether on academic or vocational pathways, which would be compulsory prior to 16 and an entitlement thereafter. Young people will be entitled to the support of a learning coach as well as careers and personal support[9].

The QCA itself has initiated a wide and thorough debate on, significantly, the 'Futures Curriculum'[10]. This starts with an examination of the aims and values which should permeate and shape curriculum content and learning styles (see, in particular, John White's

---

[9] WAG (2003)
[10] QCA (2005b)

briefing paper on curriculum aims[11]). And there is currently an ongoing review by the QCA of KS3.

Subject associations (e.g. Historical[12] and Geographical Associations[13]), awarding bodies, and trusts (such as the Nuffield Foundation in developing the science curriculum 14-16 and the Specialist Schools Trust in modern languages[14]) are wresting back much of the initiative for curriculum design, specification and development from the regulators – but with the approval of QCA. New GCSEs are being developed in geography and science. For example, the Nuffield Foundation, in collaboration with the University of York Science Education Group and the examination board OCR, has been developing a suite of science courses, 21st Century Science, with a core of general scientific understanding and additional sciences for those who wish to specialise and progress in science. History and geography are developing together a course in the humanities in association with an examination board[15]. Furthermore, reform of A Level examinations is planned for 2008, affecting English and Welsh exam boards.

The RSA has continued its interest in alternative ways of educating young people for an unpredictable and fast-changing world[16]. Through its programme *Opening Minds: Education for the 21st Century,* the RSA has produced a comprehensive list of competences to structure the learning of young people and piloted it in several schools.

The Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools (CSCS) has produced powerful and detailed proposals for curriculum reform[17].

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'s Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) is exploring new approaches to learning[18].

Furthermore, the appropriate learning experiences and curriculum for young people have been a constant theme of reports and initiatives by government and its agencies and working parties for many years, although regrettably this historical perspective rarely illuminates the current debate. The Further Education Unit (FEU) developed, in several publications following *A Basis for Choice[19],* a *pre-*vocational curriculum for those who did not want to progress up the academic route but who had little idea of the vocational path they wanted to take. This led to a range of qualifications: namely, City and Guilds of London Institute Course 365, Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education, Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), Diploma of Vocational Education and finally GNVQs. Dearing's 14-16 report in 1993 proposed a revision of the National Curriculum with coherent progression

---

[11] White, J. (2005)
[12] The Historical Association (2005)
[13] Rawling, E. (2004)
[14] For examples of curriculum developments, see Specialist Schools Trust website: www.specialistschools.org.uk
[15] Roberts, M. and Winch, C. (2005); Lambert, D. (2005)
[16] RSA (1999a); RSA (1999b)
[17] CSCS (2005)
[18] Pollard, A. and James, M. (eds.) (2004)
[19] FEU (1979)

from KS4 to post-16 and vocational pathways[20]. Dearing's subsequent review of 16-19 qualifications anticipated more recent developments in Key Skills, work-based and vocational options from 14 onwards and national certificates and diplomas at levels 2 and 3[21]. The Crick report transcended subject boundaries in proposing successfully a preparation for citizenship which required active commitment as much as acquisition of relevant concepts[22]. The RSA produced several influential working papers directly or indirectly relevant to 14-19 developments[23], and, in 1984, produced its *Education for Capability* manifesto, signed by 250 distinguished academics and people in public life, declaring that the system of education was ignoring the very skills and competences essential for intelligent everyday life[24]. The National Commission on Education, sponsored by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, provided a radical overview of education and training including 14-19 provision[25]. The Manpower Services Commission funded the very popular and influential TVEI, 1983-1992 – celebrating the importance of practical and experiential learning, though subsequently ignored in the development of the National Curriculum[26]. The Nuffield Foundation has for long funded and developed more practical and experiential approaches to the teaching of science, and is now supporting the suite of new GCSE science courses, which will offer choice for the diversity of students' interests and aspirations[27].

The Review, therefore, is building upon a tradition of educational analysis and reform, appreciating what has been and is being achieved, whilst concerned that, in some respects, too little has been learnt from previous initiatives.

3. Background concerns

Considerable achievement at the 14-19 phase in the last few years deserves to be recognised. Participation post-16, until recently, has increased, although now, as is shown in Chapter Four, has flattened out. Successful completion of GCSE courses with grades A*-G, and of A Level courses, has continued to rise. The numbers of school-leavers accepted on HE courses rose from 240,000 in 1995 (70,000 from comprehensives) to 290,000 in 2004 (85,000 from comprehensives)[28]. The proportion who are in employment, education or training compares favourably with those in other comparable countries with advanced economies.

However, concerns are voiced about what is being taught and about the quality of 14-19 education[29]. Indeed, the RSA "proposes to re-engineer education …… the start of a radical

---

[20] Dearing, R. (1994)
[21] Dearing, R. (1996)
[22] Crick, B. (1998)
[23] Ball, C. (1990); Ball, C. (1991); White, R., Pring, R., and Brockington, D. (1995)
[24] RSA (1986)
[25] National Commission on Education (1993)
[26] Pring, R.A. (1995)
[27] See Nuffield Curriculum Centre website: www.21stcenturyscience.org
[28] UCAS figures, reported by Freedman, S. (2005)
[29] Policy statements by the NAHT can be found on their website: www.naht.org.uk; ATL (2004); the websites of various subject associations also record concerns with content of curriculum and quality of teaching and learning.

and philosophical debate on what education must achieve in the 21st century"[30]. The Nuffield Review has attempted to identify and clarify these different concerns.

Disengagement

Research points to the number of young people who are disengaged from education and training, performing poorly in examinations, being disruptive in school and leaving at the first opportunity[31]. These are generally to be found in the lower 50% in achievement with fewer than five GCSEs at grades A* to C, although disengagement takes many forms and is by no means confined to the low achievers. It is clear from the evidence that many who succeed in the system do not enjoy the experience, but see it as the necessary step to the next stage. Again, the 9,880 students **permanently** excluded from schools in England during 2003-04[32] are symptomatic of a larger number of young people whose antipathy towards education, as it is experienced, affects the climate of learning for many more. Eight per cent of 16 year-olds and 13% of 17 year-olds were not in employment, education or training (NEET)[33]; they had lost interest in pursuing any further programmes of learning. The reasons are complex but include their experience of school[34].

There would seem to be, though this is difficult to quantify, a particular difficulty in engaging with Islam's disaffected youth, especially after recent events. There are clearly problems of cultural identity which pose important questions for education. Boys of Pakistani and Bangladeshi parentage tend to perform less well in examinations than their white British equivalents, although the gap is closing[35].

Nonetheless, it is clear from research[36] that many, who remain in touch with the educational system, "appear to respond to a wide range of educational initiatives, which often take them out of school, into a further education, work-related or some other setting". But doubts are raised about the capacity of schools to provide such interventions and about the underlying assumptions that work-related learning (WRL) *per se* is inherently motivating, rather than pedagogic style and better personal support. The impact of pedagogic or personal support interventions is re-enforced by other research within the same research programme, pointing to the significance of improved motivation, self-esteem and preparedness for post-16 study[37].

Rarely do reports on the disengagement of young people take into account the effect of such social factors as student mobility, but recent research has pointed to the significance of this

---

[30] RSA (1999a)

[31] Steedman, H. and Stoney, S. (2004)

[32] Smithers, R. (2005)

[33] Maguire, S. and Rennison, J. (2005)

[34] Payne, J. (2002)

[35] DfES (2005d). The percentage of students of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent gaining five GCSEs A*-C in 2004 rose, respectively, by 3.7% to 45.2% and by 2.9% to 48.4%, compared with a 1% increase to 52.3% amongst white British students.

[36] Steedman, H. and Stoney, S. (2004)

[37] Macrone, T. and Morris, M. (2004)

– and the implications for appropriate educational provision[38]. In a study of three LEAs (Haringey, Westminster and Blackpool), a high level of social disadvantage was associated with high levels of student underachievement and mobility. Three thousand children in these LEAs joined or left secondary schools at abnormal times in one year (one or two schools took in more than 150 students at non-standard times). These were generally young people who had been excluded or put into care, or who were in transit between foster or separated parents. Concern for underachievement or disengagement cannot ignore the dire social circumstances in which many young people find themselves and the great differences that can exist in the nature and stability of school communities, exacerbated by problems resulting from schools being their own admissions authorities and striving for examinations success.

The 'health' of subjects

The quality of learning is often evaluated from the perspective of subjects through which, in the main, the curriculum is organised, and the need for subjects to relate to wider issues of personal and social concern[39]. Concern is expressed over the apparent decline in the take-up of some subjects and in the standards which they represent. The Smith report[40] gave a damning criticism of the state of mathematics teaching, pointing also to the 15% fall in entry to A2 Level after the introduction of Curriculum 2000. The number of sixth formers studying French and German has halved since 1992[41], causing language departments in universities to close. The number taking geography GCSE has declined more than 20% since 1996[42]. Sixth formers taking physics fell from 46,000 in 1985 to 31,000 in 2002.[43] But the problems identified are likely to worsen, as the smaller numbers who graduate in certain subjects lead to fewer teachers properly qualified to teach those subjects. The number of chemistry teachers has more than halved since 1984, and in 2002 only 7% of new teachers of science in secondary schools held a physics degree[44].

Dominance of traditional subjects (the so-called academic curriculum)

In contrast to worries about the declining strength of subjects, others claim that a curriculum dominated by subjects creates a mode of learning which is unsuitable for many. Indeed, the decline in some subjects is due to their perceived irrelevance to current concerns[45]. The RSA states that, in expressing what students should learn, the curriculum should not be organised by subjects "but primarily as the medium through which students should develop competencies"[46]. Although subjects (as is explained below) at their best, are

---

[38] Dobson, J.M. and Pooley, C.E. (2004)
[39] See, for example, White, J. (ed.) (2004)
[40] Smith, A. (2004)
[41] Mansell, W. and Bloom, A. (2004)
[42] QCA (2004b)
[43] Data from Institute of Physics website: http://policy.iop.org/Policy/1.1x.doc
[44] Numbers from the Institute of Physics and Royal Society of Chemistry. In: Lipsett, A. (2004)
[45] QCA (2004b)
[46] RSA (1999a), pp.2-3

distinct modes of enquiry through which sense is made of the world, when distilled for curriculum purposes, their relevance to issues which concern many young people may seem remote. They involve too often, as the respective subject associations admit, a pedagogy which pays scant respect to the circumstances, the experience and the modes of learning of young people. This is succinctly put in the Nuffield Foundation's influential report on science education:

> … desire to provide a new vision of education in science for our young people. It is driven by a sense of growing disparity between the science education provided in our schools and the needs and interests of the young people who will be our citizens.[47]

Higher education

Research conducted by the Review, in partnership with UCAS, into the views of over 240 admissions tutors across 21 universities indicated much dissatisfaction with the 'product' of the 14-19 phase. (See Appendix VI for a synopsis of the research). Among the weaknesses identified were a lack of capacity for independent learning and an inability to take risks in setting out ideas. These weaknesses were attributed to the frequency and intensity of assessment, the short-term nature of learning in modules, and the target driven culture in schools. In addition, a few institutions worry about lack of discrimination between more able candidates who get A grades, and steps are being taken to develop additional assessment tools that will help such discrimination – including Advanced Extension Award questions on A Level papers and subject related admissions tests administered by groups of universities. However, it should be remembered that the need for fine discrimination relates to a small percentage of HEIs and should not be allowed to distort the assessment system as a whole. Although it is early to evaluate the extent to which the Welsh Baccalaureate meets these concerns, the initial response from HE seems supportive, despite some concerns over non-completion rates[48].

Literacy and numeracy

Widespread concern about the standards of literacy and numeracy of many young people has produced an overriding need to develop what the Tomlinson report refers to as 'functional literacy' and 'functional numeracy'[49]. The Moser report pointed to the high number of functionally illiterate young people amongst those who leave school, who experience curtailed opportunities for further learning and for satisfactory employment[50]. On the other hand, the Review, in the light of the evidence received, would suggest that the idea of functional literacy and numeracy is not as clear or as easy to define as is assumed in

---

[47] Millar, R. and Osborne, J. (eds.) (1998)
[48] Wright, G. (2005)
[49] Working Group on 14-19 Reform (2004)
[50] Moser, C. (1999)

government policy[51]. The Review saw the need for greater clarification of both in the light of the basic tasks which are perceived to be required of adult life[52].

Work-based learning

Some, who perceive the quality of learning for many to lie in more WBL, express concern at the uneven quality of such learning experiences. The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI's) 2002/3 report judged 46% of WBL provision to be inadequate on the grounds that, in certain sectors, employer networks were insufficiently strong and there was no long-established commitment to training[53]. But standards were improving – the 46% unsatisfactory was a great improvement over the 60% of the previous year, and that improvement arose from many different factors: the closure of unsatisfactory providers, more rigorous assessment of Key Skills and good off-the-job teaching of the theoretical background to the practice. There was further improvement in 2003/4 when only 34% of WBL was judged to be inadequate[54]. Furthermore, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC's) extensive survey of learner satisfaction reports in successive years that 90% of work-based learners were at least satisfied with their learning experience[55].

There is now a comprehensive ladder of work-based awards, starting with Entry to Employment (E2E) through to Foundation Level and then Apprenticeships at Levels 2 and 3 to foundation degrees within specific vocational areas. However, in practice such a ladder of progress is not yet being fully taken advantage of.

Prevailing culture

There are pressing influences on young people which militate against the requirements of formal education. There is often a gulf between the world of school and the cultural and domestic world which many inhabit outside school. That cultural life may not be negative, as indeed is reflected in a wide range of interests. Popular culture takes many forms, as has been shown and defended many times. But much more is required to see how the gap between different cultures might be bridged[56].

However, there is a negative side, as is pointed out in the recent DfES Green Paper on youth[57] – one element of it being the prevalence of drugs. It is estimated that 38% of 15 year-olds had used drugs in the previous year, and 28% of 16-26 year-olds (8% having used Class A drugs)[58]. A Health Development Agency report points to the rise in binge

---

[51] See Secretary of State (2005)
[52] Ellis, V. (2005); Wake, G. (2005); Watson, A. (2004a, 2004b)
[53] ALI (2003)
[54] ALI (2004)
[55] LSC (2005c)
[56] See, in particular, Williams, R. (1989)
[57] DfES (2005i), p.14
[58] DoH (2004)

drinking amongst young people[59]. Another report points to the rise in diagnosable mental disorders, which now affect roughly 10% of the 14-19 population[60]. Yet another points to the fact that one third of crimes are committed by 13-19 year-olds[61]. It requires little imagination to realise how such conditions affect both the perception of what is worthwhile and the capacity to learn. Yet little or no reference is made to them in the various developments of 14-19 education and training.

Sense of failure

There is widespread agreement that the emphasis upon testing and accountability of students, teachers and providers engenders a deep-seated sense of failure in many young people. The certificates given for what has been achieved at 16 in fact spell out for many failure, not achievement – the students have failed to get the C grades (still seen as pass grades at GCSE) which would enable them to pursue the course they want and to continue in the sixth form or transfer to the sixth form college. A lot of negative selection takes place at 16. This enormous sense of failure, experienced in the system, needs to be addressed.[62] There is a danger that this will be exacerbated by the new Diploma at age 16, proposed in the DfES 14-19 White Paper, which will require five 'good' GCSEs including maths and English.

Progression through the levels

The notion of levels is considered important for a number of reasons. First, it signals parity of esteem between different kinds of qualifications. ('Qualifications' does itself need qualifying since, as is explained later, rarely do qualifications qualify for anything.) Second, it gets away from seeing five GCSEs at grade A*–C as the sole definer of standards. Third, it implies the possibility of learner progression between different levels and types of qualification. However, levels as currently defined do not adequately promote progression through more complex stages of learning (as was envisaged, for example, in the Tomlinson report). Progress from Levels 1 and 2 to Level 3 and beyond is often a step change too big for learners, perhaps because the system of levels is still dominated by the concept of selection rather than the concept of progression, or perhaps, as was pointed out earlier, because the concept of progression remains unexamined. The qualifications encompassed in a level are not regarded as equal by end users or often by the learners and their parents. This lack of progress incurs the criticism of the ALI in its Annual Report[63], which refers to the 64% of 16 year-olds, who begin Level 3 apprenticeships without attaining Level 2 qualifications, as "nothing less than scandalous". And yet we have come to talk of levels as though the concept is quite transparent, indicating equivalence across a wide range of quite different learning objectives and activities. In so doing, the planners are in danger of

---

[59] HDA (2004)
[60] Meltzer, H. and Gatwood, R. (c.2000)
[61] Home Office (2003)
[62] Stanton, G. (2004)
[63] ALI (2003), pp.10-11

sacrificing logical progression within any field of activity to a neat standardisation of all qualifications. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that little attention has been given to the curriculum which lies behind qualifications at different levels so that progression is rarely conceived in terms of understanding, knowledge and skills[64].

Conclusions

It is clear that, in many cases, radical solutions are required to meet the learning needs of students, not only those who are disengaged from school or college – solutions which go beyond 'vocational options' and address more practical and experiential modes of learning. There is little evidence that simply providing more vocational pathways will provide a solution. On the other hand, the Review has revealed how some schools and colleges have responded imaginatively to the problems – moving on from the crude academic/vocational dichotomy, and ensuring progress through the different levels in ways which offer choice. The system is not for some as rigid and as straight-jacketed as is often assumed. Many individual providers have produced exciting innovations, based on their analyses of the learning problems, utilising the resources of the community, obtaining resources from different funders, picking from the multitude of qualifications those that best reflect the learning which has taken place – but with difficulty on the face of the barriers identified above. Indeed, so impressed were the writers of this strand of the Review with what they saw that it is intended to produce a separate report on the practical and imaginative examples of schools and colleges meeting the needs of young learners, including the barriers which they had to overcome.

4. Listening to the learner's voice

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills in England stated that our aim is "… that there should be in every service, and in every phase of learning … a stronger voice for children, young people and adults in the development of policy and the design of services …"[65]. Hence, in the new self-evaluation form "now used as a basis of inspection, schools are expected to provide detailed information on how they consult learners and how the results of it inform practice"[66]. The WAG has given the lead in its 14-19 Learning Pathways programme where participation by young people has occurred at all levels of policy development. This has included support for Funky Dragon – a youth movement which acts as a voice for young people across the country and to which ministers and civil servants are invited in order to 'listen to their voice' and to give an account of themselves. In England, the DfES established Connexions in 2001 with a view to producing personal support and guidance, especially for young people most at risk of joining the NEETs.

---

[64] Rawling, E. (2001), ch.7
[65] DfES (2004a)
[66] McConnell, E. (2005)

It is necessary, however, to be careful. It is not clear for what purpose the 'learner's voice' is thought to be important: whether for understanding how to motivate the students (to get them to take an interest in the things which teachers or trainers think they should be interested in) or whether for shaping the very aims and purposes of learning. Should the curriculum be determined by the interests of young people or should those interests be harnessed to the pursuit of aims established elsewhere? The Paul Hamlyn Foundation is pioneering ways in which the undoubted musical interests of young people outside school might be part of the school curriculum, becoming the route into performing and appreciating[67].

The Review has begun to explore the complex way in which young people see and relate to education and training, although this is not an easy task. The review of research conducted by the NFER indicates that "…for most pupils in most subject areas, an instrumental view of relevance prevails; learners see the curriculum as relevant to passing exams, getting grades, and as a passport to their next steps" – though there are many exceptions, namely, those who do see the intrinsic merits of what they study[68]. Work for the QCA in geography found the curriculum content repetitive with emphasis upon improving exam grades rather than motivating students[69]. Research conducted by Professor Rudduck for the ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme, concluded that students valued being consulted and listened to because they felt respected and taken seriously, were aware that their views had an impact on how things are done, felt they had greater control over their learning, were able to talk about their own learning, were more confident in being able to improve it, and were more positive about learning and their school[70]. The newly established English Secondary Students Association is working closely with the Review in pioneering ways in which the student voice might inform the debate[71].

Particularly is it important to understand how young people feel about and value the learning experiences they have had in particular types of course. Recent research by NFER reports positive impact of new forms of vocational education on 14-16 year-olds, "especially as schools reported that 90% of participants went on to further education and training"[72]. And the LSC's National Learner Satisfaction Surveys, covering over 43,000 learners in 2003/4, found that 90% of learners in FE and WBL were 'fairly', 'very' or 'extremely' satisfied with their leaning experiences[73].

The recent report by John Berkeley argues that to encourage work-based learners to make suggestions for improvement and to act decisively on the results (to listen to the authentic voice of the learners) would help promote change and improve standards[74]. The report sets

---

[67] For details of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Musical Futures Project, see: www.musicalfutures.org.uk
[68] Lord, P. and Johnson, A. (2005)
[69] Battersby, J. and Biddulph, M. (2002)
[70] Rudduck, J. (2005)
[71] www.studentvoice.co.uk
[72] Golden, S., O'Donnell, L., Benton, T. and Rudd, P. (2005)
[73] LSC (2005c)
[74] Berkeley, J. (2005)

out the many different ways in which the views of the work-based learner are being sought – by the inspectorate, local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs), employers and SSCs.

Addressing these background concerns requires a grasp of the cultural influences on young people as a basis for understanding what kind of learning motivates and is perceived to be valuable. Much can be learnt from the knowledge and experience of the Youth Service. Tom Wylie, Chief Executive of the National Youth Agency, argues that

> too often, students are isolated and lonely individuals, subjected to disjointed, incoherent learning experiences … Where in today's world does learning meet youth culture? We need to master the 'new grammar' – the language which young people use to describe and define themselves, and with which they communicate.[75]

How much more urgent is it to listen to the voice of young people from ethnic minorities, following the impact of recent events upon their perceptions of themselves within our society.

5. Curriculum response: Principles

The curriculum, in a way, brings all this together – the subjects or organised traditions of knowledge, the voice or interests of the learner, the values embedded in particular practices and the creative expertise of the teacher. Stenhouse[76] defined a curriculum as "an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice." Below, therefore, are principles and features which, in the light of the evidence Strand I received, might shape the practical organisation of learning. However, these are offered tentatively – inviting criticism in the light of further experience and evidence.

Curriculum should be a creative act within schools, not something handed on. The curriculum brings the resources of the culture that has been inherited to bear upon the needs, culture and interests of young people – a constant act of interpretation and interaction rather than one of transmission.

The teacher is a curriculum developer, not a curriculum transmitter. For that to be possible, teachers and lecturers are vital, not as 'curriculum deliverers' of something received from on high, but as 'curriculum creators' – putting to the test methods of enhancing the quality of learning, and translating the national framework into planning at classroom, school and community levels. There is a tradition of teachers responding creatively to the learning needs they have identified – where the peculiarities of pupils or contexts require imaginative teaching, supported by classroom-based research. This

---

[75] Wylie, T. (2005), p.2
[76] Stenhouse, L. (1975), p.4

tradition in more recent times has been supported by the Teacher Training Agency.[77] But this creative aspect of teaching is often undermined by the relentless pursuit of targets or the demands of qualifications, inhibiting the opportunity to innovate or to do other than 'deliver' off the shelf.

There is a core of learning applicable to everyone. This could be conceived as a 'common curriculum', or as an attempt to create Tawney's 'common culture', or as an 'expectation for all young people'[78], or as a minimum national 14-19 entitlement of learners whether they are in full-time or part-time education, which should be part and parcel of an 'educated 19 year-old'. That 'core' learning should be spelt out in terms of
- concepts and skills through which young people can understand the physical, social and personal worlds they inhabit and within which they need to act purposefully;
- personal qualities and virtues (e.g. independence of mind);
- social responsibilities (as reflected in citizenship activities);
- physical skills;
- social competencies;
- capacities (e.g. critical thinking);
- creative interests which enrich life (as in music, arts and sports);
- 'big issues' that confront us all, including an international dimension and awareness.

The RSA provides a 'framework of competences' which it thinks should be the core[79], although the Review urges caution in the use of competences because of its association with the 'competency-based assessment' approaches in the USA[80] and in the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in this country. The Review has concluded that the link between such capacities and traits, on the one hand, and subject content, on the other, needs to be explored. And, indeed, much useful exploratory work is being undertaken (e.g. the new 21st Century Science GCSE courses attempting to provide a 'scientific literacy' for those who do not undertake further, more specialist studies in science[81]). QCA Futures, having set out general educational aims, is asking subject groups to explore how each respective curriculum would contribute to these[82]. But a concern raised within the Review has been the place of the humanities within the core – these appear vulnerable under the pressure for greater 'functionality'.

High standards of literacy and numeracy are central to the core. These are part of the core, and, under present proposals, will become integral to GCSE maths and English (and a requirement for the attainment of Diploma at Level 2) and integral, too, to assessment at Entry Level and Levels 1 and 2. Such importance is attached to **functional** literacy and numeracy in the recommendations of the Tomlinson Working Party and the DfES

---

[77] See TDA website for research funded under the TDA's Teacher Research Grant Scheme:
www.tda.gov.uk/partners/quality/practiceresearch/research/grantscheme.aspx
[78] GTC (2005)
[79] RSA (1999b)
[80] For a good critical review, see: Cuban, L. (2004)
[81] For details, see: www.21stcenturyscience.org/home/index.asp
[82] For details of the QCA Futures programme, see QCA (2005b)

14-19 White Paper that this Review is giving special attention to them. 'Functionality' requires a deeper analysis of the social context in which young people need to make sense of the world and operate intelligently within it. And there is a danger that 'functional literacy', normally incorporated into English classes, is pursued at the expense of everything else. Literacy and numeracy are integral to all subjects and should be developed within them.

There is a need to meet diverse needs within a common framework. The curriculum 'entitlement' should include learning experiences to suit the developing aspirations and learning styles of a wide spectrum of learners, but within a common framework so that learners can progress laterally and vertically. The possibility of choice increases in importance as age increases and young people are developing particular interests and aspirations. But the availability of such choice depends upon institutional partnerships (see Chapter Five) – and upon the availability of impartial and specialised advice and counselling. The development of learning coaches as part of the 14-19 programme in Wales, to facilitate such support and advice for young people, is of interest in this respect.

There is a need for relevant pedagogy: practical and experiential modes of learning must be recognised. The curriculum is much more than content to be learnt; it sets out the way in which learning might most effectively take place. Too often the curriculum embodies a limited notion of learning, providing few opportunities for the more practical and experiential learning through which young people, including those who pursue an 'academic' curriculum, can make sense of the world and develop a capacity to work intelligently within it[83]. The last few decades have seen a decline in such practical modes of learning, as the erstwhile experience of woodwork, metalwork and home economics has been integrated in design and technology, and rendered 'more academic' to make it respectable. Similarly, the GNVQs, established within a pre-vocational tradition in which practical learning was assessed appropriately, suffered the fate of becoming more like A Level in order to gain respectability (as in vocational GCSEs and Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education). Vocationally related activities have given way to the academic study of vocational activities.

Opportunity must be given for the exploration of values. The arts and humanities quintessentially focus upon 'what it means to be human'[84] and upon an appreciation of human relations. The issues which engage young people – the use and misuse of violence, the exercise of authority, the relations between the sexes, the prevalence of racism, the pursuit of justice, the impact of greed, ambition, envy or jealousy, and different cultures in their midst – are the very themes of great literature and drama. The exploration of such issues and of the values they embody engage young people at a deep personal level, and yet distance that struggle from immediate personal concerns[85]. In so doing, they cut across divisions based on attainment, ability and social class. Examination of the profound differences within society, which affect us all, should have a place in the curriculum,

---

[83] Buckley, J. (2005); Shaw, J. (2005)
[84] See Bruner, J. (1966)
[85] Somers, J. (2005)

especially as opportunities to explore such issues have diminished outside formal schooling. The greater stress upon 'the basics' renders certain kinds of learning (the arts and the humanities, for example) vulnerable, reflecting a neglect of educational values.

Recognition should be given to school ethos and hidden curriculum. Rarely does the 'core curriculum' refer to the ethos and general atmosphere of the school, the form of life and the relationships which pervade it. But it is clear that efficient learning is dependent on that ethos[86]. If certain values are to be promoted, such as justice, fairness and respect, then these values need to be embodied in the very life of the school or college – in the very relationships between teacher and learner[87].

These principles might be summarised as follows:
- providing a common core of learning arising from analysis of qualities, skills, attitudes, experiences and knowledge required of 'an educated 19 year-old';
- re-appraising 'traditional subjects' (both content and pedagogy) in the light of that analysis;
- acknowledging the key role of teachers (and the appropriate professional preparation of them) in the response to the learners' needs, interests and conduct;
- putting greater emphasis upon the **processes** of successful learning;
- ensuring more practical and experiential modes of learning for all young people;
- integrating standards of literacy and numeracy into the whole learning experience;
- re-assessing 'breadth', in terms of modes of learning and experiencing;
- providing opportunities to explore values systematically and in the light of evidence;
- ensuring an international awareness and perspective;
- increasing choice as progress is supported by formative assessment and guidance;
- critically assessing the school or college ethos to ensure it embodies the very values and qualities which the curriculum seeks to nurture.

6. Curriculum response: Principles into practice

Examples

The Review was made aware of the tension between policy and practice. There is widespread dismay at centralised management of teaching through targets, assessment and inspections. There is apprehension that the DfES 14-19 White Paper's recommendations, with regard to both A Levels and GCSEs as the 'cornerstones of the new system' and the new vocational diplomas under the aegis of the SSCs, will fail to answer the problems that the system faces or to embody the principles outlined above.

---

[86] Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P. and Ouston, J. (1979)
[87] Kohlberg, L. (1992); Power, C. and Reimer, J. (1978)

On the other hand, despite these difficulties, the principles as outlined above are embodied in various developments in curriculum and assessment. For example:

- The Welsh Baccalaureate, from 2007-8 (subject to external evaluation and adoption by the Welsh Assembly), will be available at Foundation Level (Level 1), Intermediate Level (Level 2) and Advanced Level (Level 3) to all schools and colleges in Wales, and possibly across the UK. The Welsh Baccalaureate will provide a framework and overarching qualification for programmes of 14-19 study, including a learning core, WRL, community experience, and existing awards such as GCSE, Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Levels and A Levels, Apprenticeships and ASDAN.

- The QCA ended in July its consultation on *English 21* – systematically and widely "asking the questions to shape the future of English … what should [children starting school now] have learnt in English and be able to do by [2015]"[88].

- The Nuffield Foundation, after wide consultation, has developed for AS Level a new course in *Science for Public Understanding*. As already pointed out, new and innovative GCSE courses will be available in 2006.

- Subject associations are engaged in rethinking the aims and content of their respective curricula to ensure greater relevance to young people's concerns and a changing society's needs. For example, the Geographical Association and the Royal Geographical Society, working with QCA and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), are exploring how geography might contribute to an understanding of an increasingly globalised world with diverse cultural and environmental constraints[89].

- The growing popularity of the religious studies post-16 (the number of A Level religious studies entries rose by 17% in 2005, and for two years this subject has seen the greatest percentage increase) arises partly from the scope it provides for exploring values and the philosophical base for them.[90] Short courses at GCSE level have facilitated this.

- ASDAN, a national charity which promotes personal, social, health and active citizenship education in over 4,000 secondary schools, colleges, youth work and training providers, with 150,000 learners registered annually in the UK, provides the means of integrating learning across subject boundaries – based on experiential learning pursued through project work and assignments[91]. Its awards, reflecting learning achievements and Key Skills, are recognised in the newly revised DfES Achievement and Attainment Performance Tables for Schools and Colleges and by the UCAS points system for admission to university.

---

[88] QCA (2005a)
[89] Lambert, D. (2005).
[90] Gay, J. (2005)
[91] See Brockington, D. (2005b)

- The Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) has shown how schools and colleges can, in partnership, initiate flexible and learner-centred routes, with WBL where that is helpful[92]. For example, the motor maintenance workshop of Skidz in High Wycombe Motor Project serves 14 schools and an FE college. It is clear that those attending come to value the learning opportunities provided by more experiential and practical learning and have decided to continue learning through their local college[93].

- Voluntary bodies, often serving the more disengaged young people, provide alternative learning experiences which have a deep effect and which can serve the educational purposes of the school. For example, Changemakers, which is a voluntary body providing educational programmes for about 8,000 young people, often excluded from school, has developed highly motivating social enterprise activities[94].

- The Specialist Schools Trust actively supports many innovative approaches to teaching[95].

The Review has had brought to its attention many examples where schools and colleges, often actively encouraged by national agencies, are putting these principles into practice within the formal system but collaborating with voluntary bodies and private trainers. The Review hopes to provide, in a separate document, detailed examples of how some (maybe only a minority of) local authorities and their schools are tackling the problems they face through imaginative curriculum developments and partnership arrangements, despite the constraints of national systems.

Organisation of learning[96]

The terminology used in talking about the practical application of principles – how the learning is organised – is imprecise. We talk of subjects, courses, programmes, learning activities, modules, projects and so on. The key distinction in practice seems to be between 'subjects' (virtually, but not exclusively, defining the 'academic route') and 'vocational courses'. That at least is how most schools and colleges see it, thereby perpetuating the academic/vocational divide.

---

[92] Golden, S., O'Donnell, L. and Rudd, P. (2005)
[93] Fox, J. (2005)
[94] Turner, D. and Buckley, J. (eds.) (2004)
[95] See Specialist Schools Trust website: www.specialistschools.org.uk
[96] A range of papers, presented to Strand I on the place of subjects (on which this section draws) are on the website www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml; Roberts, M. and Winch, C. (2005); Rawling, E. (2005); Ellis, V. (2005); Winch, C., Roberts, M. and Lambert, D. (2005); Wood, D. (2005).

The idea of 'subject'

A subject is one way of organising learning. There is an historical and a sociological story to be told about any one 'subject' – how learning came to be parcelled up in a particular way[97]. And indeed subjects change, get modified, merge with other subjects. On the other hand, there is also a philosophical story to be told, namely, that subjects represent different ways of thinking, of posing questions, of pursuing enquiries, of assessing evidence, of conceptualising experience. In theory, at least, teaching history or physics is a matter of getting the learner into a particular way of thinking, employing a logically related set of concepts, and applying particular criteria for assessing the truth of what is said. This may not, of course, be how the learners experience subjects as they learn what is required to pass examinations. But, nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind the philosophical basis for identifying a subject as a distinctively different way of organising how we think.

However, the logical structure of what is to be learnt (the network of concepts, the mode of enquiry) does not entail the exact way in which the learning is to be organised. Views were frequently expressed about the way in which subjects can 'freeze' the organisation of learning into fragmented compartments, ensuring their disconnection from the practical and personal concerns of young people – and indeed from the pressing problems of wider society. Hence, the need for a constant reappraisal of the nature of any subject and of the way in which it serves wider educational aims, engaging all young people across the ability range[98]. An understanding of, and a concern for, environmental sustainability or racism or Islam in the world today, for example, draws upon the disciplined thinking within specific subjects, but cannot be captured within any one. Subjects, whether theoretical or practical, should be seen as resources upon which to draw in helping young people to make sense of the world and learn to act intelligently and practically within it. And, indeed, there are many examples past and present where this has been demonstrated. The Nuffield Foundation has been supporting the rethinking of the science curriculum for 14-16 year-olds over the last ten years, in partnership with the University of York, QCA, many teachers and an awarding body, OCR, resulting in the new 21st Century Science GCSE, which has been piloted in 75 schools.

A Levels represent an emphasis on subjects as the basis for organising learning. The Secretary of State for Education and Skills in England recently said that A Levels and GCSE will stay as free-standing qualifications, "because they are widely recognised and valued, in the education world and beyond, nationally and internationally"[99]. She did admit to the need for 'increasing stretch', but believed that the incorporation of Advanced Extension Award questions into A Levels would do that. The Secretary of State's analysis does not receive universal agreement, even amongst prestigious universities. Geoff Parks, Director of Admissions at the University of Cambridge, warned that the 'gold standard' examination is

---

[97] Goodson, I. (1988)
[98] See White, J. (2005)
[99] See Secretary of State (2005)

failing to assess the analytic, problem solving and critical skills sought by top universities[100].
And the proposed Advanced Extension Award, incorporated into A Levels as an optional
extra, could disadvantage bright students from less privileged backgrounds. Already, in
England, there is a widening gap in performance between schools within the state and
independent sectors, particularly in 'hard subjects' such as mathematics and foreign
languages[101]. Hence, much significance is attached in Wales to the development of the
Baccalaureate.

Vocational courses

An alternative to subjects, as traditionally conceived, has been to offer vocational courses,
which sometimes are seen as subjects with their own distinctive knowledge, concepts and
skills (e.g. business studies, hospitality and catering, and leisure and tourism). But there is
a need to consider the purpose of these courses. Where on the continuum between
occupationally specific training (training for a job, meeting National Occupational Standards)
and general education are they meant to lie? Is the main aim that of laying foundations for
subsequent training in related occupations, or is it that of continuing general education but
through an occupational interest and through the more practical context which it affords?
And if it is part of general education, what are the educational values, which the vocational
routes should embody? The motor mechanics course at the Skidz training centre is not, for
the majority who take it, the first rung on the ladder of a qualification for a motor mechanic,
but rather a practical and motivating context in which a wide range of learning takes place –
plus a taste for continuing with education. The Review suggests that:

- too often 'vocational' is confused with 'practical' learning;
- a problem was created by the attempt to give 'academic respectability' to more
  practice and experience-based courses (which, prior to the National Curriculum, were
  pursued in woodwork, metalwork, home economics and rural science classes),
  thereby eroding the practical;
- too little thought has been given to the achievement of a rich educational experience
  through vocational training;
- the distinction between awards which qualify learners to do something and those
  which do not should be made clear and explicit.

On the other hand, the Review has seen many examples of how schools have creatively used
'vocational' awards to provide enriching experiences, tailor-made to the learning needs of
students. Increasingly they are developing 'vocational centres', usually in co-operation with
other schools and a local college. Homewood School in Kent has invested in performing arts
studios which have provided popular options leading to NVQ, BTEC and GCSE awards in
dance and drama and associated technical skills.

---

[100] BBC (2005)
[101] Smithers, R. and Curtis, P. (2005)

The Review, therefore, is concerned that the Secretary of State in England will endorse vocational diplomas, developed under the aegis of SSCs, which re-enforce a narrow conception of 'vocational subjects' disconnected from the learning needs of young people and from any understanding of general education pursued through practice and experience.

Key skills

A sometimes fierce debate has taken place over nearly three decades on the nature, content and definition of 'key' or 'core' skills, from the emergence of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in 1976, to the Tomlinson report's 'common knowledge, skills and attributes' within the 'core' of the proposed curriculum. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI), who had sat with Government on the MSC tripartite body alongside the Trades Union Congress, had promoted the significance of what was then described as core skills for the purposes of the employers sector. Many commentators have also described the various dimensions of a unified common core for the 14-19 curriculum which was needed to bridge the academic and vocational divide[102]. Although the broad pathway division between the academic and the vocational was left intact by the Dearing review of 1996, the debate as to what might be a 'core' or 'key' skill, if not what might constitute the common 'core' of a learning programme in any qualification pathway, was opened for re-examination[103]. Many would see the current six Key Skills, which now appear as qualifications within the National Qualifications Framework, as a defective model, since there remains lack of clarity whether, for example, their function and purpose is either enriching or remedial. Nonetheless, they currently represent the only element which even approaches a common core of generic qualifications, in principle available across all education and training routes. The Key Skills that are described as 'main' Key Skills are: communication, application of number and information technology. The Key Skills that are described as 'wider' Key Skills are: improving own learning and performance, working with others, and problem solving.

Equally debatable has been the manner in which Key Skills might best be taught. Opinions have ranged from the view that they should be approached as independent subject areas to the belief that they are best learned within a context of relevance to the learner. The latest views on the Apprenticeship framework conclude that Key Skills were the most frequently quoted reason for non-completion of the framework from across all six sectors and that "Key Skills appeared to be an effective component only when they were integrated and delivered in the workplace"[104]. Similar conclusions were reached in relation to the academic pathway during the course of research by Hodgson and Spours[105]. Following *Qualifying for Success*, the Key Skills Qualification, which focused on the three main Key Skills as a combined qualification, was phased out from September 2001. Learners were encouraged to register for the individual Key Skills units. It is because of the perceived value placed on the wider Key Skills by employers and HE, that schools and colleges, certainly post-16, were

---

[102] See White, R., Pring, R. and Brockington, D. (1995); Richardson, W., Spours, K. and Woolhouse, J. (1995)
[103] See Brockington, D. (2002)
[104] Reported in Hughes, M. and Monteiro, H. (2005)
[105] Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2002)

encouraged to develop all six Key Skills, "choosing those most useful to individual students for their 16-19 work and their future plans"[106].

While recognising the pedagogic value of all six Key Skills, many teachers and learners have been discouraged by the assessment demands that were applied as a condition of their inclusion as qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework[107]. Awarding bodies such as ASDAN have played a leading role in developing more appropriate and more streamlined assessment regimes. This has been the case especially for the wider Key Skills, for which it was deemed to be less appropriate to apply the terminal and externally set standardised tests that are applicable to the main Key Skills. Such a streamlined national assessment system which combines rigour with a portfolio of evidence and standardised pro forma approach now obtains for the wider Key Skills, which were admitted to the National Qualifications Framework in September 2004[108].

Functional mathematics[109]

There seems to be widespread agreement that some form of mathematics should be part of the core study programme of 14-19 year-olds[110]. This demand for 'mathematics for all' recognises the central role of mathematics in enabling individuals to function effectively as learners, citizens and workers. Whilst not neglecting the importance of the first two of these categories, policy-makers are particularly concerned that there should be a well-educated workforce that is well placed to remain economically competitive. In this regard, the key role that mathematics has to play across many employment sectors and different skills levels of workers should be recognised. The key question, therefore, appears to be not whether to include some form of mathematics education as a compulsory part of the 14-19 curriculum, but rather what form this should take. Current government papers on education and skills[111] propose 'functional mathematics'. At present, however, it is not clear exactly what this might entail, although one might hope that it will promote being functional with mathematics in a way that allows one to make sense, in a critical manner, of the increasingly complex technological world in which we live and work.

It is, therefore, perhaps naïve to suggest that being competent with a range of basic numeracy skills is what is required: as a number of recent studies into the use of mathematics in workplaces demonstrate, these skills are necessary but not sufficient. Researchers[112] point to how mathematics as currently experienced by students in school and college classrooms is of a particular stylised form and that adults, as citizens and workers, adapt and reformulate mathematics into different forms to suit their purposes and

---

[106] QCA (2001)
[107] Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2002)
[108] For a fuller account of the status of wider key skills as generic employability skills, see Brockington, D. (2005a)
[109] Geoff Wake provided the substance of this section.
[110] Roberts, G. (2002); Smith, A. (2004)
[111] DfES, DTI, DWP, HMT (2005); DfES (2005a)
[112] Pozzi, S., Noss, R., Hoyles, C. (1998); Wake, G.D. and Williams, J.S. (2000); Hoyles, C., Wolf, A., Molyneux-Hodgson, S. and Kent, P. (2002); Kent, P. Hoyles, C., Noss, R. and Guile, B. (2004)

objectives. For example, they point to how workers may develop a generalised understanding of a mathematical concept, but within a particular situational context (which indeed may have enabled them to develop this understanding in a way very different from that expected in mathematics classrooms). They also highlight how technology often plays a large role in the overall activity of workers, and how this forms and shapes mathematical processes and consequently understanding.

However, their most important observation is how often relatively straightforward mathematical ideas and techniques are used by workers to make sense of quite complex situations and to solve problems. It is the complexity of the situation and the use of mathematics to make sense of it that poses the challenge: fluency with basic numerical skills and techniques is absolutely necessary, but other skills are required. The problems posed and situations investigated are very different from those currently experienced by students, working at all levels, in mathematics classrooms.

To develop a 'functional mathematics' curriculum, therefore, that equips young people to use mathematics in a functional way, in a range of different situations and settings, requires considerable thought, development and innovation. This curriculum must build on competency with basic skills and techniques in a way that reflects how mathematics is regularly used in quite complex situations that often involve the use of a range of technologies. This provides a major challenge to all involved in mathematics education: those charged with development of curriculum specifications; those who provide support for the emerging curriculum by way of materials and professional development; teachers who implement the curriculum; and the students who experience the new 'functional mathematics'.

Pedagogy

The evidence to the Review has stressed again and again that changing the content of the curriculum is pointless without changing pedagogy (that is, the way in which learning is encouraged and teaching carried out) and without changing how that learning is assessed. Frequently, problems of pedagogy are seen to be important where less academically successful students are concerned. The experiences of those who drop out demonstrate the alienation felt by many from a system of teaching which holds no interest for them.

However, it applies just as much to those who do well academically and proceed to the university. The research conducted by the Review into the views of admissions tutors (see Appendix VI) found that the major complaint was that, due to over-assessment and the pursuit of targets in a modularised system, essential processes of learning were absent: the readiness to take risks, the independent search for solutions to a problem, and the capacity to integrate ideas and evidence into a coherent argument. The same complaint came from students aspiring to go to the university: they felt over examined and geared to the 'correct

answer', which had taken the enjoyment out of learning the very subjects they wanted to learn.

Again, however, the Review has noted many innovations which are redressing the problem successfully.

- Edge is a charitable organisation which argues for a 'practical learning entitlement', spelling out in ten ways how practical learning should 'spark and fuel your learning'. It is influencing the development of courses in several colleges of FE.

- ASDAN's awards, taken by over half the secondary schools England, show the value of initial and ongoing action-planning and review by the learners themselves, which encourage individual engagement with the process of taking responsibility for learning. There is a focus upon experiential learning and formative assessment. The ASDAN awards are suited to those whose learning styles have not been catered for by traditional GCSEs.[113]

- The government has actively advocated 'personalised learning'[114], and the ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme has supported a range of projects in this connection (although, as Winch argues, this 'new idea' has little that is new about it[115]).

- The WAG, following a series of regional Pedagogical Conferences in the spring of 2005, set up a Pedagogy Board, representing all stakeholder and interest groups covering the 0-19 age range. A National Learning and Teaching Conference is to be held in November 2005. Other activities planned include the creation of a website for sharing good practice and for setting up practitioner networks.

- Changemakers was formed with a mission to promote a young person-led approach to community involvement. Its philosophy, translated into practical programmes, is to empower young people to become young activists and to enable teachers, youth workers and other adults to support young people to lead positive action. It has worked with thousands of young people who are often on the margins of formal education and training[116].

The following seem to be key features of a pedagogy appropriate for a developing 14-19 phase which caters for the wide range of attainment and aspiration:
- encouraging co-operative learning, emphasising group goals, peer activities and mentoring, and co-operative tasks[117];

---

[113] See the ASDAN website for more details: www.asdan.org.uk.
[114] Miliband, D. (2004)
[115] Winch, C. (2005)
[116] Turner, D. and Buckley, J. (2004)
[117] See the summary of relevant research by Slavin, R.E., Harley, E.A. and Chamberlain, A. (2003)

- valuing practical and experiential learning, including the learning arising from experience outside the formal educational setting;
- finding a place for the learner's personal and social experience in the process of learning;
- using the powerful information retrieval methods made available by modern technology to enable more independent learning and synthesis between different kinds of subject matter;
- stressing the importance of evidence-based discussion;
- providing individual learning support.

Progression and transition: guidance and counselling

To help with transition through the system and also with continuity in those transitions, the system needs to be more open (not confined to two tracks) – with personal tutors guiding and counselling young people through the transition. Connexions is a service for every English secondary school to do just this. But it is important to distinguish between careers and personal counselling, on the one hand, and the kind of support which focuses upon pedagogy. The learning coaches, introduced in Wales under its Learning Pathways, are part of the latter. Having been piloted in a variety of institutions, learning coaching is now becoming a universal entitlement, with appropriate training specifications for the coaches and materials.

One problem in the encouragement of progression to further stages lies in its cost. But the introduction of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), which 250,000 are receiving, is making some difference – increasing participation by nearly 4%. Thirty-five thousand students are estimated to have continued with their studies last year as a result of the EMA[118].

Use of information and communications technology

In developing the more relevant learning experience (and the co-operation between different learning providers to facilitate this), much hope is attached to the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Indeed, one condition for receiving grants under the £2 billion per year Building Schools for the Future programme is that 10% of the money distributed will be spent on state-of-the-art communication technology. A report by Microsoft on the future of secondary provision in Kent, titled *Transformation of Kent,* argued that the partnerships to be established within clusters of schools depended on such technology[119].

---

[118] Press Association (2005)
[119] Ellis, A. (2003)

Such technology is seen to transform how learning might be organised and enhanced. The Review has briefly examined the research on this claim[120]. Of course, access to the Internet makes available a wide range of information and debate on issues which are dealt with on the school and college curriculum. Learners are no longer so dependent on teachers or textbooks for facts and an understanding of those facts. Rival views can be explored. In theory, at least, learners have the facilities to be much more independent learners, and this inevitably changes (or should change) the role of the teacher. But, according to Ofsted, ICT was having little effect on raising attainment, enriching provision and increasing flexibility for students across the 14-19 curriculum[121].

7. Assessment

A main barrier to a creative curriculum response to learners' needs would seem to be the rigid demands of a system of assessment, which is determined by the dominant form of accountability. It shifts the responsibility of assessment from the teacher's professional judgement to a mechanical standardisation and implementation. This narrows the learning experience and constricts the professional creativity of the teachers. What is often seen as 'the tyranny of high-stakes testing' needs to be challenged, especially where such testing serves managerial rather than educational purposes – that is, where testing is intended to show improvement against targets[122]. The proposals of the 2005 White Paper *Education and Training 14-19* could exacerbate, rather than, alleviate the problem. Indeed, the General Teaching Council (GTC) sees the assessment proposals to be "a barrier to change …. The government's commitment to retaining the current balance between internal and external assessment longer term is disappointing"[123].

Rather would it seem necessary to find a system which is responsive to the creative curriculum work of colleges and schools, as indeed is recommended by the government's proposals for 'personalised learning'[124]. One key feature of 'personalised learning' is 'assessment for learning' (setting personal targets, effective feedback to the learner, effective use of data to plan learning, peer and self assessment). Of course, in this there is nothing new; Black and Wiliam[125] demonstrated improvements in learning where assessment was geared to informative feedback rather than to summative judgement required by a system of accountability. Assessment should be seen primarily as a system of communication – above all to the learners to help them learn better, but also to employers and HE.

---

[120] See, as an interesting review, Davies, C., Hayward, G., Lukman, L. (2005)
[121] Ofsted (2004a)
[122] See Cuban, L. (2004) for an excellent critique of 'high stakes testing' in the USA.
[123] GTC (2005)
[124] Miliband, D. (2004) North of England Education Conference Speech.
[125] Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998)

Furthermore, it needs to be based on 'short step progress', straddling the Levels, as was envisaged in the Tomlinson report, and build on the experience of established schemes such as ASDAN[126].

These characteristics of learning-based assessment need to be carefully spelt out, especially with reference to the 14-19 phase, where a range of learning and careers choices have to be made, and where 'qualifications' are not keeping up with the curriculum and learning experiences in the more imaginative providers. Otherwise, the purpose of assessment will be seen, especially by the learners, only as a means of selection which large numbers are destined to fail. If, however, a "greater degree of teacher assessment is required for formative purposes"[127], there must be, as the GTC response to the White Paper argues, much more support for teachers in the development and application of the skills of formative and summative assessment.

The Review welcomes the major review of the impact of tests and examinations which is being launched by the QCA. It is hoped that the QCA review will address:
- the main purposes of assessment;
- how to assess practical and experiential learning without turning it into another academic exercise;
- the need to keep assessment for learning distinct from assessment for accountability;
- lighter touch assessment for purposes of accountability;
- professional needs of teachers if they are to take charge of assessment;
- the assumption that A Levels and GCSEs "will stay as free standing qualifications … widely recognised and valued"[128];
- lessons from the developments of the Welsh Baccalaureate by the Welsh Joint Education Committee.

Such a review needs to question how far such assessment needs to feed a system of accountability. The Assessment of Performance Unit developed light sampling techniques which provided rich data on the quality of learning across the curriculum and across the country. These benefited from the experience of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Denver, Colorado. Such testing could be carried out with minimal disruption to the schools, could indicate progress over time and could provide the base for internal measurement of performance.

8. Qualifications

The system of qualifications available to young people is, to say the least, complex, and not easy to understand. Hence, the attempt to provide a National Qualifications Framework.

---

[126] Brockington, D. (2005b)
[127] DfES (2005a)
[128] Secretary of State (2005)

Currently it includes about 4,000 qualifications provided by over a hundred awarding bodies officially recognised as capable of offering qualifications within it. But the danger, then, is that qualifications are made to fit within a simplified system which equates quite different sorts of attainment. Until recently there have been six levels: Entry Level, Level I (e.g. Foundation Level GNVQ), Level 2 (e.g. GCSE Grades A*-C), Level 3 (e.g. A Level), Level 4 (First Degree) and Level 5 (post-graduate degree or professional qualification). But the QCA is now developing the Framework for Achievement (FfA) which works on a common system of units and credits that is designed eventually to include all types of learning experience[129].

It was pointed out, however, that such a 'qualifications framework' is confusing because it mixes up, as though no distinctions are to be made, 'qualifications' and certificates of attainment. A qualification qualifies you to do something – to practise as a plumber, teacher or doctor. But many of the so-called qualifications qualify you to do nothing. And yet within the same framework, progress is expected from non-qualifications, under the guise of qualifications, to real ones. Since 'qualifications' at Level 2 do not qualify anyone to do anything, they are in danger of misguiding those recruited.

The structure of qualifications, diplomas and certificates is not where examination of the system of education and training should begin. What qualifications are needed depends, on the one hand, on the kind of learning which is to be encouraged and assessed, and, on the other, on the uses to which qualifications are to be put. Future work of the Review will include looking closely at the use which employers make of qualifications. But the Review has had brought to its notice that, in the development of the qualifications and certificates of achievement, four dangers need to be avoided.

- The first concerns the deceptive attraction of 'standardisation' – the establishment of equivalences between achievements which are in no way equivalent. It is not easy to understand what is meant by the equivalence between Level 3 apprenticeships in engineering and retailing – with nothing in common in the skills, practical know-how or theoretical knowledge.

- The second concerns the confusion of role between the regulatory (QCA) and developmental bodies for qualifications. As in the case of the GNVQs, these will be one and the same body in the development of the new Diplomas, thereby opening up their development to influence by central government.

- The third danger lies in ignoring what, in practice, is clearly working with learners and employers, even if not quite fitting the utopian planning of developers. The continued popularity of BTEC National Diplomas, even when they do not fit easily into the national framework of qualifications with its clearly defined Levels, is worth reflecting upon. Where much is made of 'flexibility', it would be inconsistent to make the system of qualifications itself inflexible.

---

[129] QCA (2004a)

- The fourth danger lies in calling awards 'qualifications' when they do not qualify for anything.

A widespread anxiety about the present system of qualifications lies in what is perceived to be a lowering of standards at A Level, which, when established, qualified 6% or so of 18 year-olds to proceed to university studies – that was its purpose. Though often referred to as 'the gold standard' (and thus impervious to reform), achievements at different grades are seen in the popular press to have been increasingly inflated. In 2004, 96% of examinees passed (E grade) and 22% received the top grade, A. Various explanations are given to defend these grades – more focused teaching and greater effort on the part of learners. But other explanations relate to the different modes of assessment: course work in addition to terminal examinations; the easier AS part and the harder A2 part both counting 50% towards the final A Level; the fact that learners who know they are unlikely to gain a high grade in their final A Level switch to a different subject after taking AS Level; the opportunity to repeat assessments in order to improve upon grades; and accumulation of assessments through modular systems.

There are causes for anxiety in relation to A Levels, but it is not only to do with learners gaining high grades. As noted above, the number of students taking French and German has halved since 1992. The proportion of entries to physics has fallen since 1998. Accusations are frequently made that the attainment of the same grades is becoming easier over time. And some research shows that there is greater likelihood of getting higher grades in certain subjects (e.g. English literature or media studies) than in others (e.g. physics or chemistry)[130]. To some extent the problems were created by the shift in 1988 from norm referencing (when only a fixed proportion of students were allowed to obtain certain grades) to criterion referencing (where the examinee obtained a grade if he or she met the specified requirements). The Dearing report on 16-19[131] made it clear that standards at 18 (the A Level in particular) needed to be safeguarded and monitored over time. Longitudinal comparisons of standards over time are notoriously difficult to make, as was apparent from the attempt to use the Rasch model by the Assessment of Performance Unit in the 1970s[132].

One solution suggested is that, at the A grade, there is a need for sub-grades – greater refinement of the criteria. Another is that the marks, whereby grades are given, should be revealed. A further suggestion is that universities (and employers) should set their own tests – and, indeed, that is happening in some subjects and in some universities.

There is, therefore, an extremely complex set of arguments about assessment and the stability of standards in a world where different demands are being made upon the assessment of students' work and where what is to be assessed is itself constantly changing. Different players in this set of arguments – employers, HE, the teachers and the students –

---

[130] Hill, P. (2004)
[131] Dearing, R. (1996)
[132] Goldstein, H. (1979)

are requiring different uses of the system. This is an area which the Review will tackle next year as it explores the relationship between 14-19 and subsequent progress to HE and employment.

9. Role of teachers and lecturers

Changes in the 14-19 phase of education and training, whether those already in train or those argued for in the Review, have profound implications for the role of teachers – and thus for their initial and continuing professional education.

- Teachers in the secondary phase are trained within a subject specialism and ill prepared to see more widely across the learning experiences of young people or to help develop a less fragmented approach to the problems which affect them. This problem has to be addressed, as the 14-19 phase is characterised by programmes, wider activities and projects which do not fit within the framework of one or even two subjects.

- Meeting the background concerns identified in the Report requires teachers to be active in developing an appropriate curriculum response. But a tradition of curriculum innovation has almost been lost – where teachers, through teachers centres, through participation in projects (e.g. those of the Schools Council), through teacher-based assessment (e.g. in the Certificate of Secondary Education) and through consortium initiatives (e.g. TVEI), were encouraged to provide innovative solutions to the learning problems.

- Lack of consensus over aims gives added professional responsibility to teachers. Rarely, however, is there opportunity for teachers to address these broader issues of educational aims and the wider learning needs of young people, or to recharge their own intellectual batteries so that they can teach from a renewal of knowledge.

- The introduction of more 'vocational' and practical studies cannot succeed without the employment of people with the relevant skills and work experience.

There is no alternative but to ensure that teaching profession has the capacity and freedom to innovate, has within it the knowledge and skills base from which to teach, and has the opportunity to interpret the national curriculum framework within their respective schools and colleges. They alone know the students – their capacities, motivation, consuming interests and difficulties in learning. They alone can test out the curriculum framework where learning really takes place. And, indeed, there are excellent examples of how teachers have developed alternative practices, despite the countervailing pressures on them and their schools[133].

---

[133] See, for example, Hart, S., Dixon, A., Drummond, M.J. and McIntyre, D. (2004)

Therefore, there is an urgent requirement to:

- ensure teacher education gives insight into the problems of disengaged young people and pays attention to non-subject ways of organising learning;
- establish the conditions in which creative and imaginative young teachers can be attracted to the profession and encouraged to stay within it;
- recruit to teaching those whose expertise lies in more practical and skill-based activities related to the workplace but who (for that reason) will rarely have the qualifications normally required for entry into teaching;
- train work-based supervisors, leading to professional qualifications (the Review saw the talents of many work-based supervisors reflected in relationships with young people who value their craft-based knowledge);
- reappraise the professional development of teachers, which has been reduced to little more than short courses geared to meeting targets or applying standards determined from above;
- provide opportunities, in partnership with subject associations[134], for professional development, enabling teachers to 'recharge their batteries' and to enjoy relevant intellectual and artistic experiences[135];
- create, once again, a forum where teachers can exercise professional judgement over curriculum development and assessment in the light of research into learning and deliberation over educational aims;
- re-examine the age-related categories of teacher qualifications to facilitate those with relevant experience, who were qualified for post-16 and whose total experience has been in FE, to qualify to teach post-14;
- recognise the growing shortage of teachers qualified in key areas of the curriculum;
- provide clear routes for suitable qualified teacher assistants to enter the teaching profession.

Wales plans to create a progressive continuing educational development of teachers from initial training and induction, and to fund professional development for all teachers, within a continuing professional development framework which will lead to chartered teacher status.

10. Institutional framework

A key question for the Review is: how do we create institutions in which the problems outlined can be addressed and teachers given the support and capacity to respond creatively? This question is pursued in greater detail in Chapter Five, but contributors to Strand I stressed its inseparability from the quality of learning.

---

[134] See in this respect the Routledge Teaching school subjects 11-19 series.
[135] The Paul Hamlyn Foundation has funded schemes which give teachers within the arts access to best practices within the performing and creative arts.

First and foremost, it was agreed that providers (schools, colleges and private training providers), must increasingly be seen as 'learning organisations' – that is, places which organise the instruction and experiences of young people without necessarily providing all those experiences within the one institution. Indeed, following the recommendations of *Every Child Matters[136],* schools in particular would be seen as multi-agencies for the dispensation of a range of services, upon which the success of education depends. They would seek to use other providers and organisations which have the resources and expertise, and harness the opportunities provided by communication technology to ensure access to sources of learning[137]. They would be closely linked to public services which relate to educational success.

The Review has seen ways through which initiative and partnership can flourish, especially in the light of the Westminster government's IFP, in which 39 'pathfinders' tested out ways of working collaboratively in delivering education and training. The evaluation of the IFP[138] showed how the partnerships, though differing from each other in many respects, ensured: broader curriculum opportunities mainly through vocational and WRL in colleges, training providers and workplaces; individual learning plans; greater focus on progression routes; and extensive collaborative arrangements.

The importance of such arrangements has been made evident to the Review – but so have the difficulties, rarely acknowledged by the government documents which see partnership and co-operation between providers to be the way forward[139]. Those difficulties arise from the increasingly fragmented and competitive nature of the system in which collaboration is intended to take place.

Schools and sixth form colleges

Recent policies in England have ensured a more diverse and competitive system of schools. That diversity lies in different governance, admissions policies and funding arrangements, making collaboration difficult. Common timetabling is essential but difficult to achieve without formal structures between providers, such as the development of federations of schools as is seen in Kent or the collegiate groupings of schools. Funding arrangements between schools and schools, and between schools and colleges, are difficult to formulate, especially as the colleges are less generously funded for the same work and responsibilities; there is much talk of underfunding and subsidising provision. Delocalisation of education creates complexities of organisation and supervision. The complexity created by government policy is best illustrated by the intended establishment of 200 academies, which, though funded by government, will have their own system of governance and

---

[136] DfES (2003b)
[137] Ellis, A. (2003)
[138] Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005b)
[139] DfES, DTI, DWP, HMT (2003)

admissions policies, and by the recent encouragement of 11-16 schools to develop sixth forms, which has destabilised existing post-16 provision[140].

Within this complexity, however, interesting innovations are taking place from which lessons might be learnt, showing that there is greater leeway for experiment than is often assumed. Many schools combine sixth forms in order to create larger and stronger teaching units. (Eight schools and an FE college in Kingswood, Bristol, have a shared timetable post-16, an integrated transport system and a common system of coordination funded on an equitable basis[141].) Kent has clustered schools, and is promoting federations of schools within the clusters with a combined governing body (there are presently five). The Paul Hamlyn Foundation is funding imaginative partnerships between schools, arts organisations and other agencies which aim to develop the arts within formal education. In Wales there is the development of a National Planning and Funding System for 16-19 provision in schools and FE colleges.

The place of the independent sector in England is crucial in any integrated 14-19 framework – it caters for about 16% of young people in full-time education (FTE) over 16. And the division between maintained and independent is too crude, given the variety within the independent sector and the different degrees of independence arising within the public. Partnership across institutions and sectors is part of declared public policy[142], and it is important (a) to recall the benefits of partnership in the past (e.g. Nuffield Science, Nuffield Maths, Salter Physics); (b) to provide a forum for common professional development in the light of 14-19 developments; and (c) to see how, locally, greater partnership can be achieved for the benefit of all. Indeed, the independent schools must be seen (and, in many cases, see themselves) as part of a national system of provision. Independent sector providers can contribute to such a partnership and gain much from it, especially in coming to see educational achievement more widely than success in a large number of GCSEs or A Levels[143]. Indeed, a growing number of independent schools is looking for alternatives to A Levels either through the International Baccalaureate or elsewhere.

The Review has noted, however, the need to question whether certain assumptions about institutional size are appropriate for all young people. It is aware of the arguments, based on research, put forward by the Small School Movement[144] which says that, for many young people, the close relationship during their formative years with adults who know and understand them is more important and productive than exposure to and choice between a wide range of subjects. The Review is impressed by the Urban Academy in central New York which, with a school population of no more than 150 from 14 to 19, dispenses with the normal timetable and achieves very high standards by focusing upon the processes of

---

[140] DfES (2005e)
[141] Truelove, J. (2005)
[142] DfES, DTI, DWP, HMT (2003)
[143] Mason, P. (2005)
[144] Tasker, M. (2003)

learning, drawing upon the resources of the wider community, and promoting co-operative relationships within the school community[145].

Further education colleges

Consideration of aims, learning and curriculum cannot be separated from the general ethos of the institutions where learning takes place. Many vocational options pre-16 take place within FE colleges, and these (providing a different environment) are increasingly seen as responsible for young people 14 to 16. Many aged 14 to 16 who spend part of their time in college value the experience, partly because of the more 'hands-on' experience of learning, and partly because of the different atmosphere which results in greater respect for them as adults[146]. They feel better about themselves. Quite clearly, school is not working for them. In many respects, the compulsory period of schooling has not reflected the immense cultural changes affecting young people – creating different lifestyles. To engage such young people, the learning activities must give satisfaction, be seen to be relevant, generally be experiential and practical, and take place in an adult context.

Also, FE colleges have the job of taking many at age 16 who have been deselected from their first choice provider and course, and of reversing their sense of failure. Lewisham College has produced tailor-made courses (e.g. its youth entry programme) which are now recognised by several universities as equivalent to A Level for matriculation purposes.[147]

However, there are difficulties to be faced.
- Improved behaviour and learning, arising from part-time college experience, might depend on the 14-16 year-olds constituting only a minority of the college population. Increased college participation would change the context in which young people presently feel more adult and respected.
- An alternative would be to create vocational centres in school, the value of which was demonstrated to the Review in its visit to Whitstable Community College in Kent. But the lesson from research[148] is that it is the adult ethos of the college which is significant, as much as the vocational focus.
- Too many of such initiatives depend on short-term funding and are transient (e.g. TVEI) and are not sustainable year on year.
- Present arrangements are too often subsidised by colleges.

Furthermore, according to the NATFHE survey, 40% of FE teachers do not welcome the development – lower pay (in England) than school teachers for teaching their students and dealing with an age group they have not been trained or prepared for[149]. This is a view shared by Fforwm, the FE sector's representative body in Wales. This needs to be addressed

---

[145] Cook, A. and Mack, H. (2005)
[146] Harkin, J. (2005)
[147] West, A. (2005)
[148] Harkin, J. (2005)
[149] NATFHE (2004)

in the recruitment and training of a new generation of FE teachers and in the development of partnerships between schools and colleges. There is a need to move from *ad hoc* relations between schools and colleges to an embedding of the 14-16 phase within a wider educational context involving schools, colleges, voluntary agencies and employers. (See Chapter Five for an elaboration of this idea.)

There is a danger that FE colleges in some areas could become the new secondary moderns – responsible for the 14-19 education of those who have been deemed unable to proceed up the academic route (in schools' sixth forms or in sixth form colleges). The providing institutions (or partnerships of them) need to be big enough to offer much greater flexibility – greater responsiveness to the different kinds of young people who need to be motivated and to find fulfilment.

Employers, private training providers and voluntary bodies

Two years ago, around 8% of 16-18 year-olds were in WBL – one third of them on Advanced Modern Apprenticeships and two thirds on Foundation Modern Apprenticeships. Another 5% were in employer-funded training (EFT). Therefore, the quality of learning in the work place is very important, and relies upon the organisation of it by private training providers and the active involvement of employers[150]. Furthermore, voluntary bodies are key providers of more practical, experiential and work-related activities which motivate young people and enable them to continue with their learning. Changemakers challenged the educational thinking of Strand I. Hence, future models of collaboration must embrace voluntary bodies as well as formal providers[151].

Funding

To achieve a curriculum which is responsive to the needs of all young people, there is a need to be creative with funding. Funding streams (geared to particular levels and kinds of courses) may not easily fit the alternative courses developed by the college (or school). Such alternative ways of learning often require a great deal of personal support for the customisation of work, the provision (in, say, a large learning centre) of continual individualised support[152] and the development of personal skills – often embedded within an integrated learning programme. The differences between funding in schools and colleges, wherein colleges receive more than 13% less for the same work[153], clearly need to be addressed urgently in England as indeed they have been in Wales – possibly by a system in which money follows the learner across institutions and on the same basis in all institutions. Colleges giving evidence to the Review have highlighted how these have suffered from the penalty system where cash is clawed back when targets have not been met. Not only has the system behind 14-19 education and training been expensive and time-consuming in its

---

[150] Farlie, V. (2004)
[151] Buckley, J. (2005)
[152] West, A. (2005)
[153] Fletcher, M. and Owen, G. (2005)

bureaucracy (requiring proof of every bit of learning that goes on), but it has obviated long-term planning on the part of the colleges. However, new proposals are being considered based on the LSC's recent report *Agenda for Change*[154]. The Foster review of further education, due to report in the autumn, is also likely to tackle the issue.

Co-ordinating the providers

The Review has been struck by the major difficulty in England of ensuring efficient and comprehensive provision of education and training to meet the very diverse needs of young people. The difficulty lies in the lack of overall responsibility of any one body – a point addressed in detail in Chapter Five. LEAs no longer have responsibility for colleges; different kinds of schools have different ways of controlling funds and admissions. The LLSCs have conducted Strategic Area Reviews (StARs) to find ways of ensuring, more cost-effective and rational use of resources. But the division of strategic responsibility across the 14-19 phase (and within the highly charged political atmosphere of 'save our sixth forms') has made this difficult. Proposals from the LLSC following the local StARs have often been either ignored or implemented in a partial manner. However, there are examples of LEAs and LLSCs working closely together with head teachers to ensure greater collaboration. It is a requirement now of LEAs' development plans to think more strategically in terms of 14-19. Nonetheless, according to the Ofsted report into 12 LEAs[155],

> the ending of statutory education at 16, the complex funding arrangements and the reduction in their powers, are potentially significant barriers to LEAs providing effective support for 14-19 education …

> the various funding streams available to support 14-19 learning are perceived by LEAs to be complex and lacking coherence …

> bidding processes consume a lot of staff time.

In Wales the impending (April 2006) merger of Education and Learning Wales (the Wales version of the LSC) into the WAG, and the strong relationship which continues to exist between central and local government in the field of education, again provides a very different context to that which exists in England.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried, in the light of widespread discussion and review of research, to identify the key issues to be resolved in the development of a system which will be fair, motivating, inclusive, and relevant to each young person and to society as a whole. The results of the deliberations have been examined critically by a core group of teachers and

---

[154] LSC (2005a)
[155] Ofsted (2003), p.8

lecturers, head teachers and college principals, professional bodies and subject associations, researchers and civil servants, and community and voluntary body leaders.

But the issues are complicated – not surprisingly because, as was argued at the beginning of the chapter, aims, reflecting the different values which permeate public life, are not agreed upon. Education cannot be isolated from such diversity; indeed, that diversity must be at the heart of educational deliberation at every level, including the classroom.

The key issues which seem to emerge are summarised in the Conclusion. It is hoped that these will be the basis for much wider critical thought next year.

There are obvious gaps, which need to be made good. Little has been said about the particular needs of young people who have learning difficulties or who are seriously disadvantaged by the social circumstances. Little, too, has been said about the transition from school or college to work, FE and training or HE. Again, the articulation between 14-19 and subsequent HE, further training and employment will be a major focus of Year 3.

Chapter Four

Understanding the Dynamics of the System

(Strand II)

Understanding the Dynamics of the System

Introduction

Last year the Annual Report described the patterns of participation, progression and attainment in the English and Welsh systems. The evidence indicated a fairly rapid shift between 1985 and 1993 from a low to a medium participation system[156] relative to other OECD countries, and from a mixed to a school-based model[157]. After 1994, despite repeated policy interventions, participation rates have stagnated. In addition, the current system was described as being both selective and highly attritional with substantial non-participation, particularly among low attainers, at 16 and a loss of learners at 17. This year the aim was to explore the dynamics underpinning these patterns in more detail and attempt to arrive at some explanation of their origin. Thus the principal aim is to try to understand more about the dynamics and drivers of change at a system level using three key metrics: participation, retention and attainment rates. In addition, more effort has been put into exploring patterns of progression within the vocational routes, understanding more about those who leave the system at 16 and 17, setting these findings within a comparative frame, and beginning to address the influence of HE on the 14-19 system. In so doing, issues of data adequacy to describe and understand the dynamics of the system have also been explored, and issues about performance measurement are raised.

The analysis in this chapter adopts a framework for understanding the dynamics of change in the education and training system, illustrated in Figure 1[158]. The framework[159] makes a distinction between structures and policies of the 14-19 education and training system; stakeholders and actors' expectations of system behaviour and system change; and the actual patterns of behaviour of the 14-19 system. There is therefore a middle layer, between structures and policies and actual behaviour, which has to be opened up in order to account for patterns in the system that might otherwise seem unexplainable. The problems arise when there is a mismatch between any of the components of the model. For example, expectations – based on policy discourse – that following certain policy initiatives the system will change in the direction of higher participation rates, parity of esteem between the academic and the vocational, and international competitiveness[160] do not seem to be consistent with the actual behaviour of the system over the past ten years; rather, there has been a decline in participation rates, a tendency towards an increasingly school-based

---

[156] The definition of 'system' used here is the traditional one: "a set of elements standing in interrelations" (Von Bertalanffy, L., 1968).
[157] A mixed model is one where the majority of young people are in full-time education provided by schools and colleges but a significant minority are in WBL. A school-based model is one where the overwhelming majority participate via full-time school and college provision.
[158] This framework comes from a system dynamics perspective (see Appendix IV).
[159] Forrester, J. W. (1991). The framework presented here, though inspired by Forrester's model, is not loyal to the traditional system dynamics perspective, which is used here in a qualitative and heuristic manner.
[160] See Wright, S. and Oancea, A. (2004)

system, the academic drift of curricula and so on. Why and how has this happened are the key questions here. Is this because of a mismatch between expectations and behaviour? In other words, is this because the expectations were translating incorrect or insufficient information about structures and policies? Or does it have more to do with a discrepancy between expectations and the known structures and policies, for example when the expectations are far stronger than the policy implementation would justify. There are many pointers to the fact that the mismatch might be here, rather than at the level of the system not behaving as it should have; this reduces the surprising and puzzling character of system behaviour.

Figure 1. Understanding system dynamics 14-19 – A framework
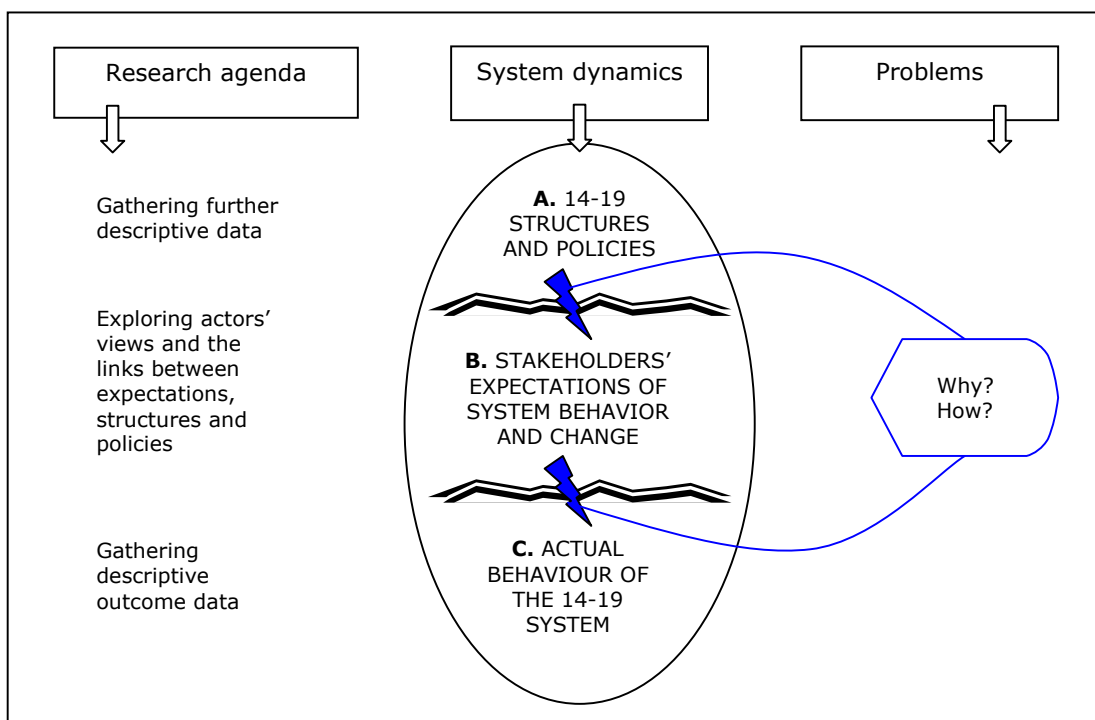
The way in which unexpected behaviour is accounted for – and the boundary on which the source of 'mismatch' is located – is also crucially important in terms of building an agenda for future research. The left hand column of Figure 1 shows how a focus on different layers of the framework can lead to investments in quite different research programmes – from large scale descriptive studies, to statistical modelling, to interpretive and critical studies of actors' views and the links between expectations, policies, structures and outcome.

The framework described above sees the system in a holistic manner and concentrates on its internal relationships. This leaves open the issue of exogenous behaviour – that is, of the interactions of the system with its environment. This behaviour will also need to be addressed, and explanations will need to be sought. However, the evidence gathered by the

Review suggests that exogenous factors are not enough on their own to account for the patterns of system behaviour and for their change over time, and that the internal dynamic is at least as important.

This chapter of the Report will put this framework to work in the following manner. First, it will provide a detailed description of the system (Layer C in Figure 1), and it will point out the apparent 'anomalies', or puzzling behaviours, whose explanation is important (for example, it will be shown that, rather than exhibiting booming participation rates as a consequence of dedicated policy initiatives, the system exhibits a decline over the past ten years). The chapter will then move on towards identifying potential explanations: first, by looking at exogenous factors; second, by looking at structures and policies (Layer A); and third, by exploring the ways in which the young people make sense of all this and construct their educational trajectories and expectations (Layer B). The next section examines comparative data to place the English and Welsh system in a broader context. This will be followed by a separate section on the role of HE in configuring the 14-19 system. Together this helps with drawing some lessons for further research and policy in the final part of this chapter.

1. The changing dynamics of participation

Political expectations of the post-compulsory secondary education and training system are high, as reflected in the Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets[161]. The hope is that the system will change its dynamics so that participation and qualification rates will match those found in other better performing countries. Such a change in system behaviour, it is believed, would yield higher levels of economic prosperity both nationally and individually through enhancing productivity and enabling firms to move into high value-added goods and service. In addition, it is hoped that such an alteration in system dynamics would increase social inclusion, and reduce distributional inequalities and levels of child poverty which have been growing remorselessly for the last twenty years in the UK[162]. The last twenty years, the time period under consideration here, has witnessed a multitude of policy initiatives intended to deliver the vision of an inclusive and internationally competitive post-compulsory education and training system. The first three sections in this chapter inquire into the extent to which this has been achieved. To some extent this will recapitulate work presented last year but a basic descriptive understanding of the system's dynamics is essential before inquiring into why the observed behaviour is occurring.

[161] Available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/performance
[162] Burgess, S. and Propper, C. (2002); HM Treasury (1997); Gregg, P., Harkness, S. and Machin, S. (1999)

Overall patterns of participation

Figures 2 and 3 show the general trends in participation among 16-18 year-olds in England and Wales[163]. Looking at these curves two phases can be identified:

1. A phase of expansion 1985-1994
2. A phase of stagnation 1995-2004

The data series is not long enough to show the phase of expansion in Wales. But there is no reason to doubt that such changes also took place in Wales between 1985 and 1993. Indeed the trace of the expansionary phase can be seen in the continuing growth in participation among Welsh 18 year-olds from 1992 to 1995. Wales, like England, reaches a peak in participation in 1994; then, as in England, this is followed by stagnation[164].

Figure 2. Overall participation rates for 16-19 year-olds in England, 1985-2004
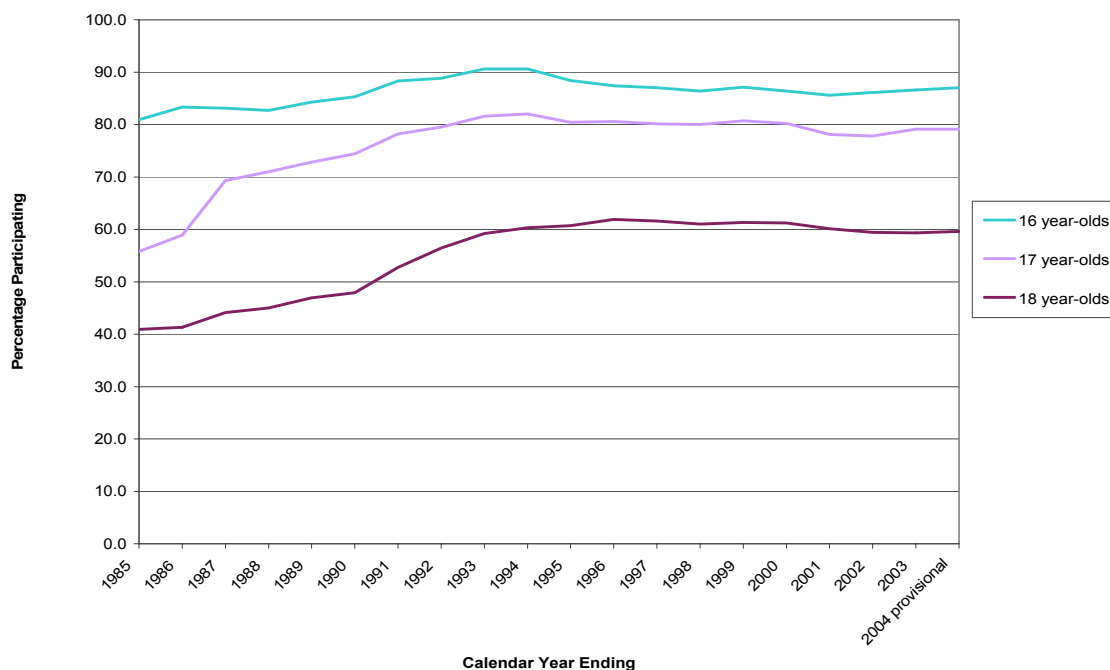
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

---

[163] Figure 2 uses the new estimates of participation based on the revised population estimates for England produced by the Office for National Statistics. A technical paper is available on the Nuffield Review website www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml. It explains these changes and provides a range of graphs showing the long-term behaviour of the English system. A similar paper is available for Wales. Time series data for Wales are less extensive than for England.
[164] The Welsh administrative data supplied by the Welsh Assembly website www.wales.gov.uk/keypubstatisticsforwales/index.htm changes in successive publications. Thus, the large peak in the 16 year-old growth curve and the trough in the 18 year-old curve, neither of which are present in the 17 year-old curve, are probably artefacts. It is the trends that are important.

Figure 3. Overall participation rates for 16-18 year-olds in Wales, 1992/93-2002/3
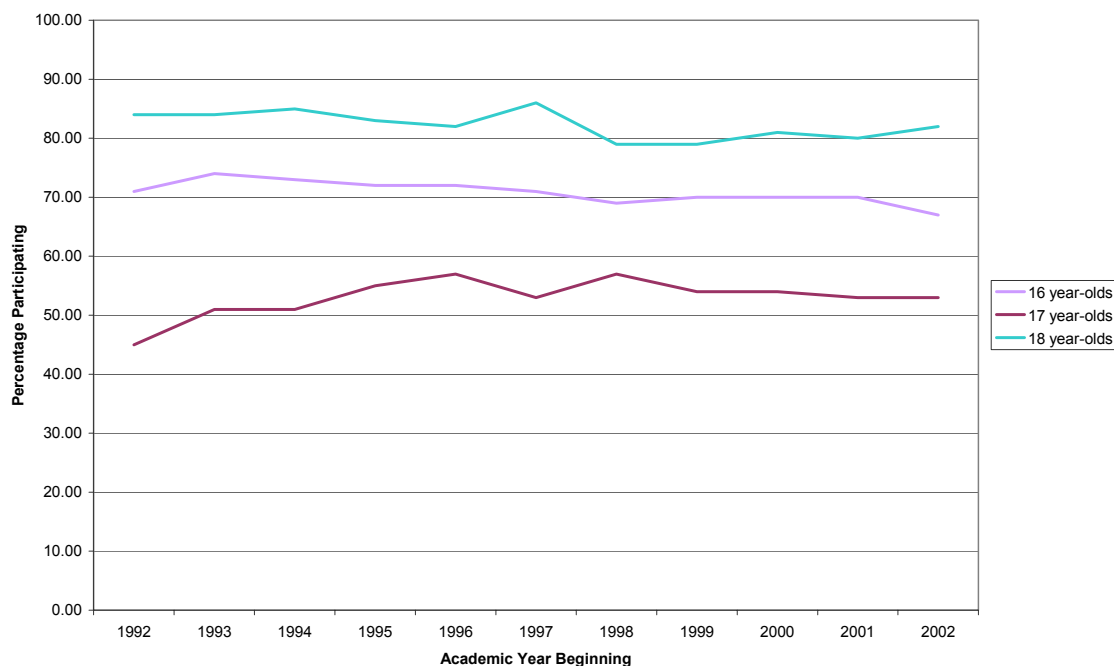
Source: 1. National Assembly for Wales (2000) SDB 18/2000 (Revised). Participation of 16-18 year-olds in education and the labour market. Available online at: www.wales.gov.uk/statistics

2. National Assembly for Wales (2003) SB 100/2003. Participation of 16-18 year-olds in learning and the labour market. Available online at: www.wales.gov.uk/statistics

3. National Assembly for Wales (2004) SB 80/2004. Participation of young people in education and the labour market. Available online at: www.wales.gov.uk/statistics

There is some evidence of perhaps renewed but slow growth in the last three years but in both countries the system is still struggling to get back to the participation rates of 1993/1994. A number of questions emerge from examining these two sets of growth curves:

- What produced the growth during the phase of expansion?
- What caused the more rapid growth in participation among 17 and 18 year-olds compared with 16 year-olds?
- What produces the attrition in participation between 16 and 17, and 17 and 18?
- Why, despite all of the reform efforts of the last decade, has the system not changed in the direction of higher participation rates?

To answer these questions requires examining the underpinning dynamics of the system in more detail.

Participation among 16 year-olds: England

Overall participation rates among 16 year-olds rose by nearly 10% between 1985 and 1994 and then declined by 5.5% from 1994 to 2001 (Figure 4). Subsequently, overall participation rates have increased by 1.6% to 2004 but the participation rate is still below that achieved in 1994 (90.6%). However, the number of young people participating at 16 has increased since 1993 because the size of the age cohort has grown (see Figure 22). As a consequence, in 1994 there were just under 460,000 16 year-olds in education and training. This had increased to just over half a million by 2004[165].

Figure 4. Different modes of participation of 16 year-olds 1985-2004, England
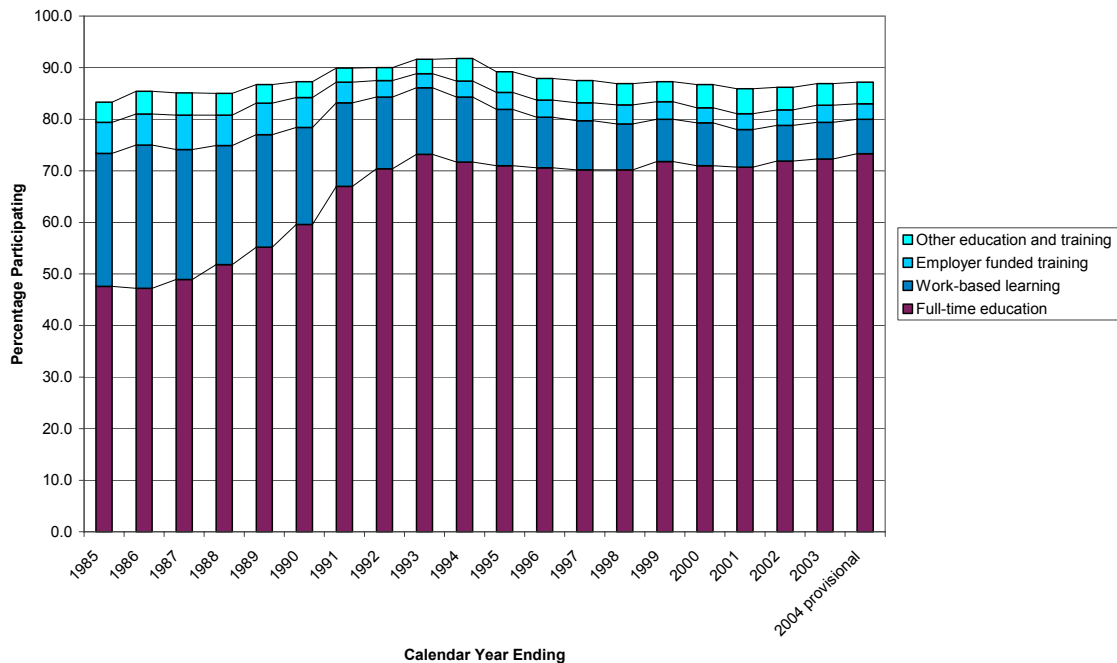
The increase in participation between 1985 and 1993 was accompanied by a shift from a mixed model of education and training to a much more school and college-based model, as young people increasingly participated via FTE rather than work-based or EFT. After 1993, participation in FTE stabilised but participation in WBL and EFT continued to decrease, despite the many reforms over the last decade intended to encourage young people to participate via this route. The weak performance of the work-based route is examined in more detail in Section 3 but its performance does explain the decline in participation from

---

[165] If participation rates had stayed at the 1993 level, 90.6%, then an additional 58,000 16 year-olds would be participating today.

1993 to 2001 among 16 year-olds. The apparent recent slight increase in participation among 16 year-olds is due to a further expansion in participation in FTE.

Participation among 17 year-olds

In the first Annual Report, the 16-19 system was characterised as a medium participation one with a high attrition rate reflecting the decline in participation rates between 16 and 17, and then between 17 and 18. The rate of attrition has declined over time (Table 1 and Figure 2). In 1986 participation by 17 year-olds was about 22% lower overall than participation by 16 year-olds the year before. By 1993/94, this difference had declined to 9%; it is currently about 8%. In part this is because overall participation rates increased more sharply for 17 year-olds (by 37.1%) than for either of the other two age cohorts between 1985 and 1993 (Figure 5). This was the result of an increase in participation in both FTE and WBL, the latter being associated with the introduction of the two-year Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in the mid 1980s.

The decline in participation rates among 17 year-olds after 1994 is less pronounced than for 16 year-olds. In part this is because of continuing higher rates of participation in WBL. Nonetheless, participation in WBL and EFT, while higher than for 16 year-olds, also shows a similar pattern of long-term decline.

Figure 5. Different modes of participation of 17 year-olds 1985-2004, England
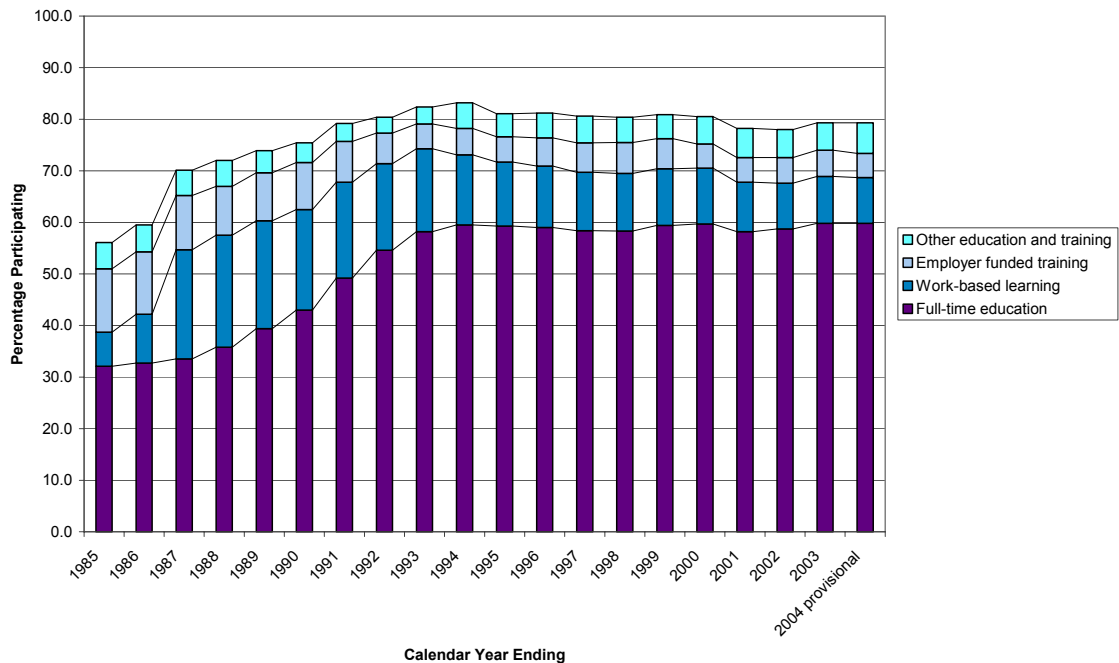
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

Participation among 18 year-olds

The years 1985 to 1993 also saw a sharp increase in participation rates among 18 year-olds, primarily as a result of the expansion of HE (Figure 6 and Table 2). Subsequently overall participation rates for this age group have remained relatively stable. Participation in WBL is higher than for 16 year-olds but lower than for 17 year-olds, with some indication of a long-term increase. Once again participation in EFT has declined. Nonetheless, more 18 year-olds currently participate via WBL and EFT than either 16 or 17 year-olds. In addition, a greater proportion of 18 year-olds than 16 or 17 year-olds are in other education and training. There remains a substantial fall of 20% in participation between 17 and 18 as young people reach the end of post-compulsory secondary education.

Figure 6. Different modes of participation of 18 year-olds 1985-2004, England
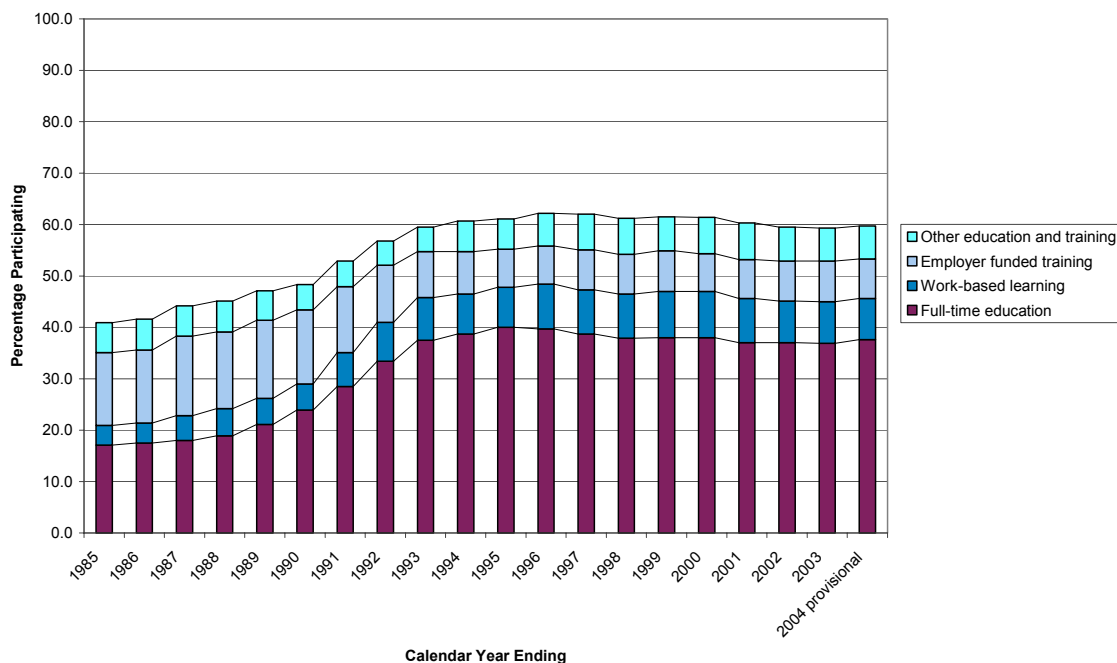
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

Patterns of participation among different age groups: Wales

Figures 7 and 8 show the proportions of Welsh 16 and 17 year-olds engaged in FTE and WBL. Overall participation rates for 16 year-olds are slightly lower in Wales than in England but the distribution of young people between FTE and WBL is very similar.

**Figure 7. Different modes of participation of 16 year-olds 1992/93-2002/03, Wales**

Participation rates among Welsh 17 year-olds are also lower than in England with a greater proportion participating via WBL, especially apprenticeship programmes.

Figure 8. Different modes of participation of 17 year-olds 1992/93-2002/03, Wales

What needs explaining is the rapid increase in the participation rates in FTE and its subsequent stagnation, and the different patterns of participation in WBL (including EFT) among 16–18 year-olds. This task is undertaken using English data, which is more detailed and of longer duration than data for Wales.

Participation in full-time education by institutional type

To understand the dynamics of change in participation requires a resolution of each growth curve into its constituent parts: participation in different types of institutions and different types of programmes by young people with different characteristics of gender, social class and ethnic background. The essential features of the two-phase pattern of growth in participation rates can be captured by focusing on three years for 16 year-olds – 1985, 1993, 2001 – which constitute the turning points in the growth curves. Each of these

cohorts of 16 years-olds is then followed as 17 and 18 year-olds for a further two years. Tables 1 to 5 present this data.

Different types of institution have experienced different rates of increase in participation rates in FTE (Figures 9 and 10). Participation rates for 16 year-olds in FTE increased in all types of institution during the phase of expansion. Following a short decline, participation rates in maintained schools recovered in 1996. Participation rates in sixth form colleges increased throughout the time period, albeit at a slower rate after 1994. Participation rates in the other types of colleges[166] and independent schools stagnated after 1994.

Figure 9. Participation by 16 year-olds in different institutions 1985-2004, England
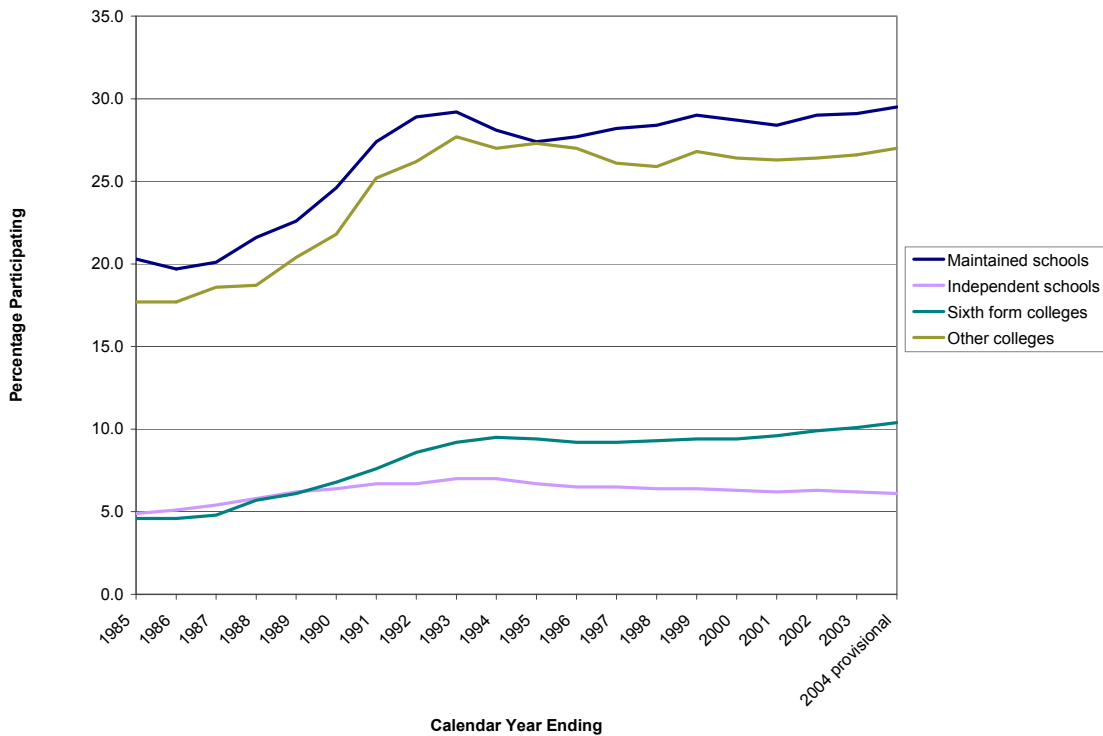
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

Changes in participation rates in FTE for 17 year-olds in maintained schools, independent schools and sixth form colleges mirror those for 16 year-olds in these institutions. Historically, the other colleges were the main provider of FTE for 17 year-olds. However, participation rates for this age group slumped after 1994 with the result that levels of participation among 17 year-olds in general FE, tertiary and specialist colleges and maintained schools became the same by 1998.

---

[166] These are described as general FE colleges, tertiary and specialist colleges in the administrative data sets being used here.

Figure 10. Participation by 17 year-olds in different institutions 1985-2004, England
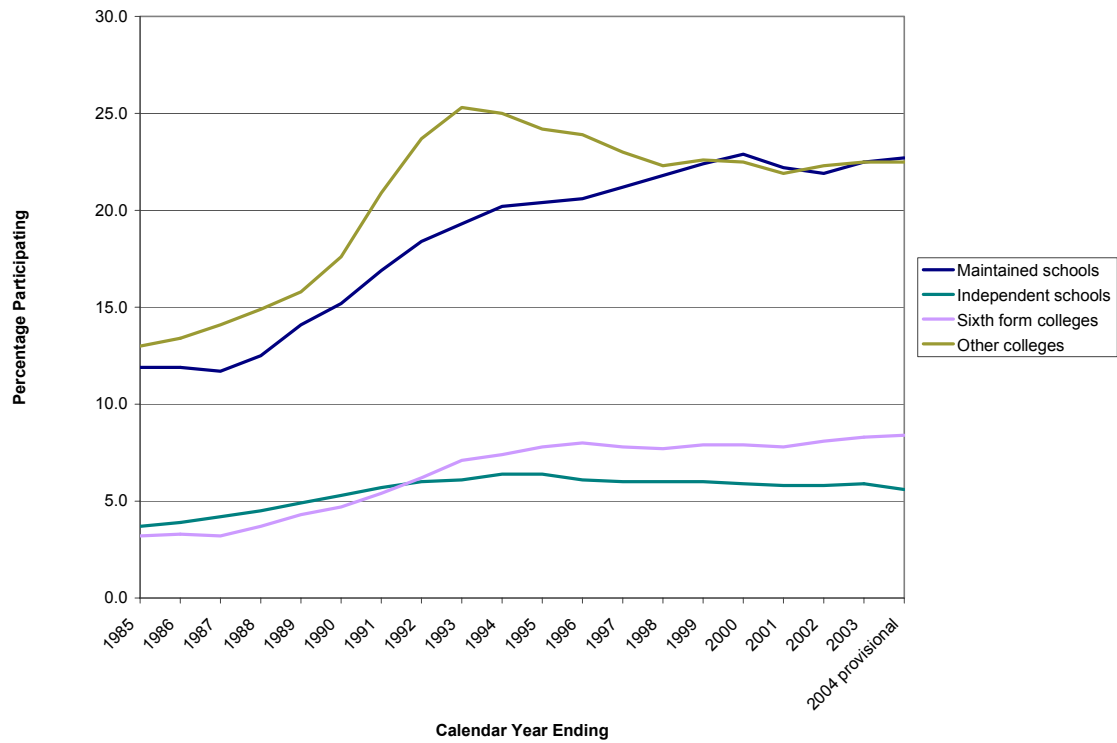
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

This quite dramatic change in system behaviour is even more stark if data for those in part-time education are included (Figures 11 and 12). These changes in participation rates reflect the reduction in participation in WBL among 16 and 17 year-olds during the time period, and the continued decline in the numbers of that traditional FE learner, the day-release student.

Figure 11. Participation of 16 year-olds in full-time and part-time education in different institutions 1985-2004, England
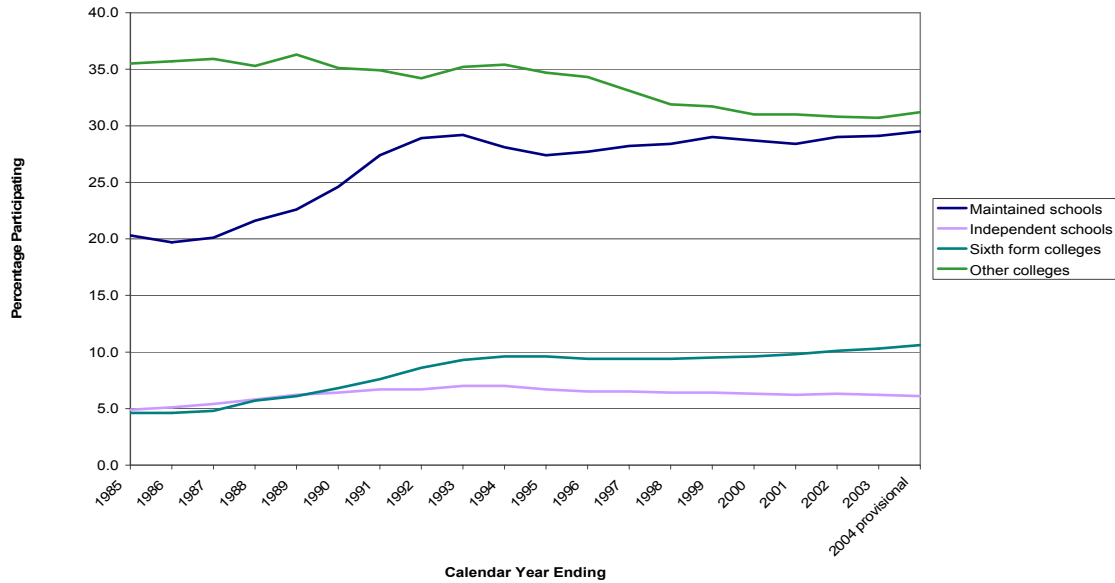
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

Figure 12. Participation of 17 year-olds in full-time and part-time education in different institutions 1985-2004, England
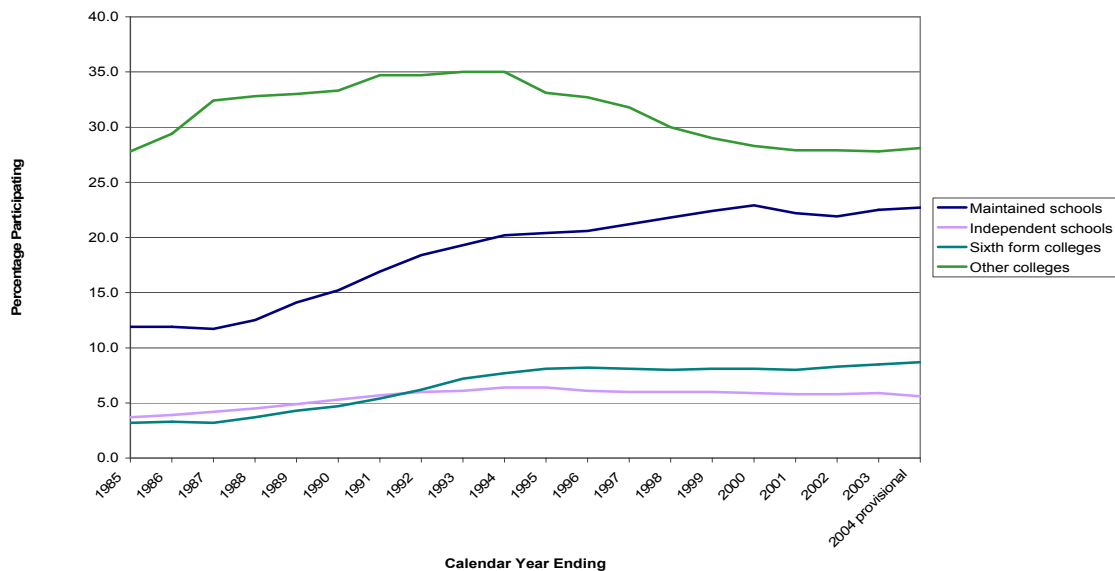
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

The impact of this decline in participation rates on general FE colleges has been the continuing need to diversify their provision to cater for 16-19 learners with a wider range of attainment in order to maintain funding. This pressure has been further increased by the reform of funding for adult learning.

Participation by highest qualification aim

This section disaggregates the administrative data on participation by highest qualification aim by institution, and highlights the reconfiguration of the learning opportunities available to young people from 1985 to 2002. A comparison of the data across Tables 3 to 5 makes it clear that growth during the period of expansion for 16 year-olds resulted primarily from increasing participation in Level 3 programmes such as A Levels. Participation on Level 3 vocational courses, starting from a low base, nearly tripled between 1985 and 1993. After 1993 there was continued slow growth in participation rates across all Level 3 programmes (Figure 13). The growth in participation at Level 3 reflects the increasing proportion of young people attaining 5 or more A*-C GCSEs at the end of KS4. In addition there has been some growth at Level 1 as new types of provision, such as Foundation GNVQs, have become available. However, the increase in Level 1 and 3 participation is offset by a decline in Level 2 participation in FTE.

Figure 13. Participation in different levels of provision among 16 year-olds 1985-2004, England
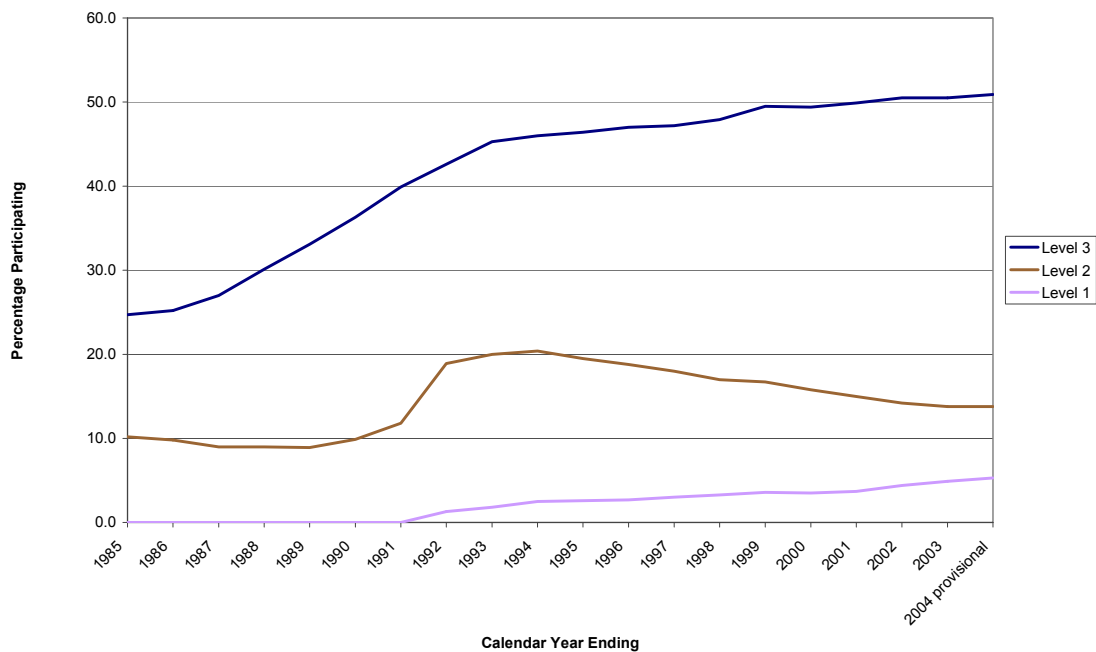
Among 17 year-olds the strong growth in Level 3 participation is still evident (Figure 14) but this growth ceases after 1994. This suggests that only a small proportion of those participating at Level 2 at 16 currently progress to Level 3 provision. This issue is pursued further in Section 3. However, it is worth comparing the current situation with that between 1991 and 1995. In those years participation at 17 in Level 3 programmes was higher than at 16, suggesting an excess supply of new learners on to Level 3 programmes at 17. Participation on Level 1 and 2 programmes was considerably lower than on Level 3 provision.

Figure 14. Participation in different levels of provision among 17 year-olds 1985-2004, England
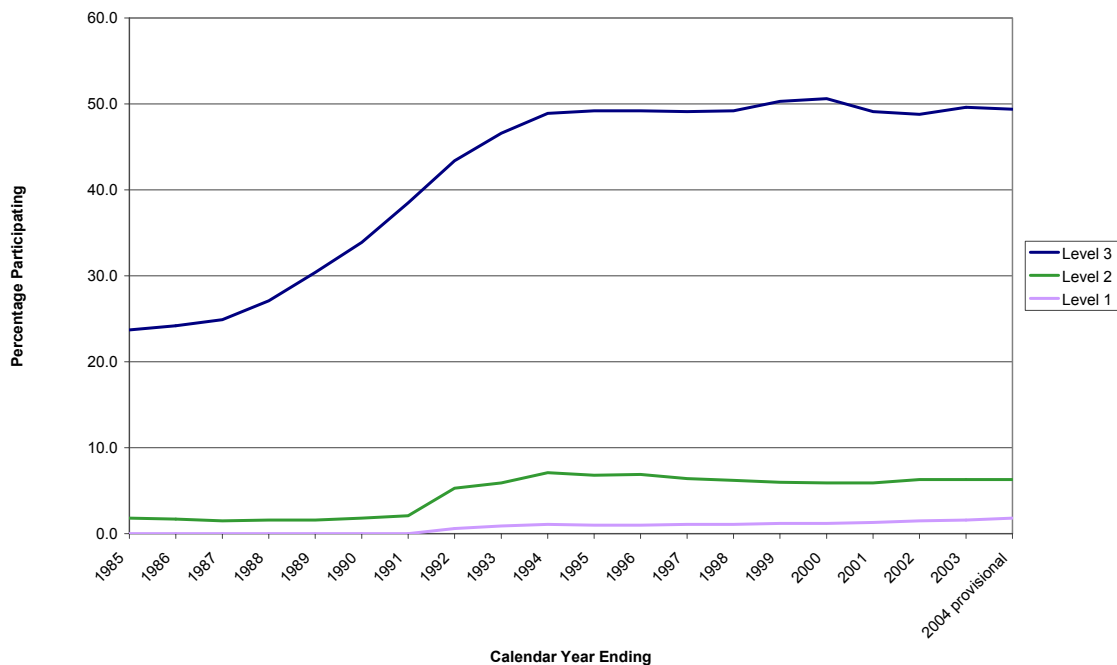
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

Participation rates at Level 3 can be further disaggregated into different types of courses (Figure 15). Participation in GCE A Level continues to rise throughout the time period, albeit much more slowly after 1993, and is in line with increasing GCSE attainment. Participation rates in all forms of full-time vocational Level 3 programmes are considerably lower than for GCE A Level. Participation in other vocational provision at Level 3 remains fairly constant throughout the time period with indications of a substitution of advanced GNVQ for these programmes following its introduction in 1992. Overall participation in Level 3 vocational provision among 16 year-olds has increased since 1992. Data for 17 year-olds reflect these trends.

Figure 15. Participation by 16 year-olds by Level 3 qualification aim 1985-2004, England
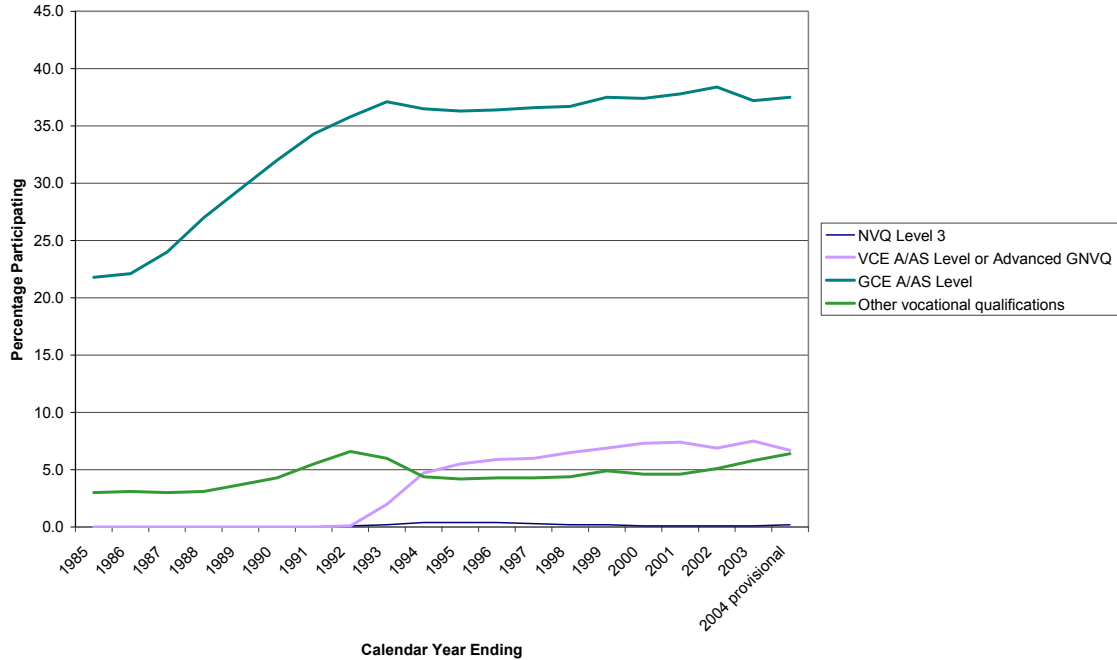
The data for 16 year-olds taking Level 3 qualifications also indicates the division of labour in the system between schools and sixth form colleges on the one hand, and general FE, tertiary and specialist colleges on the other hand (Table 3 and Figure 16). In 1985, 78.5% of all Level 3 provision was in schools and sixth form colleges. This proportion declined over the phase of expansion to 74% by 1993. By 2004, the proportion had increased again to 77%, primarily as a result of the opportunity to recruit learners on to Advanced GNVQ and then VCE A/AS Level provision in schools and sixth form colleges. Participation via this route for 16 year-olds has increased sevenfold in these institutions since 1993, while in FE colleges participation via full-time Level 3 vocational provision increased by less than 1%. In comparison participation via the GCE A/AS Level route has increased by just over 1% in schools and sixth form colleges since 1993 and declined in general FE and tertiary colleges[167].

---

[167] It is worth noting here that the situation in Wales is different, with FE colleges being the biggest providers of Level 3 qualifications. Details are available on the Nuffield Review website: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk

Figure 16. Participation of 16 year-olds in full-time education by institutional type and Level 3 qualification aim 1985–2004, England
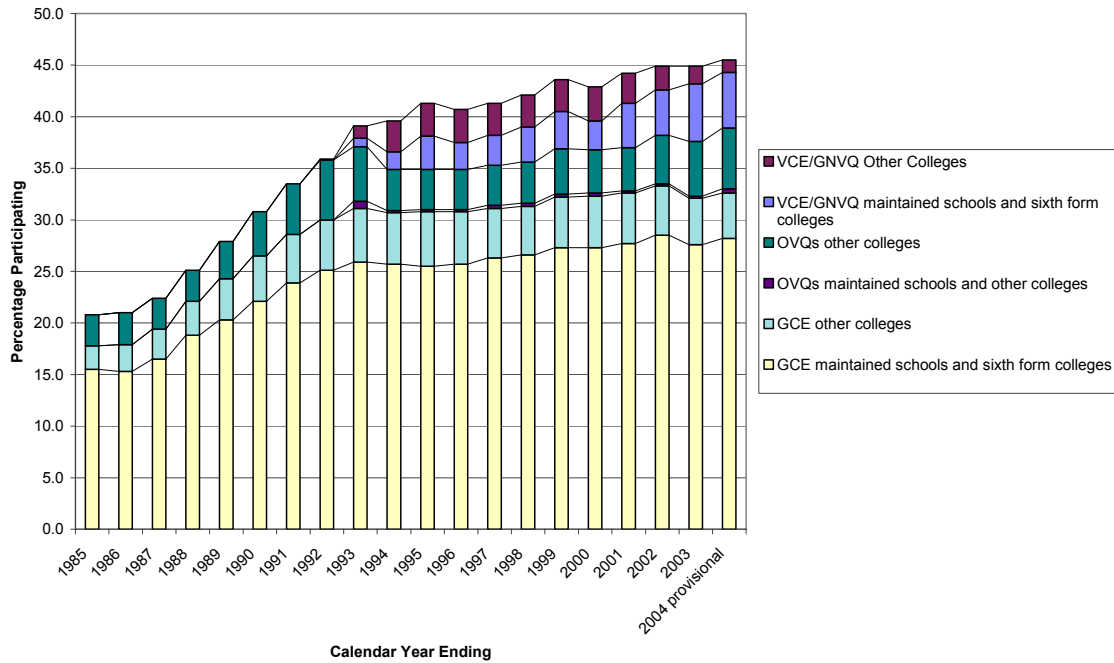
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

As a result, today schools and sixth form colleges provide almost as much full-time Level 3 vocational provision for 16 year-olds as general FE and tertiary colleges. This is a large reconfiguration of the learning opportunities available to young people at Level 3. Furthermore, there is a major difference in the nature of that provision, with schools and sixth form colleges primarily offering VCE A/AS Level while the other colleges offer in the main other Level 3 vocational qualifications at Level 3, primarily BTEC National Diplomas. This results in a difference in the experience of the two groups of learners.

In terms of full-time participation at Level 2 and below (Tables 4 and 5), the situation is more complicated. In 1985, about a fifth of 16 year-olds were participating in courses at these levels, with about 60% of these in general FE, tertiary and specialist colleges and just over a quarter in maintained schools. By 1993, just over a quarter of 16 year-olds were engaging with this type of provision with again 60% of these learners being accommodated by general FE, tertiary and specialist colleges. However, from just examining participation at Level 2 (Figure 17), it is clear that until the early 1990s, maintained schools were the main providers of this type of full-time provision via GCSE courses[168]. The major change

---

[168] It is important to remember here that that the data are for full-time education. FE colleges in particular would have been providing a whole range of courses leading to Level 2 qualifications, such as those offered by City and Guilds, to part-time learners on apprenticeships and youth training programmes.

during the phase of expansion was the substitution of Level 2 vocational programmes, as they became available through the late 1980s and the early 1990s, for GCSEs in both schools and colleges. This produces the increase in diversity of provision after 1991.

After 1994, participation rates in provision at Level 2 and below among 16 year-olds declined, so that by 2001 once again about a fifth of the age cohort were participating via programmes at these levels. This offset the growth in participation in full-time Level 3 courses, resulting in the stagnation in participation rates in FTE for 16 year-olds (see Figure 2). Now, however, 70% of this provision is being provided by general FE, tertiary and specialist colleges. The decline in Level 2 provision by maintained schools is particularly marked (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Participation of 16 year-olds in full-time education by institutional type and Level 2 qualification aim 1985–2004, England
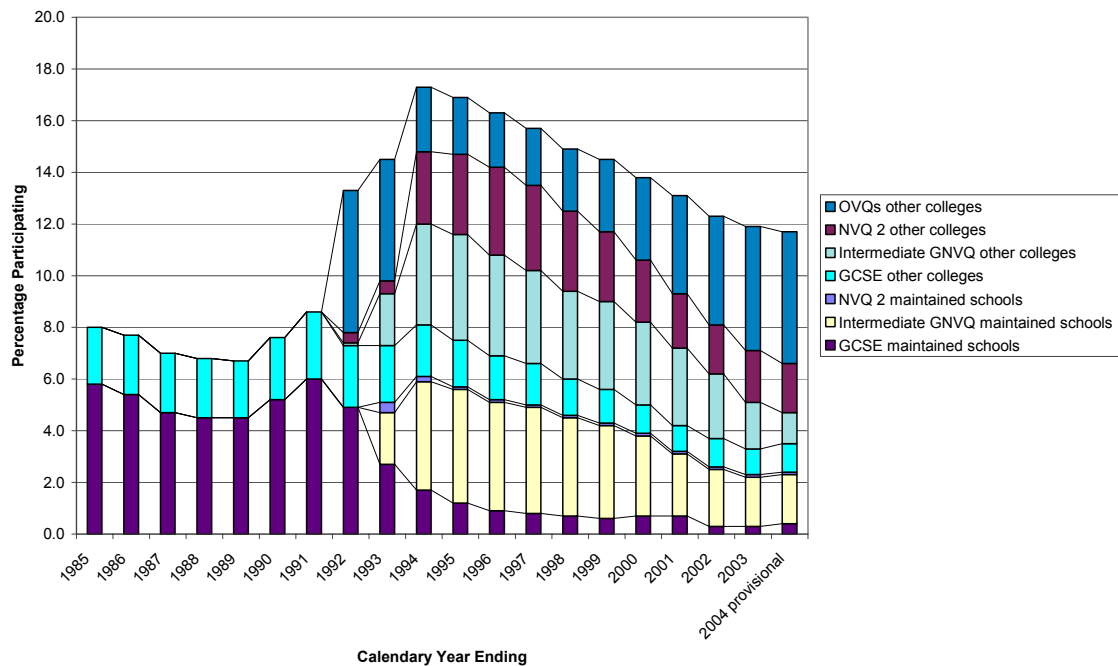
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

Moving on to the 17 year-olds, participation rates on Level 3 courses fall slightly from the participation rates seen for the 16 year-olds (Table 3). The exception is 1993/94 when there is an increase in overall participation at Level 3. This is due to increased participation in the Level 3 vocational programmes among 17 year-olds. In all years there is drop-out from A and AS Level. General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges seem better at recruiting new Level 3 vocational learners at 17 than schools or sixth form colleges, suggesting that these institutions are running some version of a three-year post-compulsory secondary programme. This would, at least in part, explain the relatively high continuing participation

at 18 on all Level 3 programmes, but especially vocational ones, in general FE, tertiary and specialist colleges.

Unsurprisingly participation rates at Level 3, especially on A and AS Level courses, fall sharply among 18 year-olds as they progress out of the 16-19 system.

At all other levels participation rates fall sharply at 17 (Tables 4 and 5). Participation in Level 2 provision among 17 and 18 year-olds increased between 1986 and 1994, following the trend for 16 year-olds, and then declined slightly. The largest proportion of Level 2 and Level 1 learners at 17 is found in general FE and tertiary colleges. The origin of these learners remains obscure. They could be progressing from programmes at a lower level, retaking the year, or moving to another programme at the same level. This last behaviour may form a pattern of sensible horizontal progression as learners build up a portfolio of qualifications at Level 2. On the other hand, it could represent students being on a 'magic roundabout[169]' where they take additional Level 1 and 2 courses because there is nothing else for them to do.

Regional variation in participation rates

What has been presented so far is an average picture for the whole nation. However, there is considerable variation in participation rates between areas. A satisfactory explanation of the dynamics of the system's behaviour over time needs to account for this geographical variation.

At the LEA level, overall participation rates in all education and training among 16 year-olds at the end of 2003 ranged from 73% in Barnsley to 93% in Enfield, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames and Waltham Forest. For 17 year-olds participation rates ranged from 55% in Thurrock to 100%[170] in Wokingham. At the LEA level, participation rates in FTE for 16 year-olds ranged from 59% in Barnsley to 89% in Richmond-upon-Thames. For 17 year-olds, participation in FTE ranged from 44% in Salford to 79% in Harrow and Richmond-upon-Thames.

In general, participation rates in FTE are higher in the South than in the North of England, but this is largely offset by higher participation rates in WBL in the North. As a consequence, regional variation in overall participation rates is lower than the variation in participation rates in FTE and in WBL. Young people who continue in FTE are more likely to do so in schools in the South than in the North, while the opposite is true for the proportion going to on to sixth form or other FE colleges.

---

[169] Huddleston, P. and Oh, S. (2004)
[170] All of these figures are subject to a certain degree of error owing to uncertainty about the actual size of the age cohorts both locally and nationally.

As reported last year there is also considerable variation in participation rates between Welsh LEAs[171]. In both countries these regional variations in participation can be linked to regional variation in attainment at the end of KS4.

Participation by learner characteristics

A wide range of personal characteristics are associated with the propensity of young people to participate[172]. These are briefly reviewed here.

Gender

There is a clear gender effect in the changing pattern of participation among 16 year-olds (Tables 1 and 2). Participation rates rose for both genders in the phase of expansion (Figure 18). Labelled the gender revolution[173], this change in the pattern of participation has led to the number of young women catching up and then exceeding the number of young men in education and training at the ages of 16 and 17, and achieving parity in participation rates by 18. For example, in 1985 a smaller proportion of young women were participating in education and training at 16 than young men. By 1993, participation rates among women were 1% higher than among men and by 2004 over 5% more 16 year-old women were participating than 16 year-old men (Figure 18)[174].

---

[171] Hayward, G., Hodgson, A., Johnson, J., Keep, E., Oancea, A., Pring, R., Spours, K. and Wright, S. (2004)
[172] For a review, see Sparkes, J. and Glennerster, H. (2002)
[173] Moore, R. (2004)
[174] The interpretation of the meaning of these gaps between groups is contentious. This will be discussed further in the section on attainment below. The point to be made here is simply that such gaps in participation rates between groups exist.

Figure 18. The percentage of female and male 16 year-olds participating in full-time education and work-based learning 1985-2004, England
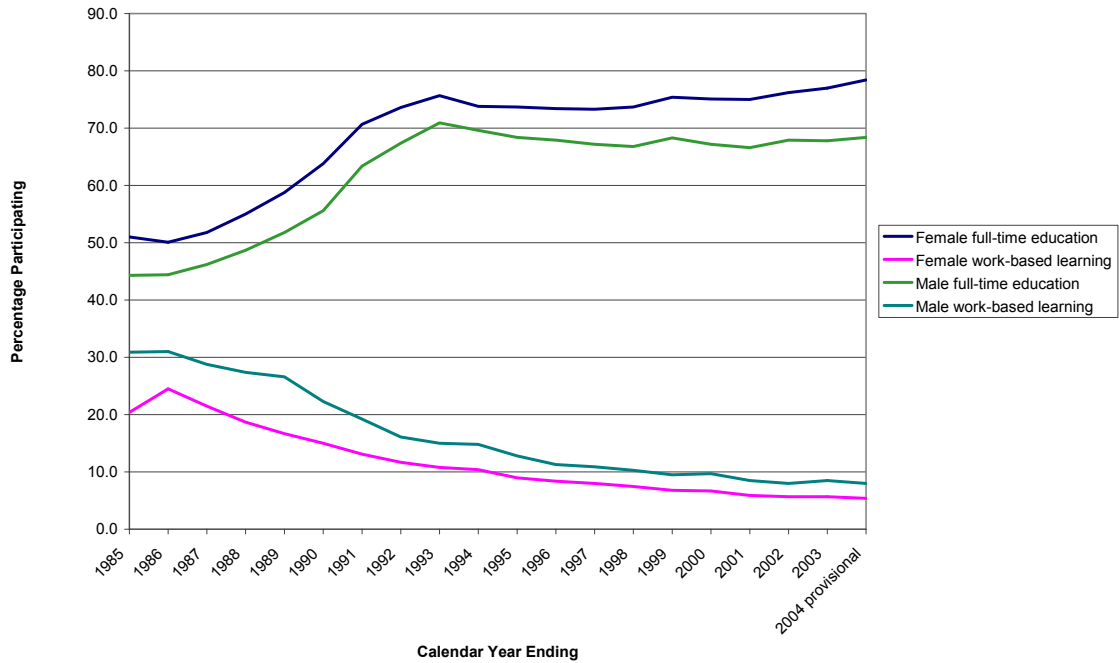
Source: Data online at: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway

This is the result of two changes: first a sustained increase in participation among young women in FTE compared with young men over the time period; and second, a slightly larger fall in participation among young men in WBL and EFT compared with young women. In 1985 about a quarter of 16 year-old women and nearly 40% of men participated via these routes. This had declined to 12.5% and 18.6% respectively by 1993, and to 7.5% and 11.9% respectively by 2004. However, women who might have previously participated via the WBT and EFT routes demonstrated a greater propensity to switch to participation via FTE than their male counterparts. This pattern is correlated with the faster increase in GCSE scores among young women than young men, which is discussed later. The net result was a sharper decline in participation at 16 among men (7%) than women (3%) from 1993 to 2001. During the current period of slow growth, participation is increasing more quickly among young women than among young men.

Among 17 year-olds there is also an increase in the likelihood of women to participate compared with men, with participation of 17 year-old women now exceeding that of men by about 4%. Men both historically and currently are significantly more likely to leave FTE at 17 than women, and remain more than twice as likely to be engaged in WBL as women at this age. There has been a sharp decrease in participation in EFT among 17 year-old men but participation via this route among 17 year-old women has also halved.

The participation of 18 year-old women in FTE continued to increase after the sharp rise from 1985 to 1993. However, male participation in FTE declined slightly after 1993. This is offset by the continuing higher rate of participation by 18 year-old men in WBT and EFT. Overall, this has meant that participation rates of 18 year-old men exceed those of women until the end of the time period when the participation rates became similar. However, participation rates among 18 year-old women show a long-term increase compared with a long-term decrease for men, suggesting that female participation for this age group will soon exceed that for men. In part this is a working through of the higher rates of participation among 16 and 17 year-old women relative to their male counterparts, but it may also reflect differences in behaviour between men and women that emerge at the end of post-compulsory secondary education rather than earlier.

Young women are consistently more likely to participate in maintained schools than young men and this difference has grown over time. Differences in participation in general FE colleges narrowed during the phase of expansion but women are still more likely to participate in FTE in these institutions than young men. This is because young men are more likely to leave FTE at 16 and 17 to enter WBL, EFT or the labour market.

Ethnic origin

Participation rates in FTE have increased among 16 year-olds of all ethnic origins. Nonetheless, participation rates in post-compulsory secondary education still vary widely between young people with different ethnic origins (Table 6). For example, in 2004[175] overall participation rates in education and training were lowest among 16 year-olds from Bangladeshi (83%) and white origins (85%). They were highest among those with other Asian (96%) and Indian origins (96%). Black and Pakistani 16 year-olds fall into an intermediate position (91% and 89% respectively).

By 17 years of age, people from white backgrounds are the least likely to be participating (81%) followed by those of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin (86%)[176]. In part this can be attributed to the fact that these groups are the least likely to be studying for Level 3 qualifications at 16[177], an outcome associated with poorer attainment at the end of compulsory schooling. The likelihood of leaving the system by the end of the first non-compulsory year is much higher for those on Level 2 provision and below.

---

[175] Data from YCS 12, Sweep 1. In: DfES (2005h). YCS data tend to overestimate participation rates compared with administrative data. It is the relative position of the different groups that is important. YCS data also do not disaggregate young people's ethnic origins using the Census categories. This leads to grouping young people with different patterns of participation, for example young black people with Caribbean and African origins, into one large category of black origin.
[176] Data from YCS 11 Sweep 2. In: DfES (2003c). Data from the YCS prior to Cohort 12 do not disaggregate Bangladeshi and Pakistani young people. This is a major weakness as it is clear from the later cohort that the participation behaviour of the two groups differs. In all likelihood the participation rate of young people of Bangladeshi origin is lower than this figure.
[177] YCS 12 Sweep 1. In: DfES (2005h)

A major difference in patterns of participation between young people from different ethnic origins is in the type of institution where they are learning. Those from black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are significantly more likely to be studying in FE colleges than those from white or Indian backgrounds.

It is important to recognise the considerable regional variation in participation rate among members of the same minority ethnic group. This is closely linked to GCSE attainment, which is discussed in Section 2.

Socio-economic status

The probability of participating at 16 and 17 years of age, particularly via the FTE route, is much higher for those with parents in professional and intermediate occupations than for those with parents in lower supervisory and routine work. Participation rates are also likely to be low for those with parents who are unemployed. In addition, those with more highly educated parents are more likely to participate (Table 6).

Disability

Disabled young people are slightly less likely to be participating at 16 (Table 6). The relative participation rates for 17 year-olds with and without disabilities remain about the same.

Disengagement

Those who have been excluded from school or who have a history of persistent truancy are also less likely to participate beyond the end of the compulsory schooling (Table 6). Those with such characteristics who do participate are far more likely to do so in a FE college than in a school.

Qualifications at 16

A number of analyses indicate that a key factor associated with continuing participation at 16 is the level of qualification obtained at the end of KS4[178]. It is clear that those with higher levels of attainment in their GCSEs are far more likely to be participating in post-compulsory education than their less academically successful peers (Table 6). For example, 89% of those with five or more A*-C GCSEs are in FTE or WBL at 16, compared with 48% of those with 5 or more D-G GCSEs and 26% of those with no GCSE passes. Those with lower levels of attainment at 16 who do participate are less likely to be doing so by 17 years of age. This is mainly because those who do not have five or more GCSEs at Grades A*-C are more likely to be on one-year Level 2 and Level 1 programmes. Progression from studying

---

[178] For example, Bynner, J. and Parsons, S. (1997); Payne, J. (2003a)

qualifications at this level at 16 years of age to studying a Level 3 qualification at 17 seems to be low. This is an issue that is examined further below.

In turn GCSE attainment at the end of KS4 is linked with other characteristics of learners such as their gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Thus attainment acts to mediate the effects of other pupil characteristics on their likelihood of participating at 16 and 17. Factors affecting qualification rates are examined in the next section. Here it is important to note that certain characteristics are associated with higher rates of participation among those who have not done so well in their GCSEs. Students are more likely to participate with poorer GCSE results if they are female, of Asian origin and with parents in professional and intermediate occupations.

Summary

Since 1985 participation rates have improved across all groups of young people but relative differences of access to post-16 learning opportunities have not declined over time; that is the system does not appear to have become more socially inclusive. Such differences in access do not necessarily imply inequality but it does appear that entry to the post-16 system, both in terms of what can be studied and where, is highly selective. This selective effect may weigh most heavily on those who have to leave school at 16 because there are no appropriate learning opportunities available for them within these institutions. This burden has increased over time as maintained schools have increasingly specialised in providing Level 3 courses. This has increasingly left general FE and tertiary colleges, and WBL providers, to meet the needs of the lowest attaining students in a system which inequitably distributes resources (see Chapter Five).

It is at this juncture, between the end of year 11 and the beginning of year 12, that the loss of learners begins[179]. This loss is mediated by GCSE attainment but is ultimately the result of long-term processes that operate both inside and outside the school system[180]. Given the importance of GCSE attainment to subsequent progression pathways, this is examined in the next section, before returning to consider in more detail the fate of those who fail to achieve five or more A*-C grades at GCSE at the end of compulsory schooling.

2. Qualification rates

Participation rates may have stagnated after 1993/4 but attainment rates have not at either Level 2 or Level 3. For the latter, this is the result of an increase in both retention rates (fewer learners are leaving their programmes early) and success rates (more learners are achieving the qualification they have been studying for). Last year's Annual Report considered the continuing increase in qualification rates across all types of examination. The

---

[179] A small but decreasing proportion of young people will already be out of the system because they have been permanently excluded.
[180] See, for example, Gorard, S. and Rees, G. (2002)

patterns are reviewed here for Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. Last year the focus was on Level 3 attainment. This year greater attention is paid to attainment at Level 2 set against the current government PSA targets. These targets are set as part of the annual Spending Reviews (SR) and they change over time.

Level 2 attainment in England: GCSE and GNVQ[181]

There are four PSA targets[182] for attainment at Level 2 by the end of compulsory schooling.

1. The SR2002 PSA target, "An average increase of 2 per cent per year in the percentage of 16 year-olds achieving 5 or more GCSE/GNVQs at Grades A*-C, between 2002 and 2006", has been replaced by, "By 2008, 60% of those aged 16 to achieve the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C (this target may be reviewed in light of recommendations in the Tomlinson report)."
2. SR2004 PSA target: "In maintained mainstream schools, at least 20% of pupils to achieve 5 or more grades A*-C at GCSE and equivalent by 2004, rising to 25% by 2006 and to 30% by 2008."
3. The SR2000 PSA target: "92% of 16-year-olds pupils to achieve 5 or more grades A*-G at GCSE and equivalent, including mathematics and English by 2004."
4. SR2000 PSA target: "38% of 16-year-old pupils in each LEA to achieve 5 or more grades A*-C at GCSE and equivalent by 2004."

Given the key importance of attainment at this stage in 'determining' future patterns of behaviour among young people, such targets seem sensibly ambitious.

Nationally, the proportion obtaining five or more GCSEs at Grades A*-C was 53.7% in 2004[183], 52.9% in 2003, and 51.6% in 2002; that is the rate of growth in attainment at the upper level of GCSE is apparently slowing[184]. The likelihood of achieving the first PSA target appears, therefore, slim. However, in 2005 the proportion of entries awarded A*-C was up 2% to 61.2%, the largest increase in 13 years[185]. This is likely to lead to an increase in the proportion attaining five A*-C though these figures are currently not available.

In 2004, 72 maintained mainstream schools failed to have 20% of their pupils achieve five or more GCSE or equivalent and 186 schools failed to achieve the 25% target. This is an improvement on 2003 of 40 schools for the 20% target and 38 schools for the 25% target.

Nationally, the proportion achieving five A*-G GCSEs in 2004, 88.8%, was the same as in 2003. The proportion achieving five A*-G GCSEs including English and mathematics was

---

[181] In reporting attainment, GCSE and GNVQ attainment is conflated in the administrative data sets. Suffice to say that participation in GCSE dwarfs participation in GNVQ. For example, in 2004 there were 5.14 million GCSE entries in full GCSEs; 404,200 in short course GCSEs; 106,170 in Applied GCSEs; and 45,839 in the full intermediate GNVQ.
[182] DfES (2005c)
[183] DfES (2005c)
[184] DfES (2004b)
[185] Edexcel (2005)

0.1% higher in 2004 than in 2003. The proportion obtaining five or more A*-G GCSEs in 2003/4 increased by 0.1% from 2002/03 to 86.7%. In 2004, 97% of LEAS (145 LEAs) achieved their GCSE targets for five or more GCSEs at grades A*-G, an improvement of 2% (four LEAs) on 2003[186].

The picture is further complicated by the considerable variation in GCSE attainment between LEAs and between young people with different characteristics. For example, in 2003/04 the lowest achieving LEA had 34.7% of its 15 year-olds achieving five or more GCSEs at A*-C with the highest achieving 68.1%. Attainment rates can vary sharply between adjacent Learning Partnership Regions, for example from 44.2% five or more GCSEs at A*-C in Sunderland to 51.2% in Tyne and Wear. In Gateshead, 62.2% of young people achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C. Cross the river to Newcastle upon Tyne and this proportion declined to 45.6%. The most obvious explanation for this is the relative deprivation of these different areas. In every Government Office region the proportion of young people achieving five or more A*-C GCSEs increases as the degree of deprivation in the area where a school is located decreases[187]. As will be seen in Section 4, relative poverty is a strong predictor of educational success. These local differences in GCSE attainment are reflected in the variation in participation rates in post-16 education and training between LEAs noted above.

The impact of gender, ethnicity and social class on GCSE attainment

In addition to these regional differences in GCSE attainment, there are the well-known associations between gender, ethnicity, social class and GCSE attainment. These differences between groups are more pronounced at the higher levels of GCSE attainment.

Gender

Nationally in 2003/04 58.8% of 15 year-old women achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C. Only 48.8% of young men of the same age achieved at this level. The higher success rate of young women on this metric is found across all LEAs, though the size of the difference fluctuates quite sharply. For example, in Sunderland in 2004 it stood at 14%, in Blackburn with Darwen at 15.9%, in Worcestershire at 11.8%, and in Thurrock at 11.9%. By contrast, in Nottingham the difference was 7.3%, in Barking and Dagenham it was 6.2%, and in Reading it was 1.2%[188].

Ethnicity

GCSE attainment has been rising for all ethnic groups with the exception of black pupils who have shown a decline in attainment since 2001 (Figure 19)[189]. Chinese, Indian, mixed white and Asian heritage and Irish pupils all perform better than the national average on the five

---

[186] DfES (2005c)
[187] DfES (2005c)
[188] DfES (2005c)
[189] DfES (2004c). The data for 2001/02 are the last finalised data which provide information on these variables. However, the participation rates will not have been corrected to take account of the most recent ONS population estimates.

or more GCSEs at A*-C measure (Tables 7 and 8). All minority ethnic groups within the 'black' category, Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils, and pupils of mixed white and black Caribbean heritage are consistently below that national average on this metric. However, Bangladeshi pupils' relative attainment is closer to the national average at GCSE/GNVQ, with 43.3% achieving five or more GCSEs at A*-C compared with the national average of 49.0% in 2002. This situation has further improved since 2002 (Figure 19).

Figure 19. GCSE attainment by ethnic origin 1992-2004, England and Wales
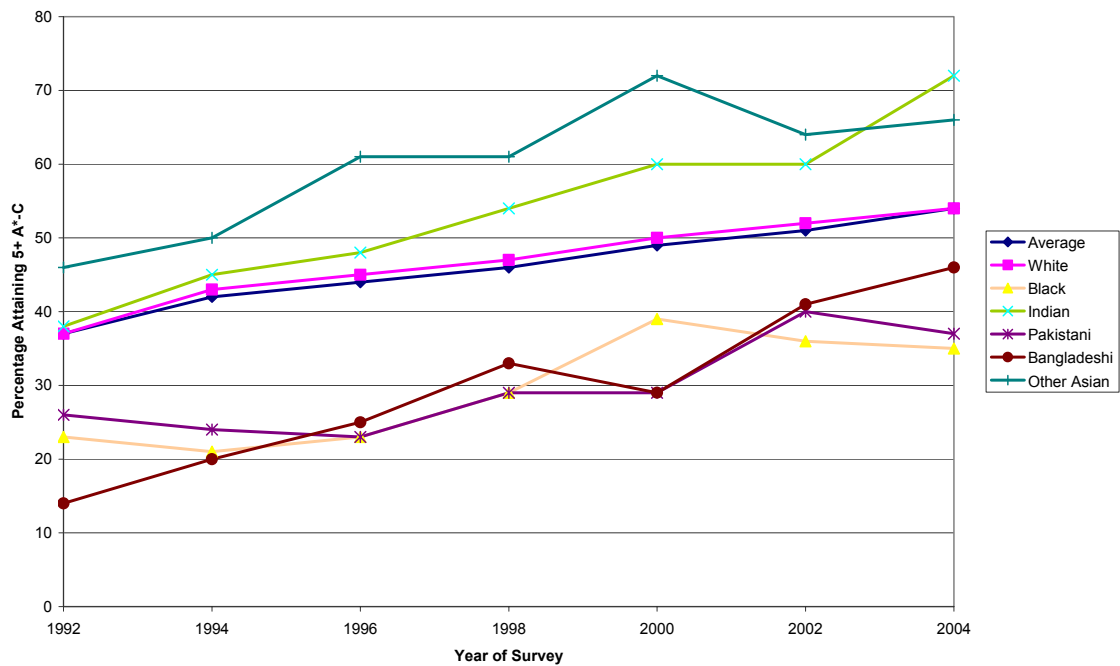
Source: YCS Cohorts 6-12, Sweep 1

These national figures again mask considerable local variation in attainment within ethnic categories. The available evidence suggests that children of all minority ethnic groups can achieve. In one study[190], of the six minority ethnic categories analysed, one was the highest attaining of all in at least one LEA. The categories included black students, who are often considered to have poor attainment. The same study found that "in one in ten authorities that monitor GCSE results by ethnicity, pupils in all recorded black groups are more likely to attain the benchmark[191] than their white peers."[192] Similarly, although at a national level 15 year-olds of Pakistani origin are less likely to achieve five higher grade GCSEs than their white peers, in four out of ten LEAS that monitor by ethnic origins, pupils of Pakistani origin were more likely to attain the benchmark than their white counterparts locally.

---

[190] Gillborn, D. and Mirza, H.S. (2000)
[191] 5 A*-C GCSEs
[192] Gillborn, D. and Mirza, H.S. (2000)

The available research shows conclusively that no ethnic group is inherently less capable of academic success, but despite the variation noted, the evidence shows that there are consistent and long-standing inequalities in average attainment at GCSE for many of the principal minority ethnic groups. The evidence[193] also indicates that for pupils of African-Caribbean origin the inequality in attainment compared with their white and Indian peers increases as they move through the school system, with a particularly marked decline in attainment between primary and secondary school. For young people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin initial inequality at base line assessment seems to decline through primary school and, in the case of pupils of Bangladeshi origin, through secondary school as well. Nonetheless, these young people still have significantly lower than average GCSE attainment compared with their white and Indian peers, who perform above average.

Suggestions that account for this situation in terms of alienation of these young people are not supported by evidence about their attendance or attitudes towards school. The qualitative research evidence suggests that the way such pupils are stereotyped within the school system, as well as some of the assessment procedures, imposes additional barriers to academic success[194].

Gender and ethnicity

Young women at 16 and 17 years of age consistently outperform young men in all minority ethnic groups as they do nationally (Table 7). For example 36.8% of black Caribbean girls achieved five or more GCSE at A*-C compared with 21.9% of boys, a difference of nearly 15% compared with the national average of 10% in 2001/02[195]. Analysis of data from the Youth Cohort Study (YCS) suggests that, while there is a well-established gender gap in each ethnic group, there remain significant attainment inequalities between ethnic groups regardless of gender. Thus, while the growing gender gap in higher grade GCSE attainment has attracted greater media coverage in recent years, inequality in attainment at the end of compulsory schooling attributable to differences between ethnic groups is larger, and is dwarfed by inequality in attainment attributable to social class differences[196]. The big challenge in meeting the PSA targets is therefore not just to improve the attainment of boys; it is to improve the attainment of young people from poorer backgrounds generally.

Social class

Using parental occupation as a proxy for social class, it seems that the attainment gap at GCSE between the highest and lowest social classes has increased since the late 1980s (Figure 20). This is linked to the observation that rates of social mobility have also declined sharply over the last thirty years[197]. In terms of the five A*-C benchmark, between 1988

---

[193] Gillborn, D. and Mirza, H.S. (2000)
[194] See Gillborn, D. and Gipps, C. (1996); Gillborn, D. and Mirza, H.S. (2000); Gillborn, D. and Youdell, D. (2000).
[195] DfES (2004c)
[196] Gillborn, D. and Mirza, H.S. (2000)
[197] Blanden, J., Gregg, P. and Machin, S. (2005)

and 1997, the gap between children with parents in managerial/professional occupations and those in unskilled manual jobs grew from 40% to 49%[198].

Social class, gender and ethnicity

Taking free school meals is also associated with lower attainment at GCSE compared with the national average. For example, overall, 23% of those taking free school meals achieved five or more GCSE passes at A*-C, compared with 53.7% of those not taking free school meals. However, the size of this difference is affected both by gender and ethnicity. For example, only about a fifth of white pupils taking free school meals achieved five or more GCSE passes at A*-C, the lowest of any ethnic group. This is partly the result of the very low attainment among young men in this group, but young white women taking free school meals have the lowest attainment on this metric of any female ethnic group. Black boys of Caribbean and other origin taking free school meals attain less well than boys from minority ethnic groups. If taking free school meals is taken as a proxy for socio-economic status it is clear that the effects of social class on educational attainment are conditioned by gender and ethnicity in a complex way.

Figure 20. Attainment of five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C by social class 1989-1998, England and Wales
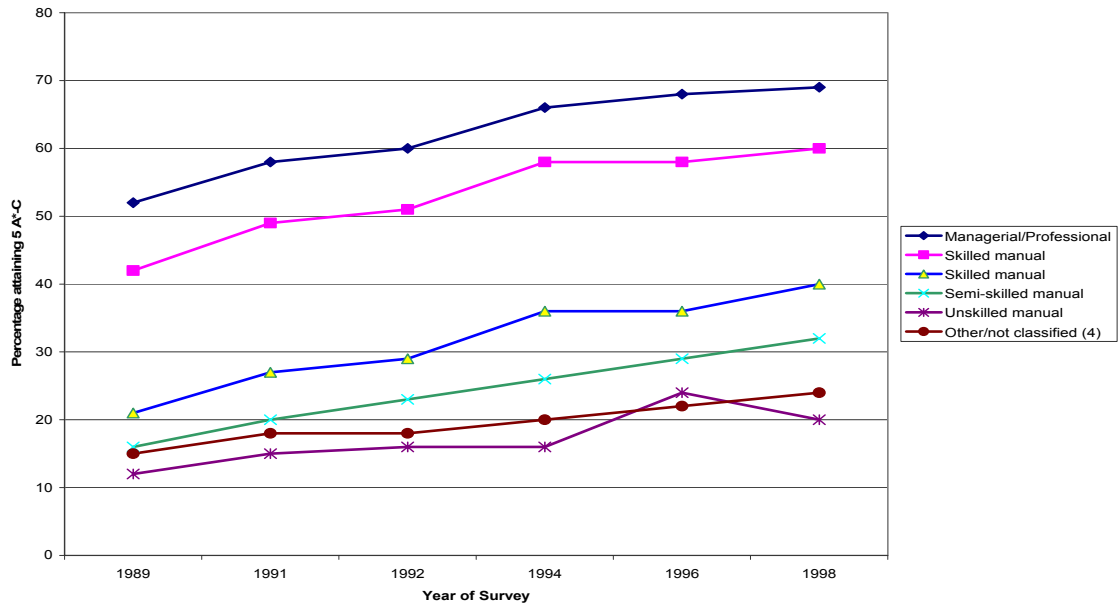
Source: YCS Cohorts 4-9, Sweep 1

---

[198] Gillborn, D. and Mirza, H.S. (2000). This analysis is based on YCS data which use the revised categories for recording parental occupation after 1997, thereby breaking the time series.

Such debates link to wider debates about social mobility, political economy and the long-term relative economic decline of the UK. Suffice to say here that the education and training reforms of the last twenty years have failed to produce a more socially inclusive model of compulsory and post-compulsory education. This, in turn, contributes to the stagnation in participation rates after 1993/94 in both England and Wales, and the continuing inability of the system to emulate participation rates in countries such as France, Germany and the Nordic states.

Special educational needs

The impact of special educational needs (SEN) increases with the severity of the needs (as proxied by having SEN with a statement – Table 8). Overall, 5% of pupils with SEN with a statement achieve five or more GCSE passes at Grades A*-C, compared with 13% of pupils with SEN but no statement, and 59% of pupils with no SEN. Once again though there are sharp deviations from these national averages depending upon ethnicity and gender. For example, black Caribbean boys with SEN but without statements are only half as likely as their white counterparts to achieve five or more GCSEs at A*-C, though similar proportions are likely to achieve five or more GCSEs at Grades A-G.

Interpreting attainment gaps

There is some debate over the interpretation of these achievement gaps between genders, different ethnic groups and social classes. In part, those disagreements stem from different interpretations of the reasons for undertaking educational research. For those who interpret the purpose of educational research as providing a means of socio-political critique[199] of the education system, these gaps should be taken at face value and are indicative of an education system in crisis – one which systematically discriminates. Such accounts tend to emphasise internal explanations, ones that suggest, for example, that processes of selection operating inside schools mean that white working class pupils (in particular) along with their black peers end up in lower sets and without access to higher tiers of GCSE attainment in subjects such as mathematics. This process it is argued is mediated by differential teacher expectations of those with ascribed characteristics, such as skin colour, and achieved characteristics, such as social class. These processes institutionalise difference and create barriers to achievement which ultimately result in lower attainment at GCSE. Overcoming such processes of early selection is seen to be key, therefore, to increasing GCSE attainment and so participation in post-16 learning in our current system. Such accounts depict the education and training system as one that is becoming increasingly polarised, with schools and teachers failing to respond to the needs of certain groups of young people. Attending to these internal barriers, for example through better teacher training, would result in a reduction in the 'educational underachievement' of certain groups.

---

[199] It is too easy to pigeon hole researchers here but Gorard, S. (2000) identifies Arnot, Gillborn, Gipps, Troyna and Weiner as belonging to this group.

Alternative interpretations of the research evidence[200] concentrate on a reanalysis of the achievement gaps using a proportionate approach over time. Such interpretations suggest, for example, that the system is improving attainment for all learners over time, with the lowest attaining learners improving the fastest; such interpretations undermine the claim that the system is becoming increasingly polarised over time. Nonetheless, there is still the recognition of the importance of low attainment (rather than underachievement) and the need to address the issue. This time the solutions are seen to lie more in the external environment, for example through the reduction of poverty. "Unfortunately, this is not a policy that can be implemented by education alone … Education is generally a very poor form of social engineering which is why a policy of 'education, education, education' could be such a misguided one for Britain." [201]

Types of Level 2 qualification

It is also worth noting the differential attainment between different types of qualification at Level 2. In 2003/04 just under 60% of all passes in what might be termed traditional GCSE subjects were at grades A*-C, rising to 61.2% in 2004/05. By contrast only 34.4% of passes were at grades A*-C in applied GCSEs in 2004, rising to 39% in 2005[202]. This may be due to a greater proportion of students from working class and certain ethnic minority groups being directed into this type of provision. Interestingly, there was a 4.2% rise in entries for the Intermediate GNVQ in 2004/05 even though this qualification is being phased out[203]. It is tempting to speculate that this may be due to the poor experience of schools with the applied GCSEs. Passes at grades A*-C are also lower on the short course GCSEs, standing at 51% of passes in 2003/04[204].

Level 3 attainment in England: GCE and VCE A/AS Level[205]

There is long-term increase in achievement at Level 3 (Table 9). In part this reflects the increasing participation rate at Level 3. However, as Table 3 shows, while the proportion participating at Level 3 has grown only slowly since 1994, the proportion of the 17 year-old population gaining one or more GCE/VCE A Levels has increased by 10%. This shows that success rates for Level 3 qualifications are increasing over time, leading to the annual complaints over falling standards. In part this debate is fuelled by the increasing proportion of entries that achieve Grade A. However, this figure is conflated with candidates achieving three or more Grade As at A Level. In fact the proportion of the 17 year-old population achieving three or more Grade As has only increased by 1.7% since 1994 (Table 9).

---

[200] These researchers adopt a realist perspective, where the purpose of research is to reveal the truth as far as that is possible. They would include Foster, Gomm, Gorard and Hammersley.
[201] Gorard, S. (2000), p.191
[202] Data from the Joint Council for General Qualifications
[203] Edexcel (2005)
[204] Data from DfES (2005c)
[205] This section should also have considered attainment in a wide range of other Level 3 vocational qualifications but there has been no update to that data from last year. This reflects the continuing struggle to construct a proper set of administrative data for participation and attainment in vocational learning.

Translated into numerical terms this means that about 10,000 17 year-olds achieved three Grade As or more in 1994. By 2004 this had increased to about 23,000-24,000, as the size of the age cohort increased and attainment rates improved. It is the increase in participation at GCE A Level, combined with an increase in the size of the age cohort and the improvements in attainment rates, that have produced the difficulty being experienced by some HEIs in using A Level grades to select the 'best' applicants. These problems will ease over the next 15 years as the size of the age cohort falls (Figure 22).

The main message from last year remains the same: attainment rates on GCE A/AS Level courses remain higher than those on VCE A/AS Levels. In 2003/04, 96.6% of candidates aged 16-18 years passed their GCE A Level, compared with 83% of VCE candidates. Pass rates on GCE A Level were higher for women (97.3%) than for men (95.8%) and the same was the case for VCE A Level (87.4% and 85.3% respectively)[206]. A larger source of the observed discrepancy in overall success rates on GCE A Level and vocational courses is the higher drop-out rate from the latter.

At face value the GCE A Level route seems to be performing well: participation rates are high, retention is good and attainment rates are increasing. Policymakers continue to speak to the value of the qualification which is said to be well understood and respected by HE and the business community. However, the metrics of participation, retention and attainment on a qualification pathway do not necessarily measure its performance in terms of preparing young people well for further learning. The results of the research undertaken by the review with HE admission tutors suggest that, with respect to this ultimate measure of how well a component of a learning system is working, there is much to be concerned about (see Appendix VI). This is an issue that will be pursued by the Review next year. However, the need to understand more about the dynamics of participation and retention in the vocational and work-based pathways, and the fate of those who leave the system at 16 and 17, were of more concern this year. These concerns are addressed in the next section.

3. Half our Futures revisited

The challenge of dealing with lower attaining learners has been a constant concern both in this country and across Europe[207]. In England and Wales such concerns can be traced back to at least the beginning of the 20th century but were brought to a head by the Newsom report on the education of lower attaining 13-16 year-olds. The evidence reviewed last year shows that the majority of those in the middle and lower thirds of the attainment range end up in either the full-time vocational or work-based routes, or else they leave the system all together. What happens to these young people?

Progression in the vocational routes

---

[206] DfES (2005b)
[207] See, for example, CEDEFOP (1998)

The causes of the fall of participation between 16 and 17 (Figure 2 and Table 2) are difficult to understand given the currently available data[208]. However, evidence presented to the Review[209] last year suggested that the major problem seems to lie in the vocational pathways. Two factors are at work. First, there are those who start on vocational programmes but who leave early; that is, there is an issue of low retention rates on these programmes. Second, there are those who complete a Level 2 programme and then leave rather than progressing on to a Level 3 programme. The Review reported on the first of these last year, showing, for example, that the difference in success rates between Level 3 vocational programmes and GCE A Level was primarily the result of lower retention rates on the vocational courses, though the causes of these lower retention rates remain poorly understood.

The Review commissioned additional research using the Individual Learner Record (ILR) to investigate both issues further[210]. These data only cover learners in the college sector and WBL, but the majority of vocational learners at Levels 1 and 2 are found in these sectors. Depending on how the calculations are performed, the progression rate within the vocational route, both in college and in WBL, from Level 2 and below to Level 3, lies somewhere between 6% and 13%. Progression rates to Level 3 provision for those passing a Level 2 qualification are about 28%. Progression rates are higher in FE provision than in the WBL route.

The implications of these findings are stark: the highest rates of attrition in post-compulsory secondary education are found among the most disadvantaged learners. In comparison with countries such as Sweden, where practically all young people are accommodated in a comprehensive post-compulsory secondary education system, the English and Welsh model remains highly selective and discriminatory. Accounting accurately for these high rates of attrition is currently not possible given the available data, but poor progression from Level 2 to Level 3 is likely to be the result of four mechanisms operating at different stages in the academic year.

First, some potential students will leave either before the courses have begun or shortly afterwards. These are likely to be students who are struggling to find an appropriate course, are experiencing poor induction processes, or are struggling to come to terms with the economic and social costs of continued participation. Second, some learners will drop out during the course, electing to take up opportunities in the labour market. It is possible to imagine a scenario where a young person on such a programme with a part-time job, for example, is encouraged by their current employer to migrate into the full-time labour market rather than stay in learning. Third, some qualitative research evidence[211] suggests that portfolio building is an overwhelming task for some young people and, while they stay

---

[208] This is because the data neither record the reasons for attrition nor provide the necessary social and demographic variables to model the process of attrition.
[209] Watson, J. (2004)
[210] This was undertaken by Dr Judith Watson at the University of Brighton.
[211] Ecclestone, K. (2002); Bathmaker, A.-M. (2001)

enrolled until the end of the programme, they never complete the materials needed for assessment. The evidence from the Review's research this year suggests that about 20% of young people leave Level 2 vocational programmes early, probably for these sorts of reasons.

Fourth, however, the largest group of young people who do not progress to Level 3 provision are to be found among those who complete the course. Clearly, if someone does not pass a Level 2 course, even if they complete it, then they are unlikely to be offered the opportunity to progress to Level 3. Analysis of the ILR has found that pass rates on Level 2 programmes are about 60% for women and 53% for men. Of these, only about half then progress to a Level 3 qualification. So there remains a substantial proportion of young people who started on a Level 2 programme and who completed it satisfactorily but who are not progressing to Level 3 programmes. This could be because they have achieved a qualification that gives them entry to the labour market, and there is some research to indicate that attaining a Level 2 vocational qualification after leaving school does increase the likelihood of gaining employment relative to those with no qualifications[212]. Alternatively, it may be because, even though the young people have been successful on a Level 2 course, they are still not considered to have sufficient potential to make the jump to Level 3 provision. In the absence of a 'Level 2.5 qualification', they either have to leave or enter yet further Level 2 provision. There is some evidence that this is occurring: analysis of the ILR has found evidence that those who pass at Level 2 are on further Level 2 provision in the subsequent year. This has been described as the 'magic roundabout', where learners are trapped into a cycle of provision at the same level year after year[213]. This pattern of participation could also be the result of horizontal progression, whereby a vocational learner builds up a portfolio of Level 2 qualifications. However, this is probably a more likely pattern of progression for adult learners who are retraining for a new career or coping with, for example, technological change in their current career.

Whatever the causes of attrition within Level 2 programmes, and the poor progression from them, it is indicative of an ineffective and inefficient education pathway. Such a pathway is wasteful for young people, who incur opportunity costs but no substantial return in the labour market, and wasteful of public funds.

Apprenticeships

Participation in apprenticeship programmes merits more careful consideration at this point. This year saw the publication of the final report of the Apprenticeship Task Force headed by Sir Roy Gardner[214]. It advocated, once again, the importance of developing a strong apprenticeship route, particularly to build up the stock of craft skills in the economy. This is the area where there are clearly identifiable skills shortages[215]. A conceptual problem here

---

[212] McIntosh, S. (2004)
[213] Huddleston, P. and Oh, S. (2004)
[214] Available online at: www.employersforapprentices.gov.uk
[215] See, for example, LSC (2004)

is that the term 'apprentice' is being stretched to cover a very wide range of learning experiences. A functional definition of apprenticeship provides the key characteristics of the approach.

> … a structured programme of vocational preparation, sponsored by an employer, juxtaposing part-time education and on-the-job training and work experience, leading to a recognised vocational qualification at craft or higher level, and taking at least two years to complete, after requisite general education.[216]

This suggests that apprenticeship is an expensive form of formation training because it takes a number of years to complete. However, the task force's final report argued the value of apprenticeship training in the retail sector, for example, because apprentices could be fully productive in six to eight months[217]. This short time period to achieve proficiency seems more in line with short-term skills training than any notion of apprenticeship found on the continent.[218] Should public funds be used to support such training which companies would have provided anyway? This is the familiar problem of deadweight associated with inducement type policy instruments which abound in this area, for example EMA and Employer Training Pilots.

The headline figures in the press over the last year have been that the number of young people in apprenticeship programmes increased by 5% between October 2003 and 2004. These figures refer to the stock of young people, aged between 16 and 25, who were participating in an apprenticeship programme. The size of the stock is affected by the inflow of people starting an apprenticeship and the outflow of those leaving, either with or without completing the apprenticeship framework. Thus an increase in the size of the stock can occur either by an increase in the size of the inflow, a decrease in outflow or both.

The available evidence indicates that retention rates on apprenticeship programmes have improved; that is the outflow has decreased. In addition, there has been a slight increase in the inflow to both Advanced Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship programmes over the last year (see Table 10). Both of these are welcome developments but they do need to be set in context. The longer term trend in Advanced Apprenticeship starts is one of decline and only time will tell if the apparent increase in participation in 2003/04 is sustained over the coming year. By contrast starts on Apprenticeship show a long-term increase, as do numbers participating in E2E. These increases are offset by a fall in participation in NVQ learning, part of government policy to move young people into learning frameworks. Overall, however, as Figures 4 to 8 show, participation rates in WBL among 16 and 17 year-olds are declining.

---

[216] Ryan, P. and Unwin, L. (2001), p.100
[217] Apprenticeships Task Force (2005)
[218] It is worth noting the current reforms to the Danish apprenticeship system, which has been shortened in recent years – Lindkvist Jørgensen, A. (2005)

It is important to remember that apprentices can be aged between 16 and 25, and the Review presented evidence last year to indicate that in some sectors of the economy the apprenticeship routes were dominated by older learners, whereas in other sectors apprentices were being recruited at the age of 16 or 17. The proportion of 16 year-olds choosing to participate via WBL, which includes apprenticeship, actually declined from 7.1% to 6.7% between the end of 2003 and 2004. The equivalent figures for 17 and 18 year-olds were 9.1% and 8.9%, and 8.1% and 8.0%.

Table 11 shows that slightly under 7% of 16 year-olds, 9% of 17 year-olds and 8% of 18 year-olds were participating in WBL in 2004. Only 5% of 16 year-olds, 7% of 17 year-olds, and 7.1% of 18 year-olds were on apprenticeship programmes, the majority at Level 2[219]. These proportions are in stark contrast to other European countries with successful apprenticeship programmes. This is discussed further in Section 5.

One interpretation of these findings is that there is low demand for apprenticeship places. But the final report of the Apprenticeship Task Force revealed that the demand for apprenticeship places exceeds supply. The problem seems to lie in encouraging more employers to provide apprenticeships at a time when intangible costs, such as training, are under severe pressure. In addition, there remains the challenge (as discussed in last year's Annual Report) of ensuring that the learning provided by apprenticeship is of a high quality and that a much higher proportion of apprentices complete their frameworks. Finally, there is the very non-random distribution of young people across the various apprenticeship frameworks, which still follows stereotypical patterns of participation by gender and ethnic group.

What happens to those who leave?

Between 1985 and 1993 the 16-19 system showed a considerable improvement in retaining learners at both 16 and 17. To some extent this trend was reversed after 1993. Long-run time series data for the group leaving at these ages only go back to 1991 for England. Those who leave can fall into one of two groups: those who are labour market active and those who are inactive. The former group can then be divided into those that are employed or unemployed according to criteria of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Table 12 provides summary statistics for the same set of years as before. The NEET group comprises both those who are economically inactive, about 2% in 2004, and those who state that they are unemployed at the time they are questioned as part of the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

At the end of 2003, about 13.5% of 16 year-olds were not in education or training – approximately 87,000 young people. Of these about three quarters were in the labour market and one quarter were labour market inactive. Of those who were labour market active, about a half were in employment with the others actively looking for work. At the end of 2003, about one fifth of 17 year-olds – roughly 132,000 young people – had left the

[219] Wales has a higher participation rate in apprenticeship programmes than England, but a much lower completion rate.

education and training system. Of these young people, 86% were in the labour market, with about three quarters of those who were labour market active in employment.

Statistically, the YCSs indicate that those who leave at 16 and 17 are more likely to be male, with poor attainment at 16[220]. They tend to have lower school attachment, as indicated by higher rates of truancy and permanent exclusion. They tend to have parents who are unemployed or employed in routine or lower supervisory occupations, with lower levels of academic attainment. Those with disabilities or health problems are also more likely to leave. White young people are much more likely to leave than any other ethnic group. However, young people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin who do leave are more likely to be out of work than any other group. Males are slightly more likely to leave than women; young males are significantly more likely to enter full-time employment than females at 16; young women are more likely to take up part-time jobs. The majority of the young people who leave live in two-parent households where the home is owned by the family; three quarters have fathers in employment and half have mothers in employment. Parents tend to be poorly qualified; for example, only 10% of fathers had one or more A Levels, and 7% had a degree.

The majority of those choosing to leave the education and training system at 16 and 17 are doing so in order to enter the labour market. Only a small minority are labour market inactive. If we include those who are classified as being unemployed by the ILO criteria[221], in the NEET group, then about 60% of 16 year-olds and about a third of 17 year-olds who leave the education and training system would be considered to be NEET. However, the majority of these are actively looking for work.

Evidence from the LFS indicates that the situation with regard to the NEET group is very dynamic – young people may be NEET in one quarter, in employment in the next and then NEET again in the subsequent quarter. What causes this pattern of moving into and out of employment is presently unknown but it is likely that young people are finding short-term ephemeral employment, or are being taken on for a trial period and are not showing the necessary qualities for continued employment with that organisation.

The top five job destinations for those leaving early are, using the Standard Occupational Classification[222]:

1. Sales assistants;
2. Clerks, not otherwise specified;
3. Cleaners and domestics;
4. Counter hands and catering assistants;
5. Waiters and waitresses.

---

[220] Payne, J. (2003b)
[221] Available to start work in the next two weeks, and has either looked for work in the last four weeks, or is waiting to start a job already obtained.
[222] Data from YCS Cohort 9 Sweep 1.

Of the organisations employing these young people, 50% have fewer than 25 employees. The top five according to the Standard Industrial Classification are:

1. Wholesale, retail trade, repair of motor vehicles;
2. Manufacturing;
3. Hotels and restaurants;
4. Construction;
5. Real estate, renting and business activities.

In terms of job status, 70% of the young people see themselves as permanent employees. The median working week is 39 hours and the median wage is estimated as £100-£125 per week[223].   In terms of the types of occupations they are entering, the size of the establishments and the economic sectors offering such employment, these young people are clearly taking up low-paid, and presumably low-skilled, work[224].   Nonetheless, preliminary analysis of data from the LFS suggests that young people in jobs without training (JWT) tend to earn significantly more than those on apprenticeship programmes. Thus, there remains a strong economic 'pull' to enter such work rather than taker up a training place. Furthermore, the supply of apprenticeship places is not keeping up with the demand for them[225]. This produces a 'push' for young people who want to leave FTE to enter the labour market rather than training.

But, 16% of the young people in JWT report being given a written training plan, and 46% report receiving on-the-job training after the end of Year 11. Just over a quarter reported receiving on-the-job training in the four weeks prior to the survey[226]. In addition, about an eighth reported receiving off-the-job training since the end of Year 11. Nearly eight out of ten reported that the training they had received was good or excellent. The description of the employment opportunities being taken up by these young people as constituting JWT may therefore be questionable, although that training seems, by and large, not to lead to qualifications.

A major policy challenge, then, is to convince these early leavers, who have largely had unsuccessful learning careers to date (at least as judged by the measurable 'outcomes' of education embodied in our current accountability systems and targets) that it is in their 'interests' to change their behaviour and decide to remain in education and training at the end of post-compulsory schooling. The stability of non-participation rates over the last decade, in the face of a gale of education and training reforms, suggests that this is not going to be an easy task. First the system has to make it in the interest of these young people to participate, and second they then have to be convinced it is in their interest. Understanding more about the social and social-psychological processes that produce the

---

[223] The Review is currently undertaking a more detailed analysis of wages.
[224] McKnight, A. (2002)
[225] Apprenticeships Task Force (2005)
[226] YCS 9 Sweep 1.

system dynamics examined in this and the previous sections is crucial to thinking how this task might be achieved: there is little point, for example, in investing money in education and training initiatives that have little practical chance of success given the wider societal context. This analytical task is undertaken in the next section.

4. Accounting for changes in system behaviour

It is of course one thing to describe the changing patterns of participation and progression over time in England and Wales and quite another to account for these changes. To achieve this requires setting the current 14-19 system within its wider educational and social context in order to understand the changing institutional opportunities and incentives (and disincentives) to participate, progress and attain. In addition, it is necessary to recognise that young people and their families are involved in making sense and extracting meaning from such a schedule of incentives, as they weigh up the various costs and benefits of continued participation.

Collectively the opportunities and incentives produce a decision field that is actively interpreted by young people – "What kind of education does someone like me need to be the sort of person I want? And is it possible? Is it worth it? And what are the alternatives?"[227]

Ultimately the dynamics of the system are underpinned by a myriad of individual 'decisions'[228] made by young people against a changing background of learning opportunities and a schedule of incentives to participate. Young people have to decide whether to stay on or leave the education and training system. They have to choose what to study – A Levels, a bewildering array of vocational options, an apprenticeship. Others may just want to do something. They have to choose where to study – they could stay on into the sixth form, move to one of a variety of colleges, or take up an apprenticeship with an employer. How does all this choosing and deciding get done? How much involves the exercise of real choice and how much the following of a trend? What factors and issues do young people and their families take into account when weighing up the competing opportunities being offered to them in the decision field? What resources and sources of knowledge do they draw upon to make these decisions and exercise the choice available to them? What follows is an initial attempt to begin answering these questions.

The decision field

---

[227] Moore, R. (2004), p.95

[228] The concept of 'choice' is commonly used in the research and policy literature, and is often elided with the concept of decision, but is rejected here because the experience of many 14-19 year-olds does not seem to tally with the degree of agency and rationality, of weighing up alternatives, implied by the concept of choice. The term 'decision' is used here, but this term really serves as a shorthand for a continuum between those who seem to 'fall' into what they end up doing on the basis of long-standing assumptions about their educational careers, and those who do gather information and weigh up different options, i.e. exercise choice. Any one individual may of course do both. The concept of 'decision' is inadequate to cover this range and the possibility of change over time, but no better English language alternative could be found.

The 14-19 system can be conceptualised as a field of opportunities within which young people make decisions. Watch the system for long enough and the types and configuration of the opportunities on offer will be seen to change. For example, labour market opportunities for young people will vary with the economic cycle. Prior to the Education Reform Act of 1988, an interesting range of more practical learning opportunities developed for young people under the aegis of the TVEI. These all but disappeared with the advent of the National Curriculum. Now the careful observer will see new attempts to develop such practical learning again, for example through the IFP. These seem to have a positive impact on attainment at 16 and subsequent progression[229]. Other opportunities seem to persist, albeit with minor alterations, through the time period, for example the 'royal road to higher education'[230] via GCSE to GCE A Level and then degree progression. Other opportunities seem to come and then go, most noticeably in the vocational areas and WBL[231]. Understanding how this field of opportunities is configured, and how and why it changes is the first task.

Watch the system for long enough and it will also become apparent that, however young people are distributed in the field of opportunities, they are not distributed at random. Young people with certain characteristics of class, gender and ethnicity are more likely to be found in some parts of the field than others. This pattern remains remarkably stable over time suggesting limited social mobility[232]. A number of authors emphasise that the scope and nature of the meaningful decisions available to young people varies[233]. Academically able, middle-class pupils in a school with a sixth form may not spend much time debating whether to stay in FTE, or even whether to take GCE A Levels or vocational alternatives: the real decision is which subjects to take. The real decision for some young people who opt for employment or work-based training will likewise not be whether to leave FTE but which placement to accept or decline, which course to pursue and which employer to work with[234]. The choice between FTE and work-based training or employment, or between academic and vocational pathways, is more significant for those in marginal situations. Understanding how young people come to be distributed across the 14-19 system is therefore the second task addressed here.

---

[229] Golden, S., O'Donnell, L., Benton, T. and Rudd, P. (2005)

[230] Brown, N., Corney, M. and Stanton, G. (2004)

[231] It would take too long to list the multiple changes in, for example, the sorts of vocational qualifications available – CPVE, BTEC First, NVQs, GNVQs, BTEC National Diplomas, Certificates and Awards, City and Guilds qualifications and so on – or the multiple changes to WBL from the YTS to Advanced Apprenticeship and Apprenticeships.

[232] Blanden, J., Gregg, P. and Machin, S. (2005)

[233] See Payne, J. (2003b), p.9

[234] Hodkinson, P., Sparkes, A. and Hodkinson, H. (1996) This study (over a period of economic recession) found there was often little real 'choice' over employer for trainees. More options may be available in better economic conditions, but recent evidence of an insufficient supply of apprenticeship placements suggests that their argument may still hold true.

Configuring the field

Figure 21. A conceptual framework for thinking about education and training systems in a comparative context.
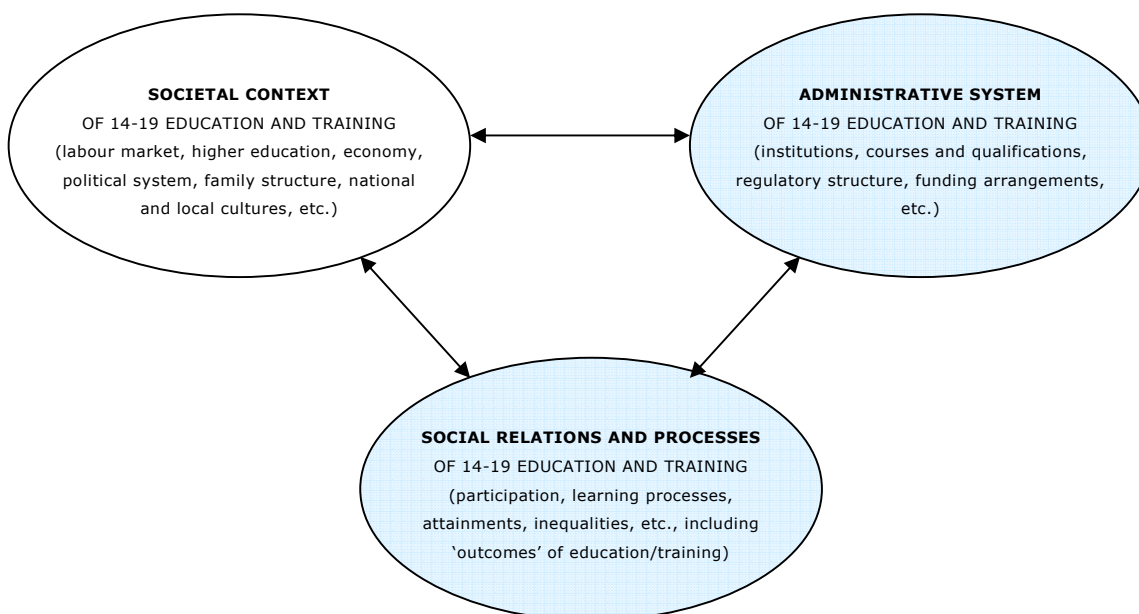
Source: Adapted from Raffe *et al.* (2000)

Figure 21 provides a simple conceptual framework for thinking about education and training systems in a comparative context[235]. It draws on two distinctions. The first is between the education and training system on the one hand (shown as blue in Figure 1) and the wider societal context within which it is embedded. The educational state is embedded in tightly linked, nationally specific congeries of institutions – including political, economic, legal, industrial, financial, medical, household, labour market, social security, research and market institutions[236]. Such national congeries frame the education and training system and while they may be influenced by supranational agencies, for example the EU, or processes such as globalisation, they are not overridden by them. The second distinction is between education and training as a set of social relations and processes that are framed by an 'administrative' system. As suggested in the introduction there is no simple connection between the

---

[235] Raffe, D., Brannen, K. and Croxford, L. (2001) The framework was originally developed to investigate school to work transitions in a comparative context. However, the model seems to have helpful features that provide a better grasp on structural processes affecting, for example, participation and progression in 14-19 education and training systems. Ultimately the framework will be used in the context of the Review for comparative purposes. In this section it will be used to think about historical changes in the relationships within and between the three elements of the model, and how these might have affected the changing dynamics of the 14-19 system described in last year's Annual Report.
[236] Dale, R. (2000)

external context and dynamics of the education and training system. The education system has an internal dynamic that is remarkably persistent in the face of external change.

The relationships between the elements in the model are reciprocal: the social relations and processes are shaped by the administrative system and the societal context, but these are also influenced in turn by the social relations. Political concern over participation rates relative to other OECD countries stimulates (in part) 14-19 policy, for example qualification reform and the introduction of EMAs. Similarly the administrative system interacts with and is influenced by the societal context. For example, long-term concerns expressed by business organisations such as the CBI about the functional literacy and numeracy skills of school leavers can be linked to initiatives such as the Key Skills reforms and the emphasis on basic skills in the current 14-19 White Paper[237].

Exogenous changes in the societal context

Space does not permit an exhaustive treatment of the social history of England and Wales since 1986. The focus is therefore on three key factors that seem to have an impact on the demand for, and supply of, post-compulsory secondary educational opportunities: demographic change, the labour market, and growing distributional inequalities. HE is also an important influence but this is dealt with separately in Section 6.

Demography

What matters to an educational institution trying to maintain its resource levels under a new funding regime associated with the development of a quasi market in the late 1980s is not the participation rate per se but the supply of learners, which is a function of the participation rate and the size of the age cohort (Figure 22). If the participation rate for 16 year-olds in FTE had remained at 47.6%, the 1985 level, by 1993 there would have been almost 100,000 fewer 16 year-old learners in schools and colleges. This would have resulted in a large programme of school and college closures. There would have been, therefore, a huge economic pressure for educational institutions to adapt in order to attract a more diverse range of learners to plug the gap. The 25% increase in the participation rate in FTE between 1986 and 1993 did just that. As a result there was almost an additional 50,000 learners in FTE in 1993 compared with 1986.

---

[237] For further details, see the technical paper on Key Skills on the Nuffield Review website at www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml; Hayward, G. and Fernandez, R. (2004) provide an assessment of the impact of the Key Skills policy.

Figure 22. The changing size of the 16 year-old age cohort 1985–2025, England
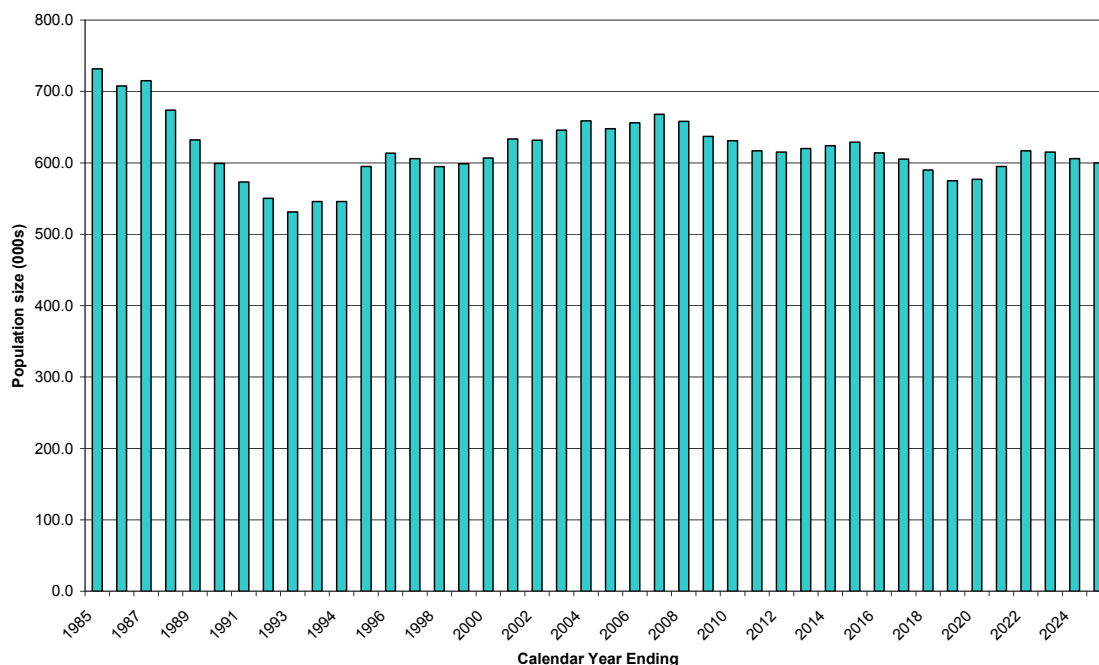
But the introduction of the GCSE examination in 1986 enabled one set of institutions, schools and sixth form colleges, to meet their needs for extra learners without significantly diversifying their provision. The growth in participation during the first few years of the expansionary phase was achieved almost entirely because of the increased supply of learners with certificates, GCSEs, which were construed as indications of their potential to succeed on GCE A Level programmes. The take-off in Level 3 participation occurred in 1987 and continued until 1993 when the size of the age cohort reached its minimum. The result was an increase of 40,000 learners taking GCE A Level during this period. This means that fourth-fifths of the growth in student numbers in FTE by 1993 came via this track. Subsequently the increase in the size of the age cohort added to the growth in the numbers of 16 year-olds in the GCE A Level track, which reached almost a quarter of a million by 2004, an increase of over 88,000 young people since 1985. Nearly all of this increase was concentrated in schools and sixth form colleges. The result has been a steep decline in the provision of programmes at Level 2 and below in schools and sixth form colleges, a major reconfiguration of the learning field since 1986. Thus a student wishing to continue learning at Level 2 and below had increasingly little choice: they would have to do so in a FE college displaced from school and sixth form colleges by their more academically successful peers. This perpetuated that space in which such young people, increasingly less valued by schools, could be lost from the education and training system.

The labour market

The unemployment rate in the UK fluctuated between 1% and 3% of the workforce from the 1950s until the middle of the 1970s, before rising to 4.5% by the end of that decade (Figure 23). But since 1980, it has averaged around 8.5%. In the early 1980s unemployment increased as the economy went into deep recession[238]. By the middle of that decade economic growth was beginning to make inroads into the level of unemployment but further recession in the early 1990s led to a renewed increase in unemployment. Subsequently unemployment has fallen but despite recent economic growth the unemployment rate has not yet returned to the levels of the 1970s.

Figure 23. Changes in ILO unemployment, 1971-2004, UK
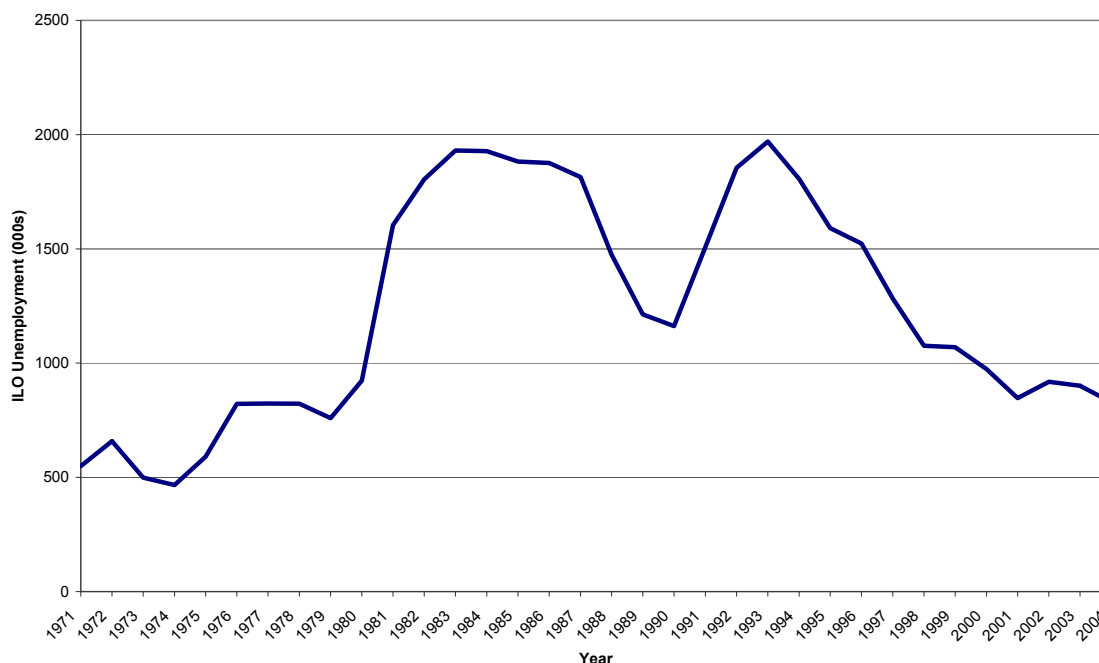
Source: Data available online at www.statistics.gov.uk

The state of the labour market is typically thought of as a major determinant of participation in the post-compulsory education and training system[239]. Undoubtedly they are linked but the relationship is far from clear. At the time participation rates were growing rapidly after 1985, unemployment was actually falling. The economy at this time may have had fewer jobs to offer young people because of changes to the nature of the labour market. In conjunction with the abolition of social security for unemployed 16 and 17 year-olds in the

---

[238] See HM Treasury (2005)

[239] See, for example, Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2003): "Arguably the most important background factor throughout the whole period from the late 1970s to the present has been changes in the youth labour market and the related increase in full-time post-16 participation."

mid 1980s, linked to the implementation of the two-year YTS, this would have reduced the opportunity costs to participate in education and training.

The decline in participation after 1993 can be attributed to young people opting to participate in the labour market rather than take up opportunities in either FTE or WBL. The fact that the vast majority of these young people were leaving with low levels of attainment speaks volumes about the nature of the labour market for 16 and 17 year-olds (or at least these young people's interpretation of it). Indeed, a recent study of rates of return using the British Household Panel Survey data indicates that the wage premium usually associated with GCSE qualifications has disappeared for younger people between 1992 and 2002. This is associated with an increasing relative demand in the labour market for less-well-qualified individuals since 1992, during a time when such labour was becoming scarcer[240].

An additional complication is that if the state of the labour market determined directly the propensity of young people to stay on, one might expect participation rates to be higher in areas with higher unemployment. In fact participation rates are lowest in areas with higher rates of unemployment. Furthermore, the economic prospects for women, as measured by the employment rate, increased consistently throughout the time period, compared with those for men, which fell until 1993. Yet it is young women who are consistently more likely to stay in FTE than young men. Clearly the nature of this link needs to be explored further.

Distributional inequalities

Poverty is an obvious reason for leaving the system early. A family or a young person may not be able to bear the opportunity costs of remaining in the system. This is an issue that the government has sought to address through, for example, the EMA and various reforms of the tax system. The evaluation of the EMA indicates that it has had a positive impact on participation rates but not on attainment rates[241]. An additional possibility is that poverty directly affects the attainment of young people. The evidence reviewed so far indicates that this is the case but it is the level of relative poverty that matters. For example, one study[242] argues that there maybe a causal impact of income on educational attainment and that a one third reduction in family income from the mean (about £140 per week in 2004) increased the chances of obtaining no GCSE passes at A*-C. This in turn would reduce the likelihood of staying on in education or training by about 4%. The worrying thing here is that the long-term trend in the inequality of income distribution is increasing, i.e. the poorest families are becoming relatively poorer. There seems little that the education system itself can do about such a trend but the consequences for educational participation post-16 are worrying.

---

[240] McGuiness, S. and Doyle, J. (2005); McKnight, A. (2002)
[241] Middleton, S., Perren, K., Maguire, S., Rennison, J., Battistin, E., Emmerson, C. and Fitzsimons, E. (2005). The results are positive but in the absence of a cost-benefit analysis the likelihood of deadweight problems commonly found with this type of inducement policy instrument cannot be assessed.
[242] Blanden, J. and Gregg, P. (2004)

Endogenous changes in the administrative system of education and training

Typically the ultimate targets for education and training policy are located in the set of social relations and processes, for example improved participation rates, better outcomes and reduced inequality (Figure 21). In England and Wales, at least, such targets are to be achieved largely through the use of policy instruments[243] aimed at changing the administrative system, for example through qualification reform and more demanding regulatory and accountability systems. In addition, the institutions offering education and training 14-19 – schools, colleges, private training providers and, to some extent, employers – will need to be alert to the demands, needs and beliefs of 'actors' in the wider societal context, such as parents, HE, the labour market and demographic change. In a system of education and training where money follows the learner, downturns and upturns in the supply of young people may have a major impact on institutional behaviour under a given set of administrative circumstances.

The administrative system of education and training and the wider societal context represent an external environment to which institutions offering education and training to 14-19 year-olds need to adapt if they are to survive in a marketised education and training system[244]. In so adapting, institutionally based 'actors' will need to make decisions about the sorts of learning opportunities and experiences they will provide and the type of learners they will aim to recruit. These are likely to change over time as the external environment alters, for example through demographic change or the provision of new types of qualifications. Such institutional behaviour, conditioned by adaptation to the external environment, will produce a decision 'field' for young people, consisting of a range of learning opportunities distributed across different types of institution, and a schedule of incentives for young people to participate.

Figure 21 leads to a consideration of the incentives and disincentives that push and pull young people into and out of the education and training system, and distribute them within the system, set against changes in institutional behaviour induced by changes in both the administrative system of education and training and the broader societal context. For example, league tables, quasi-markets and funding mechanisms, all elements of a growing managerialism in educational governance, are powerful incentives that may make institutions wary of taking on certain types of learners whom they consider to be 'risky'[245]. As a consequence, such learners are pushed out from certain forms of provision and into others, for example from general into weakly vocational provision or from schools into general FE colleges, or out of the system all together. The availability of alternative forms of provision, such as 'weakly vocational qualifications', which provide a relatively cheap type

---

[243] The term 'policy instrument' is defined here as the different strategies that policy makers use to promote education and training goals through the allocation of public funds and the imposition of regulations by one governmental level on the levels below it. See McDonnell, L.M. and Grubb, W.N. (1995), p.3.

[244] This idea of adaptation to an external environment is taken from organizational theory. For an introduction, see Tsoukas, H. and Knudsen, C. (eds.) (2003)

[245] For a review, see Sparkes, J. and Glennerster, H. (2002)

of course provision, may be adopted to retain learners in one type of institution when their needs may have been better served by moving to alternative provision in another institution.

Sometimes the outcomes that result from such adaptive changes in the behaviour of institutional actors seem to be positive, for example the continuing increase in GCSE scores. At other times they seem to be perverse. For example, there is some evidence to suggest that current accountability systems lead teachers on vocational courses to adopt an inventory approach to assessment[246]. This, it is argued, can damage relationships between teachers and learners and so result in an increased drop-out rate from such courses. This is then reflected in the lower retention rates on vocational courses.

Changes in the administrative part of the education and training system over the last twenty years are detailed on the Nuffield Review's website[247]. Over the last twenty years there has been a gale of reform initiatives. Some of these, for example the introduction of GCSE in the mid-1980s, seem to have had an impact on increasing participation rates in full-time post-16 education (albeit in conjunction with other wider societal trends). Others, such as the constant rebranding of youth training programmes, appear to have had little if any impact on participation rates in the work-based routes. The introduction of a range of weakly vocational provision has enabled schools and sixth form colleges to move into the market for learners who, while not reaching the level of GCSE attainment thought necessary to progress into GCE A Level provision, are felt capable of attempting Level 3 vocational qualifications such as Advanced GNVQ. Other vocational qualifications at Levels 1 and 2 have been used to substitute for the generally recognised GCSE retake programmes.

Overall, growth in participation has been concentrated at Level 3 rather than at Level 2 and below, and largely in full-time provision. This growth can largely be attributed to the increasing attainment in GCSE which has provided more young people with the opportunity to progress into post-compulsory Level 3 study. Schools and sixth form colleges have responded by expanding their provision in this area with a concomitant decrease in the provision of learning opportunities at Level 2 and below in these institutions.

The non-random distribution of young people across the range of opportunities open to 14-19 year-olds is associated with certain characteristics of young people – such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. The decision 'field' is not somewhere, however, where young people roll around like marbles on predestined courses. So, in addition to considering the structural relationships both within the education and training system and between the system and its wider social context, consideration also needs to be given to the agency of young people as they make choices[248].

---

[246] Bathmaker, A-M. (2001); Ecclestone, K. (2002)
[247] Wright, S. and Oancea, A. (2004)
[248] The relation structure-agency is a complex one; from this perspective, at least three dimensions underline the above patterns and dynamic: social determinism vs. individualisation and reflexivity; internal vs. external control processes; and social reproduction vs. conversion.

The decision-making of young people

Young people interpret the incentives and disincentives to participate and progress in the 14-19 phase differently depending on a variety of historical, social and cultural factors. They actively construct the decision 'field' and their position within it using a variety of locally, historically and culturally situated resources to imagine their futures, interpret the opportunities available to them and develop their aspirations and motivations. Some young people are able to make choices and to succeed against the odds. The Review aims to understand much more about the sorts of resources they are able to mobilise that enable them to do so. It is also very important to understand the processes through which young people define and express their identities in the process of becoming adults, through or against the education and training system, the labour market structures and incentives.

Several authors provide detailed discussion of models of decision-making[249]. The intention here is not to go over this ground again but to draw out the key features of three ideal types of models that have been used to explain decision-making, and the factors that are thought to affect the decision-making of young people, against the background set out previously. Each of these models has its strengths and its weaknesses, and none explains everything, but they all have some utility in understanding system dynamics.

Models of economic/instrumental rationality

These stress the importance of 'agency' over structure. They see decision-making as a rational process of gathering information and weighing up the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action, as classically expressed in human capital theory[250]. Some young people do seem to be acting rationally in opting to stay in education or training and so incurring a range of opportunity costs, rather than, say, leaving at the earliest opportunity to enter the labour market to earn money. However, it is important to recognise that perfect information and rationality are not needed for individuals to act in such a way that they incur costs now to acquire more education that will constitute an investment in their own future earning capacity[251].

In other words, young people who stay on in education and training at the end of compulsory schooling are acting as though they appreciated the economic benefits of their actions. However, their actions are probably mediated by the activities of 'noise traders'[252] such as teachers, their parents and their peers (and their parents), so it may appear as though they are following a trend rather than making a conscious decision to stay on. If it is

---

[249] See, for example, chapters in Ball, S. Maguire, M. and Macrae, S. (2000a); Belfield, C.R. (2000); Foskett, N. and Helmsley-Brown, J. (2000); Gambetta, D. (1987); Hodkinson, P., Sparkes, A. and Hodkinson, H. (1996). A review of this literature is available from the Nuffield Review website.
[250] See, for example, Becker, G. (1975). An accessible introduction to this work is provided by Blaug, M. (1977); Belfield, C.R. (2000)
[251] See Blaug, M. (1977)
[252] Noise traders are economic agents, such as stock brokers and estate agents, who infer information about investment returns from past movements of prices.

the case that more education will lead to better future returns for all[253], why do not all young people stay on in education and training at the end of compulsory schooling? Presumably because they judge that the returns to their investment in FE and training will bring limited future returns in the labour market. In this they are probably right given that sizeable returns only accrue to Level 3 qualifications, especially GCE A Levels. GCSEs and some Level 2 vocational qualifications gained by men via apprenticeship also appear to offer a positive return, though this is questioned in recent analysis[254].

Structuralist models

These models see decisions mainly as the result of external 'forces' beyond the individual's control. These forces can be elements of an individual's background (such as class, ethnicity and gender), the influence over the decision-making process of other individuals (e.g. parents and teachers), the nature of education and training provision (as influenced by government educational policies and the nature of educational institutions), and economic conditions (e.g. labour market opportunities). These models downplay agency, and argue instead that individuals experience little meaningful choice over their education and training. They also tend to downplay the element of rationality in decision-making, emphasising instead emotional and psychological factors and preconceptions and assumptions arising out of the external factors listed above.

Hybrid models

Hybrid models aim to accommodate the role of both external structures and individual agency and identity. These are more common in recent research than either structuralist or economic or instrumental rationality models. It is important to note that, although there seems to be a consensus in favour of hybrid models, different authors sit at different places on the structure/agency continuum. Such models typically argue that people are bounded by horizons for action, which are determined by both external job and educational opportunities and personal perceptions of what is possible, desirable and appropriate (perceptions which are derived from both the wider culture and an individual's life history). In this way opportunities have both objective and subjective elements: what is available, what is perceived to be possible and what is perceived as desirable can alter the range of 'available' options.   Three key elements to pragmatically rational decision-making are identified. First, the decision-making process is part of a wider choice of lifestyle (influenced by social context and culture). Second, decision-making is part of an ongoing life course (of which the immediate decisions young people face are only one stage). Third, decision-making evolves through interactions with others, so decisions are in fact the outcome of negotiations between young people, employers, parents and so on.

---

[253] This is the message conveyed in much of the rhetoric produced by policy makers and their administrative agents. See the LSC's website for a fine example of this genre at: www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Media/PressReleases/young-people-missout_ema.htm.
[254] A review of the rates of return literature can be found on the Nuffield Review website: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents/shtml.

Decision-making as a process

There also seems to be a consensus in much recent literature[255] that decision-making is an ongoing process that is not necessarily linear in nature. The education and training system focuses on particular decisions and particular points in time. However, the decisions taken at these particular points (for instance as to destination at the end of compulsory education at 16) are part of an ongoing process of identity and attitude-formation, and in some cases information gathering, which begins before and continues after these decisions.

So, as young people approach the end of compulsory schooling they are engaged in making decisions within a complex decision field of possibly poorly perceived incentives and opportunities. Within this decision field there are a range of opportunities that could be pursued and a schedule of incentives and disincentives that will affect the propensity to act in particular ways. These incentives and disincentives can be conceptualised as factors that act to pull and push young people into or out of the system. For the more academically successful these processes probably operate at a subliminal level; there is no real choice being made about whether to stay on (that is assumed to be the correct thing to do) but rather decisions about what to study. For young people with lower levels of attainment at 16, there is a need to weigh up, albeit in a manner which at best approaches bounded rationality, the relative merits and opportunity costs, both economic and personal, of staying on and participating in different ways. Such young people are more likely to feel the weight of factors that operate to push or pull them out of the education and training system than their academically more successful peers. All of this is however conditioned by young people's sense-making in the decision field which underpins their actions. This sense-making is in turn likely to draw upon historically and locally constructed social and cultural resources (cultural capital), and the networks of adults and peers that young people interact with (social capital).

At least four factors seem to be at work here: delayed transitions and restructuring of the life course; de-standardisation and individualisation of transitions; individualised perceptions of risks and opportunities; and multi-dimensional, dynamic identities.

Delayed transition and restructuring of the life course

Some documents in the early 1990s criticised the UK environment for seeing youth as 'a short-lived status', substantially indistinct from other stages of the life course and thus 'invisible' to policy[256]. Such criticisms emphasised the concept of delayed transition and the ways in which the life course of individuals strayed from traditional patterns (e.g., for many women, the pattern of 'education – marriage – child care – re-training – employment – dependent income/retirement' does not function any longer). It is not only that the order of the life stages has changed; they are often merged together, skipped altogether, or given an unprecedented unequal weighting. Traditional definitions of youth (in terms of involvement

---

[255] For details, see Wright, S. (2005)

[256] Chisholm, L. and Bergeret, J.-M. (1991), p.9; Bynner, J. (2001), p.11

in formal education, for example, or in terms of family relations) are thus losing their references, and therefore research is called upon to make attempts at "charting what individuals (and groups) actually do, and how this is changing", as a "first step to understanding what it means"[257].

De-standardisation and the increasing non-linearity of youth transitions; individualisation of life course transitions

The example of the restructuring of women's life courses, for example, over recent decades, is only a pointer to the variability of individual biographies.

> The evidence suggests that the life experience and future prospects of this generation are more complex and less predictable than those of their predecessors, and that consequently the established linear models of transition to adulthood and future careers are increasingly inappropriate.[258]

The life course is thus becoming increasingly individualised, both in terms of the multiplication of externally available 'identities', and in terms of investment in adult identity throughout one's biography:

> The stances toward developing an individualized life project can be seen to range through degrees of 'default individualization' – or the passive acceptance of mass-marketed and mass-educational pre-packaged identities, which can lead to a deferred membership in an adult community – through degrees of 'developmental individualization', or the active, strategic approaches to personal growth and life-projects in an adult community(ies).[259]

Individualised perceptions of risk and opportunities

One of the phrases favoured by current policy discourse is 'providing opportunities'. In the recent 14-19 White Paper, the word 'opportunity/-ies' occurs 82 times. In 43 of these instances, the opportunities are being 'offered', 'provided', '(made) available', 'given', 'created', or 'widened'. In only eight instances are they being 'made the most of', 'taken up' or 'benefited from' by young people[260]. In contrast, the word 'risk' appears only five times, mostly to define a special group of young people and never in relation to their perception of risk or to their responsible risk management.

The question that immediately emerges is whether the definition of opportunity is external or internal to the individual involved, and whether what is externally presented as an opportunity may be perceived by the individual as being a risk (and vice versa). This is an area where the 'voice of the learner' can strongly diverge from that of the provider.

---

[257] Bynner, J. (2001), p.6; Cote, J. (2002), p.118
[258] Wyn, J. and Dwyer, P. (1999), p.5
[259] Cote, J. (2002), p.119
[260] See also DfES (2003a)

Multidimensional dynamic identities

Youth studies literature conceptualises identity as dynamic, multidimensional and evolving[261]; that is, a person's identity is not a monolithic construct[262]. Of special interest in relation to education and training are the socially constructed components of identity, which in contemporary societies tend to be evolving rather than stable. Such constructions happen in relation to the horizons of interpretation opened by the society and by interaction with significant others. They involve configurations of the past, perceptions of the present and imagined futures. 'Ideal identity' is part of such projections of the individual in the future, and there might be a mismatch between the ideal identity as harboured by an individual and the externally imposed models received as pressures from school, family or peers.

Pulling it all together

The central puzzle addressed in this section is why, despite waves of reform, participation rates stagnated after 1993/4 after growing strongly from the mid 1980s[263]. The argument is that this is the result of factors exogenous to the education and training system, such as demographic changes and shifting labour market conditions, and those endogenous to the system, such as administrative changes, acting in concert with the changing agency and identity of young people. In addition, there is a need to explain the ongoing effects of ethnicity and social class on attainment at GCSE and subsequent participation in post-compulsory secondary education and training. The gender revolution also needs to be fitted into any mode purporting to explain changes in average participation rates. Variation in participation within groups of young people across space also needs to be explained. Achieving all of these would require the construction of a structural-dynamic model of educational change[264] but currently we do not have the data to construct such a model.

In addition, we also need to take account of the way young people position themselves in relation to the education and training system within the "conditions and orientations given by a more general structural dynamic within which education mediates the relationship between pupils' origins and destinations"[265].

Finally, we would also need to take due account of the relationships between different groups, in particular how young people and their families, embedded within their local communities, relate to the education and training system at a local level. In particular, the capacity of people within different groups to choose between the types of education and training institutions they want their children to attend is a key issue[266].

---

[261] De Ruyter, D. and Conroy, J. (2002)
[262] Rorty, A. and Wong, D. (1993)
[263] The idea of a 14-19 phase is itself part of this ongoing policy agenda. The invention of such a construct can be linked to the ongoing policy desire to reduce early leaving.
[264] Following Moore, R. (2004). What we have in mind here is a model in the tradition of Raymond Boudon and the field of structural dynamic modelling.
[265] Moore, R. (2004); Ball, S., Maguire, M. and Macrae, S. (2000a)
[266] Ball, S.J. (2003); Gorard, S. and Rees, G. (2002); Moore, R. (2004)

Attempting to produce such a comprehensive account, drawing as much as possible on the available research evidence, is a key task for next year. What follows is an initial sketch produced in the spirit of the Review set out in the introduction: to expose ideas to critical scrutiny at an early stage. A basic tenet of our approach is that simple monocausal explanations of changes in the dynamic of system behaviour are not tenable. Rather, consideration needs to be given to webs of influence that affect the system over time and cause changes in its behaviour. This is in line with the approach adopted by the more qualitative turn in the discipline of system dynamics.

The phase of expansion

The early 1980s were characterised both by a major economic recession and by a radical restructuring of the labour market associated with deindustrialisation, which saw the disappearance of many 'respectable' working class and unskilled manual jobs[267]. As the economy emerged from recession in the mid 1980s, social security provision for 16 and 17 year-olds was removed. The high levels of youth unemployment of the time and the lack of social security would have reduced the opportunity costs for young people and their families of continuing to participate in education and training post-16, leading to an increase in demand.

'Actors' in education institutions would also have been aware of the need to expand the range of students that they recruited to post-16 provision to meet the challenge of maintaining student numbers at a time of severe demographic decline. This could have led to all institutions diversifying their provision to include, for example, more participation at both Level 2 and Level 3. However, the introduction of a new qualification, GCSE, provided an increased supply of young people with the characteristics needed for recruitment to GCE A Level courses. This is where the major expansion occurred, as young people who might have participated previously in work-based routes were drawn into FTE. The growing availability of prevocational courses in the late 1980s also offered opportunities for substituting this provision for GCSE retake but did not result in a major expansion of Level 2 learning compared with Level 3 learning.

In addition, it is likely that the ongoing Thatcherite experiment has also produced a shift in expectations among an increasingly property-owning society in terms of their aspirations for their children. This effect seems to have been particularly pronounced for young women. Such changes in the societal context would have acted to push more young people into an education system more willing to accept them. The introduction of GCSE, however, enabled schools and sixth form colleges to proceed to do this in a way that did not require them to offer a more comprehensive provision of post-16 learning opportunities. In this sense, GCSE is in the tradition of UK education policy which has typically involved grafting on new initiatives to an established system, over which some form of political settlement has been

---

[267] Brown, P. (1987)

reached, rather than engaging in systemic reform[268]. The result has been the continuation of a selective, attritional and divided post-16 education and training system.

The phase of stagnation

Growth in participation rates slowed and then stagnated after 1994. Indeed the participation rates seem to have declined since that time. In part this can be attributed to the stabilisation of participation rates in FTE, which had been the motor of expansion. The increasing size of the age cohort meant, however, that the number of young people in FTE was still increasing, relieving the economic pressure to expand further. While there was still an increase in the supply of those with higher level GCSE passes, the rate of growth in this supply was decreasing, limiting the scope for further expansion in GCE A Level participation rates. However, the advent of the weakly vocational Advanced GNVQ and then the VCE A Level provided new opportunities for schools to retain learners with some of the markings of future success. However, this reduced further the need to provide post-16 provision in schools for Level 2 learners, which declined steeply during this phase.

The continuing recovery of the labour market after 1994 led to an expansion in demand for better qualified labour during this period, and young people who were able to do so seem to have acted in accord with the rates of return being offered in the labour market to continue their learning through the GCE A Level to degree route to meet this demand. The expansion of HE encouraged this. However, the evidence also suggests that there has also been an expansion in demand for less-qualified workers. This raises the opportunity costs of carrying on in education and training on programmes that offer only marginal return in the labour market if any. As a result, young people begin once again to drift out of the system at 16 and 17 to enter the labour market, leading to the decline in participation observed after 1993/4.

Variation in participation rates

The regional variation in participation rates observed earlier is closely linked to regional variations in attainment at GCSE. If the benchmark of five or more higher grade GCSEs is not achieved, then continued participation may result in a young person incurring significant opportunity costs, both economic and emotional. This produces a strong incentive to leave. Thus the key issue is to account for differential levels of GCSE attainment. These can be linked to factors of class, gender and ethnic origin. Linking these variables to variation in the distribution of the population and the relative levels of deprivation being suffered in different communities could provide the basis for an explanation on such variation. In addition, there is a need to understand how processes acting early on in the life course and the development of local learning cultures might also have an effect on participation rates [269].

---

[268] Jones, K. (2003)
[269] Gorard, S. and Rees, G. (2002)

Clearly there is much unfinished work to be undertaken here. But examining the English and Welsh system in a more comparative perspective may be useful in helping to clarify the issues. Initial work undertaken by the Review in this area is presented in the next section[270].

5. Participation in a comparative context

This section uses a comparative perspective as a lens to shed light on 14-19 education and training in England and Wales. The OECD indicators on education serve as the basis for the discussion. They are the most widely used and widely quoted measures of participation in education and training, and are a useful barometer of the participation rates in the OECD countries. They are exactly what they claim to be – indicators – and do not necessarily reflect the complexities and paradoxes of the education and training systems under consideration. The OECD indicators have become powerful policy drivers, particularly those for the rates of post-compulsory participation in education and training in the UK, which are comparatively low.

However, the OECD indicators must be treated with some caution. One problem is that they are open to abuse and misinterpretation when they are reported in the media. Further, even within other, more formal contexts, there can be selective reporting of these indicators. With regard to the participation rates in particular, the wider realities of the systems are not always fully taken into account[271].

The range of OECD countries reviewed for this section includes a number of different approaches to education and training, some broadly school-based (such as France), some more work-based (such as Germany) and others featuring a model of alternance (Denmark)[272]. The most recent OECD report, published in 2004, indicates that levels of participation have risen in the UK in recent years, but still lag behind other OECD countries[273]. The indicators for the enrolment rates of full- and part-time students in public and private institutions in 2002 (Table 13) show that the UK has the **lowest** rate of enrolment, at 76.8%, of the selected OECD countries at the key age range, namely 15-19. At this age range, Germany has the highest enrolment rate, at 89.2%, followed by the Czech Republic at 88.4%. The other selected OECD countries also have enrolment rates ranging from 80.4% to 86.7%.

Further, the indicator showing the percentage of 15-19 year-olds not in education but in employment (Table 14) is comparatively high for the UK at 16.2%, compared with 8.9% in Denmark, 4.7% in Finland, 1.9% in France, 5.2% in Germany and 11% in Spain. The broad

---

[270] There are additional papers on comparative work on the Nuffield Review website: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk
[271] See Appendix V on problems with datasets.
[272] See Green, A., Wolf, A. and Leney, T. (1999)
[273] See OECD (2004); Steedman, H., McIntosh, S. and Green, A. (2004)

age range means that this indicator is difficult to interpret, but it would seem to be linked to the labour market structures in the UK, and the fact that there are employment opportunities for young and relatively unskilled people. As argued earlier, in England and Wales, there is not necessarily a high level of disadvantage for not following vocational education and training (VET), as the flexible labour market is eager to absorb young, relatively unskilled and cheap labour.

The OECD indicators show that

> to be out of education and out of employment is very uncommon in Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Norway and Poland; it is common in Finland, Italy, Mexico, the Slovak Republic and Turkey. In these countries, more than 10% of young people aged 15 to 19 are neither at school nor in work. In other OECD countries, the proportion is lower but not insignificant, ranging from 4 to 9%.[274]

Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain and the UK are part of the latter group. It is perhaps surprising that Denmark and Finland are both mentioned in this context, but at different ends of this particular spectrum. Finland performed impressively in the Programme for International Student Assessment 2000 and 2003 investigations[275]; however, a relatively high proportion of young people aged 15-19 in Finland are out of education and out of employment. This indicator, therefore, shows that the UK has comparatively high rates of employment in this age range.

Raising participation: Strengthening the work-based routes

The question now arises of how to raise those rates of post-compulsory participation. Recent reforms have given a good deal of attention to apprenticeships in England and Wales, but the desired impact on post-compulsory participation, particularly amongst younger learners, has not been overly successful in terms of take-up and completion of apprenticeship[276]. How does this compare with other OECD countries?

Green, Wolf and Leney, writing in 1999, identified various groupings of apprenticeship systems in Europe. They were:

1. **High status, high participation**
   The best-known example is Germany, but Denmark is also in this category.

---

[274] OECD (2004), p.345
[275] See www.pisa.oecd.org.
[276] See Table 13 for the relevant figures.

2. Moderate to high status, moderate participation

The UK is allocated to this group. Apprenticeship is traditionally concentrated in a few areas, including construction and crafts, hairdressing, engineering and other technical occupations[277].

3. Low status, moderate participation

France is in this group, where apprenticeships are relatively numerous, but they are regarded as lower status than school-based routes.

4. Low status, very low participation

This group includes Finland and Spain, where apprenticeship has virtually vanished except as a strategy for combating exclusion and drop-out. Spain actually abolished apprenticeship in the 1970s[278], but re-introduced it as part of government policy for tackling youth unemployment and dislocation[279].

The classification of the UK as a moderate participation apprenticeship system is perhaps surprising, given the data presented in Table 11. However, the more important point being made is that policy changes have not substantially increased the importance of apprenticeship as a route in the UK, a fact that would not surprise Green, Wolf and Leney, who drew the following conclusion about the stability of the status of apprenticeships in EU countries:

> Overall, the most striking conclusion to be drawn from the literature on apprenticeship is how stable the status of apprenticeship systems, and their role in youth trajectories, has proven to be. Every member state is to be found in the same grouping (1, 2, 3, 4) today as it was in 1984. The policy implication for governments must be that labour market practices are extremely resistant to centralized intervention.[280]

Drawing on the distinctions made in Figure 21, it seems that there are a number of characteristics of the administrative system which underpin high participation in apprenticeship, and aspects of the societal context that support it. These include:

- clarity of pathways, with progression to employment **and** HE as possibilities[281];
- high levels of regulation of programme design, assessment, and outcomes combined with a legal framework regarding the major aspects of apprenticeships, such as duration, content and the qualifications of trainers[282];

---

[277] Green, A., Wolf, A. and Leney, T. (1999), p.184
[278] Green, A., Wolf, A. and Leney, T. (1999), p.175
[279] Green, A., Wolf, A. and Leney, T. (1999), p.186
[280] Green, A., Wolf, A. and Leney, T. (1999), p.187
[281] The most celebrated example of an apprenticeship system which is perceived to be effective and successful is the *Duales System* in Germany. In Germany, far from being perceived as the route for low attainers, two thirds of the cohort choose the apprenticeship route, which provides a clear pathway into professional life, but also into HE. Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2003) on the other hand, indicate that at that time fewer than 1% of apprentices went on to HE in England.
[282] In Germany, some 20% of apprentices go on to qualify as *Meister*. This involves further study, as well as pedagogical training to ensure that the person will be suitably equipped to train future apprentices.

- effective use of social partnerships[283] to design, administer and quality assure the programmes;
- the impact of the concept of occupational identity, and a strong tradition[284] of apprenticeship, resulting in a 'brand' that is respected and valued by young people, employers and HEIs alike[285], facilitating high rates of participation and the high status of the qualification;
- regulated labour markets with licences to practise and strong articulation between initial training, qualification and labour market entry.

As argued in last year's Annual Report, several of these features favourable to a successful apprenticeship route in other countries are not fully developed in England and Wales. These include the commitment of employers to this route, effective social partnerships, a strong legal framework for apprenticeships, a tradition of apprenticeship (in a wide range of sectors) and the mixed currency of apprenticeships on the labour market.

Raising participation: Developing a school-based model

Given the weaknesses of the current work-based route in England and Wales, building a high participation, comprehensive post-16 school-based route seems the only other alternative. Other countries, notably Sweden and France, have achieved high participation rates using an essentially school-based model. In the French case this is tracked using the various baccalaureate qualifications. In the Swedish case high participation rates are achieved using a more unified, comprehensive post-16 model. During the phase of expansion this is the direction that the English and Welsh system seemed to lurch towards but growth in participation rates in FTE essentially ceased after 1994.

So, England and Wales, in terms of their system development, seem to have fallen between two stools: the two countries have a selective not a comprehensive post-compulsory school-based model, combined with a weak, under-regulated work-based route. Attempts to plug the gap by developing a third, weakly vocational or applied general education route based largely within FE colleges appear to be unsuccessful because of the high rates of attrition between Levels 1, 2 and 3 resulting in poor progression.

---

[283] In the Danish system, the social partners play an active role and are able to influence the system to a large extent. These social partners include trade unions, chambers of commerce and employers' associations, and are also of great importance in the German context. This framework is underdeveloped in England and Wales, which potentially undermines the viability and success of apprenticeships.

[284] The apprenticeship concept works effectively in England and Wales for a number of occupational areas (engineering and construction, for example) which previously had a strong tradition in this area.

[285] One point here is that, in Germany, many employers have themselves had direct experience of being an apprentice, perhaps therefore enhancing their commitment to this form of training and education. This affects progression from school to VET favourably in Germany.

6. Effects of higher education on the 14-19 curriculum

An additional, and perhaps peculiarly British, phenomenon is the impact of HE on the learning opportunities available and their perceived relative worth in the 14-19 system. In one sense, the 14-19 curriculum could be said to be distinct from HE in that HE merely receives individuals who have undertaken a programme of learning prior to entry to HE. Indeed, when asked[286], staff associated with HE admissions decisions ascertain that it is not their role to determine the nature of pre-HE learning, and that it is up to schools and colleges to agree what is appropriate for their students. On the other hand, going back over fifty years to the introduction of GCE A Levels, the small number of high-profile universities associated with the forerunners of the present unitary awarding authorities were instrumental in developing that qualification with the specific purpose of providing a route into HE.

The advent over the last twenty years of a mass HE system has meant that a significant proportion of individuals are entering HE with a raft of qualifications other than A Level, many of which are vocationally related and which have not been designed as a specific entry route into HE. In practice, the current A Level, which has seen a number of changes to its structure, most notably those which took place as part of the Curriculum 2000 developments, is very different from the version which was introduced in 1951. Thus, in terms of progression into HE from Level 3 14-19 qualifications (many of which are also delivered to adults), the picture is now complicated, and somewhat messy. This position is exacerbated by the very different practices and responses to curriculum change of selecting and recruiting HEIs, and an associated national media approach which discusses and reports on matters relating to HE as though all learners progress to around twenty HEIs, and to courses which are highly-competitive in terms of entry.

Notwithstanding this complex picture, in reality the influence of HE on, in particular, the curriculum of schools is profound. As an example, the introduction of Curriculum 2000 resulted in a position where the most influential HEIs were conservative in their approach to changes in indicative entry requirements and the structure of offers, and schools and colleges were demanding to know, from 1999 onwards, how major curriculum reform would be received by HE. From an HE perspective, it can be argued that this was an entirely legitimate and rational approach in that before introduction it was impossible to determine the manner in which the reforms would impact upon successful transition into, and progression through, HE programmes of study. However, from a pre-HE perspective, because of the pressures from parents or guardians and from within staff in many schools, particularly those with a history of progressing students from a 14-19 programme into HE, the approach taken by HE could be seen as problematic in that there was an urgent need, on the part of pre-HE centres, to know what kind of changes were appropriate to introduce.

---

[286] As part of the Review's work on HE admissions, see Appendix VI.

The result, five years on, is virtual stalemate. The restructured A Levels are still in place, but many parts of HE are proceeding as if the Curriculum 2000 reforms did not happen. The attempt by government to introduce different aspects of breadth into the pre-HE curriculum has effectively been thwarted. The first aspect, the push to encourage GCE students to study a fourth subject, has been largely successful in that a majority of learners in this category are taking a fourth subject, at least to AS Level. On the other hand, the vast majority of HE offers for A Level are still phrased around the three subjects traditionally requested, and the handful that integrated a fourth AS into offers for 2002 entry, have almost all now retrenched to the original position because their direct competitors were asking for less. The second aspect, the encouragement to mix disciplines, has been unsuccessful, partly because individual choice drives the subjects taken by A Level students, and partly because those HEIs which did respond to the existence of a likely fourth subject, frequently wished that subject to be in the same discipline as others in the programme or one closely connected to them. The latter was particularly true of science courses. A third aspect of breadth, the expectation that the majority of pre-HE learners would undertake Key Skills, again has fallen by the wayside, and again because of a reticence by HE to value such qualifications.

Further evidence of the influence of HE on 14-19 developments is beginning to become available in terms of the first group of learners undertaking the Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma. Anecdotally it is known that because some HEIs have not asked for the core of this qualification, students have dropped this to concentrate on the options: qualifications (often A Levels) which are better understood by HE, and thus asked for to the exclusion of the core.

And yet there are definitely still problems in terms of the way the 14-19 curriculum prepares some learners for progression to HE. Again, however, the position is complicated, again partly because the public perception of HE is driven by press reports. On the positive side, there is plenty of evidence[287] to confirm that for the majority of HEIs, and for the majority of courses they offer, progression from a variety of 14-19 qualifications offered by centres is without problem. UK HEIs can, and do, accept learners with vocationally-related qualifications, and with medium to low A Level grades; and over 80% of those applicants who hold a conditional offer through the UCAS system have the place confirmed once results become available.

The problems lie with the much lower proportion of courses at a comparatively small number of HEIs for which entry is highly competitive. Over fifty years ago the A Level was developed, with active HE involvement, for progression to such courses and institutions. The annual debate about whether A Level standards are being maintained, and reporting of students who are predicted high levels of achievement, often in four or five subjects, but

---

[287] Analysis of entry requirements collected by UCAS for c.55,000 courses available for full-time study in 329 HEIs across the UK.

who do not receive offers, is fuelled by the fact that it is undoubtedly true that the HEIs which select students for these courses have found it increasingly difficult, particularly over the last five years, to differentiate between the similarly profiled learners who apply for places.

Thus there is a dilemma. On the one hand, for many learners the content and structure of the present 14-19 curriculum is more than adequate for successful progression to HE, but on the other hand, current qualifications are not sufficiently discriminating at the top end of the ability range and for the most selective HEIs and courses. The influence of the latter is all-pervading and has a direct impact on the demands which those who influence schools – parents, government, governors, teachers – make in terms of curriculum offering, although, as has been seen, for many progression is more than adequate and successful. Sixth form colleges tend to be driven by the influences of HE in the same way as schools. The curriculum offering by FE colleges on the other hand is not under the same influence but this can bring other types of problem where there is an expectation that progression to HE should be possible from all Level 3 qualifications and there is a lack of articulation between some of the lesser-used entry routes and the demands of the HE curriculum.

Some steps are being taken to address the different problems which exist. At a local level in particular much is being done to pave the way for progression from, say, WBL routes to foundation degrees. In respect of extra layers of differentiation for students likely to achieve high A Level grades, unit grades will be supplied to HE in the future, and Advanced Extension Award questions will be incorporated into examination papers. An extended project is also being introduced. Whether these steps will resolve existing issues remains to be seen, and experience confirms that in any event HE is likely to be cautious in its response, whilst the pre-HE sector will be pressurising HE to be clear from the outset whether any changes to entry requirements and offers will be needed.

The focus group work with a selection of different categories of HEI (see Appendix VI) has already identified what HE would like to see from the 14-19 curriculum of the future. Year 3 of this Project needs to map the focus group findings against both existing provision which under present plans will continue, and proposals currently in the pipeline for reform. Such mapping would begin to indicate whether there are barriers to progression in respect of appropriate knowledge bases and skills, and facilitate the making of suggestions for future reform. However, this work can only begin to inform the issue of the powerful influence that HE has on pre-HE centres and the way in which they respond to change 14-19 provision, and separate recommendations will be needed in this respect. One such recommendation may well be more active and wider involvement of HE at the outset of proposals being made for the development of new qualifications and reforms to the 14-19 curriculum which in any way impact upon progression to HE. Unless this happens it is likely that the most influential institutions will continue to develop their own admissions instruments, and will rely less and less on achievement in the 14-19 phase. Whether this would be a positive or detrimental development remains to be seen.

Conclusion

The big puzzle this chapter has worked on is why the 16-19 system has failed to respond in the way desired by policymakers over the last decade. Understanding why this has happened requires locating the education and training system in its wider social and political context. Politically, the underpinning ideology of the last decade can be linked to the development of a political portrayal of Britain as an advanced industrial society developing within a logic of industrialism[288]. Such a portrayal defines a central role for education in effecting the transition to a more inclusive and affluent society. Throughout the last twenty years, governments of both political persuasions have preached this message, an 'educational gospel'[289], which is based on a belief in three key ideas.

The first idea is that we are in the midst of a knowledge revolution (or the information society or the high-tech revolution) that is changing the nature of work, shifting us away from occupations rooted in industrial production to occupations associated with knowledge and information. This requires all individuals to adapt continually, through a process of lifelong learning, in order to maintain their skills and 'employability'. The role of the state is no longer to seek full employment but to provide opportunities for individuals to maintain 'employability skills'. Individuals are supposed to respond as 'rational economic actors' to the inducements being offered and grasp the opportunities being provided to invest in their own learning. This is not a new discourse but one that can be traced back to at least the beginning of the last century. The second idea is that to cope with the jobs of the future and new forms of work organisation, people will need different types of skills – so called generic or soft skills. The third is that education and training systems must evolve to accommodate more people, delay school to work transition and teach new topics in different ways in order to develop these skills, preferably though just in time methods of instruction.

Versions of this basic creed can be found in most countries in the world and in the discourse of the EU, for example the Lisbon process. But in the UK (and the US) it has led to a particular form of vocationalism which emphasises the purposes of educational systems primarily in term of producing desirable economic outcomes requiring the development of

> …an educational system whose purposes are dominated by preparation for economic roles, one where there is sufficient access so that many individuals might have reasonable demands of more schooling, and one that is responsive to external demands … the dominant critique in the Education Gospel is that formal schooling remains overly academic and has failed to respond to the needs of the 21st century.[290]

In particular, schools and colleges and HE are accused of not providing the essential skills that employers need, 'the skills of the twenty first century'. This in turn leads to the more

---

[288] Moore, R. (2004)
[289] Grubb, W.N. and Lazerson, M. (2004)
[290] Grubb, W.N. and Lazerson, M. (2004), pp.6-7

recent calls for demand-led reforms of the education and training system. The problem here is not that education should have economic outcomes but that these outcomes are becoming over emphasised at the expense of more moral, civic and aesthetic outcomes, as discussed in Chapter Three. The point here is not to criticise this self-image of Britain as a knowledge society or to question the increasing demand for more highly skilled workers, but to point out that the wider vocationalist vision has not materialised despite two decades of reform efforts. The system still has only modest rates of participation and attainment compared with our European neighbours, is not comprehensive and has suffered massive academic drift. Initiatives, such as Key Skills reform, have been practically still-born because of the influence of HE on institutions working in a competitive marketplace where the best way to attract desirable customers is by raising performance in academic areas. Anything else is seen as a distraction. The cult of managerialism, embedded within an increasingly marketised and centralised educational state, has also worked against the vocationalist vision. Furthermore, a labour market that continues to reward academic achievement above vocational learning acts against the vocationalist nirvana of parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications.

What lessons for policy and further research should be taken from this?

First piecemeal reform of the system, by grafting on new initiatives to outmoded structures and relationships, is unlikely to achieve desired results. There will continue to be small incremental gains in participation rates, for example, at a local level due to local initiatives and the actions of particular head teachers and college principals, as was shown in the visits to two local authorities. However, these are unlikely to yield the sort of increase in participation and attainment rates needed to make the English and Welsh education and training systems internationally competitive in producing an adequate supply of intermediate craft and technician skills.

Second, the system is becoming increasingly polarised, reflecting wider social inequalities, particularly in the distribution of income. For many young people the system appears to be working well. They are progressing into Level 3 provision, gaining their qualifications and moving on to HE. However, increases in participation in this pathway have occurred more among the middle than the working classes. The expansion of HE, for example, has been overwhelmingly a middle class phenomenon. Other young people are being left behind and this has long-term implications for them in terms of their future employment and incomes. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that the education and training system cannot create more interesting and well-paid jobs. That depends upon employers and their strategic decisions in relation to the product strategy of their organisations and the sorts of work design they will use to pursue that strategy. The education system, by qualifying more young people, at best changes their relative position in a job queue seeking access to those positions. The system has been unsuccessful in changing long-established inequalities in gaining such access.

Third, attempts to provide alternative provision in the form of government-sponsored apprenticeships, WBL and full-time vocational provision have not been particularly successful. It is difficult to see how these initiatives can be successful without tying vocational qualifications more closely to licences to practise, as occurs in many European countries. This would have the twin effect of, first, making employers take notice of these qualifications and participate in their construction, and, second, requiring such qualifications to meet occupational standards as well as providing a more general education. Apprenticeship should deliver such a learning experience but with a few noticeable exceptions it appears not to be so doing. The full-time route in schools and sixth form colleges is dominated by weak vocational qualifications and yet this is where the growth in participation in Level 3 VET provision has occurred. The outcome is ironic: despite the vocationalist agenda, the amount and quality of vocational learning has declined in England and Wales over the last twenty years. The extent to which the introduction of the specialist diplomas, the FfA and the Sector Qualification Strategies may address the long-term weakness in the vocational routes remains to be seen. Further qualification reform on its own is very unlikely to be enough to remedy this situation.

Fourth, in spite of the rhetoric of the knowledge economy, the English and Welsh labour market continue to provide an expanding number of opportunities for poorly qualified entrants. The weak performance of the vocational pathways can be inextricably linked to this continuing labour market demand and the UK stands in stark contrast to its European neighbours in terms of the number of young people who are in the labour market. It is difficult to see why young people should be convinced it is in their interest to incur the opportunity costs of participating in vocational learning that has little if any return on the labour market without regulation of the youth labour market. The principle of voluntarism, on which both the involvement of young people and employers in post-compulsory secondary education and training depends, simply does not seem to work in terms of promoting high levels of participation among young people and their employers in training. However, the political price of addressing these issues may be too high in a liberalised market economy. In this case, the current levels of participation and the increasing polarisation within the system may be the price that has to be paid for a deregulated labour market.

Fifth, the issues that need to be tackled are economically very important. As the system becomes increasingly polarised in terms of its outcomes at 17 and 18 for different groups of young people, participation in learning pathways that led to the production of traditional craft and technician skills is in decline. It is the lack of these sorts of skills that employer surveys have repeatedly shown produce skills shortage vacancies in the economy[291]. The solution seems to be to recruit graduates to undertake work that previously required (and probably still only requires) Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. This is the problem of over education. For example, in Germany the apprenticeship system has been developed to

---

[291] See, for example, the LSC's National Employers Skills Surveys 2003 and 2004, available online at: www.lsc.gov.uk.

provide a greater supply of computer maintenance technicians. In Britain these sorts of posts are filled by graduates[292].

Sixth, there is a need to think harder about the way to measure system performance. The three metrics of participation, retention and attainment rates provide insights into system dynamics but they do not necessarily measure system performance. A true measure of system performance would be concerned with how well learning in the phase prepares young people for their future lives as learners and as economic and social agents. In terms of the first, the work of the Review this year has established grounds to doubt that the current GCE A Levels system is performing as well as policy makers think it is. In the case of the latter two, more work needs to be undertaken, work that takes us beneath the rhetoric of the knowledge to examine the skills needs of employers and the wider learning needs of individuals. These two issues frame in part the research agenda for next year.

The issue of where we should seek explanations at a systems level for the continuing relatively poor performance of the education and training system has already been raised. There is clearly a serious mismatch between system performance and expectations. Put simply, policy expectations over the last ten years have not been translated into large and sustained changes in system behaviour. This is an ongoing problem and suggests that the issues may lie in the types of policy instruments being used to enable expected changes in system behaviour[293]. Currently there is an over reliance on inducement strategies, where the problem is assumed to be that 'actors' who are not currently providing valued goods and services can be induced to do so through the provision of short-term funding. The assumption is that the policy targets have the capacity to deliver.

In the case of VET this may not be the case because of an inadequate supply of properly trained teachers and inadequate capital resources to deliver high-quality vocational programmes. Solving these sorts of problems, and thereby improving the quality of the education and training experience of young people, would require the deployment of much more politically risky capacity and system changing policy instruments (for example, a more widespread use of 'licence to practise' regulations in the work-based route and more radical and inclusive curriculum and qualifications reform). There seems to be a lack of political will to do this. Instead inducement instruments are supported by hortatory policy tools in the form of PR campaigns, speeches and exhortations to do better, and an accountability framework that seems to inhibit the system's capacity to innovate. A prime example of this type of policy behaviour can be found in the type of collaborative arrangements that are being encouraged in the delivery of 14-19 education and training. This is examined in Chapter Five.

In terms of lessons for research, the work undertaken this year for the Review has revealed substantial problems with the available quantitative data sets to answer questions of

---

[292] Steedman, H., Wagner, K. and Foreman, J. (2003)
[293] Stasz, C. and Wright, S. (2004)

interest. Given the size of samples of the age groups of interest in the YCS, the LFS and the British Household Panel Survey it is impossible to build quantitative systems dynamic models through which the impact of different policy alternatives could be simulated. Administrative data sets lack necessary contextual detail. Furthermore, given the above characterisation of the nature of the policy problem, little remains to be gained through directing effort at further detailed description of the system or gathering further descriptive data about policy initiatives. This suggests that research effort now needs to be directed at the middle layer in Figure 1: exploring the views of 'actors', and the links between expectations, structures and policies.

Chapter Five

The Institutional Dimension of 14-19 Education and Training in England

(Strand III)

The Institutional Dimension of 14-19 Education and Training in England

Introduction

14-19 education and training in England[294] has recently been seen through the lens of curriculum and qualifications reform (for example, the work of the Working Group for 14-19 Reform, 2004), partly because the formation of a phase of learning inevitably has to focus on what is to be learned, taught and assessed and partly because it is important that the concept of a 14-19 phase is not dominated solely by organisational considerations and interests. Moreover, the concept of discrete 14-19 providers lacks support due to the historical organisational divide at 16 and because it would mean substantial organisational reform affecting the whole of secondary, further, adult and even primary education. The more modest aim of institutional collaboration to support a 14-19 concept is seen, therefore, as less problematic and it is not surprising that this way forward dominates policy debates and proposals. The key question is how far this approach to organisational reform can be taken in support of a new 14-19 phase of education and training.

This chapter, based on one strand of the Nuffield Review's work during 2004/5, focuses on current and future institutional arrangements and how they might be reformed. It begins by examining how 14-19 education and training is organised. Its current state is characterised as a competitive and mixed economy model based largely on individual institutional autonomy with a variety of institutional governance and funding arrangements but with a growing role for initiative-based and bottom-up collaboration. The system is steered by a range of policy levers and drivers (e.g. funding, targets, inspection, planning and policy initiatives) designed to influence institutional behaviour in a complex, competitive and weakly collaborative environment

Over the last two years of national debate on 14-19 education and training, which has seen the Tomlinson report[295], a five-year strategy from the DfES[296] and the 14-19 White Paper[297], the problems of this legacy have been compounded by tensions inherent within and between these three documents. The *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners* promoted both institutional autonomy and collaboration; the Tomlinson report proposed a unified curriculum and qualifications system, and the 14-19 White Paper elected to develop a divided one. The absence of policy consistency in this area has led to considerable confusion both for practitioners and also for different sections of the policy community. LLSCs and Ofsted, for

---

[294] The institutional situation in Wales will be addressed in an updated version of David Egan (2004) *14-19 Developments in Wales: Learning Pathways*. WP19. This paper is available on the Nuffield Review website: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk
[295] Working Group on 14-19 Reform (2004)
[296] DfES (2004a)
[297] DfES (2005a)

example, have been asked to review 14-19 provision across an area and to make effective and efficient proposals to meet the needs of all learners, which has often led to plans for rationalisation of sixth form provision and exhortation of institutions to collaborate. The DfES and Downing Street, on the other hand, have been promoting institutional specialisation, autonomy and the introduction of new sixth forms and academies to increase 'contestability'[298]. This policy approach leaves untouched, and possibly encourages, the powerful role of grammar schools and independent schools in maintaining selection at 11 and at 16 in many parts of the country.

Within this context of competitive, mixed economy arrangements and policy tension, the education profession as a whole appears to view collaboration as the only viable way forward. This chapter explores this policy direction in some detail by describing and analysing different types of collaborative arrangements and their strengths and weaknesses. It also examines the effects of key policy levers and drivers (e.g. funding) and current governance arrangements at local, sub-regional, regional and national levels. It draws on a range of specially commissioned seminar papers, recent national evaluation reports and discussion at three Nuffield Review seminars involving policymakers, researchers and practitioners. From this analysis, it is suggested that there are grounds for taking a more critical view of current collaborative arrangements and the chapter poses questions about the development of a different and more integrated organisational landscape.

The final part of the chapter sets out three options for the organisation of an upper secondary system in England. The first goes with the flow of current organisational division and has a secondary phase to 16 followed by a 16-19 upper secondary phase. The second emphasises the concept of a 14-19 phase based on dedicated 14-19 institutions. The third, which is elaborated because it is seen as an effective means of supporting a coherent 14-19 phase, develops the concept of 'strongly collaborative 14-19 local learning systems'.

The chapter is, therefore, organised around three overarching questions:

1. What are the current 14-19 institutional arrangements and how do they function?
2. What are the main features and effects of current government policy in this area?
3. What arrangements are needed for the future to establish an effective and inclusive 14-19 phase?

---

[298] DfES, DTI, HMT, DWP (2005)

1. What are the current 14-19 institutional arrangements and how do they function?

Competition within a mixed economy approach

Education practitioners and policymakers in England now talk quite openly about their aspirations for the development of a 14-19 phase – a concept that is based primarily around the ideas of coherent provision leading to 'seamless' progression. However, deep-seated historical institutional and organisational features of the 14-19 education and training system work against the grain of this aspiration:

- selection at 16-plus, both in curricular and institutional terms[299];
- complex and varying institutional arrangements in different parts of the country[300] – schools, work-based training providers, the workplace, school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, sixth form centres, FE colleges, tertiary colleges and consortia arrangements between any of these;
- different types of schools within one local authority area with very different governance and admissions arrangements (e.g. Kent);
- institutional competition for high-performing 16-19 year-olds, particularly between school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and centres, and FE colleges[301];
- a relatively marginal role for the work-based route, with inadequate and fragmented employer engagement and a lack of apprenticeship places[302];
- an accountability framework (e.g. targets, performance tables and funding) based in the main on the 16-plus divide, although inspection crosses this divide;
- governance and funding for 14-19 education and training which is divided between LEAs, which are responsible for the majority of secondary education, and the LSC, which is primarily responsible for 16-19 education and training (but with some overlap on 14-16),
- a continued significant role for the independent school sector and for private and voluntary organisations in both schooling and training.

The driving force behind this mixed economy approach is institutional competition, which was actively promoted during the late 1980s and early 1990s as a way of increasing system efficiency[303] and which still plays a dominant role in determining institutional, learner and parental behaviour through the narrative of 'individual choice'. While the rhetoric of policy

---

[299] Stanton, G. (2004)

[300] The institutional arrangements across the four countries of the UK are also different. Some of these differences have been explored by the Review, for instance in Finlay, I. and Egan, D. (2004); Papers given at the joint ESRC Youth Transitions Project/Nuffield Review seminar 'Policy learning in 14-19 education and training', held at the Nuffield Foundation on 15 March 2005, available at www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml.

[301] Ball, S.J., Maguire, M. and Macrae, S. (2000b)

[302] Fuller, A. (2004)

[303] DES/Employment Department/Welsh Office (1991)

documents under New Labour has largely been one of collaboration[304], current policy proposals are more ambivalent with the introduction of new policy terms such as 'contestability'[305].

Given this complex and competitive 'mixed economy' context and a declining population of secondary school aged learners in many parts of England, what role do the different education and training providers play in meeting the needs of 14-19 year-old learners? To answer this the Review draws on the inputs to two seminars and on secondary sources, which fall broadly into five types – national datasets, academic literature, policy texts, evaluations studies and inspection reports.

National participation data indicate that full-time provision for 16-19 year-old learners is largely divided along institutional and ability lines[306]. School sixth forms and sixth form colleges are the main providers of Level 3 provision, the majority of which is A Level. A total of 68.7% of Level 3 provision for 16-18 year-olds in 2003 was undertaken in schools or sixth form colleges. FE colleges provided just under a third of Level 3 provision, with the largest single type being NVQ and equivalent qualifications (e.g. BTEC). Level 2 provision and below, on the other hand, is mainly offered by FE colleges. Overall, 7.6% of 16-18 year-olds in 2003 were on this type of provision, of which over three-quarters (78%) were in FE colleges. These patterns reflect a deeply divided system based on a process of 16-plus selection. Schools and sixth form colleges cater mainly for students on higher level programmes, which suggests a process of weeding out of lower level learners. Learners on Level 1 provision are taught almost exclusively in FE colleges, which have a much bigger spread of learners across the different levels than other post-16 providers.

Beneath this national pattern of participation, the actual institutional arrangements in any local area are highly varied. Fletcher and Stanton (2005) identify five major institutional configurations for delivering full-time post-16 provision in what they term 'travel to learn areas':
- 11-18 schools with sixth forms plus a general FE college;
- 11-16 schools, plus a sixth form college plus a general FE college;
- 11-16 schools plus a tertiary college;
- 16-18 consortia involving various combination of school sixth forms and colleges with varying degrees of formality to the arrangements;
- sixth form centres within general FE colleges.

These different configurations are further complicated by the varying governance and funding arrangements of different types of schools (e.g. city academies, specialist schools and grammar schools).

---

[304] DfES (2002b).
[305] DfES, DTI, HMT, DWP (2005)
[306] Fletcher, M. and Stanton, G. (2005); DfES (2005f); DfES (2005g)

Table 15 summarises the main strengths and weaknesses of different institutions and institutional configurations.

Table 15. Strengths and weaknesses of post-16 institutions/institutional configurations for 16-19 year-olds (adapted from Fletcher and Stanton 2005

Institution/ institutional configuration	Strengths	Weaknesses
School sixth forms	• encourage staying on after 16 by removing need to change institutions • provide continuity of pastoral care • offer personal attention and monitoring in small groups • the sixth form has a beneficial effect on the rest of the school • sixth formers can adopt leadership roles within the school • the availability of sixth form teaching attracts and retains good staff	• many students need a change after five years in the same place • do not provide continuity of care for the lower attainers who are most vulnerable • often limited choice of courses, particularly vocational and below Level 3 • the fact that sixth forms do not cater for all alienates some 14-16 year-olds – schools that are comprehensive at 11 become selective at 16 • relatively expensive – require large intakes at 11-plus and/or cross-subsidy from 11-16 funding, particularly for those under 160 • suggest that academic subjects are the norm and vocational courses for those who cannot manage these • students may not get comprehensive and impartial advice on post-16 choices
Sixth form colleges	• highly effective and popular institutions that concentrate resources and expertise in one place • everyone joining a new institution at the same time so can start afresh on a new footing if required, even after a gap year at 16-plus • organised specially to meet the needs of 16-19 year-olds – strong pastoral and record-keeping systems overcome transitional issues • larger than sixth forms in schools; therefore more cost effective and able to offer a wider variety of provision and extra-curricular activities • provide a balance between the sheltered environment of schools and the challenges of HE	• most do not cater for those without five A*-C grades at GCSE • the 45% below this threshold may go to general FE colleges with a sense of being rejected • encourage the view that academic subjects are the norm for able 16 year-olds • most do not offer part-time provision for those under 19

Tertiary colleges	- cater for all abilities, and all ages, on a full and part-time basis - provide strongly vocational courses as well as high-quality academic subjects - comprehensive intake keeps learners in contact with all aspects of the community at an important developmental stage - most make special efforts to offer pastoral support to 16-19 year-olds and to build effective links with partner schools - FE rather than school hours makes better use of plant and equipment (equivalent to an extra day per week)	- large size does not suit all learners - monitoring more difficult - in practice, A Level students and others often lead separate lives
Sixth form consortia	- share the strengths of school sixth forms - in addition, they allow more schools to have sixth forms whilst giving students sufficient choice of subjects and controlling costs	- share most weaknesses of sixth forms (possibly with exception of cross-subsidy and choice) - students spend valuable time moving between sites - continuity of pastoral care can be very difficult
Sixth form centres within general FE colleges	- share some of the strengths of sixth form colleges without the ethos of a distinctive 16-19 institution - nevertheless, it is possible to create an environment which is more suitable for 16-19 year-olds and encourages greater involvement in "enrichment" activities than is appropriate for older students	- potentially seals younger learners off from traditional FE provision, adult learners and the wider FE experience - many such centres exist as rhetoric rather than reality, and in any case there is no evidence that they are more effective than FE provision as a whole
General FE colleges	- wide range of provision particularly vocational with specialist equipment and staff - offer a second chance and all levels of provision - seen as an adult environment by younger learners - opportunities to learn alongside adults	- often too large and anonymous to offer full pastoral support - seen as second choice and second chance by many learners and parents - recent history of low staff morale and financial pressures - question of sustaining quality and performance, particularly with lower level qualifications

Effects on 14-19 participation, attainment and progression

Currently, as Fletcher and Stanton (2005) also note, administrative performance data are typically collated and reported at the level of the individual institution as part of the competitive, mixed economy system. Data exist at national level on the performance of

different types of institutions (e.g. selective schools) in terms of qualifications and National Curriculum outcomes and this is what is widely reported in the media.

In recent years, additional performance measures (e.g. value-added) are also beginning to feature and there now are LEA and LSC-wide statistics, although these do not achieve the same public prominence as league tables derived from individual institutional examination results. Moreover, it is difficult to establish the exact effects of current institutional arrangements on learner participation, attainment and progression in any given area, both because of the different configurations in different localities and because of the important influence of wider factors, such as local labour markets[307]. In particular, there are difficulties with measuring performance in collaborative arrangements because, as evaluations have noted, there is often a lack of systematic data collection on joint programme outcomes and a failure to produce clear performance measures[308].

There is a policy assumption that diversity and choice will increase participation, attainment and progression[309]. However, national statistics suggest otherwise. The effects of a complex and competitive pattern of institutional arrangements, selection at both 11 and at 16 and a divided qualifications system combine to depress participation rates. A total of 25% of 16-18 year-olds are not involved in any form of education and training and attrition rates for 16-19 year-olds are high in provision outside the academic track[310]. The current 14-19 FTE system loses learners faster than other national systems[311].

Sixteen-plus qualifications division is exacerbated by the post-16 institutional divide. The majority of those who fail to meet the GCSE threshold for progression to A Level at 16 do not have open to them the full range of courses or institutions that are available to higher attainers. They are often forced to change institution at this point and are unable to continue in the general education track. While advice and guidance on post-16 options focuses largely on choice of course, learners are also, in fact, making a choice of institution at this stage in their education. It is post-16 institutions which have the whip hand in terms of the learners they admit. This form of selection at 16-plus, and the way in which schools, in particular, behave to maximise their position in league tables at 16-plus and 18-plus, sends a very strong message to learners about who is valued and who is not. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that lower attainers, who do not have the opportunity to progress to what are widely regarded as high-status courses and institutions, opt to exit the education system between the ages of 16-19.

---

[307] Hayward, G., Hodgson, A., Johnson, J., Keep, E., Oancea, A., Pring, R., Spours, K. and Wright, S. (2004)
[308] Nelson, J., Morris, M., Rickinson, M., Blenkinsop, S. and Spielhofer, T. (2001); Rodger, J., Cowen, G. and Brass, J. (2003).
[309] DfES (2002a); DfES (2002b); DfES (2003a); DfES (2005a)
[310] DfES (2005f)
[311] OECD (2003)

14-19 collaborative arrangements

While competition and selection still appear to be the dominant features of institutional arrangements in England, institutional collaboration is growing because of a need to overcome the limitations of individual institutional provision and to offer more choice and opportunity for 14-19 year-olds within the broad overall policy aim of increasing participation, attainment and progression[312]. This process has been supported and sometimes accelerated by the effects of particular policy levers and drivers, such as area-wide inspections, StARs and dedicated funding from the IFP[313] and 14-19 Pathfinders[314].

Recent studies on collaboration[315] suggest that collaborative arrangements now go beyond catering for 16-19 year-olds and increasingly involve 14-16 year-olds, part-time learners, employers and training providers. These studies offer illuminative examples of collaboration, although it is difficult to quantify their extent on a national scale. What the studies do provide, however, is useful information on different models of collaboration that are emerging to meet different local needs. These models range from jointly owned organisations and facilities through to looser and more occasional forms of collaboration for particular purposes. Below we identify the main types discussed in current literature, starting with the 'harder edged' end of the spectrum:

- **Federations** are defined by the DfES as "**a group of two or more schools with a formal agreement to work together to raise standards**". Some of these federations, of which there are currently 35 in receipt of pump-priming funding from the DfES, have a single governing body or a joint governing body committee as provided for in the 2002 Education Act[316].

- **Shared post-16 organisation and facilities** include joint sixth forms[317] and post-16 centres on school sites[318].

- **Consortia** are voluntary groupings of institutions, involving schools, colleges, sixth form colleges, tertiary colleges and, in a small number of cases, WBL providers, with different levels of integration[319].

- **Clusters** are LEA/LLSC-sponsored groupings of institutions. These groupings may be more or less voluntary and are usually supported by dedicated funding from

---

[312] DfES (2004a)

[313] Golden, S., O'Donnell, L. and Rudd, P. (2005)

[314] Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004)

[315] Principal Learning Ltd. (2003); Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004); Munday, F. and Pratley, B. (2004); Golden, S., O'Donnell, L. and Rudd, P. (2005)

[316] www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/federations, accessed 14 February 2005.

[317] Munday, F. and Fawcett, B. (2002)

[318] Ofsted/FEFC (1999)

[319] Edem, A., Spencer, P. and Fyfield, B. (2003)

either the LEA or the LLSC or both (e.g. Oxfordshire, South Gloucestershire and Kent).

- **Bilateral arrangements** involve two institutions with less formal arrangements to meet specific needs, including collaboration to ward off competition from stronger providers[320].

- **Strategic alliances[321]**, such as Learning Partnerships, were established in early 1999 to promote provider collaboration across different sectors (e.g. FE, schools, WBL, and adult and community learning) and to rationalise existing local partnership arrangements[322].

- **Increased Flexibility Partnerships** are collaborative arrangements to achieve a particular objective fostered by a government initiative and government funding. A total of 269 partnerships were funded in 2002 involving almost three-quarters of all FE colleges, almost half of all secondary schools and a small proportion of WBL providers. These partnerships were set up to provide a more flexible curriculum and vocational learning opportunities for 14-16 year-olds[323].

- **14-19 Pathfinders** provide another example of the development of collaborative arrangements to achieve a particular objective fostered by a government initiative and government funding. Collaboration was only one of the Pathfinder criteria, though this has been an outcome in the majority of cases.[324]

- **Occasional, localised collaborative activities** are arrangements between individual providers which typically do not involve overarching bodies such as the LEA or LLSCs and are independent of government initiatives and specific government funding. Examples include state schools using independent school facilities, or independent school staff running classes or workshops for local state schools[325].

In addition to these, case study evidence given to the Review highlights new post-14 Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) shared between schools and colleges in a locality (e.g. the West Notts Learning CoVE and the Whitstable Community College CoVE in Kent).

The common feature of all the models above is their attempt to offset the negative effects of a competitive and divided system in order to meet the horizontal and vertical progression needs of particular groups of learners in a local area. Beyond this, there is a great deal of variation both in the learners they serve, the type of provision they offer, the degree of

---

[320] Munday, F. and Fawcett, B. (2002)
[321] Johnson, D. (2003)
[322] Rodger, J., Cowen, G. and Brass, J. (2003)
[323] Golden, S., Nelson, J., O'Donnell, L. and Morris, M (2004); Golden, S., O'Donnell, L. and Rudd, P. (2005); Ofsted (2004b)
[324] Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004)
[325] Independent Schools Council (2003); Smith, P., Kerr, K. and Harris, S. (2003)

institutional autonomy and integration and their model of governance. Many of the models are sustained by short-term national funding related to particular initiatives.

Higham and Yeomans[326] provide criteria for looking at the depth or strength of institutional collaboration. They argue that collaboration can be understood in terms of four main dimensions:

- **Inclusivity** – the number and type of partners and participants;
- **Level** – the different levels at which collaboration takes place ranging from policy and strategic planning through to shared facilities and joint course provision;
- **Focus** – the areas around which collaboration takes place (e.g. to provide innovative approaches to vocational learning or progression post-19);
- **Scope** – the number of institutions, staff and student involved and the size of the geographical area covered.

It may be useful to think of these four dimensions in terms of two basic groupings – the breadth and depth of collaboration.

Three case studies, illustrating different forms of institutional collaboration, were presented to the Nuffield Review – the first and third are closest to 'strategic alliances', while the second is both a 'consortium' and a 14-19 Pathfinder. The first case study demonstrates how a tertiary college collaborates with eight 11-16 schools and two special schools to offer a comprehensive range of courses at all levels from Entry to Level 4 (Foundation Degrees). The collaboration is now being extended from 16-19 to 14-19[327]. The second case study involves six 11-18 schools and an FE college in a partnership to deliver learning opportunities, originally for A Levels and vocational provision for 700 learners in schools, but now increasingly to 14-19 year-olds[328]. The third presentation focused on the development of different 14-19 collaborative arrangements to offer a broader range of provision for learners in a large LEA. The plan, led by the LEA, LSC and Connexions, is to develop 12 learning networks covering the whole county to deliver academic, vocational and specialist provision[329].

The Review also undertook two detailed case studies in 2004/5 investigating 14-19 institutional arrangements and collaborative schemes in Oxfordshire and Kent. In Oxfordshire, there has been a long-standing tradition of collaboration between schools and colleges, largely to provide a choice of A Levels post-16. This was driven by both head teachers and the LEA. However, it has been recognised recently that there has not been sufficient focus on vocational provision, particularly for 14-16 year-olds, and on lower level courses. Currently, the LEA and the LLSC are active in promoting collaboration to provide new provision and greater choice for 14-19 year-olds. While many institutions in Oxfordshire are broadly supportive of this strategy, there are major practical impediments

---

[326] Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[327] McPhee, L. and Cumberland, G. (2005)
[328] Truelove, J. (2005)
[329] Plato, P. (2005)

such as funding, league tables, the role of the independent sector, transport and the commitment of some governing bodies. Kent, on the other hand, has no long-standing tradition of institutional collaboration. It is legendary for its highly diverse and divided approach to secondary and post-compulsory education: its institutional framework includes 33 grammar schools, a large number of foundation schools, secondary high schools and five FE colleges. Following the recent StAR, the LEA in co-operation with the LLSC has attempted to tackle this institutional legacy by using a 14-19 strategy as a way of transforming secondary education as a whole. Schools and colleges have been allocated to clusters responsible for the provision of 14-19 education in a particular locality. The Review looked in some detail at four of these clusters which are drawn together by different types of financial incentives including the offer of shared vocational facilities. The two major factors supporting collaboration in Kent are the existence of small uneconomic sixth forms and the desire of some partners involved to meet the needs of 14-19 year-olds in terms of vocational education and training. These positive factors are offset by a whole host of difficulties including the non-participation of most grammar schools, the lack of perceived benefit by some institutions, potential resentments arising from CoVEs being located on one particular site, transport costs and the loss of autonomy over aspects of institutional organisation, such as timetabling.

The question in all of these cases is whether funding, which appears to be the central lever for supporting collaboration, is strong enough to offset some of the very real practical and institutional self-interest factors which often take precedence over it. This one-dimensional strategy is particularly problematic because the majority of new 14-19 collaborative arrangements relate to vocational provision, which is not central to the mission of many secondary institutions.

Discussing collaboration – strengths and limitations

Each of these case studies identified strengths but also limitations of collaborative arrangements, which are echoed in national evaluation reports. Research evidence suggests that collaborative arrangements can:

- increase the range of provision for 14-19 learners at different levels[330];
- open up new or enhanced progression routes and make them more transparent[331];
- extend advanced level choices and protect minority subjects[332];
- enhance the quality of provision[333].

However, reports and evaluation studies also indicate that the new provision set up under these arrangements tends to cater for small numbers of lower achievers[334] and often for 14-16 year-olds, rather than for the whole 14-19 cohort[335]. It mainly affects applied or

---

[330] Principal Learning Ltd. (2003); Munday, F. and Pratley, B. (2004)
[331] DfES (2005a)
[332] Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2003)
[333] Principal Learning Ltd. (2003)
[334] Golden, S., Nelson, J., O'Donnell, L. and Morris, M (2004); Ofsted (2004b)
[335] Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004)

vocational provision, often depends on the involvement of enthusiastic individuals and is costly in terms of staff time[336]. Moreover, collaborative arrangements are less easy to organise in rural and coastal areas and may be difficult to sustain without dedicated funding and national policy support[337]. In addition there is, as yet, little strong evidence about whether these arrangements increase participation and attainment.

During the first seminar of this strand of the Nuffield Review, a number of useful textured points were raised in discussion regarding the context for collaboration:

- **complexity** – not only are there several different patterns of 14-19 institutional arrangements and governance arrangements, but there can be several such patterns within the same area, within an LEA or beyond its boundaries, creating greater difficulties in obtaining collaboration;

- **context** – collaboration requires an understanding of, and a respect for, the local historical and political context; the perceived status of an institution is affected by its history (e.g. if it was a grammar or a secondary modern school) and these perceptions of status affect how local institutions interact with each other, a point highlighted in several of the case studies;

- **geography** – each area will have different problems over travel; travel costs affect Level 3 students (who are more likely to travel) in a different way from Level 2 students and each area will have different supplies of local training providers.

In addition, a number of questions were posed about institutions which do not currently play a major role in collaborative arrangements – specialist schools, academies, the independent sector and local universities – and about what difference the Local Skills Centres (including Sector Skills Academies), proposed in the 14-19 White Paper, will make.

Finally, there was a discussion of factors that encourage or impede collaboration. It was suggested that successful collaboration requires formal organisation, a co-ordinator, earmarked funding and a common database. The Connexions Service has a strong role to play in ensuring that all young people are aware of the full set of options available to them. In addition, participants noted that area inspections and area action plans, with money to support such plans, could act 'as a lever', as could StARs and individual institutional inspection with a focus on collaboration.

On the other hand, participants identified a formidable list of barriers to increased collaboration:

---

[336] Nelson, J., Morris, M., Rickinson, M., Blenkinsop, S. and Spielhofer, T. (2001); Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004); Ofsted (2003)
[337] Principal Learning Ltd. (2003); Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004); Munday, F. and Pratley, B. (2004)

- performance indicators based on individual institutions rather than on an area or a partnership;
- travel costs and transport arrangements;
- different funding, pay and conditions of service between different providers;
- the difficulties of joint recording of exam results;
- the lack of involvement of private learning providers;
- governance issues and admissions policies – the difficulties of getting agreement on joint admissions arrangements;
- resistance to common timetabling;
- the lack of involvement of the majority of teachers in a school;
- the amount and sustainability of funding required to organise a system of collaboration.

In summary, from both national evaluation studies and the evidence provided for the Nuffield Review, in their current state, collaborative arrangements could not be characterised as a dominant national pattern and national policy does not appear to be fully committed to making them so. In fact, the seminar discussion revealed a more concerning situation. On the one hand, collaboration is seen as a good thing because it extends educational opportunity and appeals to a shared sense of professionalism, having emerged in many cases as a result of grassroots action. On the other hand, the barriers identified above provide innovators with a daunting list of inhibiting factors, some of which are practical and can be decided at a local level, but others of which are deeply systemic and demonstrate the problem of going against the thrust of national policy. The fate of earlier 14-19 initiatives, such as TVEI, remind us that localised bottom-up developments, however enterprising, find it difficult to thrive without continued financial support and, more importantly, without strongly reciprocal national reforms[338]. Collaboration is difficult to sustain in a climate of competition[339] and a recent Ofsted report on supporting 14-19 education underlines this point:

> About fifteen years ago, many LEAs were inspired by the national initiative aimed at expanding technical and vocational education and improving the range of opportunities for young people between the ages of 14 and 19. LEAs were given a central development role that fostered collaboration. Subsequently, the concept of a 14 to 19 phase became diluted and legislation promoting competition limited the role of LEAs[340].

The next section explores the effects of government policy on institutional behaviour and collaboration in order to explain why 14-19 institutional arrangements could still be described as strongly competitive and weakly collaborative.

---

[338] Yeomans, D. (2003); Higham, J. S. (2004); Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (eds.) (1997)
[339] Ofsted/FEFC (1999)
[340] Ofsted (2003)

2. What are the main features and effects of current government policy?

A route-based and weakly collaborative approach to 14-19 education and training

The current Government approach to the organisation of an emerging 14-19 phase could be characterised as route-based and weakly collaborative. It could also be described as a partial system approach, which could be compared with the more strongly collaborative and unified learning system approach associated with Tomlinson-like reform.

Virtually every commentary on the recent 14-19 White Paper suggests that the government has adopted a divided and route-based approach to 14-19 education and training by retaining GCSEs and A Levels and limiting reform to vocational education through its proposals for new specialised Diplomas. The consequences of a continued focus on GCSE with a new emphasis on maths and English arguably serves to reinforce the 16-plus divide rather than supporting a withering away of GCSE as suggested in the earlier Green Papers[341]. Furthermore, the focus of development on a separate set of vocational specialised Diplomas means that in the foreseeable future financial and human resources are likely to be largely devoted to this area, rather than being applied to the reform of 14-19 education and training as a whole.

The second major feature of government policy, reflected in the DfES *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*[342], is the support for institutional autonomy and learner choice. This can be seen as going with the flow of a highly divided, competitive and complex set of institutional arrangements for 14-19 education and training. While government documents argue that this type of competition leads to higher quality learning, it can also undoubtedly lead to duplication of provision and exclusion of certain groups of learners[343]. Under these circumstances, schools of various types often actively compete with one another over the selection and recruitment of higher performing 11 and 16 year-olds; certain institutions are associated with particular social, age and ethnic groups of learners and have different institutional missions, curricula and professional traditions, compounded by different funding streams and accountability arrangements (e.g. performance measures and targets). Set against this, as highlighted earlier, are a number of measures to encourage institutional collaboration – funding for the IFP, 14-19 Pathfinders, 14-19 area-wide inspections and the proposals in the 14-19 White Paper for progression targets and joint LSC/LEA area prospectuses for 14-19 provision[344]. The relationship between competition and collaboration

---

[341] DfES (2002a); DfES (2003a)
[342] DfES (2004a)
[343] Stanton, G. (2004)
[344] DfES (2005a)

is, nevertheless, an unequal struggle, with these limited initiatives working against a deeply embedded and historical set of institutional arrangements. Current government strategy for the organisation of 14-19 provision, might, therefore, be characterised as route-based and weakly collaborative (see Table 17 for a summary of the features of these arrangements).

The Tomlinson reforms – a unified system and strongly collaborative approach

The Government's divided curriculum and qualifications view of the 14-19 phase, however, has been strongly contested by the education profession. This is not only due to 15 years of professional debate about the need for a more unified and inclusive approach, but also because the government invited public discussion on 14-19 reform through the establishment of the Tomlinson Working Group[345]. Despite the Government's rejection of the central Tomlinson proposal for a unified diploma system, the concept of a more comprehensive approach to 14-19 education reform is now very much in the public domain and shapes much of professional thinking at a national level and institutional practice at a local level. The Tomlinson report focused on six key proposals:

- a vision of a modernised upper secondary curriculum characterised by inclusion, challenge and personalisation;
- a unified multi-level system of diplomas and credit for all 14-19 year-olds eventually replacing individual qualifications;
- holistic learner programmes constructed around the concepts of core and main learning;
- moving away from assessment for accountability towards assessment for learning;
- supportive performance measures at 18/19 related to an area as well as to individual institutions to encourage institutional collaboration;
- a long-term reform process involving all stakeholders.

During the 18 months of the Tomlinson Working Group's deliberations, many local areas and individual institutions were already planning how they might respond to the idea of a unified diploma system and had begun to collaborate to develop provision of this type. It was widely recognised that no one institution would be able to deliver the diploma system as a whole and institutional collaboration would be necessary to provide the full range of programme choices, progression routes and awards. Furthermore, the Tomlinson proposals included important shifts in the conduct of assessment and the concept of quality assurance. These too, would have been a focus of institutional and professional collaboration. Beyond mounting an argument for expanded areas of institutional collaboration, the Working Group did not go into detail. It accepted that this would be something to discuss in the period following the publication of its final report.

The divided and partial system approach of the 14-19 White Paper, on the other hand, involves only some institutions and some members of staff – primarily those involved in

---

[345] Working Group on 14-19 Reform (2004)

vocational education.   The Tomlinson unified diploma approach sought to involve all institutions and all staff, as well as a wider set of external community and labour market partners, in supporting the universal 14-19 reform and the wider learning and assessment opportunities it required.

Factors affecting institutional behaviour in the delivery of 14-19 education and training

Curriculum and qualifications reform is only one aspect of policy affecting institutional behaviour: a number of other important dimensions of policy have an important effect on the provision of 14-19 education and training.

From the perspective of the LSC, the funding and planning body at the centre of the learning and skills sector, Stuart Gardner[346] reminded the Review that there are four broad policy mechanisms it can use to steer institutional behaviour:

- **government strategy and policy** (e.g. election manifestos, Green and White Papers, Acts of Parliament), which outline the actions that the LSC must do and the powers it can use;
- **LSC remit and annual grant letters** from the Secretary of State, the first of which provides the overview of the LSC's role and the second of which "provides subtle changes in emphasis" from year to year within the broad "direction of travel";
- **levers available to the LSC**, including funding methodology, grants and guidance documents – these are stronger for FE colleges and WBL providers than for school sixth forms, where the LSC has to work with LEAs;
- **initiatives** such as the IFP, CoVEs and those concerned with promoting employer engagement.

However, he was of the view that these mechanisms do not constitute a directive planning role for the LSC, which "in practice, prefers to operate by persuasion and influence, rather than by direction." He identified a more facilitating role for the LSC in which "sharing data on existing provision and existing or anticipated demand, including labour market information, enables providers to identify new markets, moving into which might attract additional capital or revenue funding from the LSC"[347]. Gardner's advocacy of what might be termed 'soft power' may be a reflection of the LSC's perception that it does not possess directive power or the right tools for transforming the learning and skills sector[348].

However, from evidence given to the Review, institutions, particularly FE colleges, appeared to see this differently. Tom Jupp, in a paper discussing the impact of key policy mechanisms on FE colleges, highlighted both funding and inspection as very powerful levers in driving college behaviour. Key to the influence of these levers is the way in which senior managers

---

[346] Gardner, S. (2005)
[347] Gardner, S. (2005)
[348] Hodgson, A., Spours, K., Steer, R., Coffield, F., Finlay, I., Edward, S. and Gregson, M. (2005)

decide about organisational strategy to make their college effective. This includes achieving financial stability; working with accurate data on performance; creating a culture of quality improvement and only then thinking about a medium to long-term development plan which reflects local demand and opportunities as well as national policies[349]. The implication is that, above all else, colleges are absorbed by their own organisational health and mission, so prioritise policies related to funding and inspection. Broader government policy, while providing a backdrop, is interpreted through the lens of this organisational mission. Jupp was of the opinion that unless government policy is absolutely clear, consistent, well communicated and adequately funded, colleges simply cannot afford to provide a whole-hearted response.

Schools, on the other hand, according to Martin Johnson[350], are affected by a wider set of policy and professional levers surrounding an 'accountability agenda', reflecting their role as part of compulsory as well as post-compulsory education. He listed nine aspects of accountability affecting the teacher, ranging from the parent/carer and learner, through the governing body, LEA and LLSC to Ofsted, the GTC and the Secretary of State. He argued that these mechanisms operate through a quasi-market system to affect secondary school admissions and hence institutional viability. For Johnson the most powerful lever is not funding but the role of Ofsted and targets around the performance measure of five A*-C GCSEs. He saw these two mechanisms forming part of a management system that cascades down through the school hierarchy to individual teachers, thus creating a culture of target compliance. Johnson perceived a tension between the impact of target-driven management and the government's own avowed vision of a new professionalism comprising more reflective and autonomous practitioners. This suggests not simply replacing one target with another but transforming the whole target culture.

Policy mechanisms and institutional collaboration

The picture painted by these contributions to the Review, together with wider research on the effects of policy levers and drivers[351], is one of strong incentives for institutions to become self-absorbed with their own viability and image, with correspondingly less incentive to collaborate with others.

However, Higham and Yeomans[352], reflecting on the government-funded 14-19 Pathfinder Initiative, take a somewhat more optimistic view of policy on collaboration. They report that some of those involved in the Pathfinders see the current national policy drive towards a 14-19 phase and support for collaboration as more of a long-term strategy, in comparison with 'one-off' stand-alone projects such as the TVEI. Participants in their study identified the main current drivers for collaboration as 14-19 area-wide inspections and funded action plans, StAR, the IFP and, of course, the 14-19 Pathfinders. However, it is interesting to note

---

[349] Jupp, T. (2005), p.4
[350] Johnson, M. (2005)
[351] Hodgson, A., Spours, K., Steer, R., Coffield, F., Finlay, I., Edward, S. and Gregson, M. (2005)
[352] Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)

that all these policy drivers are now being phased out by government. Participants also saw tensions in government policy as a result of the *DfES Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners* and the Academies Programme.

The research of Higham and Yeomans, as well as other evaluations of institutional collaboration, highlight a number of local factors that have a powerful effect on collaboration. The case studies presented to and undertaken by the Review corroborate these findings. Factors which promote collaboration include:

- shared aims and objectives and clear remits for the organisations involved[353];
- strong and effective leadership and coordination[354] and well trained and committed teaching staff[355];
- good personal relationships between staff in different organisations[356];
- effective quality assurance systems and procedures for measuring a partnership's achievements[357];
- access to additional funding to support collaboration[358];
- effective communication structures, particularly in relation to information on learner progress[359];
- common timetabling[360];
- lack of hierarchy between local institutions[361];
- a history and culture of collaboration locally[362] including the role of strong local identities'[363];
- urban regeneration agenda, the identification of skills gaps and labour market needs[364].

Those inhibiting collaboration include:

- competition and cultural differences, misunderstandings and prejudices between institutions or sectors[365];
- procedural barriers to sharing information, such as the Data Protection Act, which make monitoring progress over time and across institutions very difficult[366];
- logistical complexities of partnership working (e.g. common timetabling, student transport and organising staff meetings, particularly in rural locations)[367];

---

[353] See, for example, AoC (2001) cited in Munday, F. and Fawcett, B. (2002); Ofsted (2003); Rodger, J., Cowen, G. and Brass, J. (2003); Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[354] For example, Nelson, J., Morris, M., Rickinson, M., Blenkinsop, S. and Spielhofer, T. (2001)
[355] For example, Ofsted (2004b); Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[356] AoC (2001) cited in Munday, F. and Fawcett, B. (2002)
[357] For example, Audit Commission (1998); Ofsted (2004b)
[358] For example, Golden, S., Nelson, J., O'Donnell, L. and Morris, M. (2004); Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004); Nelson, J., Morris, M., Rickinson, M., Blenkinsop, S. and Spielhofer, T. (2001)
[359] For example, Nelson, J., Morris, M., Rickinson, M., Blenkinsop, S. and Spielhofer, T. (2001); Golden, S., Nelson, J., O'Donnell, L. and Morris, M. (2004)
[360] For example, Ofsted/FEFC (1999); Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004)
[361] Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004)
[362] Aiston, S., Rudd, P. and O'Donnell, L. (2002)
[363] Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[364] Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[365] For example, Smith, P., Kerr, K. and Harris, S. (2003); Independent Schools Council (2003); Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004); Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[366] For example, Ofsted (2004b)

- lack of time and resources required for collaboration[368];
- institutional autonomy and hierarchies between local institutions in which successful institutions (as defined by performance tables and local academic standing) have little market incentive for collaboration[369];
- the lack of local leadership or coordination capacity, either at individual institutional or LEA/LLSC level[370];
- institutional distinctiveness and the fear of dilution of institutional ethos[371].

Another significant factor which could inhibit collaboration, not mentioned in the evaluations of institutional collaboration but raised in the case studies presented to the Review, is the projected decline in the size of the cohort of 17-year-olds. This demographic change could lead to falling rolls and intensify competition between institutions for students.

An important issue is how national policy mechanisms impact on these local factors that directly affect institutional collaboration. Currently, as we have seen, national, sub-regional and local policy levers and drivers do not always steer institutions in the same direction (e.g. sub-regional StAR Plans versus the national policy of establishing City Academies). Table 16 attempts to capture some of the broad positive and negative effects of the main policy steering mechanisms on institutional behaviour and collaboration in the delivery of 14-19 education and training. It raises three questions about how government can use these mechanisms to realise their policy aims on collaboration and improved quality of 14-19 provision at the local level:

1. How can policy levers and drivers be organised to send out consistent rather than confusing messages to institutional managers and practitioners?
2. Which mechanisms or combination of mechanisms can produce the most effective professional behaviour to serve the needs of learners and the local area?
3. Which national policy mechanisms need to be used more sparingly or in a different manner to positively affect local factors?

---

[367] Golden, S., Nelson, J., O'Donnell, L. and Morris, M. (2004); Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004), Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[368] For example, Golden, S., Nelson, J., O'Donnell, L. and Morris, M. (2004); Aiston, S., Rudd, P. and O'Donnell, L (2002); Ofsted/FEFC (1999); Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[369] For example, Adnett, N. and Davies, P. (2003); Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004); Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[370] Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)
[371] Aiston, S., Rudd, P. and O'Donnell, L. (2002); Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004)

Table 16. The effects of national policy steering mechanisms on institutional behaviour and collaboration

National policy steering mechanism	Effects on institutional behaviour	Effects on collaboration
Performance tables and targets	Performance tables and targets promote exclusion (e.g. the five A*-C GCSE benchmark encourages schools to focus on certain learners and not on others and the Level 2 target for FE colleges focuses attention at this level).	Almost entirely negative because performance tables and targets relate to individual institutions and encourage competition rather than collaboration.
Institutional inspection	Encourages institutions to focus on improvement. Also encourages selection because of the focus on examination results and doing well with the post-16 learners you have. Does not require schools to cater for all learners.	Largely negative because this type of inspection assesses performance and quality of provision at the individual institutional level rather than for collaborative arrangements.
14-19 area-wide inspection and StAR	Focus on provision within an area and the needs of all learners.	Important incentive for collaboration but temporary and has clashed with other forms of inspection.
Funding	Encourages recruitment with less emphasis on retention and achievement. At advanced level, encourages large programmes of study for individual learners. Certain dedicated funding streams (e.g. IFP and 14-19 Pathfinders) encourage collaboration.	Both positive and negative. Collaboration is expensive and funding dependent but dedicated funding is currently available. Collaboration can make provision more cost-effective by increasing participation and class sizes.
Qualifications	The current divided qualifications system promotes institutional specialisation and, therefore, selection.	Mainly negative because very few individual qualifications require collaboration. However, improving and diversifying learner programmes of study does. Tomlinson-style diplomas would make collaboration a requirement.
Policy initiatives	Promote both collaboration (e.g. 14-19 Green Papers and 14-19 initiatives) and competition (e.g. DfES *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*)	Currently a mildly positive effect on collaboration because of the stress on a 14-19 phase rather than a break at 16. This has been disrupted by the DfES *Five-Year Strategy for Children and Learners*.

Seminar discussion on policy levers and drivers

Discussion at a Nuffield Review seminar, involving a range of policy-makers and practitioners, helped to broaden the scope of analysis by considering the different and combined effects of both the policy levers and drivers and the wider policy context within which they operate.

Funding, inspection and targets – quality and quantity of learning

It was suggested that there is a need to distinguish between the different functions of policy mechanisms: those that ensure viability, such as recurrent funding; those that encourage improvement or drive up quality, such as inspection and funded initiatives; and those that promote quantity, such as targets.

Funding by itself does not necessarily improve quality, in fact the opposite may be true (the notion of bums on seats at all costs). Participants argued that the current funding system, despite changes brought in by the LSC, has still not created stability or a level playing field for providers, so it does not encourage collaboration. The development of collaboration and the joint attainment of agreed aims depend on how resources are allocated and directed – and these are often unequal across the different providers. Colleges, for example, are estimated to receive approximately 13% less funding than school sixth forms for educating the same type of students[372]. In addition, in all sectors, there is too much dependence on short-term and discretionary funding, so that the benefits of particular initiatives (e.g. IFP) do not become embedded in the system. In order to improve quality of provision, funding and inspection have to work together. Per capita funding is the key lever for ensuring institutional viability and development (higher recruitment means more money) and healthy recruitment often depends on successful inspection reports that make an institution more attractive to learners.

Inspection also has a more direct effect on driving change and promoting improvement by influencing managerial decision-making both pre- and post-inspection. However, individual institutional inspection does not actively support collaborative arrangements because it focuses attention on performance and quality of provision at the individual school or college level rather than at the area level. It is area-wide inspections and StARs that encourage the latter focus.

Seminar participants agreed that it is much more difficult to assess the effects of targets, particularly where they are linked to performance tables. Both mechanisms, while providing a benchmark for institutional improvement, also promote exclusion (e.g. the five A*-C GCSE benchmark encourages schools to focus on certain learners and not on others and the Level 2 target for FE colleges focuses attention on learners at this level sometimes to the exclusion of learners at Entry and Level 1). However, simply adding to the current battery

---

[372] See Fletcher, M. and Owen, G. (2005) for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

of targets (e.g. by introducing an inclusion target) will not necessarily have the desired effect, particularly if the apparently constant and immoveable five GCSEs A*-C grade target remains in place. In terms of collaboration, the effects of targets and performance tables are almost entirely negative because they relate to individual institutions and encourage competition rather than collaboration. Participants suggested that perhaps the whole system of management by targets needed a fundamental rethink.

Planning, policy consistency and the future

Both government and its agencies (particularly the LSC) are involved in 'planning' the system, but the form that planning takes is politically contested. One definition of planning is the construction of a blueprint and taking the necessary steps to implement it. Those involved in national agencies suggest that this is not the way they operate. They take a more pragmatic approach to planning, seeing it as information sharing and persuasion, which involves mapping what is going on, identifying through consultation the key problems to be dealt with and gaps in provision, and nudging the system in a particular direction. For example, in one part of the country, an LLSC discovered that there was no provision for part-time courses in art and design, even though there was demand for trained people in this area. Each institution in the locality thought that the demand for these courses was being satisfied elsewhere. In this case, simply making information available to providers encouraged them jointly to plan for this type of provision. This 'soft power' approach to planning emphasises the need to take into account local conditions, the history of the institutions involved, the local labour market and professional judgement. Too much insensitive central direction is likely to be counter-productive and particularly when policy changes occur too frequently (e.g. different emphases in annual grant letters to the LSC).

The conditions for soft power or the exercise of 'goodwill' levers and drivers were debated. One major barrier was the lack of consistency in government policy – annual changes of emphasis and actual policy tensions. According to policymakers present[373], the government's main aims for the learning and skills sector remain constant:
- increased employability of young people (development of basic and relevant skills);
- increased entry to HE;
- widening participation in all types of learning;
- higher standards all round.

However, despite an apparent consistency of aims over time at this broad level, there is not an agreement on how the system should operate to fulfil them. As already noted, national policy promotes inclusivity and collaboration, on the one hand, and specialisation and autonomy, on the other. It was argued that there is a growing 'crisis' in policy as we aim to move forward and respond to rapidly changing conditions with apparent policy inconsistencies.

---

[373] For example, Gardner, S. (2005)

The need for more strategic planning was highlighted not only as a means of reducing the amount of practitioner confusion or even cynicism, but also as a way of coping with future major material challenges. Demographic trends will soon become an important factor and are already affecting some parts of the country (e.g. Oxfordshire).[374] It was noted that the size of the 17 year-old cohort will decline from 660,000 to 550,000 over a period of ten years. This will have consequences in terms of competing demands for young people – the labour market may exert a stronger pull as employers find their pool of cheap labour shrinking, schools and HE departments in certain areas will become non-viable, and competition between providers for high performing 16-19 year-olds will become more intense. There will inevitably be regional variations, but, without planning, there will be turbulence and self-interested decision-making by providers that may ultimately reduce learner choice. In particular, this decline in the number of young people is likely to become a barrier to collaboration amongst clusters of providers. Hard decisions will have to be made about rationalisation of provision to ensure efficiency as well as choice.

Choice and quality of provision

The current focus on choice as an important aspect of planning was also viewed as contentious. Government policy sees choice in education primarily between competing courses and/or institutions. However, this approach to choice is limited to a proportion of students (on the whole, those who do well academically) and a proportion of institutions (those who set their own conditions of entry). Moreover, by creating a more diverse institutional framework with each institution becoming increasingly specialist under present government policy and having its own entry requirements and its own special focus, there could be a *decrease* in flexibility of pathways and choice within each institution. The increase in small school sixth forms with a limited choice of courses provides a good example of this trend. In addition, there is a tension between quality and choice – between the restriction or focusing of provision to what is good quality and the autonomy of institutions to develop courses they want. At present the 14-19 education and training system is dominated by providers and their preoccupation with viability, rather than by provision and quality, and the former focus is largely supported by current policy levers and drivers. An alternative approach to choice and quality could be based on the centrality of provision and on how institutions in a local area are organised to offer it to the highest standard. This idea is explored in the final section of the chapter through the concept of 'strongly collaborative 14-19 local learning systems'.

---

[374] This was also noted in the case study of provision in Oxfordshire undertaken for the Review.

3. What arrangements are needed for the future to establish an effective and inclusive 14-19 phase?

This section makes an initial attempt to develop a concept of 'strongly collaborative 14-19 local learning systems' as a way of focusing on learning and learner needs; the relationships between providers in a local area and the respective roles of local, sub-regional, regional and national policy in 14-19 education and training. In describing these systems, we identify six key dimensions and conclude by arguing for strong collaboration focused on the needs of a local learning area rather than simply on the individual needs of any one of the partners.

The starting assumption in this chapter has been that the best way of overcoming system factors which inhibit improved levels of participation, progression and achievement – the break between compulsory and post-compulsory education at 16 and the negative aspects of the academic/vocational divide in England – is through the development of a unified 14-19 phase of education and training. In the English context, with its medium levels of full-time post-16 participation, high levels of attrition among 16-19 year-olds, voluntarist employer involvement and marginal work-based route[375], the concept of a comprehensive 14-19 phase, arguably, creates the basis for a more sustained and expanded upper secondary education. One of the major aims of such a phase would be to promote progression and aid transition between the present 14-16 and 16-18 phases. Over the last fifteen years of debate in this area, concepts of a 14-19 phase have been defined in terms of curriculum and qualifications[376]. The organisation and delivery of such a phase has featured far less in policy discussion. This is partly because agreements on fundamental curricular aspects have taken precedence and partly due to historical organisational arrangements representing a problem – 14-19 education is divided between secondary education in schools until the age of 16 and post-compulsory education offered in the main by colleges and training providers.

Only 11-18 schools cross the divide and they do not cater for the whole cohort or curriculum. A minority of employers are involved in education and training for 14-19 year-olds and government has not sought to regulate their involvement through mechanisms such as 'licence to practise'. This has precluded the development of the kind of strong work-based vocational education to be found in Germanic systems and has meant that the English system has had to adopt an 'education-based/school-based' approach to upper secondary education.

---

[375] Hayward, G., Hodgson, A., Johnson, J., Keep, E., Oancea, A., Pring, R., Spours, K. and Wright, S. (2004)

[376] For example, NAHT (1995); Labour Party (1996); Working Group on 14-19 Reform (2004)

Given these issues, the Review is faced by three main options for the organisation of a 14-19 phase:

- Should the concept of an improved and expanded upper secondary education system in England simply align itself with the current dominant organisational pattern, (i.e. with a 16-plus divide)? If so, this would mean abandoning the concept of a 14-19 phase and accepting that there is a secondary curriculum and education that ends at 16 followed by three years of upper secondary education as an entitlement. This is the situation in Scandinavian education systems. The danger with this approach in the English context is that it leaves a 16-plus divide intact and takes the pressure off the reform of the secondary curriculum (GCSE in particular), which is where many of the problems of learner alienation and depressed participation, originate. It also leaves untouched a selective and divided institutional framework and voluntarist employer involvement.

- Should a 14-19 phase, as the new definition of upper secondary education, have its own dedicated organisations? The creation of such 14-19 institutions would involve the recasting of 11-18 schools and the extension downwards of sixth form or tertiary colleges to 14. Such a move would immediately create pressure for a substantial lower secondary phase, thus creating a three-phase education system for all children and young people – primary, secondary and upper secondary. Rational though this option may sound, it would undoubtedly mean considerable organisational upheaval. Moreover, the newly-created upper secondary organisations might not be able to offer the full range of provision for the phase, particularly in relation to the workplace, and they would risk losing an articulation with adult and lifelong learning.

- The third option is to see the creation of a more coherent and inclusive 14-19 phase served by stronger collaboration between a range of providers in a local area. In order to achieve this, it would be necessary to consider a stronger and more tangible sense of an 'area': an agreed curriculum 'map' between all partners including employers and voluntary organisations, and new forms of governance which restrict institutional autonomy in the interests of the learners in an area. It would also require a rethink about the way that different policy levers and drivers, including powerful mechanisms such as funding, are used consistently to push the system towards collaboration. This 'delivery framework', however, could also be seen as a way of allowing the current competitive, mixed economy system to evolve in a more collaborative, efficient and effective direction. This option is elaborated below through the concept of 'strongly collaborative 14-19 local learning systems'.

Building the type of system that privileges learners, provision and effective choice will mean a step change in 14-19 collaborative arrangements, with a stronger concept of a curriculum entitlement in an area and more power being invested in area-wide planning mechanisms. Controversially, it is also likely to mean the development of a more 'tertiary approach' to

provision – through institutional rationalisation and a reduction of autonomy for individual providers – and more demands on employers for their involvement.

As argued earlier, the concept of a 14-19 collaborative learning system is not rooted in the English education and training system, either locally or nationally. At the local level, the nearest concept is that of a tertiary system, associated with tertiary reorganisation in several LEAs in the late 1970s and early 1980s[377]. The term tertiary system tends to refer to 16-plus rather than 14-plus education with a tertiary college at the heart of the system supporting a range of feeder schools within an LEA. The term 'tertiary system' is sometimes used more loosely now, however, to mean collaborative arrangements between school sixth forms and colleges within an area. While recent research has argued for tertiary solutions to StARs[378], neither national government policy documents on 14-19 education and training nor local StARs appear to be promoting this solution.

At the national level in recent policy documents[379], the term 'system' is used in various ways to refer to the national education and training system as a whole and, at the same time, to systems of a more specific type – funding systems, inspection systems, assessment systems and, most frequently, the curriculum and qualifications system. The term 'system' is less often used in conjunction with institutions or providers and very rarely in association with the term 'learning'.

The same broadly applies to the term 'collaboration' which, while ubiquitous in recent 14-19 policy documents, is not deeply embedded either in national government policy or in local institutional practice.   As Higham and Yeomans point out[380], current collaborative arrangements are highly localised and varied and can be tailored to the particular needs of the local context, which can be seen as a strength. However, as shown earlier in the chapter, in all cases they have to struggle with a difficult national policy terrain in which both collaboration and competition, and area planning and institutional autonomy, are encouraged by different parts of national government policy. They also have to contend with local historical competitive arrangements and complex governance and funding issues. The sustainability of these weak collaborative arrangements is thus in question, particularly since there is no clear indication of any further national funding incentive in this area.

---

[377] For example, Alwyn, J. (1979); Herschel, D. (1980); Anderson, J. (1981)
[378] Responsive College Unit (2003)
[379] For example, DfES (2004a); DfES (2005a)
[380] Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a)

Table 17. Weakly and strongly collaborative approaches to 14-19 learning systems

Dimensions	Weakly collaborative approach	Strongly collaborative approach
1. Vision, purposes and underpinning principles	Vision: two routes to meet different learner needs – academic and vocational Main purpose: participation up to 19 and employability Principle: choice of route and entitlement to the 'basics'	Vision: comprehensive and inclusive unified system Main purpose: participation up to 19 and preparation for adult life and lifelong learning Principle: entitlement to common 'formation' and choice within this
2. Curriculum, qualifications and assessment	Divided curriculum and qualifications arrangements with separate progression routes based on individual free-standing qualifications. High degrees of external assessment for national standards and public accountability.	Unified credit-based diploma system for all 14-19 learners based on holistic learner programmes, with clear ladder of progression and high degrees of local innovation and discretion. Assessment for learning, a mixture of external and internal.
3. Planning, organisation and governance in 'a local area'	Specialisation, competition and collaboration for learner choice with the possibility of clear distinctions between institutional types (e.g. grammar schools and FE colleges); area planning primarily focused on the vocational route. Top-down relationship between national/local, unclear division of labour between LLSCs and LEAs and lack of democratic accountability.	Formation of a democratically accountable sub-regional authority for planning comprehensive provision across a local area with the possibility of rationalisation. Clearer limits to institutional autonomy and changes to governance arrangements to reflect a more tertiary approach.
4. Professionalism, pedagogy and leadership	Tolerance of different conditions of service and professional development for those working in FE, schools and work-based training. Focus on subject or area of curriculum with little mutual learning or boundary crossing.	Capacity building for innovative general and vocational learning and assessment to support the new unified system and the transformation of the secondary and upper secondary phase. No distinction between conditions of service and professional development for those working in FE, schools and work-based training. Focus on expansive learning, cross-disciplinarity and boundary crossing.
5. Physical learning environments and communications systems	Main focus on new vocational learning environments and communications systems aimed mainly at tracking achievement and supporting choices across a divided system.	Focus on learning environments for both general and vocational learning and communications systems aimed to create new relationships between learning, assessment, personal progress and professional capacity building.

6. Accountability framework	National levers (e.g. performance tables, targets, inspection, funding) to drive institutional behaviour; mainly based on individual institutional performance. Standards assured through national external examinations. Lack of local democratic accountability.	Emphasis on bottom-up 'aspirational' targets; main focus on monitoring performance across an area at 19 based on collaborative targets for participation, achievement and progression; creation of local, transparent quality assurance systems alongside national awarding and validating systems.

Features of strongly collaborative 14-19 local learning systems summarised in Table 17 would be based upon four fundamental principles:

- **the active involvement of a wide range of partners** – schools, colleges and work-based providers; learners and their parents; employers; HE; community and voluntary organisations; and other local and national services (e.g. Connexions and social services) involved in 14-19 education and training – informed by a strong public sector ethos and collaborating within a common educational vision, a more equitable funding system, and a more regulated and democratically accountable framework[381];

- **a broad scope of collaboration** around provision, capacity building, professional development, assessment, resourcing, quality assurance and the recognition of outcomes from education and training;

- **agreement on the division of power between national, regional, sub-regional and local levels** with high degrees of devolved responsibilities to a democratically accountability local level to meet locally determined needs;

- **a focus on provision rather than providers** with a clear role for area planning supported by area-wide funding and a tertiary approach.

Using these as a starting point, six possible dimensions of strongly collaborative 14-19 local learning systems are described below:

i. Vision, purposes and underlying principles

The Nuffield Review Annual Report[382] pointed to the importance of a shared educational vision with strong underpinning values and clearly articulated purposes for the 14-19 phase.

---

[381] Evidence from the HEI focus groups undertaken by the Review suggests that the active involvement of a range partners is also necessary to facilitate progression beyond the phase, for instance into employment or into HE; participants suggested that their lack of active involvement in 14-19 education and training had contributed to what they perceived to be a widening gap between 14-19 education and training and HE.

[382] Hayward, G., Hodgson, A., Johnson, J., Keep, E., Oancea, A., Pring, R., Spours, K. and Wright, S. (2004)

These can provide the glue that binds the wider actors together in the purposes of preparing young people for adult life and lifelong learning. This is not, however, about constructing an artificial or bureaucratic consensus. It recognises that collaborative learning systems will bring together partners with different professional traditions and will, therefore, involve negotiation, debate and 'co-configuration' in which mutual learning takes place[383]. Moreover, in the process of moving towards a local learning system, which reduces the autonomy of each of the participating partners, the strength of the educational vision and purposes will be paramount in resolving practical problems of rationalisation. However, we do not underestimate the difficulties of forging a vision and a set of purposes that can effectively provide cohesion for all partners in the proposed local learning system. These would have to permeate all aspects of the system and the dimensions outlined below and would need to be manifest in national policy steering mechanisms and accountability frameworks, in the curriculum and qualifications system, in organisational structures and governance and, crucially, in professional practice.

ii. Curriculum, qualifications and assessment

At the heart of strongly collaborative local learning systems lie curriculum, qualifications and assessment. It is possible to argue that systems which are based on a unified curriculum and credit-based qualifications framework are more likely to be inclusive and effective because of the emphasis on what is common to learning for this phase as well as what choices learners can make. From a learner perspective, a learning system is one that creates clear demands but, at the same time, provides space to participate in the learning process from a position of interest and confidence. This unified approach to curriculum, qualifications and assessment will mean balancing features of coherence and national frameworks with choice, local determination and personalisation. It also suggests the need for a new type of participative pedagogy and strong support for expansive learning in a variety of challenging contexts, including the workplace[384]. This is most likely to be facilitated by shifts in approaches to assessment away from the dominance of external examinations and towards the development of more teacher-directed assessment with standards secured through local quality assurance systems involving a range of stakeholders. Teacher-led assessment has been successfully used by institutions in other countries, for example the *Handelsakademie* in Austria.

iii. Planning, organisation and governance and the definition of a 'local learning area'

The concept of a local learning area, capable of offering the full range of provision for all 14-19 year-olds, suggests the need for a high degree of agreement about what provision is offered, which partner has prime responsibility for different types of learning and how that learning will be recognised, particularly by employers in the local labour market and by HE

---

[383] Warmington, P., Daniels, H.E., Edwards, A., Leadbetter, J., Martin, D., Brown, S. and Middleton, D. (2004)
[384] Unwin, L. and Fuller, A. (2003)

providers.   It also suggests that area planning would have to take precedence over individual institutional plans in the building of a more tertiary approach.

As indicated earlier, however, the notion of a local learning area is not well established within the English education and training system, in part due to the impact of national policies on marketisation and performance measures which have privileged the national and the individual institutional levels. The institution, no matter how small or ineffective, rather than the area, remains the main focus of delivery and accountability. In the development of strongly collaborative local learning systems, this focus would have to change to one where the performance of an area became dominant. As indicated earlier, this would involve a sea change in way that institutions see themselves, how performance is measured and the relationship between institutional freedom and collective responsibility. A key factor will be to develop more common forms of accountability without losing sight of individual institutional responsibility. It also means a much stronger sense of area governance which will require the scope of planning and co-ordination to include those institutions (e.g. the independent sector and private training providers) which have traditionally lain outside the public sector.

In addition, recent reforms may have made the concept of a learning area more problematic because there is a lack of clarity about which body is responsible for the 14-19 phase and what constitutes a local area. The Labour Government, like the Conservatives before it, has emasculated LEAs and imposed instead a structure of LLSCs, which lack democratic legitimacy and transformative capacity[385]. Multiple administrative entities in the field also raise issues about geographical definitions of a local area (e.g. in certain parts of the country LEAs and LLSCs are co-terminous, but in others one LLSC will include a number of LEAs). A strong local area will require a single democratically accountable authority which takes responsibility for the whole of publicly funded 14-19 provision and which also defines the learning area. In many other national systems this would be the municipality.

The concept of a learning area might be illustrated as two concentric circles – the local and sub-regional levels – supported by two further circles representing the regional and national levels (see Figure 24 below). The purpose of the first circle, the 'education delivery area', is the provision of comprehensive 14-19 education and training, delivered by a 14-19 consortium or tertiary institution with feeder schools. The 'wider learning area', the second circle, represents an administrative entity that operates at the sub-regional level to support a broad range of partners (e.g. multiple education delivery areas, WBL providers, employers, voluntary and community organisations, Connexions and other local government agencies) in the delivery of expansive learning experiences going beyond what is provided in the education delivery area. It would also provide the boundaries for the local accountability system. The wider learning area would be the responsibility of a democratically elected sub-regional body – the nearest example in England being a large local authority. These two levels of a local learning area would be supported by a regional and a national tier of

---

[385] Hodgson, A., Spours, K., Steer, R., Coffield, F., Finlay, I., Edward, S. and Gregson, M. (2005)

administration responsible for specialist skills development and HE and for ensuring consistency in a system that is more locally devolved.

Figure 24. The 14-19 local learning area within the national system

- The education delivery area
- The wider learning area
- Regional level
- National level
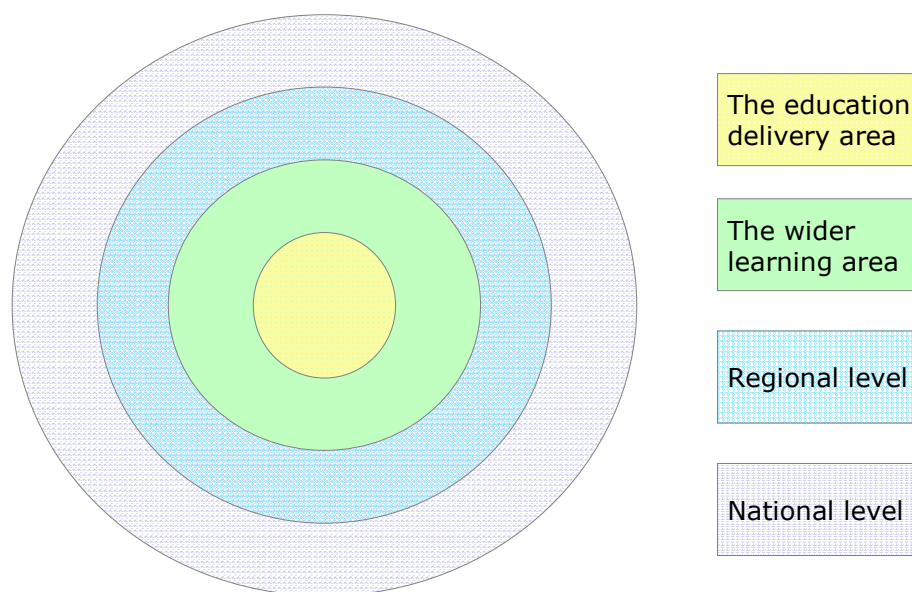
iv. Professionalism, pedagogy and leadership

The concept of a collaborative learning system with a strong area-based dimension requires a common set of education professional characteristics: a sharing of educational values around curriculum, pedagogy and leadership; a shared analysis of the needs of the learning area, comprising the education delivery area and wider learning area; joint professional development supported by greater equity of pay and conditions to encourage genuine collaborative delivery; and agreed approaches to specialised delivery. It is also important to consider the role of an 'expanded professionalism' in which education specialists, professionals from other walks of life (e.g. social services, voluntary and community agencies, and health) and those delivering WBL seek opportunities to work together and learn from one another.

v. Communications systems and physical learning environments

High-quality 14-19 education and training will require extensive collaboration around communications systems to track and support learner participation, achievement and progression. The Review has seen examples of significant developments in ICT systems

where schools and colleges use an extranet to promote continuity between key stages and to develop and share learning materials and new ways of interacting with learners across the whole curriculum. These would be key to communication between consortia or tertiary providers, their feeder schools and wider partners. It is also important to establish effective systems of communication with partners outside the education delivery area but within the wider learning area. It is unlikely that these partners would need to share information on individual learners to the same extent as those within the educational delivery area. Nevertheless, effective mechanisms for regular consultation and for sharing information would need to be developed.

The development of high-quality physical learning environments and the sharing of expensive specialist resources will also play a crucial role in an effective local learning system. It makes sense to concentrate these resources in large tertiary institutions that actively involve employers. It does not seem to be economically viable or educationally sound to develop strongly vocational provision in individual schools because they do not have the vocational expertise and precious resources are too dispersed. In strongly collaborative 14-19 local learning systems, schools would primarily provide general and pre-vocational education although they might collaborate, as is being already planned in some areas (e.g. Ashford, Kent), in the development of a shared 'skills centre'.

vi. Accountability frameworks

The development of such systems also requires policy levers and drivers at the sub-regional level to clearly support and incentivise collaboration. Currently, the accountability framework, drives institutions in different directions with some mechanisms promoting collaboration and others competition[386].

A new accountability framework has to consistently promote a different logic – support for a continuous 14-19 phase, strong institutional collaboration, expanded forms of learning and professionalism and a high degree of local discretion in meeting the needs of learners. Fulfilling this function could entail:

- performance measures based on outcomes at the end of the phase, value-added measures and area-wide attainment and progression;
- a more devolved approach to target setting – for example the encouragement for a local area to develop its own 'bottom-up' targets;
- a system of funding which incentivises collaborative practice;
- inspection focusing on collaboration, relations with wider partners and broader learning outcomes, as well as individual institutional performance and examination results;
- local quality assurance systems to support an increased role for teachers in assessment based on the processes of validation and institutional licensing.

---

[386] Hodgson, A., Spours, K., Steer, R., Coffield, F., Finlay, I., Edward, S. and Gregson, M. (2005)

The concept of strongly collaborative 14-19 learning systems thus comprises a range of mutually dependent local, sub-regional, regional and national dimensions more strongly aligned with democratically accountable structures. The question will be the balance between them. Currently, the 14-19 system is conceived nationally and delivered institutionally. The realisation of strongly collaborative local learning systems will mean inverting this logic so that these systems are conceived and delivered locally and sub-regionally and supported regionally and nationally. It may also be the case that these systems cannot be fully constructed without wider reforms still – changes to the functioning of the youth labour market, the reform of local government and new demands on employers and private providers of education and training. In this sense, the institutional dimension of 14-19 education and training in England is part of the broader political agenda of public service reform. In fact, what is being discussed in this section, through models of 14-19 collaboration, is whether institutional arrangements are slightly restructured through 'weak' collaborative patterns but stay essentially within a 'conservative education state', or whether the debate about stronger models can mark a move towards a less divided and more democratic organisation of upper secondary organisation.

Conclusion

Conclusion

Introduction

This year's Annual Report has focused on three major strands of work identified by the Review in its first year: educational aims, values and the organisation of learning; the dynamics and performance of the 14-19 education and training system, its institutional framework and the effects of key policy steering mechanisms on education provision. It has also continued its focus on policies and policymaking using historical and international comparisons as lenses on the English and Welsh systems. There is inevitably an interconnection between these strands. The quality of learning depends on the opportunities enhanced or limited by the changing institutional framework; the sometimes startling differences between regions or between countries in participation and attainment cannot be disconnected from either the quality of teaching provided or the opportunities offered by different institutional arrangements.

While full synthesis of these three strands will form part of the work for the third year of the Review, there are clear common as well as discrete messages emerging from the evidence collected and reviewed to date.

Key issues

Aims, values and the language of education

Words embody concepts, and the consequent language shapes our thinking. Change the meaning of those words, and you change how one thinks. Hence, in thinking about 14-19 education and training, one must be careful not to be seduced by the changing use of language – the elastic use of 'skill', the unexamined use of 'vocational', the careless use of 'progression', the vacuous use of 'equal value', the adoption of business terms (performance targets, audits and curriculum delivery) – where once one talked of understanding, of initiation into a world of ideas and even of teaching.

There needs to be a constant appraisal of the values which are embedded both in educational language and in educational practice and which shape the learning experience of young people, especially in the light of rapid social changes. Damage done by the false dichotomy between 'academic' and 'vocational' needs to be urgently addressed, especially its consequence for an impoverished understanding of 'vocational', a narrowing of the concept of 'academic' and an undermining of experiential and practical learning for all.

Quality of learning experience

Reform needs to begin with closer attention to how young people learn and are motivated, and to the quality of their learning experiences, including the value of more practical and experiential modes of understanding. Too many, even amongst those who are seen to succeed within the system, are disengaged from the programmes provided. The demands of continual assessment, qualifications and accountability, particularly 'high-stakes testing', have restricted what counts as worthwhile learning. The diversity of possible learning experiences, talents, interests and ways of making progress requires a system which embraces it rather than maintains differences between 'academic' and 'vocational' routes for 'academic' and 'vocational' learners.

Heeding the voice of the learner

Current policy emphasises the need to make the system more 'demand-led', where employer demands are given priority. However, more attention should be paid to involving learners themselves in decisions about the 14-19 phase and the nature of the learning processes and experiences they find valuable. This must go beyond a naïve idea of giving young people simply what they want. But a system that takes no account of their demands upon it seems counter-productive if higher levels of participation are to be translated into higher levels of attainment.

Progression into FE and HE or into employment with training

All learners, regardless of attainment within compulsory schooling, should be able to continue with general education beyond the age of 16 to provide them with the basis for lifelong learning and adult life. While attainment has improved over time, the structure of GCSE and A Level qualifications, and the shallow approaches to learning that they seem to induce, should be matters for concern. There remains a strong argument for the reform of both of these qualifications to improve progression and the quality of learning. At the same time, it is vital that attention be given to the development of high-status 'strongly vocational' programmes which lead to worthwhile qualifications recognised by employers and HEIs. We have much to learn from international comparison in this regard. A framework is required of curriculum provision and associated awards, which enable development and enrichment of learning, choice and flexibility between different kinds of experience. This requires more effective discussion with HE and employers.

New diplomas

The Review has identified a number of principles to underpin the design and implementation of the proposed new specialised Diplomas in England to reduce the possibility of introducing new divisions in 14-19 education and training. Given the rather hasty way in which these

diplomas are already being developed, the Review proposes the following principles with a sense of urgency:

- building on a ladder of progression from Entry Level upwards to meet the needs of all learners;
- focusing at Level 2 on general education rather than occupational preparation (bearing in mind that many of the students will not have decided upon their future career or training);
- reconciling strong vocational content at Level 3 with general education;
- ensuring that the diplomas include full-time and part-time study modes as well as apprenticeships;
- providing progression into HE as well as to employment;
- listening to employers' voices about standards relative to their respective sectors, rather than seeking standardisation across sectors;
- ensuring the separation of awarding bodies from the national regulation body;
- putting in place a carefully managed and consultative reform process to ensure broad agreement about their design and the conditions for their successful implementation in order not to repeat the mistakes of *Curriculum 2000*.

Teachers

Teachers are key to reform. A more positive role for teachers is required if ambitious changes for 14-19 are to provide the right kind of learning opportunities. That in turn requires a re-appraisal of initial and continuing professional education and training in particular, in relation to vocational learning. Many teachers and lecturers are already engaged in innovative programmes of more integrated and collaborative education. That momentum must not be lost and lessons must be learnt from the many excellent examples, past and present.

Failure of the system to meet expectations

Despite nearly two decades of continuous reform, the behaviour of the system in terms of participation, progression and attainment rates is still failing to meet the expectations of policymakers. This is largely the result of lower participation and progression rates for those with poorer attainment at the end of KS4. Attempts to accommodate these young people have fallen between the twin stools of a weakly performing and under-regulated work-based route and a selective rather than comprehensive full-time school-/college-based route. Reforms have acted in such a way that schools and sixth form colleges have increasingly become specialist Level 3 providers post-16 of general qualifications, leaving FE colleges to deal with lower attaining students with fewer resources and to cover a far wider range of types and levels of qualification and programme. This is clearly not equitable.

Raising participation rates

Raising participation rates requires more than further reform of qualifications. Instead, sustained attention has to be given to increasing the incentives for young people to stay in education and training and reducing the incentives for them to enter the labour market early. Evaluations of programmes such as the EMA pilots found a positive impact on participation and retention, but not on attainment. This suggests a need for capacity building within the system, for example appropriate teacher training and smaller class sizes, to enable teachers and trainers to cope with the needs of lower attaining learners.

Regulating the youth labour market

Thought should be given to regulating the youth labour market, though this is politically difficult given the current adherence to a strategy of deregulated labour markets. While licences to practise may not be possible across all sectors, the Sector Qualification Strategies linked to the FfA may go some way towards a licence to practise, albeit within what will still be essentially a voluntarist environment. Currently, the FfA only applies to those over 19 years of age and such 'licences to practise' would therefore only apply to that market. Specialist Diplomas may be included in the FfA and thus such 'licences' would potentially extend downward to include 14 year-olds. This may well act to raise the status of school and college-based VET qualifications in the eyes of employers. However, the potentially confusing message about what is, and what is not, to be covered by major initiatives such as the FfA is not helpful, and is indicative of policy being constructed too rapidly.

A competitive and weakly collaborative system

The emerging 14-19 phase in England can be described as divided (in both curricular and institutional terms), competitive and 'weakly collaborative' – features which appear to depress participation rates because they do not tackle 16-plus selection. Weakly collaborative institutional arrangements, while seen as positive by the education profession because they diversify provision and offer greater learner choice, are fragile, expensive and in some cases, inefficient. Moreover, there is no evidence to date about their effects on participation or attainment. Policy steering mechanisms (e.g. funding, inspection, performance measures, targets, planning mechanisms and initiatives) currently support both collaboration and competition and thus ensure that current 14-19 collaborative arrangements remain weak.

The Review has identified three options for the future organisation of 14-19 education and training:
- secondary education up to 16 followed by an upper secondary phase of 16-19;
- dedicated 14-19 institutions;

- 'strongly collaborative' 14-19 local learning systems.

It has elaborated the third option on the grounds that it appears to be the most practical way forward to tackle deep-seated historical problems through a gradual but transformative organisational strategy. It argues that 'strongly collaborative 14-19 local learning systems' will need to be conceived and delivered locally and sub-regionally and supported regionally and nationally. This will require the development of a well-defined sense of 'local area' with a tertiary approach to upper secondary education; a democratically accountable sub-regional level and supportive national policy steering mechanisms.

Policy initiatives

This year has seen unprecedented policy 'busyness' in the area of 14-19 education and training with considerable professional disappointment in England at the government's 14-19 White Paper's partial response to the Tomlinson Report. The system as a whole continues to be subject to a plethora of piecemeal policy initiatives that are not fully evaluated before they are superseded. Rarely are lessons learnt from past experience, from comparisons across the countries of the UK or indeed from the experience of those who work with young people and it appears that there is no real attempt to see reforms in a holistic manner. Moreover, there is a perception that the education professional voice, which might be able to bring this type of overview to the policy process and to provide valuable feedback on the effects of policy, counts for very little with politicians. Fewer short-lived disparate initiatives from central government would provide greater stability, with incremental rather than rapid change, longer funding periods, and less dependence on bidding for earmarked funds.

Learning from past and other national experiences

The processes of education policymaking in Scotland and Wales are sometimes seen as being more deliberative, more evolutionary and better informed by 'policy memory'. Those responsible for the system of education and training in England seem unable and unwilling to learn from the past, as though the many problems being addressed had not been tackled before. Why did so many 14-19 initiatives meet an early death? Policy seems to lack a historical perspective because it is guided by short-term objectives. In addition, the three home countries are diverging in their policies for 14-19 year-olds and in the broader processes of policy development and educational change. Several commentators have suggested that this divergence may itself be a fruitful source of policy learning. In particular, there may be much to be learnt from the external evaluation of the Welsh Baccalaureate. This is currently being commissioned and is due to report in 2007[387].

Future work

---

[387] See papers from the joint seminar between the Nuffield Review and the University of Edinburgh, available at www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml.

The Report provides detailed conclusions arising from intensive deliberations, based on evidence gathered from seminars, visits, research and submissions from a variety of stakeholders. Over a hundred teachers, college lecturers, researchers, employers, trainers and officials have participated in those deliberations. But further debate is required. The third year of the Review aims to do the following.

First, it intends to share its current analysis and findings with a much wider audience through regional seminars, focused discussions with key stakeholders and the distribution of papers. It is crucial that, in getting right the future arrangements for 14-19 education and training, there should be wide, open and intensive discussion of the provisional conclusions of the Review.

Second, the articulation between 14-19 arrangements and what follows – entry to HE and to employment – will be a major focus of the Review. Once, post-16 studies were very much shaped by the demands of universities: that connection is less clear than it was. Moreover, as the reforms announced in the various Green and White Papers are shaped by bodies such as QCA, the SSCs, the LSC and the Regional Development Agencies, there is an ongoing need to examine the ways in which schools, colleges and work-based training providers prepare young people for their future social and economic responsibilities.

Third, the Review is conscious of its relative neglect of particular groups of young people, especially those with disabilities whose needs, as they progress through the educational system into further training, education and work, require special attention. This neglect will be rectified in the final year.

Fourth, there is a continuing need to focus on the policy process as it impacts on 14-19 education and training. In the coming year the Review will be drawing more on international as well as 'home international' comparisons to provide a lens through which to examine policy developments in England and Wales. For example, 'Nordic' education and training systems (e.g. Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark) have been identified as a fruitful source of comparison: they are highly successful in terms of participation and attainment, but also have institutional arrangements and curriculum developments from which we might learn valuable lessons.

References

Adnett, N. and Davies, P. (2003) Schooling Reforms in England: From quasi-markets to co-opetition. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18 (4), 393–406.

Aiston, S., Rudd, P. and O'Donnell, L. (2002) *School Partnerships in Action: A case study of West Sussex specialist schools*. Slough: NFER.

ALI (2003) *Annual Report of the Chief Inspector 2002–03.* London: ALI.

ALI (2004) *Annual Report of the Chief Inspector 2003–04.* London: ALI.

Alwyn, J. (1979) Towards a Co-ordinated National System of Tertiary Education: Some problems in the development of a federal political system. *CORE*, 3 (1), March.

Anderson, J. (1981) Birth of a Tertiary System: A case study. *Forum*, 22 (3), 71–2.

Apprenticeships Task Force (2005) *Final Report: The business case for apprenticeships* [online]. At: www.employersforapprentices.gov.uk/index.cfm?action=News.Display&NewsID=34 accessed September 2005.

ATL (2004) *Position Statement on 14-19 Reforms* [online]. At: www.atl.org.uk/atl_en/images/PS14-19Reforms_tcm2-4693.pdf, accessed 14 September 2005.

Audit Commission (1998) *A Fruitful Partnership: Effective partnership working*. London: Audit Commission.

Ball, C. (1990) *More Means Different: Widening access to higher education*. London: RSA.

Ball, C. (1991) *Learning Pays: The role of post-compulsory education and training.* London: RSA.

Ball, S.J. (2003) *Class Strategies and the Educational Market: The Middle Classes and Social Advantage.* London: Routledge.

Ball, S., Maguire, M. and Macrae, S. (2000a) *Choice, Pathways and Transitions Post-16: New youth, new economies in the global city.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Ball, S.J., Maguire, M. and Macrae, S. (2000b) 'Worlds Apart': Education markets in the post-16 sector in one urban locale 1995-98. In: Coffield, F. (ed.) *Differing Visions of the Learning Society.* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Bathmaker, A.-M. (2001) 'It's the perfect education': Lifelong learning and the experience of foundation-level GNVQ students. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 53 (1), 81–100.

Battersby, J. and Biddulph, M. (2002) *A Study on Progression and Continuity in Geography 11-19.* A report for the QCA Geography Team. London: QCA.

BBC (2005) Cambridge seeks harder A-levels. *BBC News Education* [online]. At: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/education/4538127.stm, accessed September 2005.

Becker, G. (1975) *Human Capital*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Belfield, C.R. (2000) *Economic Principles for Education: Theory and evidence*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Berkeley, J. (2005) *Listening to the Work-Based Learner: Unlocking the potential of apprentice feedback.* London: DfES.

Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998) *Inside the Black Box: Raising standards through classroom assessment.* London: King's College London School of Education.

Blanden, J. and Gregg, P. (2004) Family Income and Educational Attainment: A review of approaches and evidence for Britain. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 20 (2), 245–263.

Blanden, J., Gregg, P. and Machin, S. (2005) Social Mobility in Britain: Low and falling. *Centrepiece*, spring, 18–20.

Blaug, M. (1977) *An Introduction to the Economics of Education*. London: Penguin.

Brockington, D. (2002) *Key Skills within the National Qualifications Framework: 14-19.* SKOPE/ESRC Research Paper No 31. Coventry: University of Warwick.

Brockington, D. (2005a) *An Update on the Status of Generic Employability Skills: Wider key skills in the National Qualifications Framework.* Nuffield Review Briefing Paper 3 [online]. At www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Brockington, D. (2005b) *Nascent futures: A discussion paper on the ways in which ASDAN might contribute to a future teaching and learning agenda from aspects of its current practice*. ALC Discussion Paper 9 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Brown, N., Corney, M. and Stanton, G. (2004) *Breaking out of the Silos: 14-30 education and skills policy.* London: Nigel Brown Associates.

Brown, P. (1987) *Schooling Ordinary Kids*. London: Tavistock Institute.

Bruner, J. (1966) Man: A Course of Study. In: *Towards a theory of instruction.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Buckley, J. (2005) Education for Uncertainty: A change in young people's realities and a need for new learning. In: QCA (2005) *Futures: Meeting the challenge.* London: QCA.

Burgess, S. and Propper, C. (2002) The Dynamics of Poverty in Britain. In: Hills, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (eds.) (2002) *Understanding Social Exclusion*. Oxford: OUP.

Bynner, J. (2001) British Youth Transitions in Comparative Perspective. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 4 (1), 5-23.

Bynner, J. and Parsons, S. (1997) *It Doesn't Get Any Better.* London: Basic Skills Agency.

CEDEFOP (1998) *Agora – IV: The Low-Skilled on the European Labour Market: Perspectives and policy options. Towards a Minimum Learning Platform* (29-30 October 1998) [online]. At: www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/agora/introduction/default.asp.

Chisholm, L. and Bergeret, J.-M. (1991) *Young People in the European Community: Towards an agenda for research and policy*. Report to the Commission of the European Communities Task Force on Human Resources, Training and Youth, Brussels.

Cook, A. and Mack, H. (2005) *Urban Academy. Words and images: 20 years.* New York: Urban Academy.

Cote, J. (2002) The Role of Identity Capital in the Transition to Adulthood: The individualisation thesis examined. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 5 (2), 117-134.

Cox, B. (1995) *Cox on the Battle for the English Curriculum.* London: Hodder.

Coyle, G. (2000) Qualitative and Quantitative Modelling in System Dynamics: Some research questions. *System Dynamics Review*, 16 (3), 225–244.

Crick, B. (1998) *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools*. London: DfEE/QCA.

CSCS (2005) *Curriculum 14-19. Pathways to providing a relevant 21st century curriculum.* CSCS Broadsheet 78. Leicester: CSCS.

Cuban, L. (2004) *The Blackboard and the Bottom Line: Why schools can't be like businesses.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Dale, R. (2000) Globalization: A new world for a comparative education? In: Schriewer, J. (ed.) *Discourse Formation in Comparative Education*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus.

Davies, C., Hayward, G. andLukman, L. (2005) *14-19 and Digital Technologies: A review of research and projects.* Report 13. Bristol: Nesta Futurelab.

Dearing, R. (1994) *The National Curriculum and its Assessment.* London: SCAA.

Dearing, R. (1996) *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year-Olds.* Hayes, Middlesex: SCAA.

De Ruyter, D. and Conroy, J. (2002) The Formation of Identity: The Importance of Ideals. *Oxford Review of Education,* 28 (4), 509-522.

DES/ED/WO (1991) *Education and Training for the 21st Century*. London: DES.

DfES (2002a) *14-19: Extending opportunities, raising standards*. Cm 5342. London: HMSO.

DfES (2002b) *Success for All: Reforming further education and training*. London: DfES.

DfES (2003a) *14-19: Opportunity and excellence.* Norwich: HMSO.

DfES (2003b) *Every Child Matters.* Cm 5860. Norwich: HMSO.

DfES (2003c) *Youth Cohort Study: The Activities and Experiences of 17 year-olds: England and Wales 2002.* SFR 35/2003 [online]. At: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway, accessed August 2005.

DfES (2004a) *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*. Cm 6272. Norwich: HMSO.

DfES (2004b) *GCSE/GNVQ Results and Key Stage 3 to GCSE/GNVQ: Value added measures for young people in England, 2002/03 (Final).* SFR 23/2004 [online]. At: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway, accessed September 2005.

DfES (2004c) *National Curriculum Assessment and GCSE/GNVQ Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England, 2002 (Final) and 2003 (Provisional).* SFR 04/2004 [online]. At: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway, accessed June 2005.

DfES (2005a) *14-19 Education and Skills.* Cm 6476. London: DfES.

DfES (2005b) *GCE/VCE A/AS Examination Results for Young People in England, 2003/2004 (Final).* SFR 26/2005 [online]. At: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway, accessed July 2005.

DfES (2005c) *GCSE and Equivalent Results and Associated Value Added Measures for Young People in England, 2003/04 (Final).* SFR 25/2005 [online]. At: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway, accessed September 2005.

DfES (2005d) *National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE and Equivalent Attainment and Post-16 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England 2004*. SFR 08/2005. London: DfES.

DfES (2005e) *Organisation of 16-19 Provision: Measures in the five-year strategy*. London: DfES.

DfES (2005f) *Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England, 1985-2003*. SFR 03/2005. London: DfES.

DfES (2005g) *Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England, 2003 and 2004*. SFR 27/2005. London: DfES.

DfES (2005h) *Youth Cohort Study: The activities and experiences of 16 year-olds: England and Wales 2004.* SFR 04/2005 [online]. At: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway, accessed September 2005.

DfES (2005i) *Youth Matters*. Cm 6629. Norwich: HMSO.

DfES, DTI, DWP, HMT (2003) *21st Century Skills: Realising our potential.* Cm 5810. Norwich: HMSO.

DfES, DTI, HMT, DWP (2005) *Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work*. Cm 6483. Norwich: HMSO.

Dobson, J.M. and Pooley, C.E. (2004). *Mobility, Equality, Diversity: A study of pupil mobility in the secondary school system.* UCL: Migration Research Unit.

DoH (2004) *Statistics on Young People and Drugs Misuse: England, 2003.* Bulletin 2004/13 [online]. At: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/78/97/04087897.pdf, accessed September 2005*.

Ecclestone, K. (2002) *Learning Autonomy in Post-16 Education: The politics and practice of formative assessment.* London, New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Edem, A., Spencer, P. and Fyfield, B. (2003) *Organisation of Provision of Post-16 Education and Training*. London: DfES/LSDA.

Edexcel (2005) Policy Watch 2005/74. *GCSE Results summer 2005: The facts and issues.* London: Edexcel.

Egan, D. (2004) *14-19 developments in Wales: Learning Pathways*. Nuffield Review Working Paper (henceforth WP) 19 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed September 2005.

Egan, D. (2005) *14-19 developments in Wales: Learning Pathways: Update* [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Ellis, A. (2003) *Transformation of Kent: Realising the potential.* Kent County Council; Microsoft.

Ellis, V. (2005) *Rethinking English: An informing purpose for a sack of snakes.* ALC Discussion Paper 5 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Farlie, V. (2004) *Are apprenticeships any longer a credible vocational route for young people, and can the supply side respond effectively to government policy, and address the needs of learners and employers?* WP 28 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

FEU (1979) *A Basis for Choice*. London: DES.

Finlay, I. and Egan, D. (2004) *What policy trajectories are the national governments in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland following and are they converging or diverging?* WP 20 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed September 2005.

Fletcher, M. and Owen, G. (2005) *The Funding Gap: Funding in schools and colleges for full-time students aged 16-18*. London: LSDA.

Fletcher, M. and Stanton, G. (2005) National institutional patterns and the effects of these on aspects of participation, attainment and progression. ID Discussion Paper 2 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/publications.shtml, accessed September 2005.

Ford, L. (2005) A-Levels Over Within Decade, Says Schools Inspector. *Education Guardian*, 22 June.

Forrester, J.W. (1961) *Industrial Dynamics.* Waltham, MA: Pegasus Communications.

Forrester, J.W. (1991) System Dynamics and the Lessons of 35 Years. In: DeGreene, K.B. (ed.) (1991) *The Systemic Basis of Policy Making in the 1990s*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Forrester, J.W. (1999) *Systems Dynamics: The foundation under systems thinking* [online]. At: http://sysdyn.clexchange.org/sdep/papers/D-4828.html, accessed September 2005.

Foskett, N. and Helmsley-Brown, J. (2000) *Choosing Futures: Young people's decision-making in education, training and careers markets*. London, New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Fox, J, (2005) *"… Restaurant chefs, not cookery teachers" (White Paper, 14-19, Section 7.14): The confusing language of the 14-19 debate and three case studies of 'other providers'.* ALC Discussion Paper 18 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Freedman, S. (2005) A Sorry State of Affairs, Trends in higher education. *THES*, 10 June.

Fuller, A. (2004) *Expecting too much? Modern Apprenticeship: Purposes, participation and attainment*. WP 10 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtm, accessed September 2005.

Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2003) Creating a 'Modern Apprenticeship': A critique of the UK's multi-sector, social inclusion approach. *Journal of Education and Work*, 16 (1), 5–25.

Gambetta, D. (1987) *Were They Pushed or Did They Jump? Individual decision mechanisms in education*. Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press.

Gardner, S. (2005) *An LSC perspective on key policy mechanisms, their effects and opportunities for reform.* ID Discussion Paper 6 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtm, accessed September 2005.

Gay, J. (2005) *Religious Education 14-19.* ALC Discussion Paper 11 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Gillborn, D. and Gipps, C. (1996) *Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority Pupils*. Report for the Office for Standards in Education. London: HMSO.

Gillborn, D. and Mirza, H.S. (2000) *Educational Inequality: Mapping race, class and gender. A synthesis of research evidence.* London: Ofsted [online]. At: www.ofsted.gov.uk, accessed September 2005.

Gillborn, D. and Youdell, D. (2000*) Rationing Education: Policy practice, reform and equity*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Golden, S., Nelson, J., O'Donnell, L. and Morris, M. (2004) *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: The first year*. RR511. Nottingham: DfES.

Golden, S., O'Donnell, L., Benton, T. and Rudd, P. (2005) *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: Outcomes for the first cohort*. RR668. Nottingham: DfES.

Golden, S., O'Donnell, L. and Rudd, P. (2005) *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: The second year.* RR609. Nottingham: DfES.

Goldstein, H. (1979) Consequences of Using the Rasch Model for Educational Assessment. *British Journal of Educational Research,* 5, 211-220.

Goodson, I. (1988) *The Making of Curriculum: Collected essays*. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer.

Gorard, S. (2000) *Education and Social Justice*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.

Gorard, S. and Rees, G. (2002) *Creating a Learning Society? Learning careers and policies for lifelong learning.* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Green, A., Wolf, A. and Leney, T. (1999) *Convergence and divergence in European education and training systems.* London: Institute of Education.

Gregg, P., Harkness, S. and Machin, S. (1999) Poor Kids: Trends in child poverty in Britain 1968-1996. *Fiscal Studies*, 20 (2), 163–187.

Grubb, W.N. and Lazerson, M. (2004) *The Education Gospel: The economic power of schooling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

GTC (2005) *Response to the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper*. London.

Harkin, J. (2005) *14 to 16 year olds In further education.* ALC Discussion Paper 16 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Hart, S., Dixon, A., Drummond, M,J, and McIntyre, D. (2004) *Learning Without Limits.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Hayward, G. and Fernandez, R. (2004) From Core Skills to Key Skills: Fast forward or back to the future? *Oxford Review of Education*, 30 (1), 117–45.

Hayward, G., Hodgson, A., Johnson, J., Keep, E., Oancea, A., Pring, R., Spours, K. and Wright, S. (2004) *Nuffield Review Annual Report 2003-04*. Oxford: Department of Educational Studies.

HDA (2004) *Binge drinking in the UK and on the Continent.* London: HDA.

Herschel, D. (1980) The Tertiary Way Ahead. *TES*, 12 December.

Higham, J. (2004) *Continuity and discontinuity in the 14-19 curriculum.* WP 4 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed September 2005.

Higham, J., Haynes, G., Wragg, C. and Yeomans, D. (2004) *14-19 Pathfinders: An evaluation of the first year*. London: DfES.

Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005a) *Collaborative approaches to 14-19 education and training provision*. ID Discussion Paper 9 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed September 2005.

Higham, J. and Yeomans, D. (2005b) *Collaborative Approaches to 14-19 Provision: Report of the second year of the 14-19 Pathfinder initiative.* RR642. Nottingham: DfES.

Hill, P. (2004) Study Calls for Grading Reform. *THES*, 3 September.

Historical Association (2005) *History 14-19. The Historical Association Curriculum Development Project*. London: Historical Association.

HMT (2005) *Evidence on the Economic Cycle*. Norwich: HMSO [online]. At: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/2E6/A5/economic_cycles190705.pdf, accessed August 2005.

HMT (1997) *The Modernisation of Britain's Tax and Benefit System.* London: HMT [online]. At: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (eds.) (1997) *Dearing and Beyond: 14-19 qualifications, frameworks and systems*. London: Kogan Page.

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2002) Key Skills for All? The Key Skills qualification and Curriculum 2000. *Journal of Educational Policy,* 17 (1), 29–47.

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2003) *Beyond A Levels: Curriculum 2000 and the reform of 14-19 qualifications*. London: Kogan Page.

Hodgson, A., Spours, K., Steer, R., Coffield, F., Finlay, I., Edward, S. and Gregson, M. (2005) A New Learning and Skills Landscape? The LSC within the learning and skills sector. *ESRC TLRP Project Impact of Policy on Learning and Inclusion.* Research Report 1. Institute of Education, University of London.

Hodkinson, P., Sparkes, A. and Hodkinson, H. (1996) *Triumphs and tears*. London: David Futon Publishers.

Home Office (2003) *Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 2003*.

Hoyles, C., Wolf, A., Molyneux-Hodgson, S. and Kent, P. (2002) *Mathematical Skills in the Workplace: Final Report to the Science, Technology and Mathematics Council.* London: Institute of Education.

Huddleston, P. and Oh, S. (2004) The Magic Roundabout: Work-related learning within the 14-19 curriculum. *Oxford Review of Education*, 30 (1), 83–103.

Hughes, M. and Monteiro, H. (2005) *Improving Employer Engagement in the Delivery of Apprenticeships: Making work based learning work.* London: LSDA.

Independent Schools Council (2003) *Good Neighbours. ISC schools and their local communities*. ISC.

Johnson, D. (2003) *Partnerships: Benefits, limitations and doing it better*. Background Paper for LSDA Policy Seminar, 6 November. London: LSDA.

Johnson, M. (2005) *The effects of the accountability framework on 14-19 education and training and institutional arrangements.* ID Discussion Paper 7 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtm, accessed September 2005.

Jones, K. (2003) *Education in Britain: 1944 to the present*. Cambridge: Polity.

Jupp, T. (2005) *Key policy mechanisms and their impact on 14-19 education and training with particular reference to colleges of further education*. ID Discussion Paper 8 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtm, accessed September 2005.

Kent, P., Hoyles, C., Noss, R. and Guile, B. (2004) *Techno-Mathematical Literacies in Workplace Activity. International Seminar on Learning and Technology at Work.* London: Institute of Education [online]. At*: www.lonklab.ac.uk/kscope/ltw/seminar.htm,* accessed September 2005.

Kohlberg, L. (1992) Recent Work in Moral Education*.* In: Ward, L.O. (ed.) *The Ethical Dimension of the School Curriculum.* Swansea: Pineridge Press.

Labour Party (1996) *Aiming Higher: Labour's proposals for the reform of the 14-19 curriculum*. London: Labour Party.

Lambert, D. (2005) *Why subjects really matter.* ALC Discussion Paper 2 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Lambert, D., Roberts, M. and Winch, C. (2005) *Civic education for the 14-19 age group.* ALC Discussion Paper 15 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Leney, T. (2004) *Achieving the Lisbon Goal: The contribution of VET. Final Report to the European Commission*. Annexes to the Report. The Lisbon-to-Copenhagen-to-Maastricht Consortium.

Lindkvist Jørgensen, A. (2005) *Changing an Award Winning System – for better of for worse?* Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University College Dublin, September.

Lipsett, A. (2004) It's a Downward Spiral of Decline. *THES*, 17 December.

Lord, P. and Johnson, A. (2005) *Pupils' Experience and Perspectives of the National Curriculum and Assessment: 5th Update of the Research Review.* Slough: NFER.

LSC (2003) *National Employers Skills Survey* [online]. At: www.lsc.gov.uk, accessed September 2005.

LSC (2004) *National Employers Skills Survey* [online]. At: www.lsc.gov.uk, accessed September 2005.

LSC (2005a) *Agenda for Change.* London: LSC [online]. At: www.lsc.gov.uk, accessed September 2005.

LSC (2005b) *Further Education, Work-Based Learning for Young People and Adult and Community Learning – Learner Numbers in England, October 2004*. ILR/SFR06.

LSC (2005c) *National Learner Satisfaction Survey: Work based learning report 2003/04.* Coventry: LSC.

Macrone, T. and Morris, M. (2004) *Research into the Impact of Pre-Vocational Education.* Slough: NFER.

Maguire, S. and Rennison, J. (2005) Two Years On: The destination of young people who are not in education, employment or training. *Journal of Youth Studies,* 8 (2), 187–201.

Mansell, W. and Bloom, A. (2004) Language Crisis Mars A-Level Triumph, *TES*, 20 August.

Marsh, J. and Millard, E. (2000) *Literacy and Popular Culture.* London: Paul Chapman.

Mason, P. (2005) *Curriculum 14-19: One independent schools head's view.* ALC Discussion Paper 12 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

McConnell, E. (2005) *Responding to the Personalised Learning Agenda.* Kent Secondary Transformation Team. Paper submitted to the Review.

McDonnell, L.M. and Grubb, W.N. (1995) *Education and Training for Work: The Policy instruments and institutions*. University of California, Berkeley: NCRVE.

McGuinness, S. and Doyle, J. (2005) *Intra- and Inter-Generational Changes in the Returns to Schooling, 1991-2002.* Belfast: Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland (ERINI).

McIntosh, S. (2004) *The Impact of Vocational Qualifications on the Labour Market: Outcomes of low achieving school leavers.* CEP Discussion Paper 621. London: Centre for Economic Performance [online]. At: www.cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download, accessed March 2005.

McIntosh, S. and Steedman, H. (2000) *Low Skills: A Problem for Europe.* Brussels: DG Research of the European Commission [online]. At: www.cordis.lu/improving/socio-economic/area2.htm. , accessed September 2005.

McKnight, A. (2002) *Low-paid Work: Drip-feeding the poor.* In: Hills, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (eds.) *Understanding Social Exclusion*. Oxford: OUP.

McPhee, L. and Cumberland, G. (2005) *History of the educational provision for secondary and post-16 in the London borough of Richmond*. ID Discussion Paper 4 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml.

Meltzer, H. and Gatwood, R. (c.2000) *The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in Great Britain.* London: Stationery Office.

Middleton, S., Perren, K., Maguire, S., Rennison, J., Battistin, E., Emmerson, C. and Fitzsimons, E. (2005) *Evaluation of the Education Maintenance Pilots: Young People Aged 16-19 Years. Final Report of the Quantitative Evaluation.* RR678. DfES: Nottingham.

Miliband, D. (2004) North of England Education Conference Speech, 8 January

Millar, R. and Osborne, J. (eds.) (1998) *Beyond 2000: Science Education for the Future*. London: Nuffield Foundation.

Moore, R. (2004) *Education and Society: Issues and Explanations in the Sociology of Education.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Moser, C. (1999) *A Fresh Start – Improving Literacy and Numeracy*. Sudbury: DfEE.

Munday, F. and Fawcett, B. (2002) *Models of 16-19 Collaboration. A Report for Oxfordshire Learning Partnership*. Oxfordshire Learning Partnership.

Munday, F. and Pratley, B. (2004) *A study of Post-16 Collaboration: Phase 1 Report*. June 2004 [online]. At: www.lsc.gov.uk/kentandmedway, accessed February 2005.

NAHT (1995) *Proposals on 14-19 Education*. Haywards Heath: NAHT.

NATFHE (2004) *Activity in Colleges With Students Under 16*. London: NATFHE.

National Commission on Education (1993) *Learning to Succeed.* London: Heinemann.

Nelson, J., Morris, M., Rickinson, M., Blenkinsop, S. and Spielhofer, T. (2001) *Disapplying National Curriculum Subjects to Facilitate Extended Work-Related Learning at Key Stage 4: An Evaluation.* RR293. Nottingham: DfES.

Oancea, A. (2004) *Opportunities and Limitations of Datasets on 14-19 Education and Training in the UK.* Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Manchester, September 2004.

OECD (2003) *Education at a Glance*. Paris: OECD.

OECD (2004) *Education at a Glance*. Paris: OECD.

Ofsted (2003) *Supporting 14 to 19 Education: Evidence from the work of 12 LEAs*. HMI 586 [online]. At: www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications, accessed February 2005.

Ofsted (2004a) *ICT in Schools: The Impact of Government Initiatives Five Years On.* London: Ofsted.

Ofsted (2004b) *Increased Flexibility Programme at Key Stage 4: Evaluation of the first year*. London: Ofsted.

Ofsted/FEFC (1999) *Post-16 Collaboration. School sixth forms and the further education sector*. London: Further Education Funding Council.

Payne, J. (2002) *Attitudes to Education and Choices at Age 16: A brief research review* [online]. At: www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/projectinformation.cfm, accessed September 2005.

Payne, J. (2003a) *Participation, retention and qualification achievement in education and training from 16 to 19: Data from the England and Wales Youth Cohort Study.* WP7 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed September 2005.

Payne, J. (2003b) *Vocational Pathways at Age 16-19.* RR501. Nottingham: DfES.

Phillips, R. (1998) *History Teachers Nationhood and the State*. London: Cassell.

Plato, P. (2005) *14-19 Institutional arrangements in Surrey – a case study*. ID Discussion Paper 3 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Pollard, A. and James, M. (eds.) (2004) *Personalised Learning: A commentary by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme.* Cambridge: TLRP.

Power, C. and Reimer, J. (1978) Moral Atmosphere. In: Damon, W. (ed.) *New Directions for Child Development and Moral Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pozzi, S., Noss, R. and Hoyles, C. (1998) Tools in Practice, Mathematics in Use. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 36 (2), 105–122.

Press Association (2005) Third of Teens Ignore Education Grant. *Education Guardian,* 3 June.

Principal Learning Ltd. (2003) *Illustrations of Different Local Organisational Structures for Collaborative Delivery of Post-16 Education and Training.* London: DfES.

Pring, R.A. (1995) *Closing the Gap: Liberal Education and Vocational Preparation*. London: Hodder.

QCA (2001) *Key Skills Update,* September. London: QCA.

QCA (2004a) *A Framework for Achievement: Recognising qualifications and skills in the 21st century*. Consultation Document. London: QCA.

QCA (2004b) *Geography. 2003/04 Annual Report on Curriculum and Assessment*. London: QCA.

QCA (2005a) *English 21: Asking the Questions to Shape the Future of English* [online]. At: www.qca.org.uk/english21/, accessed September 2005.

QCA (2005b) *Futures: Meeting the Challenge.* London: QCA. [online]. At: www.qca.org.uk/downloads/11493_futures_meeting_the_challenge.pdf, accessed September 2005.

Raffe, D., Brannen, K. and Croxford, L. (2001) The Transition from School to Work in the Early 1990s: A comparison of England, Wales and Scotland. *Journal of Education and Work,* 14 (3), 293–313.

Rawling, E. (2001) *Changing the Subject*. Sheffield: Geographical Association.

Rawling, E. (2004) School Geography in England. In: Kent, W., Rawling, E. and Robinson, A. (eds.) *Geographical Education: Expanding horizons in a shrinking world*. Glasgow: Scottish Association of Geography Teachers.

Rawling, E. (2005) *Geography in the school curriculum.* ALC Discussion Paper 4 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Responsive College Unit (2003) *Research into the Comparative Performance of Tertiary Colleges*. Tertiary College Network.

Richardson, W., Spours, K. and Woolhouse, J. (1995) *Learning for the Future.* London: Institute of Education; Coventry: Centre for Education and Industry.

Roberts, G. (2002) *Set for Success. The Supply of People with Sceince, Technology Engineering and Mathematical Skills.* London: HMSO.

Roberts, M. and Winch, C. (2005) *Some thoughts on the role of humanities and history in the 14-19 curriculum*. ALC Discussion Paper 3 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Rodger, J., Cowen, G. and Brass, J. (2003) *National Evaluation of Learning Partnerships: Final Report*. RR391. Nottingham: DfES.

Rorty, A. and Wong, D. (1993) Aspects of Identity and Agency. In: Flanagan, O. and Rorty, A. (eds.) *Identity, Character, and Morality. Essays in Moral Psychology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

RSA (1986) *Education for Capability*. Windsor, Berkshire; Philadelphia, PA: NFER-Nelson.

RSA (1999a) *Redefining the Curriculum.* London: RSA.

RSA (1999b) *Opening Minds: Education for the 21st Century.* London: RSA.

Rudduck, J. (2005) Pupil Voice is Here to Stay*.* In: *QCA Futures: Meeting the Challenge*. London: QCA.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P. and Ouston, J. (1979) *15000 Hours: Secondary schools and their effects on children*. London: Open Books.

Ryan, P. and Unwin, L. (2001) Apprenticeship in the British Training Market. *National Institute Economic Review,* 178, 99–114.

Secretary of State's speech to SHA, NAHT and AoC Joint Conference *14-19 in Action*, 10 June 2005.

Shaw, J. (2005) *Organising a relevant curriculum.* ALC Discussion Paper 6 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Slavin, R.E., Harley, E.A. and Chamberlain, A. (2003) Cooperative Learning and Achievement: Theory and research. In: Reynolds, W.M. and Miller, G.E. (eds.) *Handbook of Psychology: Educational psychology,* Vol.7. New York: Wiley.

Smith, A. (2004) *Making Mathematics Count. The report of Professor Adrian Smith's inquiry into post-14 mathematics education*. London: HMSO.

Smith, P., Kerr, K. and Harris, S. (2003) *Collaboration between Independent and Local Authority Schools: LEA's perspectives on partnership and community activities*. Slough: NFER.

Smithers, R. (2005) Permanent School Exclusions Rise. *Education Guardian,* 24 June.

Smithers, R. and Curtis, P. (2005) Academic says A Levels fail top universities. *The Guardian,* 11 May.

Somers, J. (2005) *Drama as alternative pedagogy.* ALC Discussion Paper 10 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Sparkes, J. and Glennerster, H. (2002) Preventing Social Exclusion: Education's contribution. In: Hills, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (eds.) *Understanding Social Exclusion*. Oxford: OUP.

Stanton, G. (2004) *The organisation of full-time 14-19 provision in the state sector.* WP13 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed September 2005.

Stasz, C. and Wright, S. (2004) *Emerging Policy for Vocational Learning in England: Will it lead to a better system?* London: LSRC.

Steedman, H. and Stoney, S. (2004) *Disengagement 14-16: Context and evidence.* CEP Discussion Paper No.654. London: London School of Economics.

Steedman, H., Wagner, K. and Foreman, J. (2003) *The Impact on Firms of ICT Skill-Supply Strategies: An Anglo-German comparison*. London: CEP. At: www.cep.lse.ac.uk/research/skills/Skills_Publications/default.asp, accessed January 2005.

Steedman, H., McIntosh, S. and Green, A. (2004) *International comparisons of qualifications: Skills audit update.* RR548. Nottingham: DfES.

Stenhouse, L. (1975) *Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development.* London: Heinemann.

Tasker, M. (2003) *Smaller Structures in Secondary Education: A research digest.* Human Scale Education.

Tawney, R.H. (1931) *Equality.* London: Geo. Allen & Unwin.

Thornton, K. and Porter, N. (2005) School's Best in Bac Try-out. *TES*, 26 August.

Truelove, J. (2005) *A case study of the Kingswood Partnership.* ID Discussion Paper 5 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed September 2005.

Tsoukas, H. and Knudsen, C. (eds.) (2003) *The Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory: Metatheoretical perspectives.* Oxford: OUP.

Turner, D. and Buckley, J. (2004) *Education for Enterprise in Citizenship and Employment: A Discussion paper for policy makers, managers and practitioners.* Changemakers.

Unwin, L. and Fuller, A. (2003) *Expanding Learning in the Workplace*. NIACE Policy Discussion Paper. Leicester: NIACE.

Von Bertalanffy, L. (1968) *General System Theory: Foundations, development, applications*. New York: George Braziller.

WAG (2003) *Learning Country: Learning Pathways 14-19 action plan.* Cardiff: WAG.

Wake, G. (2005) *"Functional mathematics" means making mathematics functional.* ALC Discussion Paper 17 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Wake, G.D. and Williams, J.S. (2000) *Can Workplace Practice Inform Design of Mathematics Curricula?* Paper presented to the International Congress of Mathematics Education, Tokyo, Japan.

Warmington, P., Daniels, H.E., Edwards, A., Leadbetter, J., Martin, D., Brown, S. and Middleton, D. (2004) *Learning in and for Interagency Working: Conceptual tensions in 'joined up' practice.* Paper presented at TLRP Conference, Cardiff, November.

Watson, A. (2004a) *Maths 14-19: Its nature, significance, concepts and modes of engagement.* ALC Discussion Paper 13 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Watson, A. (2004b) Red Herrings: Post-14 'best' mathematics teaching and curricula. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 52 (4), 359-376.

Watson, J. (2004) *Using individual learner data to investigate progression.* WP8 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed September 2005.

West, A. (2005) *Successes that challenge the system: The FE perspective.* ALC Discussion Paper 8 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

White, J. (ed.) (2004) *Rethinking the School Curriculum.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

White, J. (2005) Towards an Aims-Led Curriculum. In: *Futures: Meeting the Challenge*. London: QCA.

White, R., Pring, R. and Brockington, D. (1995) *14-19 Education and Training: Implementing a unified system of learning.* London: RSA.

Williams, R. (1989) Common Culture. In: Gable, R. *Resources of Hope.* London: Verso.

Winch, C. (2005) *Personalised Learning: Making sense of government policy*. Paper presented at the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain West Midlands Branch meeting, 5 February.

Wood, D. (2005) *The Arts 14-19.* ALC Discussion Paper 14 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Working Group on 14-19 Reform (2004) *14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform: Final Report of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform*. London: DfES.

Wright, G. (2005) Future Looking Good for the Bac. *TES*, 27 May.

Wright, S. (2005) *Decision making in 14-19 education and training: A literature review.* Briefing Paper 4 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Wright, S. and Oancea, A. (2004) *Policies for 14-19 education and training in England, 1976 to the Present Day: A chronology.* Briefing Paper 2 [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/documents.shtml, accessed October 2005.

Wylie, T. (2005) *Human Scale Education Newsletter, s*ummer.

Wynn, J. and Dwyer, P. (1999) New Directions in Research on Youth in Transition. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 2 (1), 5-21.

Yeomans, D. (2003) Some Reflections on Policy Recurrence: *The Case of Work-Related Learning for 14-16 Year Olds*. Paper presented at BERA 2003 Annual Conference, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh.

Appendix I: Abbreviations

A Level	Advanced Level
ALC	Nuffield Review Aims, Learning and Curriculum (Strand I) working group
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
AoC	Association of Colleges
ASDAN	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
AS Level	Advanced Subsidiary Level
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CEE	Certificate of Extended Education
CGLI	City and Guilds of London Institute
CoVE	Centre of Vocational Excellence
CPVE	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
CSCS	Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfEE	Department of Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DoH	Department of Health
DoVE	Diploma of Vocational Education
DTE	Department for Training and Education (Wales)
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EdStats	World Bank database of education statistics
EFT	Employer-Funded Training
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Union
FE	Further Education
FEDA	Further Education Development Agency
FEU	Further Education Unit
FfA	Framework for Achievement
FTE	Full-Time Education
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
GTC	General Teaching Council
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office

HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ID	Nuffield Review Institutional Dimension of 14-19 Reform in England (Strand III) working group
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IFP	Increased Flexibility Programme
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILR	Individual Learner Record
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
ISC	Independent Schools Council
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
JWT	Jobs Without Training
KS	Key Stage
LEA	Local Education Authority
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLSC	Local Learning and Skills Council
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NAHT	National Association of Head Teachers
NEET	Not In Education, Employment or Training
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PSA	Public Sector Agreement
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RR	Research Report (DfES)
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SFR	Statistical First Release (DfES)
SHA	Secondary Heads Association
SR	Spending Review
SSC	Sector Skills Council
StAR	Strategic Area Review
TES	Times Educational Supplement
THES	Times Higher Education Supplement
TLRP	Teaching and Learning Research Programme
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNESCO-UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics

UOE	UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat data collection on education statistics
VCE	Vocational Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WBL	Work-Based Learning
WRL	Work-Related Learning
YCS	Youth Cohort Study
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

Appendix II: Key publications and qualifications developments for England and Wales: Update

This section updates Appendices 2, 3 and 4 of the 2003-04 Annual Report. This section aims to give an insight into the range and number of policy developments which affect 14-19 education and training, but does not attempt to be comprehensive. For a more extensive and detailed list of publications since 1976 in England see: Wright, S. and Oancea, A. (2005) *Policies for 14-19 Education and Training in England from 1976 to the Present Day: a chronology (updated September 2005)*. Nuffield Review Briefing Paper [online]. At: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk.

July 2004	**National Assembly for Wales: *Learning Pathways 14-19 Guidance***
	• Progressive roll-out of entitlement to learning pathways to take account of available funding and capacity, and 14-19 Network development plans
	• Options menus from Sept 2004 to be supported by WAG grant of £50,000 to each 14-19 Network
	• Learning core: to include Key Skills; knowledge and understanding (Wales, Europe and the world; personal, social, sustainability and health matters; careers education and guidance); attitudes and values (respect for self, others and diversity; responsibility for personal and social development, sustainability and health); common experience (work-focused experience, community participation, cultural/sporting/aesthetic/creative experiences). Opportunities for community participation and work-focused experience to be set out in guidance from Sept 2005
	• Personal support and Learning Coach to be introduced in targeted areas from Sept 2004 (£140,000 from WAG to be match funded locally), additional guidance informed by pilots summer 2005
	• Progressive roll-out of entitlement to EMA for 16-18 year-olds from Sept 2004
	• 14-19 Networks in each local authority area (working with local Community Consortium for Education and Training and Young People's Partnership) to identify priorities for their area and produce first development plan – including proposals for Learning Pathways – from Sept 2004.
Oct 2004	**Working Group on 14-19 Reform: *14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform. Final Report***
	• Recommends replacing existing framework of qualifications taken by 14-19 year-olds with framework of diplomas at Entry, Foundation, Intermediate And Advanced Levels. Successful completion of programme at given level should lead to the award of a diploma recognising achievement across the whole programme. Apprenticeships to be integrated within 14-19 framework
	• Proposes up to 20 'lines of learning' within framework reflecting sector and discipline boundaries across a range of academic and vocational disciplines,

including an 'open programmes' line where learner choice relatively unconstrained

- Proposes core should include: specified levels of achievement in functional mathematics, literacy and communication, and ICT (over time to at least Level 2); extended project; range of 'common knowledge, skills, and attributes'; entitlement to wider activities; support and guidance in planning learning and further learning and career choices
- Recommends mainly teacher-led assessment at Entry, Foundation and Intermediate Levels, more external assessment at Advanced Level. Additional grades (A+ and A++) for some Advanced Level components. Detailed electronic transcripts of achievement to be made available
- Proposes entry to diploma framework at level appropriate to individual and progression at appropriate pace

2004	**House of Commons Education and Skills Committee: *Public Expenditure. First Report of Session 2004-05*** • Questions claims in the Chancellor's Budget book for 2004 of a direct relationship between increased investment since 1997 and improved GCSE results: "Links between expenditure and outcome remain difficult to establish." • Select Committee argues that DfES reacted to perceptions of a "funding crisis" rather than an actual crisis, and questions evidential basis of DfES' decision to abolish the formula spending share funding system and to replace it with a flat-rate system, and criticises the Department for overselling a policy when accurate forecasts are not available • Criticises continued differential in student funding between school and FE: "…progress towards equal funding is painfully slow … Further Education colleges should not be seen as a means of providing education on the cheap"
Jan 2005	**Welsh Assembly Government: *Skills and Employment Action Plan for Wales 2005*** • 14-19 Learning Core: Key Skills, basic skills and Welsh language skills as entitlement for all 14-19 year-olds • Plan to strengthen key skills (extension to Key Skills Support Programme Cymru to provide specific support for Welsh Baccalaureate pilot centres; programme of support for key skills in WBL; measures to improve profile of key skills with HE and employers; more appropriate key skills assessment; piloting wider key skills of working with others, improving own learning and performance and problem solving as free=standing qualifications) • Assembly Government and Education and Learning Wales to develop and pilot "combined apprenticeships" allowing young people to combine learning in school/college with practical learning in the workplace. Target for operation scheme by Sept 2008.

Feb 2005	**White Paper (DfES):** *14-19 Education and Skills* • Proposes 'specialised' Diplomas – to lead to employment in chosen sector of to HE – to be introduced in 14 subject areas at three levels (Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3): first four from 2008, 14 lines to be national entitlement by 2015. Anyone achieving a Diploma at Level 2 must have functional English and Maths at Level 2. SSCs to design specialist Diplomas. "We will work with employers to offer more opportunities to young people to learn at work and outside school" • Maths and English GCSEs to be reformed to ensure candidates cannot get higher grades "without having mastered functional skills in numeracy and literacy" • A separate Diploma to be awarded to pupils who pass five GCSEs (including Maths and English) at Grade C or above • Existing five A*-C GCSE attainment table measure to be replaced with percentage of young people achieving 5A*-C including English and Maths by 2008 • Number of A Level modules to be reduced from six to four. Optional harder questions in A Level papers. Information about individual module grades to be available for universities by 2006 • Extended project at A Level or higher levels of the Diploma • No major change to current balance between internal and external assessment • Specialist schools to be awarded an extra £30,000 each to become centres of excellence in vocational education • Review of KS3 curriculum
March 2005	**White Paper (DfES, DTI, DWP, HMT)** *Skills: Getting on in Business, getting on at Work* • Principle of "contestability" so employers can select the providers which offer the best quality and most relevant provision for employer training pilots • Aiming for "substantial increases" in proportion of 14-19 year-olds achieving full Level 2 qualifications and participation at 17 to increase to 90% over next ten years • Aim to increase numbers successfully completing Apprenticeships by 75% between 2002/03 and 2007/08 • "We will create a network of Skills Academies, as sector-based centres of national excellence … they will set a new benchmark for excellence in the design and delivery of skills training for young people and adults." Initial network of 12 academies by 2007/08, over time for each major sector of the economy • Skills Academies to form "the linchpin of national, regional and local partnerships to provide better vocational training." Schools to work with specialist schools, Centres of Vocational Excellence and specialist facilities in HE to deliver full range of opportunities for students through new specialised Diplomas • Initiated review of the future role of colleges, due to report in Autumn 2005 • Regional Skills Partnerships to review "how they can best support the implementation of the 14-19 reforms"

May 2005	**Education Secretary Ruth Kelly** announces that in 2008 the DfES will review how the system was operating and "look particularly at whether we could achieve a consensus with employers and HE about whether there should be a general diploma"
May 2005	**Assembly Minister Jane Davidson** announces that the Welsh Assembly Government will appoint a **Vocational Skills Champion** to "promote the attractiveness of vocational learning at all levels and the Assembly Government's 14-19 Learning Pathways Scheme … to have real credibility with the business community to ensure that employers see the real value in vocational qualifications"
June 2005	**DfES: *Departmental Report 2005*** • Key priorities for 14-19 reform: "getting the basics right" especially literacy and numeracy; "ensuring that all learners are stretched and challenged; improving quality and relevance of vocational learning; tackling disengagement, drop-out and low achievement • 2005 Budget allocated £140 million over two years to pilot schemes in at least eight areas of England from April 2006 targeted at 16-17 year-olds not in education, employment or training or in jobs without training, to test effectiveness of increased support and guidance and financial incentives in encouraging young people to take up education and training opportunities (full time and training while in employment) • Proposes accountability framework to include new vocational arrangements, a new English and mathematics measure at KS4, credit in performance tables for qualifications before the usual age, and progression target and credit for completing KS4 after 16
July 2005	**Green Paper (DfES): *Youth Matters*** • Proposes local authorities should be the single body responsible and accountable for youth policy. Funding to be allocated to local authorities, through children's trusts • Connexions to be integrated with a wider range of services at the local level • Local authorities to be supported in developing and piloting "opportunity cards" to provide discounts on "sports and other constructive activities", to be topped up by young people and their parents and over time by local authorities. Government would top up cards for disadvantaged 13-16 year-olds • Proposes an "opportunity fund" in each local authority to be spent on "local projects that young people want", young people themselves to decide how the fund can be spent • Proposes legislation to clarify local authorities' duty to secure positive activities for young people, and to provide statutory guidance for local authorities setting out national standards for activities that young people would benefit from accessing in their free time • Proposes pilots to explore impact of different types of reward in encouraging young people to volunteer

	• "We will devolve responsibility for commissioning IAG and the funding that goes with it, from the Connexions Service to local authorities, working through children's trusts, schools and colleges." Local authorities responsible for commissioning IAG for young people not attending school or college • Proposes nominated lead professional as single point of contact for young people who need support in a number of areas • Proposes local authorities will work through children's trusts to use funding
July 2005	**Apprenticeships Task Force:** *Final Report* • Proposes medium-term target of 65% completion rate in order to raise status of apprenticeships • Sets out "business case for apprenticeship" (based on case study evidence, chiefly from sectors without a tradition of apprenticeship): apprenticeships improve business performance by contributing to competitiveness, profitability, productivity and quality; net costs are often lower than those involved in training non-apprentices and costs often recovered through apprentices' productivity; apprentices adopt company values and are likely to remain with employer • Proposes blueprint: SSCs and their employers at the forefront of determining the content of apprenticeship frameworks • Promotes employer-led delivery models which reduce administrative burden on employers. SSCs with employers and relevant providers should be encouraged to explore models most appropriate to their sector and facilitate their adoption • Recommends LSC allocate marketing resources to generate higher level of apprenticeship vacancies and make greater use of 'sector champions' and SSCs • Proposed National Employer Training Programme brokerage service should identify new employer apprenticeship vacancies
2005	**DfES Standards Unit:** *Equipping our Teachers for the Future. Reforming Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector* • Proposes introduction of a new award – qualified teacher of learning and skills • Proposes investment in providers and partnerships that "demonstrate high standards of support for trainee teachers in the workplace" • Lifelong Learning UK (SSC in development) to introduce planning and monitoring arrangements and a professional framework for developing the skills of teacher trainers • Development and preparation programme and funding 2005-06, new funding April 2007 and introduction of reform as a whole package Sept 2007

Appendix III: Tables relating to Chapter Four

Table 1. Participation of 16-18 year-olds in education and training 1985-2004, England. Figures for 2004 are provisional.

												Percentage
	Female				Male				All			
End of calendar year	1985	1993	2001	2004	1985	1993	2001	2004	1985	1993	2001	2004
Aged 16												
Full-time Education[1]	51.0	75.7	75.0	78.4	44.3	70.9	66.6	68.4	47.6	73.2	70.7	73.3
Work-based Learning[2]	20.4	10.8	5.9	5.4	30.9	15.0	8.5	8.0	25.8	12.9	7.3	6.7
Employer-Funded Training	3.5	1.7	2.4	2.1	8.3	3.6	3.8	3.9	6.0	2.7	3.1	3.0
Other Education and Training[3]	4.7	3.3	4.8	3.9	3.2	2.3	4.7	4.5	3.9	2.8	4.8	4.2
Total Education and Training[4]	78.5	91.1	88.0	89.8	83.1	90.2	83.4	84.5	80.9	90.6	85.6	87.0
Population (000s)	357.7	259.6	307.2	320.7	373.8	271.5	326.3	338.2	731.5	531.2	633.5	659.0
Aged 17												
Full-time Education[1]	34.8	61.3	62.1	64.5	29.4	55.2	54.6	55.4	32.1	58.2	58.2	59.8
Work-based Learning[2]	4.4	13.3	8.9	7.2	8.7	18.7	11.0	10.5	6.6	16.1	9.6	8.9
Employer-Funded Training	7.1	2.9	3.5	3.8	17.4	6.8	5.6	5.5	12.3	4.8	4.8	4.7
Other Education and Training[3]	6.0	4.1	5.4	5.8	4.3	2.5	5.6	6.0	5.1	3.3	5.6	5.9
Total Education and Training[4]	52.1	81.2	81.2	81.2	59.3	82.0	76.4	77.1	55.8	81.6	78.1	79.1
Population (000s)	364.0	269.2	297.4	316.2	378.9	279.8	315.7	333.1	742.9	549.1	613.1	649.3
Aged 18												
Full-time Education[1]	16.8	37.4	38.9	40.3	17.5	37.6	35.1	35.0	17.1	37.5	37.0	37.6
Work-based Learning[2]	1.5	6.0	6.9	6.2	6.0	10.6	10.2	9.8	3.8	8.3	8.6	8.0
Employer-Funded Training	9.4	6.5	6.3	6.8	18.8	11.3	8.9	8.7	14.2	8.9	7.6	7.7
Other Education and Training[3]	5.8	5.7	7.2	6.2	4.9	3.8	6.9	6.5	5.8	4.8	7.0	6.4
Total Education and Training[4]	34.5	55.5	59.3	59.5	47.2	62.8	60.8	59.7	40.9	59.2	60.1	59.3
Population (000s)	373.1	282.0	293.5	312.3	388.1	288.2	308.5	329.2	761.2	570.2	602.0	641.6

1 Includes work-based learning in full-time education

2 Includes work-based learning in full-time education

3 Includes part-time education not funded by employers or through work-based learning; also full and part-time education in independent FE and HE institutions

4 Total of all full-time education and work-based learning (less work-based learning in full-time education plus employer-funded training and other education and training

Source: DfES (2005f, 2005g)

Table 2. Participation in full-time education by 16-18 year-olds by institution type 1985-2004, England. Figures for 2004 are provisional.

												Percentage
	Female				Male				All			
Aged 16												
End of calendar year	1985	1993	2001	2004	1985	1993	2001	2004	1985	1993	2001	2004
Maintained Schools[1]	21.5	30.5	30.4	31.4	19.3	28.0	26.4	27.3	20.3	29.2	28.4	29.5
Independent Schools[2]	4.3	6.5	6.1	6.1	5.5	7.5	6.3	6.1	4.9	7.0	6.2	6.1
Sixth Form Colleges	4.9	9.8	10.6	11.3	4.4	8.6	8.7	9.2	4.6	9.2	9.6	10.4
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	20.3	28.9	27.5	27.8	15.2	26.6	25.1	25.7	17.7	27.7	26.3	27.0
Higher Education Institutions	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
Total	51.0	75.7	75.0	77.0	44.3	70.9	66.6	68.4	47.6	73.2	70.7	73.3
Aged 17												
End of calendar year	1986	1994	2002	2004	1986	1994	2002	2004	1986	1994	2002	2004
Maintained Schools[1]	12.1	21.5	23.9	24.9	11.7	18.8	20.1	20.7	11.9	20.2	21.9	22.7
Independent Schools[2]	3.4	5.8	5.8	5.7	4.4	6.9	5.8	5.6	3.9	6.4	5.8	5.6
Sixth Form Colleges	3.5	8.0	9.1	9.4	3.1	6.9	7.2	7.5	3.3	7.4	8.1	8.4
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	16.1	25.7	23.5	23.8	10.7	24.4	20.9	21.3	13.4	25.0	22.2	22.5
Higher Education Institutions	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.5
Total	35.4	61.7	62.9	64.5	30.1	57.5	54.4	55.4	32.7	59.5	58.5	59.8
Aged 18												
End of calendar year	1987	1995	2003	2004	1987	1995	2003	2004	1987	1995	2003	2004
Maintained Schools[1]	1.0	1.9	2.0	2.2	1.3	2.3	2.2	2.3	1.2	2.1	2.1	2.3
Independent Schools[2]	0.5	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.6	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.6	1.0	0.9	0.9
Sixth Form Colleges	0.7	1.6	1.3	1.3	0.8	1.8	1.4	1.5	0.7	1.7	1.4	1.4
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	8.8	14.8	12.0	12.1	7.3	15.9	12.1	12.3	8.0	15.4	12.1	12.2
Higher Education Institutions	6.8	20.5	23.6	23.9	8.4	19.1	17.5	17.9	7.6	19.8	20.4	20.8
Total	17.7	39.7	39.7	40.3	18.3	40.3	34.3	35.0	18.0	40.0	36.9	37.6

1 Includes all pupils in maintained schools and maintained special schools

2 Includes all pupils in independent schools, non-maintained special schools, city technology colleges, academies and pupil referral units

Source: DfES (2005f)

Table 3. Participation of 16-18 year-olds in different types of full-time Level 3 provision by institution 1985-2004, England

Percentage

	16 year-olds				17 year-olds				18 year-olds			
	1985	1993	2001	2004	1986	1994	2002	2004	1987	1995	2003	2004
Level 3	**24.7**	**45.3**	**49.9**	**50.9**	**24.2**	**48.9**	**48.8**	**49.4**	**5.9**	**15.3**	**12.3**	**12.5**
GCE A/AS Level	21.8	37.1	37.8	37.5	20.4	35.2	34.0	33.4	3.8	5.8	4.1	4.1
Maintained Schools	12.5	19.3	20.9	20.9	11.0	17.7	18.0	17.8	0.9	1.2	1.1	1.2
Independent Schools	3.9	6.0	5.1	4.9	3.6	5.8	5.2	5.0	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.6
Sixth Form Colleges	3.0	6.6	6.8	7.3	3.0	6.2	6.2	6.4	0.7	1.1	0.7	0.8
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	2.3	5.2	4.9	4.4	2.8	5.4	4.6	4.2	1.8	2.7	1.6	1.6
VCE A/AS[1]	-	2.0	7.4	6.7	-	5.3	7.8	7.1	-	3.8	2.7	2.2
Maintained Schools	-	0.6	3.1	4.1	-	0.9	2.8	3.6	-	0.5	0.6	0.6
Independent Schools	-	0.0	0.1	0.2	-	0.1	0.1	0.2	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sixth Form Colleges	-	0.2	1.2	1.3	-	0.5	1.3	1.4	-	0.4	0.4	0.4
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	-	1.2	2.9	1.2	-	3.8	3.5	1.9		2.9	1.6	1.2
NVQ 3 Equivalents[2]	3.0	6.0	4.6[3]	6.4[3]	3.8	7.9[3]	6.5[3]	8.3[3]	2.0	5.1[3]	5.1[3]	5.7[3]
Maintained Schools	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Independent Schools	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sixth Form Colleges	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	3.0	5.3	4.2	5.9	3.8	7.2	6.1	7.8	2.0	4.5	4.2	4.9

1. Introduced as Advanced GNVQ in 1992

2. Includes all other Level 3 vocational qualifications excluding NVQ 3 and VCE A/AS, for example BTEC National Diplomas

3. Figures may not sum because some Higher Education Institutions offer these types of vocational qualifications and they are not included in this table

Source: DfES (2005f, 2005g)

Table 4. Participation of 16-18 year-olds in different types of full-time Level 2 provision by institution 1985-2004, England

												Percentage
	16 year-olds				17 year-olds				18 year-olds			
	1985	1993	2001	2004	1986	1994	2002	2004	1987	1995	2003	2004
Level 2	**10.2**	**20.0**	**15.0**	**13.8**	**1.7**	**7.1**	**6.3**	**6.3**	**0.3**	**2.6**	**2.5**	**2.5**
GCSE	10.2	6.9	2.5	2.4	1.7	1.1	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2
Maintained Schools	5.8	2.7	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Independent Schools	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sixth Form Colleges	1.4	1.6	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	2.2	2.2	1.0	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
NVQ 2	-	0.9	2.2	2.1	-	2.1	1.8	1.8	-	1.0	0.7	0.7
Maintained Schools	-	0.4	0.1	0.1	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Independent Schools	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sixth Form Colleges	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	-	0.5	2.1	1.9	-	2.1	1.7	1.7	-	1.0	0.7	0.6
Intermediate GNVQ	-	4.3	6.2	3.8	-	2.1	1.7	1.0	-	0.6	0.4	0.3
Maintained Schools	-	2.0	2.4	1.9	-	0.5	0.3	0.2	-	0.1	0.0	0.0
Independent Schools	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sixth Form Colleges	-	0.4	0.8	0.7	-	0.2	0.2	0.2	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	-	2.0	3.0	1.2	-	1.4	1.2	0.6	-	0.5	0.3	0.3
NVQ 2 Equivalents	0.0	8.8	4.1	5.5	0.0	1.7	2.2	3.0	0.0	0.7	1.2	1.4
Maintained Schools	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Independent Schools	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sixth Form Colleges	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	0.0	5.5	3.8	5.1	0.0	1.6	2.1	2.9	0.0	0.6	1.1	1.2

Source: DfES (2005f)

Table 5. Participation of 16-18 year-olds in different types of full-time Level 1 and other provision by institution 1985-2004, England

	16 year-olds				17 year-olds				18 year-olds			Percentage
	1985	1993	2001	2004	1986	1994	2002	2004	1987	1995	2003	2004
Level 1	**0.0**	**1.8**	**3.7**	**5.3**	**0.0**	**1.1**	**1.5**	**1.8**	**0.0**	**0.5**	**0.8**	**0.8**
NVQ1	-	0.2	1.0	1.4	-	0.3	0.3	0.4	-	0.1	0.1	0.2
Maintained Schools	-	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Independent Schools	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sixth Form Colleges	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	-	0.1	0.9	1.4	-	0.3	0.3	0.3	-	0.1	0.1	0.2
Foundation GNVQ	-	0.2	1.2	0.9	-	0.2	0.4	0.3	-	0.1	0.1	0.1
Maintained Schools	-	0.0	0.3	0.1	-	0.0	0.1	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Independent Schools	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sixth Form Colleges	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	-	0.1	0.9	0.7	-	0.1	0.3	0.2	-	0.1	0.1	0.1
NVQ 1 equivalents	0.0	1.4	1.5	3.0	0.0	0.6	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.5
Maintained Schools	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Independent Schools	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sixth Form Colleges	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	0.0	1.4	1.4	2.9	0.0	0.6	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.5
Other courses[1]	10.3	6.0	2.0	3.3	6.1	1.8	1.7	2.0	2.7	1.6	1.1	1.2
Maintained Schools	0.0	0.7	0.7	1.6	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.4
Independent Schools	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Sixth Form Colleges	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges	10.1	4.8	0.9	1.2	5.8	1.1	0.7	0.8	2.5	1.0	0.6	0.6

1 Includes all courses below Level 1 and those of unknown or unspecified levels (also includes PRUs; and special school for which no qualification is available)

Source: DfES (2005f)

Table 6. The main activity of 16 year-olds by ethnic origin and parental characteristics 2004, England and Wales

	Full-time education	Work-based learning	Full-time job	Part-time job	Out of work	Something else/not stated
All	72	9	7	4	6	3
Male	67	12	9	3	7	2
Female	77	6	5	4	5	3
Ethnic Origin						
White	70	10	8	4	6	3
Black	83	4	3	2	7	2
Asian	85	3	1	2	5	4
Indian	91	2	*	3	2	1
Pakistani	78	6	1	*	7	7
Bangladeshi	77	*	*	*	9	8
Other Asian	91	*	*	*	*	4
Other ethnic groups	81	4	4	2	6	2
Not stated	65	12	8	2	7	6
Parental Occupation						
Higher professional	85	5	5	2	2	1
Lower professional	79	7	5	3	4	2
Intermediate	71	10	8	4	5	3
Lower supervisory	61	15	10	5	6	3
Routine	57	12	11	6	11	4
Other/not classified	63	9	7	4	12	5
Parental qualifications						
At least one parent with a degree	85	4	4	3	3	1
At least one parent with A Level	77	7	6	4	4	2
Neither parent with A Level	64	12	9	4	8	4
Disability						
Has a disability or health problem	68	7	6	3	10	7
Does not have a disability problem	72	9	7	4	6	3
Year 11 qualifications						
5+ GCSE grades A*-C, of which	89	3	3	2	1	1
8+ GCSE grades A*-C	94	2	2	1	1	1
5-7 GCSE grades A*-C	78	7	6	4	3	2
1-4 GCSE grades A*-C	60	15	11	5	7	3
5+ GCSE grades D-G	48	17	12	7	11	5
1-4 GCSE grades D-G	32	21	17	4	20	6
None reported	26	11	11	9	28	15
Truancy and exclusion in Year 11						
Persistent truant	25	11	17	8	28	11
Occasional Truant	61	11	10	5	9	4
No truancy	79	8	5	3	3	2
Excluded – fixed/permanently	40	17	14	7	17	5
Not excluded	76	8	6	3	4	3

Source DfES (2005h)

Table 7. Achievements at GCSE/GNVQ by ethnicity, free school meal provision and gender 2002

(a) GCSE/GNVQ five or more A*-C

	Non Free School Meals			Free School Meals			All Pupils		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
White	59.5	48.5	53.9	23.6	16.1	19.8	55.0	44.3	49.5
Black Caribbean	40.6	25.2	32.8	28.1	14.9	21.5	36.8	21.9	29.2
Black African	51.8	37.8	45.0	30.4	20.9	25.6	43.7	31.0	37.4
Black Other	49.8	32.8	41.4	27.7	17.8	23.0	42.5	27.6	35.2
Indian	71.9	60.3	65.9	48.4	35.5	41.7	68.8	56.9	62.6
Pakistani	50.9	36.6	43.5	36.4	27.3	31.6	44.9	32.6	38.5
Bangladeshi	53.6	42.2	47.6	46.3	35.5	40.9	49.0	38.0	43.3
Chinese	76.4	68.1	72.2	58.5	62.2	60.4	73.5	66.8	70.1
Other	60.3	46.7	53.3	38.4	24.0	30.9	54.1	40.0	46.8
Unclassified	59.3	48.8	54.0	29.3	19.1	24.4	55.4	45.1	50.2
All pupils	59.3	48.2	53.7	27.3	18.8	23.0	54.6	43.7	49.0

(b)No passes

	Non Free School Meals			Free School Meals			All Pupils		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
White	3.7	4.9	4.3	12.3	16.7	14.5	4.9	6.8	5.8
Black Caribbean	4.8	7.9	6.4	6.3	9.7	8.0	5.4	9.7	7.6
Black African	7.9	9.1	8.5	8.3	9.1	8.7	8.2	9.8	9.0
Black Other	5.5	8.5	7.0	7.4	12.7	10.0	6.4	10.8	8.6
Indian	2.2	2.5	2.3	3.5	4.5	4.0	2.4	2.9	2.6
Pakistani	4.5	5.6	5.1	4.9	7.5	6.2	4.7	6.6	5.7
Bangladeshi	4.5	8.6	6.6	5.1	6.9	6.0	4.9	7.8	6.4
Chinese	3.8	5.9	4.9	4.2	4.7	4.5	4.4	6.1	5.3
Other	6.8	8.8	7.8	9.6	13.5	11.7	7.6	10.6	9.1
Unclassified	4.9	6.6	5.8	11.5	18.6	15.0	5.8	8.3	7.0
All pupils	3.9	5.1	4.5	10.7	14.8	12.8	5.0	6.9	6.0

Source: DfES (2004c)

Table 8. Achievements at GCSE/GNVQ by ethnicity, special educational needs status and gender 2002

(a) GCSE/GNVQ five or more A*-C

	No identified SEN			SEN without a statement			SEN with a statement		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
White	61.6	54.7	58.3	14.5	12.9	13.5	5.1	5.0	5.0
Black Caribbean	44.9	31.8	38.9	8.8	5.8	6.9	4.1	2.2	2.7
Black African	49.7	38.6	44.5	17.8	11.8	14.3	4.1	4.3	4.2
Black Other	50.0	37.4	44.4	13.1	8.6	10.4	4.5	2.7	3.2
Indian	74.5	64.5	69.5	23.2	21.2	22.0	5.1	7.4	6.6
Pakistani	52.9	41.8	47.4	13.5	9.7	11.2	4.8	3.4	3.9
Bangladeshi	57.6	46.9	52.3	15.1	12.9	13.8	4.7	5.4	5.1
Chinese	77.4	72.9	75.1	38.8	30.9	34.4	20.0	14.3	15.8
Other	61.2	48.5	55.0	17.6	14.0	15.4	6.8	4.4	5.2
Unclassified	61.9	56.0	59.1	15.4	12.1	13.3	5.7	4.3	4.7
All pupils	61.3	54.0	57.8	14.7	12.8	13.5	5.1	4.9	5.0

(b) GCSE/GNVQ five or more A*-G

	No identified SEN			SEN without a statement			SEN with a statement		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
White	94.6	94.1	94.4	74.0	72.6	73.1	35.8	38.1	37.4
Black Caribbean	93.3	88.7	91.2	79.7	72.1	75.1	32.7	40.7	38.8
Black African	87.9	86.1	87.0	81.8	78.3	79.8	42.9	41.4	41.8
Black Other	92.5	87.9	90.4	73.5	70.6	71.8	29.9	36.2	34.3
Indian	97.5	96.9	97.2	90.8	91.1	91.0	43.6	43.7	43.6
Pakistani	94.8	92.4	93.6	85.5	79.1	81.7	30.7	33.2	32.2
Bangladeshi	94.3	89.7	92.0	84.0	75.9	79.3	43.8	44.1	43.9
Chinese	93.2	92.0	92.6	89.4	80.9	84.6	20.	50.0	42.1
Other	90.4	86.9	88.7	75.5	70.3	72.4	30.8	36.7	34.8
Unclassified	93.9	92.6	93.2	70.7	70.4	70.5	33.4	33.3	33.3
All pupils	94.5	93.6	94.1	75.0	73.1	73.8	35.5	37.9	37.2

(c) No passes

	No identified SEN			SEN without a statement			SEN with a statement		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
White	2.8	3.1	3.0	12.2	12.1	12.2	42.2	37.9	39.2
Black Caribbean	3.5	5.6	4.5	7.7	12.7	10.7	44.9	30.8	34.1
Black African	7.4	8.6	7.9	9.5	9.6	9.6	36.7	37.1	37.0
Black Other	3.8	6.7	5.1	12.3	13.4	13.0	44.8	40.9	42.1
Indian	1.6	1.6	1.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	41.0	37.6	38.7
Pakistani	2.9	4.0	3.4	5.5	7.2	6.6	42.9	41.3	41.9
Bangladeshi	3.7	5.7	4.7	7.2	10.5	9.1	29.7	36.6	33.8
Chinese	3.8	4.8	4.3	2.4	6.4	4.6	70.0	46.4	52.6
Other	5.8	7.8	6.8	12.4	14.0	13.3	48.7	42.2	44.3
Unclassified	3.5	4.3	3.9	14.5	14.1	14.2	47.6	41.8	43.5
All pupils	3.0	3.4	3.2	11.6	11.9	11.8	42.5	38.2	39.5

Source: DfES (2004c)

Table 9. Time series of GCE/VCE A Level (or equivalent) achievement of 17 years

As a percentage of the 17 year-old population at the beginning of the academic year

Academic Year Ending	Number of GCE/VCE A Levels (or equivalent[1]) achieved			Students achieving at least 3 A grades at GCE/VCE A Level
	1 or more	2 or more	3 or more	
2004	39.5	34.5	28.0	3.6
2003	38.9	34.0	27.2	3.3
2002	39.0	34.2	27.5	3.2
2001	37.3	33.0	24.3	2.9
2000	34.9	31.5	23.6	2.7
1999	33.8	30.5	22.7	2.5
1998	33.3	30.0	22.3	2.4
1997	3.08	26.9	21.3	2.2
1996	31.0	26.8	21.1	2.2
1995	30.5	26.1	20.0	2.2
1994	29.1	24.6	18.4	1.9

1 Includes Advanced GNVQ between 1998 and 2001

Source: DfES (2005b)

Table 10. Starts (in 000s) on work-based learning provision 2000/01-2003/04

Academic Year	Advanced Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	NVQ Learning	E2E	Total WBL for Young People
2000/01	72.4	104.1	50.1	26.3	252.9
2001/02	54.0	108.3	54.1	31.1	247.6
2002/03	47.3	115.7	40.6	35.7	239.3
2003/04	55.9	136.5	26.6	61.1	280.0

Source: LSC (2005b)

Table 11. Participation of 16-18 year-olds in work-based learning 1985-2004, England

	16 year-olds				17 year-olds				18 year-olds			Percentage
	1985	1993	2001	2004	1986	1994	2002	2004	1987	1995	2003	2004
Work-based Learning	**25.8**	**12.9**	**7.3**	**6.7**	**6.6**	**13.6**[1]	**8.9**	**8.9**	**4.8**	**7.7**	**8.1**	**8.0**
Advanced Apprenticeships	-	0.0	1.5	1.0	-	0.0	2.4	1.7	-	0.6	2.9	2.7
Apprenticeships	-	0.0	3.5	3.9	-	0.0	4.6	5.6	-	0.0	4.1	4.4
Entry to Employment (E2E)	-	0.0	0.7	1.7	-	0.0	0.6	1.2	-	0.0	0.5	0.4
NVQ Learning	25.8	12.9	1.6	0.1	6.6	13.6	1.4	0.4	4.8	7.0	0.7	0.4

[1] This figure does not really do justice to the uptake of work-based learning via the Youth Training Scheme among 17 year-olds during the phase of expansion (see Figure 2). At its peak in 1988 21.7% of 17 year-olds participated via this route.

Source: DfES (2005f)

Table 12. The labour market status of 16-18 year-olds not in education or training 1991-2004, England

	16 year-olds				17 year-olds				18 year-olds			Percentage
	1991	1993	2001	2004	1992	1994	2002	2004	1993	1995	2003	2004
Not in any education or training	**12**	**9**	**14**	**13**	**22**	**19**	**22**	**21**	**48**	**38**	**40**	**41**
ILO employed	6	4	7	5	13	11	13	12	31	26	28	28
ILO unemployed	4	4	5	5	6	4	6	5	10	9	6	7
Economically inactive	2	1	2	3	3	4	3	4	7	5	6	6

Source: DfES (2005f)

Table 13. Enrolment rates 2002

Full-time and part-time students in public and private institutions, by age

Country	Ending age of compulsory education	Number of years at which over 90% of the population is enrolled	Age range at which over 90% of the population is enrolled	Students aged					
				4 and under as a percentage of the population of 2-4 year-olds	5-14 as a percentage of the 15-19 year-olds	15-19 as a percentage of the population of 15-19 year-olds	20-29 as a percentage of the population of 20-29 year-olds	30-39 as a percentage of the population of 30-39 year-olds	40 and over as a percentage of the population of over 40 year-olds
Denmark	16	12	4-16	86.9	99.1	81.8	31.4	5.5	0.8
Finland	16	12	6-17	39.6	94.4	85.0	39.5	10.7	2.2
France	16	15	3-17	119.7	101.1	86.7	19.6	1.8	a
Germany	18	12	6-17	80.3	97.5	89.2	25.5	2.8	0.2
Spain	16	14	3-16	112.5	103.8	80.4	23.3	2.6	0.4
United Kingdom	**16**	**12**	**4-15**	**81.2**	**98.9**	**76.8**	**26.8**	**16.2**	**8.3**
Czech Republic	15	13	5-17	78.7	99.3	88.4	15.9	1.3	0.1
Hungary	16	12	4-16	81.1	100.3	81.1	21.2	4.2	0.4
Poland	15	12	6-17	29.1	94.4	86.8	27.3	4.1	Data included in previous column
Country mean	16	12		67.8	98.5	79.4	22.7	5.4	1.5

Note: these figures are based on head counts, and therefore do not distinguish between full-time and part-time study
Source: OECD (2004) p.278

Table 14. Percentage of the youth population in education and not in education 2002

By age group and work status

	Age group	In education					Not in education			
		Students in work-study programmes	Other employed	Unemployed	Not in the labour force	Sub-total	Employed	Unemployed	Not in the labour force	Sub-total
Denmark	15-19	5.9	41.0	3.5	38.4	88.7	8.9	0.4	2.0	11.3
	20-24	8.8	25.9	2.4	18.2	55.3	37.4	3.5	3.9	44.7
	25-29	1.7	21.2	1.2	11.0	35.0	58.3	2.8	3.9	65.0
Finland	15-19	13.0	7.7	4.2	55.5	80.4	4.7	2.6	12.3	19.6
	20-24	6.7	10.8	2.5	36.0	56.1	25.1	5.8	13.0	43.9
	25-29	3.1	10.9	0.9	11.8	26.7	53.6	6.3	13.5	73.3
France	15-19	5.3	0.9	0.1	88.3	94.6	1.9	1.7	1.7	5.4
	20-24	5.5	5.2	0.9	41.5	53.2	32.5	9.2	5.1	46.8
	25-29	1.7	4.6	0.4	5.0	11.7	70.1	9.4	8.9	88.3
Germany	15-19	19.5	4.1	0.7	65.9	90.1	5.2	1.7	3.0	9.9
	20-24	12.9	5.9	0.3	18.9	38.1	46.0	7.0	8.9	61.9
	25-29	1.6	6.1	0.3	8.3	16.3	66.3	6.5	11.0	83.7
Spain	15-19	0.5	2.6	1.4	77.4	81.9	11.0	3.9	3.2	18.1
	20-24	0.6	6.2	3.0	33.6	43.4	41.5	9.3	5.8	56.6
	25-29	0.3	5.9	2.3	7.6	16.1	64.2	9.5	10.2	83.9
United Kingdom	**15-19**	**4.3**	**20.1**	**2.4**	**48.5**	**75.3**	**16.2**	**4.5**	**4.0**	**24.7**
	20-24	**2.7**	**13.3**	**1.0**	**14.0**	**31.0**	**53.7**	**5.6**	**9.7**	**69.0**
	25-29	**1.0**	**8.9**	**0.6**	**2.8**	**13.3**	**70.7**	**4.2**	**11.8**	**86.7**
Czech Republic	15-19	21.6	0.2	n	66.5	88.3	5.7	3.5	2.5	11.7
	20-24	0.3	0.5	0.1	24.8	25.7	56.2	8.8	9.3	74.3
	25-29	n	0.3	n	2.6	2.9	73.3	6.3	17.5	97.1
Hungary	15-19	a	0.4	0.1	86.9	87.5	4.5	1.7	6.3	12.5
	20-24	a	4.9	0.3	32.5	37.7	42.0	5.4	14.9	62.3
	25-29	a	5.9	0.3	4.4	10.6	61.8	5.1	22.5	89.4
Poland	15-19	a	3.0	0.8	92.2	95.9	1.0	1.8	1.3	4.1
	20-24	a	9.9	8.3	35.7	53.8	20.8	18.0	7.4	46.2
	25-29	a	8.6	2.2	4.0	14.9	53.3	18.7	13.2	85.1
OECD country mean	15-19	6.0	11.1	1.8	62.8	81.7	10.4	2.8	5.1	18.3
	20-24	2.4	10.1	1.4	24.1	37.9	45.4	7.2	9.4	62.1
	25-29	0.6	6.5	0.6	5.5	13.3	68.1	6.4	12.2	86.7

Source: OECD (2004) pp.330-331. Students in work-study programmes are considered to be both in education and employed, irrespective of their labour market status according to the ILO definition

Appendix IV: System dynamics modelling

The approach adopted for this task comes from a system dynamics perspective, which "deals with how things change through time" using models that "allow one to see how the structure and decision-making policies in a system create its behaviour"[388]. Though originally (in the early 1960s[389]) an essentially quantitative approach, system dynamics has grown over the more recent years to cover both quantitative and qualitative modelling. Qualitative modelling, in the form of a detailed description of system behaviour over time, is valuable not only as a potential basis for developing quantitative models and as a compensation for their caveats, but also in its own right, as a way of mapping complexity and informing debate[390]. It is this view that opened for the Review the approach to education and training presented here, which combines insights from a variety of sources, qualitative and quantitative alike.

This approach attempts to take advantage, in a heuristic manner, of some characteristics of system dynamics studies:
- focus on the temporal dimension;
- starting from problematic behaviour: the investigation starts with the observation of a 'misbehaviour' of the system, a set of patterns that do not follow those that would have been expected, for example lower than hoped for participation rates;
- strategic orientation: such studies are undertaken with the goal of improvement;
- combination of quantitative (mathematical models of 'causally closed' systems) and qualitative (more or less 'fuzzy' maps of open systems) models;
- acceptance of complexity and non-linearity;
- importance attached to careful description aiming at joining the diversity of available information into a coherent account;
- acceptance of a diversity of sources and forms of knowledge (theoretical, as well as experiential);
- accounts of both endogenous and exogenous behaviour;
- separate consideration of underlying structures, policies, and parameters, and the resulting behaviour of the system;
- aimed at changing the ways in which the system has been traditionally (or routinely) viewed.

---

[388] Forrester, J.W. (1999)
[389] Forrester, J.W. (1961)
[390] Coyle, G. (2000)

Appendix V: Problems arising from the use of international datasets

Last year's report began the process of highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the various datasets available on 14-19 education and training. We looked then at administrative datasets from England, Wales and Scotland, and at the extent to which they make home–international comparisons feasible[391]. In the light of the comparative dimension of this year's work, we point out here some of the problems encountered in the use of international and European data on education and training.

Problems shared by the various datasets

There are major discrepancies when comparing data from different sources. Leney gives the example of UOE (UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat) and the LFS; the differences between the two sources in the case of Germany or Denmark, for instance, seem to be high[392]. These discrepancies emerge from the lack of common definitions, as well as from methodological and technological incompatibilities[393].

Reporting by ISCED level has its own problems, as there are no exact equivalents between these levels and the various qualifications frameworks, and therefore the levels will be taken to be different things in different countries ("the mapping seems to be more the result of political negotiations than underpinned by research (…) International jurors should benchmark these qualifications by both level and programme orientation (general or vocational) to produce an international dataset that distinguishes qualifications by level and orientation")[394].

Eurostat

Changes in how the surveys were carried out generate lack of comparability (Eurostat warns about Italy, 1993; Portugal, 1998; Belgium, 1999; Finland, 2000; Sweden and Bulgaria, 2001; Latvia and Lithuania, 2002; Luxemburg and Hungary, 2003[395].

Low sample size in a number of countries (including Denmark) influences the high variability of results over time.

Information is not provided by well-defined age groups (age-related information is either aggregated, or it concentrates on a 'typical' age).

---

[391] This has been reported more extensively in Oancea, A. (2004)
[392] Many of the comments included in the sections "Eurostat" and "Labour Force Survey" were raised by Leney, T. (2004).
[393] Leney, T. (2004) illustrates this with three examples: different methods of data collection; reference periods; and sampling methods. Changes in national surveys over time add further comparability problems.
[394] Leney, T. (2004), p.69
[395] Leney, T. (2004), p.77

(European) Labour Force Survey

Breaks in the series due to methodological or technical problems and changes make comparison over time very difficult. This is made worse by the asynchronous implementation of these changes in different countries. For example, in 2003 new variables were introduced in some countries (but not in all) with reference to education; therefore differences emerged between countries using the pre-2003 concept of participation (e.g. France, Poland and for a while the UK) and those operating with the new variables. Similarly, the concept of 'early school leaver' is not consistent across countries and data collections[396].

Self reported educational attainment can be a source of bias.

Information on highest completed level of education is not disaggregated by types of programmes (prevocational/vocational/general education).

The definition of certain indicators (e.g. lifelong learning) is not consistent from one wave to the other. The short period of time to which the survey refers (four weeks prior to it) produces underestimates of adult participation and "misleadingly implies a more equal distribution of participation"[397].

OECD

The presentation of undifferentiated data on the UK masks differences, for example between England, Wales and Scotland.

There are problematic definitions of certain terms (work-study programme, employment, 'in education') and inconsistencies in their usage between countries and data collections. Such is the definition of 'vocational learning' – for example, it is claimed that "60% or more of upper secondary students are enrolled in vocational programmes" in the UK[398], a percentage which seems questionable in view of previous analysis of the learning patterns of young people in the UK[399].

There is a lack of differentiation between full-time and part-time learning.

Discrepancies exist between figures based on specially collected self-reports at country level and those based on administrative sources (e.g. in the measurement of age and in the classification by qualification).

---

[396] Leney, T. (2004), p.76
[397] Leney, T. (2004), p.70
[398] OECD (2004), p.286
[399] Hayward, G., Hodgson, A., Johnson, J., Keep, E., Oancea, A., Pring, R., Spours, K. and Wright, S. (2004)

Appendix VI: Higher education focus groups summary report

Rationale

In terms of overall system performance it could be argued that the GCE A Level route and the school-based Level 3 VET routes are working well: participation and attainment are both rising. Concerns about these routes are often framed in a rather narrow way. For example, press and policy debates about progression from these Level 3 programmes focus on the issues of selection and a rather sterile debate about changing standards. Media portrayal of these debates, particularly at A Level results time, centres on standards and problems of differentiation of candidates applying for places at elite universities.   However, the qualifications achieved are only one measure of system performance. In addition, we need to consider the nature of the learning experience provided by these programmes, the quality of the learning they produce and the preparation they provide for further learning in higher education. Considering system performance within this frame also directs our attention to the broader and more complex context of historical change in the relationship between higher education and upper secondary education, the growing lack of curriculum connectivity between the 14-19 phase and HE, and a lack of HE involvement in 14-19 qualifications reform.

We undertook this research in order to find out more about these complex issues, which are masked by media portrayals and key policy messages in which selection issues dominate. This study gathered evidence about the perceptions of HE lecturers and admissions staff of the strengths and weaknesses of the current 14-19 phase of education and training, and what they believe is required for effective progression into HE.

Methodology

The study involved focus group discussions, held in 21 HEIs. The range of institutions in the study reflected the diversity of the institutional landscape in HE in England and Wales and included 12 pre-1992 institutions, four post-1992 institutions, four mixed economy colleges and one university college. The focus groups were held in each individual HEI, with an average of eight to ten participants. A total of nearly 250 participants took part in the discussions, including admissions staff, admissions tutors from a variety of courses, senior managers, liaison officers and widening participation officers. Participants were invited by the UCAS/DfES Curriculum Development Group contact in each participating HEI and the focus groups were moderated by staff from UCAS and researchers from the Nuffield Review. The findings emerged from a range of institutions, but it is not our claim that the views expressed are representative.

Summary of findings

Although participants were encouraged to identify strengths as well as weaknesses, the HE staff involved were predominantly critical of current 14-19 arrangements. The research indicates that HE staff identify a number of problems with the 14-19 education and training system. Issues that were frequently raised by the participants included:

- the decline in the currency of A Level for admissions and selection purposes, based on the difficulty in differentiating between students with similar levels of attainment;
- the perceived lack of effective development of content knowledge, independent study skills and intellectual sensitivity to the subjects studied during A Level study;
- perceived over-assessment within the 14-19 phase;
- the perceived negative impacts of modularisation at A Level, including a lack of cross-topic knowledge and an expedient attitude to learning;
- the confusing range of vocational qualifications on offer;
- the lack of time available for extra-curricular activities (particularly from 16 to 19);
- a perceived decline in students' linguistic and mathematical fluency, as well as their ability to apply knowledge and to work with abstract concepts.

Admissions process

Examination results and predicted grades remain the key source of information used to assess the suitability of a candidate for admission to a particular course. The personal statement and reference on the UCAS form were also commonly used. However, some participants felt there were a number of problems with the admissions process, including the formulaic nature of many personal statements and references, which means they are less useful than they might be in differentiating between applicants, and the decreasing usefulness of A Level grades as a selection mechanism, an argument which applies equally to predicted and achieved grades. Vocational qualifications were believed to cause particular problems for admissions purposes, either because they were unfamiliar, or because grading and qualification structures made it difficult to compare applicants.

There is also the issue of mixed messages about post-16 qualifications and their currency for access to HE: A Levels remain the key entry requirement even though some institutions identify problems with them; UCAS tariff points are awarded for qualifications which may not be accepted by HEIs; the National Qualification Framework suggests the equivalence of qualifications such as NVQs, A Levels, BTECs and so on at Level 3, but they may not be viewed as equivalent by some HEIs for admissions purposes in practice.

Subject-specific concerns

Certain subject areas were highlighted as particular causes for concern, the most often cited being modern foreign languages and single science subjects. The entitlement status (as opposed to being a compulsory component of the curriculum) of modern foreign languages

at 14-16 was seen as a particular problem, as well as the shortage of specialist subject teachers for chemistry and physics. The decline in languages was perceived to have serious knock-on effects, such as a slide in the take-up of Erasmus places and a negative impact on the competitiveness of UK graduates on the EU labour market.

Progression to HE

Concerns were expressed about the way in which 14-19 educational institutions prepared pupils for progression to HE. Participants felt that many 14-19 educational institutions lacked the time (and in some cases the knowledge) to prepare students for progression to HE. Participants from many HEIs were concerned about the quality of information and guidance available for young people and future students. These concerns ranged from guidance about options at both GCSE and A Level, as well as options for vocational qualifications, to advice related to HE choices and future employment prospects, to more general counselling about personal and financial matters.

Paradoxes identified by the research

There seems to be a fundamental mismatch between the aims of some HEIs, particularly selecting institutions, and the aspiration of the government for 50% of the cohort to enter higher education. Some participants seemed uncertain of the incremental impact of the achievement of this aspiration, and wary of the influence it would have on their student body and their work. However, other types of institution, such as mixed economy institutions, have been *de facto* responding positively to this challenge for years by initiating links with local schools and participating in government schemes such as Aim Higher.

The researchers noted a further paradox: many participants criticised the perceived effects of current 14-19 education and training fairly strongly, but many of these criticisms could be levelled at HE with equal force (for example, overemphasis on assessment; the fostering of a 'ticket to the next stage' approach; assessment patterns which encourage reluctance to engage in learning for its own sake; students with an expedient approach to courses; the demonstration of over-reliance on teaching staff on the part of the students, and the inherent weaknesses of some modular courses and modular assessment). Participants were, to a certain degree, aware of this paradox.

The researchers also identified a fundamental issue regarding the central purpose of HE. Is the main function of HE:
- to foster knowledge for its own sake?
- to offer students a passport to employment success?
- to be a successful, profit-making business?

Of course, these three aims are not mutually exclusive, but participants indicate some conflict between them, especially in terms of the expectations of lecturers and students, as well as parents and employers, from 14-19 education and training and HE. Lecturers

criticised the instrumentalist approach of some students, who were open about using HE as a passport to employment. Lecturers had an expectation that students should be interested in learning for its own sake.

A full report will be available on the Nuffield Review website by the end of 2005: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk

Appendix VII: Events 2004-05

Working Day VI: Young people and participation in 14-19 education and training: What do we know and what can we do?
26 October 2004

Stephen Ball	*Participation and progression in education and training 14-19: Working draft of ideas*
Nick Foskett	*IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) and young people's participation decisions 14-19*
Andy Furlong	*Cultural dimensions of decisions about educational participation among 14-19 year-olds*
Jane Buckley	*How can we help disaffected and less committed young people participate in education and training?*
Victor Farlie	*Are apprenticeships any longer a credible vocational route for young people, and can the supply side respond effectively to government policy, and address the needs of learners and employers?*
John Fox	*Ivor the Engine and practical curriculum reform 14-16*

Working Day VII: The Tomlinson proposals and the White Paper on 14-19 reform: What do they mean for the future of 14-19 education and training?
20 April 2005

Richard Pring	*What would the White Paper proposals mean for the aims and purposes of the 14-19 phase?*
Geoff Hayward	*How might the Tomlinson and White Paper proposals affect system performance – participation, progression and achievement?*
Geoff Stanton	*The proposals for a new system of specialist (vocational) diplomas*
Prue Huddleston, Ewart Keep and Lorna Unwin	*What might the Tomlinson and White Paper proposals mean for vocational education and work-based learning?*
Jill Johnson	*What would the Tomlinson and White Paper proposals mean for higher education providers?*
Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours	*Building a strong 14-19 phase in England? The government's White Paper in its wider system context*

Working Day VIII: Nuffield Review Annual Report 2004-05: Early Draft
20 June 2005

Core Group consultation on the three Strands of the draft Annual Report

Seminar: 14-19 Education in Wales
25 January 2005

Ross Thomas and students	*The Experience of Welsh Bac Pilot Centres*
Jane Carver and students	*The Experience of Welsh Bac Pilot Centres*
John Williams	*Building a 14-19 Learning Pathways Network*
Jane Davidson AM	*14-19 Developments in Wales: the Welsh Bac and Learning Pathways*
Terry Wales, Steve Bowden and students	*Community Participation: Building Capacity*
Gareth Pierce	*Accrediting The Future 14-19 Curriculum in Wales*
Gareth Rees	*Challenges for 14-19 Education in Wales*

Seminar: Policy Learning in 14-19 Education (in collaboration with ESRC Education and Youth Transitions Project)
15 March 2005

Jenny Ozga	*Models of policy making and policy learning*
Susannah Wright and Cathy Stasz	*A framework for understanding and comparing 14-19 policy in the UK*
David Raffe	*Learning from 'home international' comparisons: 14-19 curriculum and qualifications reform in England, Scotland and Wales*
Linda Croxford and David Raffe	*Secondary school organisation in England, Scotland and Wales since the 1980s*
Jeremy Higham and David Yeomans	*Policy memory and policy amnesia in 14-19 education: Learning from the past?*
Jacky Lumby and Nick Foskett	*Turbulence masquerading as change: Exploring 14-19 policy*
John Hart and Ron Tuck	*Consultation, consultation, consultation: Policy making in Action Plan, Higher Still and beyond*

Strand I Seminars: Aims, Learning and Curriculum

15 December 2004
Planning the work of the group

18 February 2005

Richard Pring	*The strengths and limitations of 'subjects'*
David Lambert	*Why subjects really matter*
Martin Roberts and Chris Winch	*Some thoughts on the role of humanities and history in the 14-19 curriculum*
Eleanor Rawling	*Geography in the school curriculum*
Viv Ellis	*Rethinking English: An informing purpose for a sack of snakes*
John Shaw	*Organising a relevant curriculum*
Jane Buckley	*Education for uncertainty: A change in young people's realities and the need for new learning*

23 March 2005

Ann West	*Successes that challenge the system: The FE perspective*
Dave Brockington	*Nascent Futures: A Discussion Paper on the ways in which ASDAN might contribute to a future teaching and learning agenda from aspects of its current practice*
John Somers	*Drama as alternative pedagogy*
John Gay	*Religious education 14-19*
Peter Mason	*Curriculum 14-19: One independent schools head's view*

18 May 2005

Anne Watson	*Maths 14-19: Its nature, significance, concepts and modes of engagement*
David Wood	*The arts 14-19*
Chris Winch, Martin Roberts and David Lambert	*Civic education for the 14-19 age group*
Joe Harkin	*14 to 16 Year olds in further education*

6 July 2005

Discussion of Strand I's contribution to the Annual Report

Strand III Seminars: The Institutional Dimension of 14-19 Reform in England

28 February 2005

Overarching questions for discussion:
1. What are the main institutional patterns for the delivery of 14-19 education and training in England?
2. What effects are these institutional arrangements perceived to have on learner participation, attainment and progression?
3. What are the key factors/mechanisms affecting institutional behaviour in the delivery of 14-19 education and training?

Ann Hodgson, Ken Spours and Susannah Wright	*From collaborative initiatives to a coherent 14-19 phase?*
Geoff Stanton and Mick Fletcher	*National institutional patterns and the effects of these on aspects of participation, attainment and progression*
Penny Plato	*14-19 Institutional arrangements in Surrey – a case study*
Linda McPhee and Gill Cumberland	*History of the educational provision for secondary and post-16 in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames*
Jez Truelove	*A case study of the Kingswood Partnership*

17 May 2005

Overarching question for discussion
    What institutional arrangements, together with a framework of incentives, will be necessary to underpin transparent and effective progression routes for all 14-19 year-olds in England?

Stuart Gardner	*An LSC perspective on key policy mechanisms, their effects and opportunities for reform*
Martin Johnson	*The effects of the accountability framework on 14-19 education and training and institutional arrangements*
Tom Jupp	*Key policy mechanisms and their effects on 14-19 education and training with particular reference to colleges of further education*
Jeremy Higham and David Yeomans	*Collaborative approaches to 14-19 education and training provision*
Ann Hodgson, Ken Spours and Susannah Wright	*14-19 Collaborative learning systems*

Appendix VIII: Advisory Committee membership

Nick Pearce   Director, Institute for Public Policy Research

Professor David Raffe   Professor, Centre for Educational Sociology, Department of
                               Education and Society, University of Edinburgh

Dr Catrin Roberts   Assistant Director, Education, Nuffield Foundation

Dr Geoff Stanton   Independent Education and Training Consultant

Dr Cathy Stasz   Senior Behavioural Scientist, RAND Corporation

Dr Hilary Steedman   Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Economic Performance,
                              London School of Economics

Professor Lorna Unwin   Director, Centre for Labour Market Studies, University of
                              Leicester

Sir David Watson   Professor of Higher Education Management, Institute of
                              Education, University of London

Appendix IX: Core Group membership

Kate Anderson	Learning and Skills Development Agency
Bill Bailey	University of Greenwich
Kathy Baker	General Teaching Council
Stephen Ball	Institute of Education, University of London
Tony Barnhill	Head of Student Recruitment, University of Ulster
Steve Besley	Edexcel
Maggie Blyth	Youth Justice Board
Tony Breslin	Citizenship Foundation
Dave Brockington	ASDAN
Nigel Brown	Nigel Brown Associates
Jane Buckley	Independent Education and Training Consultant
John Bynner	Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning
John Chapman	Independent Education and Training Consultant
Sheila Cooper	Girls' Schools Association
Sonja Czabaniuk	LEACAN
Chris Dark	Peers Technology College, Oxford
Peter Davies	Learning and Skills Development Agency
Simone Delorenzi	Institute for Public Policy Research
John Douglas	Newham LEA
John Dunford	Secondary Heads Association
David Egan	Cardiff School of Education / Welsh Assembly Government
Victor Farlie	Capital
Ian Finlay	University of Strathclyde
Mick Fletcher	Learning and Skills Development Agency
Nick Foskett	University of Southampton
John Fox	Independent Education Consultant
Alison Fuller	University of Southampton
Andy Furlong	University of Glasgow
Stuart Gardner	Learning and Skills Council
Denis Gleeson	University of Warwick
Steve Godfrey	Wycombe Motor Project
Howard Gospel	University of London
Paul Grainger	Independent Education and Training Consultant
Steve Haines	Disability Rights Commission
Sonja Hall	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
John Harwood	Institute of Governance and Public Management
Mark Hewlett	Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools
Jeremy Higham	University of Leeds
Helen Hill	National Union of Teachers

Prue Huddleston	University of Warwick
Tina Isaacs	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Martin Johnson	Association on Teachers and Lecturers
Tom Jupp	Independent Education and Training Consultant
Richard Larcombe	Independent Education and Training Consultant
Paul Lewis	University of Cambridge
Geoff Lucas	The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference
Stephen Machin	University College London
Malcolm Maguire	SQW Limited
Alison Matthews	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Marian Morris	National Foundation for Educational Research
Caroline Neville	Learning and Skills Council
Judith Norrington	City and Guilds
Tim Oates	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Joan Payne	Independent Education and Training Consultant
Penny Plato	Surrey LEA
Sonia Reynolds	Dysg
William Richardson	University of Exeter
Lucy Ryan	Her Majesty's Treasury
Paul Ryan	King's College London
Hilary Sargeant	National Association of Head Teachers
Maggie Scott	Association of Colleges
John Shaw	Meden School and Technology College
Vicky Shearn	Bexley Council
Andrew Sich	City and Guilds
Anne Sofer	Nuffield Foundation
Gordon Stobart	Institute of Education, University of London
Judith Stradling	City of Bristol College
Bridie Sullivan	Learning and Skills Council
Patricia Sweeney	Institute of Education, University of London
Dan Taubman	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
Kate Taylor	Department for Education and Skills
James Turner	The Sutton Trust
David Turrell	The Sir Bernard Lovell School, Bristol
Judith Watson	University of Brighton
John West	Independent Education and Training Consultant
Matthew White	Department for Education and Skills
Jane Williams	Department for Education and Skills
Chris Winch	King's College London
David Yeomans	University of Leeds

Appendix X: Members and contributors to strands

Strand I: Aims, Learning and Curriculum

Tony Breslin	Citizenship Foundation
Dave Brockington	ASDAN
Jane Buckley	Independent Education and Training Consultant
David Egan	Cardiff School of Education/Welsh Assembly Government
Viv Ellis	University of Oxford
John Fox	Wycombe Motor Project
John Gay	Culham Institute
Joe Harkin	Oxford Brookes University
Andrew Hunt	Nuffield Curriculum Centre
David Lambert	The Geographical Association
Peter Mason	Stamford School
Anna Pendry	University of Oxford
Richard Pring	Nuffield Review
Eleanor Rawling	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Helen Reynolds	Gosford Hill School
Catrin Roberts	The Nuffield Foundation
Martin Roberts	The Historical Association
John Shaw	Meden School and Technology College
John Somers	University of Exeter
Sally Tomlinson	University of Oxford
Geoff Wake	University of Manchester
Anne Watson	University of Oxford
Ann West	Lewisham College
Kathy Wicksteed	Specialist Schools Trust
Chris Winch	King's College London
David Wood	Oxford Brookes University
Susannah Wright	Nuffield Review

Strand II: Participation and Progression

Hubert Ertl	University of Oxford
Franz Gramlinger	CEDEFOP
Geoff Hayward	Nuffield Review
Jill Johnson	Nuffield Review
Alison Matthews	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Alis Oancea	Nuffield Review
Tim Oates	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Richard Skerrett	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
Judith Watson	University of Brighton
Stephanie Wilde	Nuffield Review

Strand III: The Institutional Dimension of 14-19 Reform in England

Bill Bailey	University of Greenwich
Gill Cumberland	Westminster City Council
Peter Davies	Learning and Skills Development Agency
Simone Delorenzi	Institute for Public Policy Research
Victor Farlie	Capital
Mick Fletcher	Learning and Skills Development Agency
Gary Forrest	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Nick Foskett	University of Southampton
Stuart Gardner	Learning and Skills Council
Jeremy Higham	University of Leeds
Ann Hodgson	Nuffield Review
Martin Johnson	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
Tom Jupp	Independent Education and Training Consultant
Alison Matthews	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
Linda McPhee	Richmond LEA
Adrian Perry	Department for Education and Skills
Penny Plato	Surrey LEA
Richard Pring	Nuffield Review
Catrin Roberts	The Nuffield Foundation
Hilary Sargeant	National Association of Head Teachers
Maggie Scott	Association of Colleges
Ken Spours	Nuffield Review
Geoff Stanton	Independent Education and Training Consultant
Judith Stradling	City of Bristol College
Dan Taubman	National Association for Teachers of Further and Higher Education
Kate Taylor	Department for Education and Skills
Jez Truelove	Kingswood Partnership
Susannah Wright	Nuffield Review
David Yeomans	University of Leeds