

Department for Education and Skills:

Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners

**Presented to Parliament by
the Secretary of State for Education and Skills
by Command of Her Majesty**

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by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills

Children, and all those who learn, are our future.

As we develop our strategy for the next five years for children's services, and for education and lifelong learning, we need to think about that future – about the kind of world we want our children to grow up in.

But we must also learn the lessons of the past. It is now sixty years since Butler's landmark 1944 settlement, which raised the school-leaving age to 15, and introduced free secondary education, as well as shaping a lasting partnership between Church and State in education. In the same decade, the 1942 Beveridge Report and the 1948 Children Act transformed welfare and children's services. These reforms were colossal; they transformed the landscape of welfare and of public services. Their influence is hard to over-state, and has been overwhelmingly a positive one.

However, there are three key ways in which the settlement sowed the seeds for less helpful developments in public service.

First, the model was a monolithic one – looking at the 'provision' of social services and education on the same sort of basis as public services like post-war housing – with the focus on a basic and standard product for all.

Second, administrative divisions were sharp from the outset – between health, schools, and social services – with different systems and mechanisms developed for each.

Third, the education settlement in particular was based on an assumption that ability was confined to a limited group – it was fundamentally elitist. Not only the grammar school system, but also the tiny proportion of young people able to go to University attested to (and cemented) this view. And despite the aspiration that there would be 'parity of esteem', vocational skills and training were, from the outset, clearly the poor relation. There were few technical schools, and secondary moderns were seen as the 'sinks' for those who did not make the grade for grammar school. Further education was seen as a Cinderella service, not understood or valued by policy makers who had no first-hand experience of it; and adult skills as a whole were neglected.

The move towards comprehensive education was about challenging this elitism and giving everyone a better deal. And evidence shows that it did help to improve standards, especially for those who had been put on the scrap-heap at 11 in the selective system. But the debate was still about types of school rather than standards – the principle remained that government did not interfere in how, what or how well schools taught – it was enough to ensure that education was provided.

James Callaghan's Ruskin speech of 1976 began the Great Debate on school standards, with his questions about whether the education system was really meeting the needs of employers and society. But even from here on – through the National Curriculum and the birth of Ofsted – the focus was on what every school ought to provide – a sort of basic minimum standard.

Over the last 60 years, a fundamental recasting of industry, employment, technology and society has transformed the requirement for education and training – not only driving the education system, but introducing new ideas about lifelong learning, personalised education, and self-directed learning. And the story has been of taking a system designed to deliver a basic minimum entitlement and elaborating and elaborating it to respond to these increasingly sophisticated (and rapidly changing) demands.

For some reforms, at some times, it has been necessary and right to take a fierce grip and

deliver dramatic change quickly to make right a problem in the system. We will never apologise for the directive action we took, for example, on literacy and numeracy in 1997 – it put right a national scandal of low aspiration and poor performance. But once the basics are in place and we want to move beyond them towards excellence, we need a new sort of system that is not based on the lowest common denominator.

The central characteristic of such a new system will be personalisation – so that the system fits to the individual rather than the individual having to fit to the system. This is not a vague liberal notion about letting people have what they want. It is about having a system which will genuinely give high standards for all – the best possible quality of children’s services, which recognise individual needs and circumstances; the most effective teaching at school, which builds a detailed picture of what each child already knows, and how they learn, to help them go further; and, as young people begin to train for work, a system that recognises individual aptitudes and provides as many tailored paths to employment as there are people and jobs. And the corollary of this is that the system must be both freer and more diverse – with more flexibility to help meet individual needs; and more choices between courses and types of provider, so that there really are different and personalised opportunities available.

In order to manage this increasingly diverse and personalised system, we need good leadership and high professional standards at all levels. We also need collaboration and partnership, so that diverse provision isn’t incoherent or bitty, and so that people can get seamless services. And this cannot just be a partnership of state providers – the voluntary and community sector, business, and private enterprises need to be part of this partnership to provide joined-up services.

This joining-up needs some local brokerage to make it work. But it implies a completely different kind of local system. Local government and local agencies must offer leadership and strategic direction – with really smart accountability – but the energies of the system can no longer be tied up in compliance or defensiveness. They must be focused on excellence. The people our whole system depends on – those at the front line – must be given the freedom to shape and reshape the offer to meet different and changing needs.

The result will be a nation where:

- every child gets the best possible start in life – with integrated services focused on the needs of parents and children, not chopped up according to provider;
- every primary school offers high standards in the basics, but in the context of a broad, rich and enjoyable curriculum;
- every secondary school offers excellent teaching, an exciting curriculum, and a positive and attractive environment;
- all schools are extended schools; community schools; healthy schools; inclusive schools; and enterprising schools (with real links to business);
- at 14-19, every young person has a pathway to suit them that fits them for work, further learning, and for life as an adult; and a wide range of activities outside school or college to enjoy and take part in;
- every child and young person who is in difficult circumstances gets the extra support they need without stigma;
- adult learners can all get and build the skills they need for success in employment – because employers are in the lead in designing and delivering training, working with highly responsive colleges;
- our nation benefits from a thriving university system that gives excellent teaching to all with the potential to benefit; which provides the nation with world-class research capability; and which works with business to provide the skills the nation most needs and to translate research into innovation effectively.

And where:

- the parts of the system are (and are seen as being) interlinked and interdependent – not just because each builds on the last (with primary schools dependent on effective early years education, secondary schools dependent on primary schools and so on) but in much more creative and dynamic ways – with business involved in designing employability skills education right from 11; with universities designing schemes for students in schools that both help with their outreach and give new experiences to children; with schools and colleges working together to offer routes from 14; with adult learning and childcare delivered together; with children’s services and education seen as part of one whole;
- the learner is a partner in learning, not a passive recipient – and this means that (especially as they grow older, leaving compulsory education) they have a stake in and a responsibility for their own learning;
- adult learners, employers and the wider community contribute to the education system and to children’s services so that they can get more out of them, and can shape them to meet their needs and the needs of the nation.

And all of this depends, as we have set out, on a radically reshaped system for delivering education and children’s services, and in particular a reshaped role for Local Government and for my Department, moving away from direction towards an enabling and empowering role. It depends on freedom for those at the front line to personalise services and to improve them. And it depends on Ministers like me holding our nerve and being able to resist the lure of the next initiative in favour of a system that drives its own improvement more and more.

Charles Clarke

Summary

Education and childcare are improving

Children and all those who learn are our future. That is why this Government has invested in extra nurseries and childcare places, teachers and schools, books and computers and colleges and universities.

This investment has gone hand in hand with reform and together they are producing results. Fewer children are born into poverty. More children at risk are getting better help and protection.

Our education system is now among the best in the world. Our ten-year olds are the third best readers in the world. There are many more good or excellent schools for parents to choose from, with specialist and inner city schools improving fast. The standard of teaching has never been higher. Many schools now have buildings that are a source of pride not shame.

A record number of students are now going to university. More adults now learn a new skill at work.

But we still face major challenges

We have opened up opportunity at every stage of life. But we have not yet broken the link between social class and achievement. No society can afford to waste the talent of its children and citizens. So major challenges at each key phase of life remain:

- **Under 5s** – disadvantage starts early in life and children who get a poor start tend to fall further behind as they go through the education system. And despite the improvements we are still not providing enough childcare places in a flexible way that meets parents’ needs.

- **School age years** – there are still too few excellent secondary schools for parents and pupils. While standards have risen, they are not yet high enough for all. Parents and teachers worry about truancy and bad behaviour.
- **14-19 year olds** – too many pupils drift, become disenchanted with school or get into trouble and drop out at 16. Vocational learning is still seen as second best. And pupils leave school insufficiently prepared for the world of work.
- **The world of work** – the UK lags behind other countries in terms of output and skills. A large number of adults lack vital skills in literacy and numeracy. And too often the training system does not give employers the sort of courses and qualifications that suit their business.

Underlying these challenges are more general problems. Children's services and education have been too compartmentalised. Services have not been joined up. Funding has been too fragmented. Children and learners have not had their needs addressed in a way that fits their specific needs. And as various governments have, over the years, tried to make improvements, too many of the changes have been organised in a top down way. The result has been to squeeze innovation and the entrepreneurial flair of good head teachers, nursery managers and college principals out of the system.

So we have to sustain progress, with new and more radical reforms

Our aim is to secure world-class standards for the great majority of our citizens, particularly in our schools. We do not accept the fatalist outdated argument that more means worse or that year on year improvements mean standards are falling.

Five key principles of reform will underpin our drive for a step change in children's services, education and training:

- **Greater personalisation and choice**, with the wishes and needs of children, parents and learners centre-stage.
- **Opening up services** to new and different providers and ways of delivering services.
- **Freedom and independence** for frontline headteachers, governors and managers with clear simple accountabilities and more secure streamlined funding arrangements.
- **A major commitment to staff development** with high quality support and training to improve assessment, care and teaching.
- **Partnerships** with parents, employers, volunteers and voluntary organisations to maximise the life chances of children, young people and adults.

For the **early years**, our **offer** to children and parents is:

- All parents able to get local one-stop support through Children's Centres that will provide childcare, education, health, employment and parenting support
- From birth to two, more opportunities and support for parents to stay at home with their children if they want to
- A flexible system of 'educare', that joins up education and childcare and provides 12½ hours free support per week for three and 4 year olds before they go to school, with more choice for parents about when they use it
- The development of dawn-to-dusk schools, with breakfast childcare and after-school clubs to help parents juggle their busy lives

- Children's Trusts bringing together all those who provide services for children and families in each local area, and making sure children at risk get proper care, education and protection

Once children reach **primary school**, our **offer** to children and parents is:

- Every child making the best possible progress in reading, writing and maths, with high-quality teachers and support staff in the classroom giving children more tailored learning
- A wider school curriculum and the choice for every child to learn a foreign language, play music and take part in competitive sport
- A closer relationship between parents and schools, with better information through a new 'school profile' and more family learning
- More primary schools working together in networks, supporting each other and challenging failure; and the best heads helping to improve the rest; and poor schools turned around quickly or closed

In **secondary education**, our central purpose for every pupil over the next five years is to raise the quality of education, teaching and learning, and to widen the range of real choices which are available. We will build on the achievements of the last seven years, to increase freedoms and independence; to accelerate the pace of reform in teaching and learning; and to extend choice and flexibility in the curriculum. Underpinning each of these is sustained and rising investment in schools.

At the heart of our reforms is the development of independent specialist schools in place of the traditional comprehensive – a decisive system-wide advance. We are not creating a new category of schools – rather, giving more independence to all schools within a specialist system.

But we will never return to a system based on selection of the few and rejection of the many; we will not abandon intervention in failing schools; and we will not cast aside our ambitious targets for schools to keep on improving. Independence will be within a framework of fair admissions, full accountability and strong partnerships that drive improvement.

We will put in place eight key reforms:

1. Guaranteed three-year budgets for every school from 2006, geared to pupil numbers, with every school also guaranteed a minimum per pupil increase each year. A dedicated Schools Budget, guaranteed by national Government and delivered through Local Authorities, will give headteachers and governors unprecedented financial security and confidence, and the ability to plan for the future.

2. Universal specialist schools – and better specialist schools. Every school will be able to become a specialist school with a mission to build a centre of curriculum excellence. Specialist schools will be able to take on a second specialism to develop their mission further. High-performing specialist schools will have the chance to become training schools or leaders of partnerships; those without sixth forms will have new opportunities to develop sixth form provision.

3. Freedom for all secondary schools to own their land and buildings, manage their assets, employ their staff, improve their governing bodies, and forge partnerships with outside sponsors and educational foundations. At present one in three schools enjoys some or most of these powers, including aided schools and 'foundation' schools. In future all schools – except those which are failing – will have a right to take on all these powers by a simple vote of their governing body, following a brief period of consultation. A strict national requirement for fair admissions will remain; and we will not allow any extension of selection

by ability, which denies parents the right to choose.

4. More places in popular schools. There is no 'surplus places rule'. All successful and popular schools may propose to expand. We have introduced dedicated capital funding to encourage this, and rules to allow it in all but exceptional circumstances. We will introduce a fast-track to expansion so there are more places in popular schools. We will mandate competitions for new schools which will enable parents' groups and others to promote schools, including smaller schools. This will enable successful schools to establish and manage entirely new schools and federations.

5. A 'new relationship with schools' to cut the red tape involved in accountability, without cutting schools adrift. Inspection, accountability and intervention to tackle failure are essential for independence to thrive properly. But they need to be of high quality and involve minimal bureaucracy. We will halve the existing inspection burden on schools, without scrapping the expectation that schools must constantly improve. We will replace the existing system of local authority 'link advisers' with a single annual review carried out by a 'school improvement partner', usually a serving headteacher from a successful school. In cases of failure, intervention will follow as necessary. High-performing schools will only undergo the formal review once every three years.

6. 200 academies by 2010 – and more new schools. We will provide for 200 independently managed academies to be open or in the pipeline by 2010 in areas with inadequate existing secondary schools. Some will replace under-performing schools; others will be entirely new, particularly in London where there is a demand for new school places. We expect there to be around 60 new academies in London by 2010.

7. Every secondary school to be refurbished or rebuilt to a modern standard over the next 10 to 15 years. The 'Building Schools for the Future' programme, made possible by a sevenfold increase in the schools capital budget since 1997, will give every school the buildings, facilities and information technology it needs to succeed. It will also drive reform in each locality, including the expansion of popular schools, the closure of failing schools, and the establishment of new schools and sixth forms.

8. 'Foundation partnerships' to enable schools to group together to raise standards and to work together to take on wider responsibilities – in areas such as provision for special educational needs or hard-to-place pupils.

This new system of independent specialist schools will be underpinned by a new role for Local Authorities, as champions of parents and pupils, acting as strategic leaders of education in their area.

This reshaped system will drive up quality and choice. But as well as being able to go to a strong independent specialist school, we must make sure that within their school, every pupil has the personalised teaching they need to succeed. Our **offer** to every **secondary** pupil is:

- Excellent teaching based on real knowledge of individual pupils, helping all achieve their potential
- A broad and rich curriculum with more choice and a wider set of out-of-hours opportunities – including much higher levels of sporting activity, as well as clubs, societies and residential activities
- Innovative use of leading-edge technology, with state-of-the art facilities for every pupil and teacher
- Good discipline, with heads having powers to deal with trouble-makers, and a commitment to traditional values of respect and authority

- A culture of regular attendance in every school, supporting learning but also cutting down crime and anti-social behaviour
- Schools at the heart of their communities, working closely with parents to support children

When they get to **14**, our **offer** to pupils, parents and employers is:

- A much wider choice of what and where to study, with high standards in every subject and new sixth forms and sixth form colleges where they are needed
- Demanding courses for the most able pupils, whether they take academic or vocational options, and Young Apprenticeships that start at 14
- Closer link between schools and employers, so vocational learning means something in the world of work
- Extra support for young people leaving care
- High-quality advice and guidance to help young people make good decisions, and a wide range of things to do and places to go for young people outside school or college

Our **skills** gap is narrowing but it is still much wider than many other countries. So our **offer** to individuals and employers is:

- High quality courses for everyone, and every adult able to get the skills they need for good jobs
- Free tuition for people learning basic skills, and free tuition and new Adult Learning Grants for adults going for Level 2 qualifications (the equivalent of 5 good GCSEs)
- Employers in the driving seat, with colleges and training providers who know how to help business and respond to their needs
- High-quality Further Education, with no funding for poor provision

And for those people who go on to **university**, our **offer** to them and to employers is:

- Access to university for anyone with the potential to benefit
- Grants for students that need them, an end to up-front fees, and a fair way for graduates to contribute to the cost of their course
- High-quality courses and teaching, with more flexible opportunities to study
- Better vocational Foundation Degrees designed with and for employers
- World-class research that keeps us as a leading-edge nation
- Good engagement between employers and higher education to boost innovation and skills

This programme is backed by a big increase in resources. Spending on education in England will rise to £58 billion by 2008. At the same time, we will make sure that the money is being spent well. We will improve productivity and slim down the Department for Education and Skills, reducing our central staff by over 1400 – more than 30 per cent – and becoming more strategic about the way we lead the system.

This is an ambitious strategy for education, skills and children's services. It seeks not only to

address our historic weaknesses, but also to improve everything we do. It puts a clear focus on children, learners, parents and employers, not just in setting out what we want to offer, but in designing ways of doing it that promote personalisation and choice.

1

Introduction

A success story

1. We already have an education system which is among the best in the world, and children's services which make life better for hundreds of thousands of children each year. Since 1997, there has been a step-change in both investment and reform. Spending on education in England has risen from £35 billion in 1997-98 to £51 billion in 2004-05.¹ As well as transforming life-chances, our reforms have shattered myths about education and shown that it is possible to make real change and improvement quickly at every phase and stage of learning.

2. In the Government's first term we laid the foundations for reform. We inherited a system which was suffering from underinvestment, where standards were variable, and which often let down those people in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities. We set about putting that right by:

- investing in the early years, making a commitment to free nursery education for increasing numbers of three and four year-olds;
- concentrating on the basics in primary schools with smaller class sizes and a drive to improve reading, writing and maths;
- putting a drive for higher standards for every child at the heart of our approach to education and tackling failure wherever it occurred;
- reversing the long standing underinvestment in teachers, buildings and information and communications technology and in the areas of greatest need;
- beginning our drive to raise adult basic skills.

3. In the second term we have built on these foundations and extended our investment to further and higher education. This has enabled us:

- to embark on a drive to raise secondary school standards with specialist schools at the heart of the improvement;
- to develop a National Skills Strategy designed to close the skills gap which holds back our productivity;
- to take tough decisions on the funding of higher education so that we can sustain excellence and widen participation; and
- to invest in better leadership and a more skilled and flexible education workforce.

4. We have also published in *Every Child Matters* a long term programme for improving services for children and families. As part of this, the Government has brought together within the Department for Education and Skills responsibilities for children's services and education, and given it a remit to work together with other Government Departments to achieve more joined up support for children and young people locally. This is an historic move which recognises that services for children do not fit neatly into institutional and policy silos. It paves the way for the Government to help all children and young people stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

We believe that this provides the firm foundation children need to succeed in and enjoy learning throughout their lives.

5. The results are clear to see. There is a clear way ahead for children's services, building on past progress. The education system is flourishing. Skill levels are on the rise. Standards everywhere are improving fast.

6. There are at least 500,000 fewer children living in relative poverty than there were in 1997. The Government has spent an extra £12bn supporting families with children over the period 1998-99 to 2004-05.³

7. Sure Start is already giving 400,000 children a better start in life. There is in 2004 for the first time an offer of a free part-time nursery place for every three and four year-old.

8. More children at risk are getting better help and protection the first time round, with a reduction in the number of re-registrations on the child protection register from 20 percent in 1997-98 to 13 percent in 2002-03.⁴ The proportion of looked-after children placed for adoption has risen as a result of *Quality Protects*.

9. Our primary school children are performing better than ever before. In 1996 almost half of all 11 year-olds were unable to read, write or do basic maths at an acceptable standard. Now it is only a quarter. Since 1998, about 84,000 more 11 year-olds are achieving the expected level for their age in maths and around 60,000 more are doing so in English.⁵

10. Specialist schools are leading rapid improvement in secondary education. 14 year-olds are performing better than ever before in English, maths and science. At GCSE 53 percent of 16 year olds are now achieving 5 A*-C, compared with 45 percent in 1997 – almost 50,000 more 16 year olds than seven years ago.⁶

11. Results beyond 16 continue to improve and there is a wider range of opportunities for young people to choose from – including high quality vocational routes. 255,000 young people are currently undertaking apprenticeships.

12. Following the introduction of our teenage pregnancy strategy, there has been a reduction of over 9 percent in the rate of under-18 conceptions in 2002 compared to the rate in 1998, and a significant increase in the number of teenage parents re-engaged in learning.

13. Over 2 million adults so far have received support in the skills of reading, writing or using numbers. Taken together, the number of people of working age with no qualifications in England fell from 10.8 million adults (38 percent of all people of working age) in 1985 to 4.1 million (14 percent of all people of working age) in 2003.

14. 44 percent of 18 to 30 year-olds are now entering Higher Education,⁷ in universities which continue to lead the world – compared to 12 percent of 18 to 21 year-olds in 1980.

The next stage of reform

15. These successes are a credit to those who work in all parts of our education and training sector, and in children's services. They are making a real difference to people's lives. They have, above all, laid the basis for long term reform.

16. As a result, we now have within reach a once in a generation transformation in the standards and quality of education and training, and services for children and families. It is now within our grasp to:

- achieve and sustain world class excellence in every part of the system;

- move further towards early intervention and work to prevent problems, rather than picking up the pieces afterwards;
- create services which are truly personalised around the needs and aspirations of every child, young person and adult; and
- put learning – and the high quality workforce and institutions needed to provide it – at the heart of successful communities and local and regional regeneration.

Priorities for reform

17. In identifying our priorities for reform, we have sought to do two things:

- First, to use good data and analysis that pinpoints the weaknesses of our system and address them; and
- Second, to make the whole system work better for every child, young person and adult. This is not a one-off effort, and it cannot be confined to small parts of the system; as the economy and the world are changing, our whole education system needs to improve rapidly to keep pace, and to keep changing to stay ahead.

Measuring ourselves against world class standards

18. If we are to aspire to world class standards, we must measure ourselves against the best in the world. OECD comparative data makes that increasingly possible as the chart opposite demonstrates.

19. It shows, in summary, three things:

- the current generation of children are now performing well:
 - at age 10 England is rated 3rd overall in reading among 35 countries, with only Sweden being significantly better
 - at age 15 our young people are 4th out of 31 countries in science (only Korea and Japan being significantly better) and 7th and 8th respectively in literacy and maths;
- Higher Education is a major strength: the rate of return to individuals from a first degree is the highest amongst OECD countries. The return has hardly changed as the number of graduates has grown. And in research our universities punch well above their weight on the normal measures of output and impact, with only the US significantly ahead;
- the UK's key weakness is the low participation of 16-19-year olds in education and training (The UK participation rate for 17-year-olds is ranked 27th out of 30 countries). In turn this reinforces the historic skills deficit in the adult workforce with the latest comparisons showing we are 18th out of 30 countries in the proportion of adults with level 2 skills (the equivalent of five good GCSEs).

20. Behind these headlines is a fundamental weakness in equality of opportunity. Those from higher socio-economic groups do significantly better at each stage of our system than those from lower ones – indeed, as the chart over the page shows, socio-economic group is a stronger predictor of attainment than early ability:8

21. In general, though, those that do well early do even better later in life, while those that do not perform well fall further behind; and the chances of breaking out of this cycle of underachievement reduce with age.

22. Those who do better than average at age 7 are more than twice as likely to get

qualifications at degree level by the age of 25 than those who performed poorly at 7. Results for 11 year-olds show an even starker picture – over 85 percent of 11 year-olds that do not reach the expected level for their age will not get five good GCSEs at age 16. Throughout secondary school, the pattern of attainment becomes increasingly fixed – 95 percent of those who fail to reach the expected level at the age of 14 will not get five good GCSEs.⁹ This pattern persists in the adult workforce, with highly qualified workers receiving more training and investment than less qualified workers.¹⁰

23. This is not simply a case of the system recognising and labelling learners' innate levels of ability. The gap between the best and worst performers in our system actually widens as they go through education; and it is both significantly wider and more closely related to socio-economic status in this country than elsewhere.¹¹

24. We also fail our most disadvantaged children and young people – those in public care, those with complex family lives, and those most at risk of drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and involvement in criminal activity. Internationally, our rate of child poverty is still high, as are the rates of worklessness in one-parent families, the rate of teenage pregnancy, and the level of poor diet among children.¹² The links between poor health, disadvantage and low educational outcomes are stark.

25. But as well as failing those with disadvantages, our system also performs less well than it should for the middle group. In international comparisons, our top performers help pull up our averages and mask the fact that the middle group – on some reckonings, as much as 40 percent of the population – are not so successful.¹³ This large group has also traditionally not had a great deal of attention focused on it. But it is one of the causes of underperformance in secondary schools which then feeds into our poor staying-on rates after 16.

26. It is from this analysis that we have derived the five priorities which underpin our strategy in this document:

- **early intervention to support very young children and families to lay the foundations for later success – not just in education, but in supporting the welfare of the whole child, carrying through into better services for all children and young people;**
- **a continuing drive to ensure that every child leaves primary school with the basics in reading, writing and maths; and an enjoyment of learning, built through an enriched curriculum including the arts, music, sport and a foreign language;**
- **creating secondary and further education which widens choice, stretches and engages the underachieving and prepares young people better for working life;**
- **reducing the historic deficit in adult skills, not just by greater participation and attainment by 16-19 year olds, but by addressing the needs of those in the workforce to update their skills; and**
- **sustaining an excellent university sector, capable of high quality teaching, world class research and increasing responsiveness to employers.**

Improvement in every part of the system

27. Fundamental to our approach is a belief that it will not be enough just to focus on the most obvious areas of underperformance or weakness in standards. As our analysis reveals, it is not only the most vulnerable and disadvantaged who are ill-served by our system; a large group of middle-performers are not being helped well enough either.

28. Furthermore, the world is changing, and our education system needs to change with it. Employers are looking for higher-skilled workers, adept in techniques of communication and teamwork. People are less likely to have a single job for life, and more likely to want to

change and develop their skills. Learners expect the same choice and innovation in education as they have in other parts of their lives, and parents want more for their children.

29. We need a system which can respond to these positive demands not just by eliminating weaknesses but by giving a better deal to everyone – not just serving the average person, but serving each individual as well as possible.

Investment and reform

30. Ambitious reform must be supported by substantial investment. We said at the beginning of this chapter that spending on education since 1997 had increased by nearly £16 billion, an increase of over 45 percent in real terms. In the Budget the Chancellor committed the Government to increase investment further – by over £11 billion by 2008. This will bring total expenditure on education in England to £58 billion in real terms – 5.6 percent of GDP, 14 above the OECD average.

31. The total investment in education and training is, however, much bigger than this. Families have always invested heavily in their own children's care and development and will continue to do so. Employers, on some estimates, spend £23 billion on the training and development of their workforces. The support for education – in cash and in kind – is growing: specialist school and Academy sponsors, for example, are currently putting about £50 million a year into support for secondary education. We expect co-funding to grow over the period of this strategy, as individuals and employers become readier to invest in better education and training that meets their needs.

The Principles of Reform

32. But investment alone will not be enough. It must come hand in hand with reform. We must be clear about what we expect this extra investment to deliver for children and for all learners.

33. Our aim is excellence for everyone, with good information to support real choice. The quality of current provision has been improving fast and there are many beacons of excellence setting the standard in education, training and children's services. But there are still too many places – often in the most deprived communities – where such choice as there is, is between the average and the mediocre.

34. We see **greater personalisation and choice** as being at the heart of better public services and higher standards. This will mean different things for different services. Choice within a compulsory service – like primary and secondary education – will be very different from choice for older learners, who can opt out if they want to do so. Services for children and families – where the priority must always be the welfare of the child – are different again. Nevertheless 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;
- services and learning designed around the needs of the individual and available at a time and place and in a form which suits their needs, with no artificial distinctions made (for example) between good learning and children's well-being;
- better advice and information to enable people to make choices;
- better support and incentives particularly where financial barriers would work as a disincentive to participation; and
- high minimum standards for everyone, irrespective of who they are or where they live.

35. These are high ambitions. Too often universal provision has been developed around one

model and has struggled to meet the differing needs of individuals. Too often, as well, choice has only been real for a minority – those who could afford it. In this strategy the aim is for choice and quality for all – driven by good quality provision without selection by ability or income.

36. Choice also implies **greater diversity of provision and providers**. This will mean actively encouraging a wider variety of providers in some localities and sectors. It may mean lowering the barriers to new types of providers to enable them to come into the system and to replace weak services. And choice within an institution will be just as important as choice between institutions. For some, real choice will be offered by information technology making it possible for people to learn from home. The strategy which follows reflects these different approaches. It contains, for example, proposals for stimulating different patterns for childcare and children's services, particularly through the private, voluntary and community sectors; enabling successful schools to expand; encouraging partnerships of schools and colleges to widen choice pre- and post-16; and bringing new providers into secondary and further education, particularly where current provision is weak.

37. Personalisation of services places great demands on the **quality of the leadership and the skills and commitment of the workforce** at national and local level. Much has already been done since 1997 to set standards, to develop centres of leadership excellence, to invest in leadership and workforce development and to improve the flexibility of the workforce. This work, which started in the Government's first term, is now being extended to further and higher education. Building a more flexible, coherent and skilled workforce for children's services will be similarly important.

38. Tailoring services to meet individual needs means that schools, colleges and children's services must have the freedom to innovate and adapt. So, in the next phase of reform we will give **freedom and autonomy** to the front line. We will simplify the planning, funding and accountability systems which often get in the way of innovation and change. In the next chapters of the document there are proposals for creating a system of independent specialist schools, and major reforms for children's services and for further education.

39. None of this will be possible without **effective partnerships**. It is a major theme of this strategy that Government shares the responsibility for making change happen with many others – individuals, employers, voluntary bodies, local authorities, and a wide range of national and local partners, including children's social workers, childminders, schools, colleges, universities and training providers. Successful partnerships are a key element in ensuring that services are joined up and are more than the sum of their parts. We want Children's Trusts to be the engines for reform in children's services locally, joining together health, education and social services provision. And there is an expectation that schools, colleges, and universities will have ever growing links with employers and with the wider economy and community.

40. Taken together these five principles of reform will, we believe, achieve our aim of world class public services for children, young people and adults: a new generation of personalised services where equity and excellence go hand in hand, enabling people to achieve their potential, to be economically secure and to be fully contributing citizens, contributing both to strong communities and a productive and competitive economy.

1 In real terms at 2003-04 prices. HM Treasury Figures, including HMT (2004), *Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report*.

2 There were 500,000 fewer children living in relative poverty by 2002-03 than there were in 1998-99. IFS (2004), *Poverty and Inequality in Britain*.

3 IFS (2004), *Poverty and Inequality in Britain*.

4 DfES Statistical volume: Referrals, Assessments, and Children and Young People on Child Protection Registers, England – year ending 31 March 2003

5 DfES (2003), *Education and Skills: The Economic Benefit*.

6 DfES (2003), *Education and Skills: The Economic Benefit*; DfES (2004), *Statistical First Release 23/2004*.

7 Figure is for 2003. Source: DfES (2004) *Statistical First Release 07/2004*.

8 Feinstein (2003), 'Inequality in the Early Cognitive Development of British Children in the 1970 Cohort,' *Economica*.

9 DfES calculations based on 2003 National Pupil Database.

10 DfES calculation based on Labour Force Survey, Spring 2002.

11 OECD (2001), *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000*.

12 The Well Being of Children in the UK, ed Jonathon Bradshaw, *Save the Children* 2002.

13 For example, in OECD (2001), *Knowledge and Skills for Life: First Results from PISA 2000*, our top quartile of 15-year olds were

the best in the OECD; the second and third quartiles came 4th and 7th respectively.
14 HMT(2004), *Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report*. Based on planned UK education expenditure.

Chapter 2

Early Years

Goal: Giving every child the best possible start in life, and all vulnerable children the care and protection they need

1. We know from our analysis that intervening early to give all children the best possible foundation for their learning and development is vital. Early years interventions have been shown to lead to improved health, early development and readiness for school, better relationships between parents and children, and improved social and emotional development. They have been linked to higher earnings in later life, and lower risks of dependence on welfare, unemployment or involvement in crime.
2. There are around 500,000 fewer children living in relative poverty than there were in 1997, and there have been significant increases in child benefit, and more generous support through new tax credits. As a result of the introduction of the Child and Working Tax Credits and other personal tax and benefit measures since 1997, families with children in the poorest fifth of the population will be, on average, £3,000 a year better off in real terms by October 2004.
3. There is now, for the first time, a free early education place for all three and four-year-olds, and over 1.8 million children are benefiting from the additional childcare places created since 1997. 524 Sure Start local programmes have been set up since 1997 and more than 1,100 new neighbourhood nurseries have massively increased the availability of day care.
4. The Children's Fund, which supports a range of voluntary and charitable organisations working with 5-13 year olds to prevent them dropping out of learning or society, is helping over 300,000 children or family members.

Issues and challenges

5. Despite these successes, our analysis shows that we still face clear challenges if we are to deliver a really comprehensive, but personalised and flexible offer:
 - Every parent, wherever they live, should be able to get the affordable childcare and early years services that their child needs. And there should be a wide range of types of childcare to choose from, with a range of providers – including many from the private, voluntary and community sector – offering different alternatives. At present, differences at local level mean that some parents cannot find childcare either because it is not available, because the cost is too high, or because what is available is too inflexible. The map opposite demonstrates differences in availability of childcare by Local Authority area.
 - Second, parents and families do not yet get seamless support. Social care, childcare and education have not been thought of as part of an integrated approach to helping children do well. Parents and families too often have to move between different services in a way that does not join up around the child. Children do not distinguish their needs based on which agencies run which services – neither should we.
 - Third, parents sometimes do not have enough support in looking after and bringing up their children. Being a parent can be challenging; and surveys show that 75 percent of parents and carers say that they feel there are times in their lives or the lives of their children when they need access to additional information or support¹⁵. We must make sure that parents' pre-eminent role in their children's lives is properly recognised by those working in children's services and in education, and that they work with parents in partnership to support children.

- And fourth, we need to take a more preventative approach, to reduce more serious problems later, particularly for children at risk of harm or neglect. Good quality early intervention benefits all children, but disadvantaged children benefit the most.

6. We will meet these challenges and make the following offer to children and parents:

Our offer to children and parents:

- All parents and families able to get one-stop-support at Sure Start Children's Centres – with childcare and education, health and employment advice and parenting support on offer together, within easy reach of every parent
- From birth to two, more opportunities for parents to stay at home with their children if they want to, and a wide range of accessible, affordable high quality early learning and childcare for parents to choose from, with payment according to means supported by tax credits
- For three year olds, and for four year-olds before they start school, 12½ hours a week of free 'educare' – integrated education and childcare – which can be used flexibly across the week for a minimum of 33 weeks a year according to children and families' needs
- Greater flexibility for parents to choose how they use the free offer, with better joining up between the free hours and the hours that parents pay for, and more Children's Centres, nurseries, schools and childminder networks offering integrated education and care from 8am to 6pm, for 48 weeks of the year – so parents can increasingly use the free hours as part of a seamless package that suits them and their children
- From age five, 'wrap-around' childcare available before and after school (8am to 6pm), and in school holidays, combined with extra enrichment activities like art and sports
- For all parents who want it, better support with bringing up children, and good quality help and advice about childcare and other choices

What this means in practice

Support in the very earliest years

7. The first year of a child's life is the most important for the child's development and often the most precious for parents. In 2003 we introduced new legislation on maternity and paternity leave and flexible working, and we have said we will not make any further changes before 2006, so that we can see how these changes work in practice. We are, though, continuing to consult employers and parents about how we best help them to make the choices they want to balance family and work. We will explore options for extending support for mothers and fathers in the first year of their child's life, including maternity and paternity pay and leave, and for extending the right to request flexible working arrangements to parents with older children, and increasing support to carers.

8. Parents need to feel confident that the childcare for very young children – which is often relatively informal, and based at home or at someone else's house – is of good quality. From April 2005, there will be a light touch approval scheme for home based childcare, so that parents can be assured that the carer has at least minimum qualifications. Eligible parents will also be able to claim tax credits for home based childcare. We want to build on the success of childminder networks, which have helped reduce turnover¹⁶ and improve quality by providing facilities for childminders to train and gain qualifications.

9. Sure Start has revolutionised provision for very young children and their families in deprived areas. Starting before birth, Sure Start brings together health, early learning and parenting support to meet the needs of local parents, their children and the community they live in. It puts parents in the lead, and uses local people to help support each other. Local evaluations of Sure Start programmes show that they are making an impact in a variety of ways – improving the rates of breast feeding, cutting smoking in pregnancy, reducing post-

natal depression, improving speech and language development, and helping parents find work.

10. We want to use Sure Start Children's Centres to spread this successful support so that more families can benefit, while continuing to make sure that those in difficult circumstances have the first call on our help.

Children's Centres to integrate provision

11. Sure Start Children's Centres are one-stop-shops for parents and children, offering early education and childcare, family support, health services, employment advice and specialist support on a single site, with easy access for parents and easy referral between services so that the provision is seamless. Ante- and post-natal care will be linked to Children's Centres, and each family will be supported by a team of midwives and health visitors linked to the Centre. Children's Centres will also provide outreach work to support those children and families who are unwilling or unable to access centre-based services.

12. All Centres will also offer early years education and childcare – mostly on site, but some through networks. They will be the place to go to find out about different types of childcare locally, and will increasingly act as a contact-point for networks of childminders and nurseries, so parents can match themselves up with a childminder who is nearby and suits them. Parents will also be able to get information in Children's Centres about a wide range of other services for children – for example, about local play facilities.

13. By March 2008, there will be a Children's Centre reaching all children in the 20 percent most deprived wards in England. But we want to go further than this and aim for a Children's Centre in every community. 44 percent of all children growing up in poverty do not live in recognised areas of deprivation; and we want all parents to be able to access the services they need in a joined-up way. Some Centres may be created by developing existing nursery schools, Sure Start programmes, Early Excellence Centres, family centres or other community facilities. Some may be located in schools or on school sites, and the eventual aim will be to have a Children's Centre within easy reach of every parent.

14. As well as the one-stop-shop Children's Centres, Extended Schools – both primary and secondary – will increasingly act as hubs for community services, including children's services. Extended Schools are described in more detail in the next chapter, and they will be important not only in joining up services but in delivering high-quality childcare that is linked to education.

Bringing education and childcare together into 'educare'

15. Particularly in the earliest years, children learn through play and exploration, and making an artificial distinction between education and childcare is unhelpful. Our aim is, wherever possible, to bring together nursery education and childcare into a single integrated offer for pre-school children – 'educare'.

Example: Integrated childcare and education in Leeds

Historically, Leeds City Council has always placed a high priority on early years provision and began investing in integrated care and education a number of years ago. The Council currently invests around £13 million annually on services for children from birth upwards. It has already developed integrated services in five children's centres which offer care, education, family support and employment opportunities. Families do not have to live in the neighbourhood in which a centre is located to be entitled to benefit from its services, and can access centre based childcare and early education as well as places provided by childminders linked to the centre.

These centres have been created by bringing together school based services and early years centres – sometimes on school sites and sometimes on 'free-standing' sites – and are a product of effective partnership working between the maintained, private and

voluntary sectors. In addition to the five designated children's centres, there are a further 34 integrated centres across the authority – not just in disadvantaged wards. A further sixteen children's centres will be operational by 2006.

16. At present, we offer free part-time nursery education to three and four year-olds (before they start full-time in reception classes). In practice, this is usually offered in set sessions – with an entitlement to 2½ a day, almost always during school-type hours. This means that where parents want childcare which goes beyond those hours, children may have to be moved around for their childcare. This often does not suit parents who work part time or do shiftwork and who may want to arrange the hours of free 'educare' differently.

17. We want to transform our offer by integrating nursery education and childcare so that 'educare' is increasingly available on a flexible basis. Parents of 3 and 4 year-olds will still be entitled to the same number of free hours – 12½ hours a week – but they will be able to use these hours flexibly across the week. We will expect local authorities, increasingly through Children's Trusts, to work with early years providers to ensure this flexibility is available as part of the usual offer.

18. Many parents need childcare across a whole day and throughout the year. We will take steps to increase the number of places that can offer integrated 'educare' from 8am to 6pm, 48 weeks a year. This may mean more than one provider offering a service to a family – for example, a childminder associate closely linked to a day nursery – but parents will be able to organise a package through one point of contact. Parents and carers will continue to be able to buy extra hours to add to the free ones – for many, using tax credits – so that they can put together a flexible and personalised childcare package that matches their and their child's needs better.

Tax credits

The childcare element of the Working Tax Credit is worth up to 70 percent of childcare costs for families using formal childcare, up to a limit of £200 per week for a family with two or more children (£135 per week for one child).

This help is available to parents who are both working at least 16 hours a week, or to a lone parent who is working at least 16 hours.

In April 2004, 318,000 lower and middle income families were benefiting from the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. Total Government spending on the childcare element is now almost £2 million per day.

Example – how flexible 'educare' and the tax credit will work together

Dave and Emma have one child, Suzie. Dave is a security guard and Emma works as a PA. Their joint income is £21,000.

Suzie is three. At the moment, because of Dave's working hours, the free nursery place Suzie gets doesn't always give Dave and Emma childcare when they need it – often between 5 and 6 o'clock when Dave is going out to work but Emma is still at the office. This means they end up paying for extra hours with a childminder and Suzie has to travel to nursery and then back to the childminder's house, which makes her cross and tired.

With 'educare', Dave and Emma would be able to arrange the free hours when they want across the week. Their local Children's Centre will offer 'educare' all day, so Suzie can go there for her free hours, usually in the afternoons. When Dave's shifts mean he can't look after Suzie during the day, they will be able to pay for extra hours for a week, which would cost around £100. Their childcare tax credit might cover £70 of this, and they would pay the remaining £30.

19. Children's Trusts will need to plan and co-ordinate the arrangements to make more integrated 'educare' available. As well as contributions from Government and parents, we need to explore the scope for:

- Enabling Children's Trusts to fund places with extra hours for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children;
- Doing more to engage employers in providing support and funding for their employees to add 'educare' hours. Measures are being introduced in April 2005 which will enable employers to provide childcare support for their staff. Financial support for childcare costs of up to £50 per week will be exempt from tax and National Insurance Contributions. These measures may be supported by other agencies.

20. In the Autumn, we will publish a paper setting out in more detail how this 'educare' offer will work in practice, including the mechanisms for helping more places offer 'educare' more flexibly and for 48 weeks a year; and for ensuring that we build on the good private and voluntary sector provision that already exists during school holidays.

Wrap-around childcare in schools

21. The need to link education and childcare is also important when children go to school full time. Parents' working arrangements often mean that they need to arrange childcare outside normal school hours. So we are also developing a model for an 8am to 6pm, 48-week-a-year childcare offer in primary schools either side of the school day.

22. We expect that many schools will develop and deliver this offer in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors, and with local employers, and will often integrate the offer with enrichment activities and study support, including sports clubs, extra art, maths clubs, or music.

23. Parents who want it will need to pay for the childcare guarantee outside school hours, but tax credits could, once again, be used to do this, and this would not mean charging for things – like clubs and societies – that are currently free.

24. 1,000 primary schools will be offering this model by 2008, providing places for 50,000 children. Over time, we expect every primary school either to be making this offer itself, or to be part of a network of schools who provide it between them, so that every primary child whose parents want it can benefit from this wrap-around care either in their own school, or in a linked school, with supervised travel. Over time, we want to extend this kind of offer to secondary schools as well.

The Birth to Three Matters Framework and the Foundation Stage

25. It is important that provision in the early years is not only available and flexible but of high quality.¹⁷ We know the importance of good quality early care for children's development. In November 2002 we launched *'Birth to three matters: A framework to support children in the earliest years'* with a set of resources to help those who care for babies and toddlers. There is also a national training strategy alongside the framework.

26. We will also continue to build on the important progress that has been made in shaping and defining the Foundation Stage – for three to five year olds – as a separate stage of education, with its own character, and with clear goals and teaching methods which use play to prepare children well for later learning, and support their social, emotional and behavioural development. We will also continue to improve the Foundation Stage Profile – a record which shows how well children are developing in these early years – and make sure that as it beds in all teachers can use it in a way that suits them, adds value to the education of the child, and is not too burdensome. The profile gives us and teachers good information about how children are doing, and how to support them to do better.

Personalised support for parents

27. Support for parents and carers is not simply about providing childcare. We know that good

parenting has a profound influence on all areas of a child's development and wellbeing.¹⁸ We need to make sure parents feel in control – they must, except in truly exceptional circumstances, be the ones who lead and drive the services their children get.

28. So, using Children's Centres and Extended Schools, we will develop a much more coherent set of services both to support parents and to involve them properly, not just in the early years, but at all stages of education.

29. For every parent and carer, there will increasingly be:

- Good quality information and advice, available in a range of different places and ways so that there is something to suit all parents. Children's Centres will give excellent parenting advice, and we will also develop a telephone advice line, and build up a comprehensive parents' advice website;
- Training for all key members of the children and families workforce who work with parents (such as midwives, health visitors, social services professionals, teachers and teaching assistants) in how to work with parents and carers as well as children and young people;
- Encouragement and support for schools to work more closely with parents, and to listen to and involve them better. Parents are a child's first and most effective educators and it is right that parents should be the leading partners in their children's education. This is discussed in more detail in the next Chapter.

30. This advice and support will complement more specialised services for families and parents, including extra support at difficult times (for example, bereavement or serious relationship conflict); extra support for the most vulnerable children and families (for example, children with disabilities; or children in care); and specialised support for families in very specific circumstances (such as support for parents with mental health difficulties, disabilities, or with problems of addiction), ensuring that links are made between services being provided to an adult who is a parent, and the needs of their children.

Changing the system to underpin our offer

Every Child Matters

31. The Green Paper: *Every Child Matters* heralded a sea change in services for children, young people and families, underpinned by legislation and regulatory reforms. It set out the outcomes that we want for every child – that they should be healthy and safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society and experience economic well-being. The Children Bill creates the legislative spine for developing more effective and accessible services focused around the needs of children, young people and families by ensuring proper accountability and safeguarding of children. Directors of Children's Services will be responsible for all Local Authority children's services, while Children's Trusts will bring together social care, education and health to make sure that competing priorities no longer get in the way of the best deal for children. There will be a new framework for early years services, with a revised Code of Practice for nursery education which takes account of the shift to 'educare'. There will be a new integrated inspection framework, and where services are failing there will be decisive action to put them right.

32. Because we are bringing together support for all children (aged 0 to 19) and families in a more integrated way, the changes described in this section underpin not just early years services, but all the services for children, young and people and families outlined in this and the next four Chapters.

Children's Trusts: Diversity, autonomy and partnership

33. There will be a duty placed on Local Authorities and others to co-operate to secure better

outcomes for children. The key vehicle for doing this will be the Children's Trust. Children's Trusts will bring together a range of partners, including the voluntary and community sector, to integrate the planning and commissioning of children's services.

34. Most areas should have a Children's Trust by 2006, and all by 2008.

Features of a Children's Trust

Children's Trusts are not new statutory bodies – they are partnership bodies which give effect to the new duties to cooperate in promoting the well-being of all children. They bring together local partners – education, social care, health, Connexions, Sure Start, and Youth Offending Teams, and the voluntary and community sector – so that they can work better to meet the needs of children, young people and families.

Key principles behind Children's Trusts:

- An outcome, child and family focus
- Co-location and multi-disciplinary working
- Common assessment and information sharing
- Integrated planning and commissioning with pooled budgets
- Effective partnerships and clear accountabilities

Trusts will need to:

- Understand local supply and demand for children's services, consulting children and their families and the wider community, and strike the right balance between asking for contributions from parents and funding services for those who can't afford to contribute
- Commission from the full range of statutory, voluntary and community and private sector partners, and from schools where they wish to take on this role
- Work closely with all schools, helping them to meet the full range of pupil needs and offering them effective support with the most challenging pupils

35. Children's Trusts will lead the way in the new kind of public service provision towards which we need to move. Their focus on partnership, and on commissioning rather than delivering, makes them an ideal vehicle for delivering personalised services well. Rationalised funding streams and a minimum of ring-fencing of funding will mean that the Trust will be able to pool resources across boundaries to commission services – so that there is competition to provide services, and children get the best possible deal. In childcare, tax credits are already beginning to ensure that families themselves can use their spending power to choose the providers which serve them best.

A clear framework for children and young people with additional needs

36. A crucial part of *Every Child Matters* is to improve support for all disadvantaged children, and children with additional needs (from 0 to 19). We need to provide effective support for children who are at risk – whether of poor attainment, truancy, exclusion, substance abuse or youth crime. We will develop a system which helps earlier identification of those at risk, with all those who work with children – in schools, nurseries or elsewhere – better skilled in identifying needs and signposting parents to advice and support.

37. Better information sharing and increasingly integrated ICT – including a common system for assessing children's needs – will help make sure that different services don't duplicate effort, and that children's needs are picked up early. And the rationalisation of funding streams will enable Children's Trusts to bring together professionals from education, health, youth justice, drug prevention and social care services, currently funded and managed separately, into multi-agency teams (often based in Children's Centres or Extended Schools) to provide integrated, targeted support. Lead Professionals will co-ordinate input when several agencies are involved.

Child Protection

38. For those children and young people who are at risk of harm or have been abused or neglected, *Every Child Matters* will put in place a stronger statutory and multi-agency framework to protect them from harm, and provide them and their families with services and support. All the changes described above will also help to make sure that children at risk are identified and helped earlier and that services for them are joined up.

39. In addition, we will:

- establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of all partners in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in each local authority area;
- place a duty on children's services authorities, district councils, strategic health authorities, primary care trusts, NHS Trusts, NHS Foundation Trusts, the police, probation and Youth Offending Teams, prisons and secure training centres, and the Connexions service to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- strengthen arrangements to ensure unsuitable adults do not gain access to children through their work, following Sir Michael Bichard's recent report;
- ensure that the National Service Framework for Children covers safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Building workforce capacity

40. To support our reforms, we will invest in the leadership and skills of the children's workforce (approximately 3.5 million strong, of whom 1.8 million are unpaid volunteers). This workforce is very diverse, working in many different areas, with different cultures and practices, and varying levels of qualification. We are committed to encouraging more multi-agency working across the sector – and at the same time making working with children, young people and families a more attractive option.

41. The new Sector Skills Council for children's services will lead in the development of a common core of skills, knowledge and competence for all who work with children, young people and families, and a complementary set of qualifications.

Leadership

42. A cross-sector leadership programme is being developed for Directors of Children's Services and their key local partners including children's leads in Primary Care Trusts, the police and the voluntary sector. We are also developing a leadership programme for leaders of integrated centres. It is initially focused on leaders of Children's Centres but will, over time, be open to others, including the leaders of Extended Schools.

A joint programme of change

43. We will be publishing further details in the autumn of a jointly owned programme of change by the Department for Education and Skills, the Department of Health and other Government Departments to support the implementation of *Every Child Matters* and the Children's National Service Framework. Autumn publications will give further details on the reforms set out in this Chapter, and will mark the next stage in a continued dialogue with our stakeholders about how to take forward effective change to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Timetable for change

Taken together, our reforms mean that:

Now, in 2004:

- There are 524 Sure Start local programmes, 1,139 neighbourhood nurseries, 107 Early Excellence Centres and 67 Children's Centres already working to support children and families, and focused in disadvantaged areas, with more coming this year
- There is a universal offer of 2½ hours free nursery education each school day for all three and four year-olds
- Our Green Paper and Bill have set out our future vision, and we are modelling aspects of it in more detail with four Local Authorities
- Autumn publications will set out more details of the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* programme
- Subject to the will of Parliament, we expect Royal Assent for the Children Bill

By 2008:

- We will have a new and more flexible offer of 12½ hours each week of free 'educare' for three and four year-olds (before they start school) for 33 weeks a year
- 50 percent of children will reach a good level of development by the end of the Foundation Stage, and the gap between the level of development reached by children in the 20 percent most disadvantaged areas, and other children will be closing
- There will be a revised framework for the early years, including integrated inspection of education and childcare
- At least 1,700 Children's Centres will be reaching all children in the 20 percent most deprived wards and will be being developed in other areas
- At least 1,000 primary schools will be offering an 8am-6pm childcare guarantee, providing 50,000 childcare places, as part of an increase of 10 percent in the stock of formal childcare available
- A Children's Commissioner will have been appointed and will be championing children's interests
- Local Safeguarding Children's Boards will be in place and all Local Authorities will have a Director of Children's Services, a Lead Council Member for children and a Children's Trust

Our Long-Term Aim

- An end to child poverty
- Far more opportunities for flexible working, particularly for parents of very young children
- Access to integrated, flexible 'educare' throughout the year for 3 and 4 year-olds, for all families that want it
- A Children's Centre in every community

- A primary school offering guaranteed 8am-6pm childcare in every community
- Parenting support for every parent who wants it
- Children at risk identified early, and given the help and support they need; no child allowed to slip through the net

15 COI/DfES Involving Parents through Information: Desk Research November 2003.

16 Cragg, Ross and Dawson, 'Review of Childminding Networks: Reports on Qualitative Research', DfES.

17 The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) study, for example, demonstrates the importance of the quality of a pre-school.

18 As summarised by Desforges and Abouchar (2003) in *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: A literature review* (DfES research report 433).

Chapter 3

Primary Schools

Goal: Excellence and enjoyment for every primary child

1. In *Excellence and Enjoyment: A Strategy for Primary Schools*, published in May 2003, we set out how the fusion of excellence and enjoyment makes good primary education great. Excellent teaching gives children the life chances they deserve; enjoyment is the birthright of every child. But the most powerful mix is the one that brings the two together. Children learn better when they are excited and engaged – but what excites and engages them best is truly excellent teaching which challenges them and shows them what they can do.

2. Primary education in England is already a success story, with many schools delivering very high quality education as part of a rich and fulfilling primary experience. In the vital skills of literacy and numeracy – which underpin so much later learning – we have seen impressive strides in recent years. The maps opposite show the dramatic progress in English, with LEAs where more than 75 percent of pupils reached the expected level shown in blue.

3. Not only have primary schools made impressive and necessary progress in literacy and numeracy, but as the chart above shows, teaching has improved in every single curriculum subject in primary schools since 1997.

4. Ofsted also judge over two thirds of nursery and primary schools as good or better; and teaching is rated at least good in three quarters of primary schools.

Issues and challenges

5. But we cannot be complacent about primary education.

- We must continue to improve children's achievement in literacy and numeracy. Although there have been dramatic improvements since 1997, 25 percent of primary pupils go on to secondary school without the capabilities in literacy and numeracy that will enable them to make the most of their education. And as in the system as a whole, the social class gap is unacceptably wide.
- As Ofsted have highlighted, we face a challenge to make sure that every subject is taught well in primary schools, and that every child gets the benefit of a rich, well-designed and broad curriculum. This needs to include a wide range of in- and out-of-school activities like dance, sport and drama, and the chance to study music and a foreign language.
- If parents and children are to have access to joined up services, then many more schools need to develop extended services, including childcare. As part of this – but also as part of their core education work – all primary schools should work closely with parents, seeing them as true partners in the education of their children.
- Running through each of these challenges is the unacceptable variation in performance between schools. Many primary schools achieve well, offer a rich curriculum, and put parents and the community at the heart of what they do. But a stubborn core of persistently weak schools remain, where children are not given decent chances in literacy and numeracy, or an engaging experience. The chart below shows that even looking at schools with similar levels of deprivation, some achieve much better than others.
- There are also many schools which do well either in giving a good grounding in the basics, or in providing a rich curriculum, but not both. We do not believe there should be any tension between high standards and a broad and rich curriculum – indeed, Ofsted's work on the curriculum in successful primary schools shows that they support each other – and we want every school to excel in developing children's literacy and numeracy skills without narrowing the curriculum.

6. In meeting these challenges, we will make the following offer:

Our offer to children and parents

- The best in the basics of reading, writing and maths for every child, with each making the maximum possible progress in primary school
- Better teaching and more personalised support for every child whatever their needs – including those with special educational needs, gifted and talented children, and children with English as an additional language
- A richer curriculum, with an entitlement to two hours high-quality PE and school sport each week, foreign language teaching from age seven, and the chance to learn a musical instrument in primary school
- A closer relationship between parents and schools – with better, more rounded information for parents through a ‘school profile’
- Extended Schools, and in particular the development of an 8am-6pm wrap-around childcare offer for 48 weeks a year in many schools
- All schools to be healthy schools, and all schools to be environmentally sustainable schools, teaching children by example
- A robust approach to persistent failure in primary schools, with the weakest schools closed, and struggling schools being turned around rapidly

What this means in practice

7. The key policies and programmes that will enable us to make this offer are set out below.

Literacy and Numeracy

8. Improving standards of reading, writing and maths in primary schools remains our top priority. This is an essential platform for achievement at later stages. As the chart overleaf shows, 71 percent of those who reach the expected level at 11 go on to get five good GCSEs, compared with only 14 percent of those who do not.

9. We have not reached any kind of ‘ceiling’ in children’s performance. If all primary schools helped add as much value (taking into account children’s different starting points) as the top half of schools, overall performance would already have exceeded our target of 85 percent.

10. Not only this, but the vast majority of children working below the expected Level – Level 4 – are only just below, at Level 3; and of these, a large number get Level 3 in one subject and Level 4 in the other. This suggests that we need to help teachers understand how to make good progress in one subject feed through into others, and provide support for good learning and teaching that crosses subjects.

11. For these reasons, we will continue to give dedicated support, time, training and focus to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, with training for teachers and materials for classrooms that continue to support the best possible ways of teaching children these fundamental skills, as well as training for good teaching across the whole curriculum.

A more personalised approach across the whole curriculum

12. The key is the personalisation of teaching and learning to the needs of the individual child. Through the successful national Primary Strategy (the combined successor to the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies) we will develop teachers’ skills in tailoring teaching and learning to the needs of all pupils.

13. Better and easier-to-use information about pupils’ progress will support this more personalised approach, with a Pupil Achievement Tracker which can show exactly which

subjects pupils are struggling with, and how their progress compares with others starting from a similar level (which can help particularly in making sure pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), and Gifted and Talented pupils, are being stretched as much as they should be). It can also show whether a particular group or course for certain pupils is working, and track not just pupil but also teacher performance.

14. The Strategy's training will also help teachers understand how to use this kind of information. It goes alongside day to day assessments of children's work – things like marking work or observing children in the classroom – to provide clear feedback on how pupils can improve as well as to determine the next steps in their learning. Assessment for Learning is essential if each pupil is to be helped to make the best progress they can, and reach high standards.

15. It will particularly help children who have in the past been failed by the system. Alongside dedicated support programmes – including, for example, booster work; dedicated SEN programmes and support; addressing boys' difficulties with writing; and support for children with English as an additional language – good use of Assessment for Learning will help to make sure that children are not failed by low expectations.

16. In addition, we are providing additional resource and support to all primary schools with high levels of disadvantage (more than 35 percent of children receiving free school meals), on the model of the Excellence in Cities programme. This will give funding for learning mentors to help children, extra behaviour support, and extra programmes for gifted and talented pupils. This recognises that schools may need to give children from disadvantaged backgrounds more support to help them achieve as well as they should, and in particular to stretch and challenge them. It will also help schools make strong links into the wider support provided for children with additional needs through Children's Trusts, described in Chapter 2.

Children with special educational needs

17. We set out in *Removing Barriers to Achievement* – our new strategy for children with SEN – how we would ensure that teachers and other professionals have the right skills and support to help all children achieve their full potential (in both primary and secondary schools). We will ensure that parents are well-informed about their children's progress and have confidence in the quality of provision available.

18. We want to break down the divide between mainstream and special schools to create a unified system which meets the needs of all children. Special schools have an important role to play in educating those children with the most complex and severe special educational needs and in sharing their expertise with other schools to support inclusion.

ICT supporting personalised teaching and learning

19. Information and communication technology (ICT) can be a powerful tool for assessing individual progress and personalising learning to the needs of the child. Primary schools are close to meeting the 2004 target of a computer-pupil ratio of 1:8, about half have a broadband connection and about half have at least one electronic whiteboard. 87 percent of primary teachers felt confident in using ICT in 2003. Ofsted report that teaching of ICT in primary schools has improved more than any other subject, (now good in 56 percent of schools), though there is still some way to go before use of ICT is embedded across the curriculum.

20. Over the next 5 years we will help primary schools develop and maintain their ICT infrastructure, and will ensure it is used effectively to improve teaching practice through the Primary Strategy. All primary schools will have broadband by 2006. We also expect to see increasing numbers of interactive whiteboards in primary schools, more teachers having access to laptops, and increasingly sophisticated use of ICT to support learning and management systems.

Extending and enriching the primary curriculum – diversity and choice

21. As well as supporting good teaching the national Primary Strategy will support headteachers in working with their school teams to plan and develop their school curriculum.

22. We intend specifically to extend the range of opportunities for primary children in the following ways:

- We have launched a Music Manifesto to improve the teaching of music in schools, and we will work with Local Authority music services to make sure that every primary child has the chance to learn a musical instrument.
- We will make sure that every child can have two hours of high quality PE and sport each week. Some of this will be during the school day, and some will be through more after-school and lunchtime sports clubs. Through our PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy, in which we are investing over £1 billion in total across Government by 2006, we are developing a network of primary School Sports Co-ordinators, who help link primary schools to support from Sports Colleges and clubs and build up their sports opportunities. 6,000 primary schools are already included within these school sports partnerships.
- We also want every primary child to have the chance to learn a foreign language, and all children from the age of seven will have this opportunity by 2010. We are running successful pilots in 19 LEAs. There will be specialist higher-level teaching assistants with language skills to teach languages where teachers cannot or do not want to; and a 'languages ladder' on the model of music grade exams to recognise and reward progress.

23. In addition, the work to support subject specialism, set out in Chapter 5, will support primary as well as secondary teachers and teaching assistants in developing their subject expertise.

Partnership with parents and the community

24. We will help all primary schools to develop and deepen their links with parents and the community. Children learn better when home and school work together; schools have a great deal to offer the community as a whole; and a supportive community can make a school a far pleasanter and more effective place to be.

25. Through the national Primary Strategy, we are offering videos and guides for parents and carers with tips on how to help children with reading or maths. We also have popular leaflets on how to get the most from parents' evening, and how to help with homework.

26. We will encourage schools to be more proactive about working with parents, supporting developments like encouraging parents to email the class teacher with any worries, or (as some reception classes do) inviting parents into school to join in the first activity of the day. We are giving schools practical advice on how they can involve parents better, learning from what the best schools do. And we will require schools to make both pupil and parent views part of their school self-evaluation.

The School Profile

A new School Profile will bring together the key information about a school's performance, the school's view of what makes it special, and what its priorities are for the future, in one short, accessible document.

The profile will:

- Be useful for anyone interested in the performance of a school, but especially for parents and carers
- Be short and easy to understand and use

- Be in a common format, making it easy to compare schools
- Be on a website that anyone can look at

It will include information about:

- School standards – with data about attainment, progress, and attendance, and comparisons with other, similar schools
- How the school serves all its pupils
- The school's own assessment of itself under main headings, and the most recent Ofsted judgement under those headings
- What the school offers to enrich the curriculum, including after- and before-school clubs and activities
- What the school offers to the wider community
- The school's priorities for future improvement

Extended Schools

27. Many schools already offer a range of services that go beyond the school day and the formal curriculum. Some already offer integrated childcare of the kind described in Chapter 2. Many offer opportunities such as homework clubs and access to arts and sport that engage and motivate children, improving behaviour, attendance, health and achievement. In some schools, multi-disciplinary teams linked to the school provide specialist help for children with particular needs.

28. We want more schools to develop extended services of all kinds. We want every primary school, over time, to be able to offer:

- A wide range of study support activities – including sports clubs, societies, clubs, visits and events;
- Parenting support opportunities provided on school premises, including family learning;
- Swift and easy referral from every school to a wider range of specialised support services for pupils (for example, speech therapy, child and adolescent mental health services, or intensive behaviour support), working through the Children's Trust.

29. Beyond this, we expect that increasing numbers of primary schools will make the 8am to 6pm wrap-around childcare offer described in the last chapter. And we are also developing a number of models for "full service" extended schools, which provide a comprehensive range of services on a single site, including access to health services, adult learning and community activities as well as study support and 8am to 6pm wrap-around childcare. These models cover both primary and secondary, and also include proposals for networks of schools which between them offer the full range of services. A number of schools are working with us to try out these models and to offer the full range of services to their communities.

30. By 2006, there will be at least one full service extended school in each Local Authority area, focused mainly on areas of disadvantage in accordance with the principles of our strategy. By 2008, at least 1,000 primary schools will offer 8am to 6pm wrap-around childcare. Over time, we expect that the vast majority of schools will be part of a network or partnership that, as a whole, makes a full offer to their community.

31. We do not expect schools and teachers to make these extended offers alone. The Children's Trust will help to bring together schools with voluntary and community sector providers who can help; and broker imaginative solutions that do not involve extra work for teachers. As with the childcare guarantee, parents might be asked to contribute towards the cost of some extended services, but not for things – such as study support, clubs and societies – that are currently free.

Healthy and sustainable schools, serving the needs of the whole child

32. Every school – not just extended schools – should do their utmost to serve the needs of the whole child. In particular, our aim is that every school should be a healthy school, giving good teaching and advice about nutrition and exercise backed up by its school lunches, by its PE and school sport, and by its playground activities. Through this work, we will tackle levels of obesity in children, aiming to halt the growth in obesity among under-11s by 2010.

The National Healthy School Standard

The National Healthy School Standard is jointly funded by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health. It is part of the government's drive to reduce health inequalities, promote social inclusion and raise educational standards.

How does it work?

Local healthy schools programmes, which are managed by local education and health partnerships, provide support to schools to help them become healthy and effective, supported by funding from Government

The National Healthy School Standard Guidance provides national quality standards for local healthy schools programmes. The standards were developed through a process of consultation (with practitioners and policy makers) and research. The guidance sets out criteria for assessing school achievements in relation to the following key themes:

- Personal, social and health education
- Citizenship
- Drug Education (including alcohol and tobacco)
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Safety
- Sex and Relationship Education.

33. Every school should also be an environmentally sustainable school, with a good plan for school transport that encourages walking and cycling, an active and effective recycling policy (moving from paper to electronic processes wherever possible) and a school garden or other opportunities for children to explore the natural world. Schools must teach our children by example as well as by instruction.

Changing the system to underpin our offer

34. We propose to change our system to free schools to teach and to improve. We intend to strip out unnecessary bureaucracy, give teachers and headteachers more confidence, and treat different schools differently – continuing to challenge the ones that are underperforming sharply, but being less directive with those that perform well, and moving towards more lateral support for them. This accords exactly with our principles for reform across the system as a whole.

More freedom from bureaucracy

35. We are developing and piloting a programme for improving the way we and Local Authorities work with primary schools. We believe Local Authorities will continue to have a strong role in supporting primary education, but that their support needs to be offered differently. Our reform programme – 'New Relationships with Primary Schools' – will mean fewer data requests, simpler communications, shorter, sharper inspections, a new school profile and a single point of contact for the school – a 'school improvement partner', working through the Local Authority.

Recognising the differences between schools

36. We will work through these primary school improvement partners to challenge and

support all schools appropriately, using school self-evaluation and a single school plan to design the support they need in partnership with them. Stronger schools will be given a freer hand in the relationship than weaker ones.

- For schools that perform well, the focus will increasingly be on them supporting and learning from each other, with more freedom and less top-down direction;
- For the weakest schools, there will be a tough programme of intensive support which gives firm direction for rapid improvement, with a series of 'non-negotiable' elements.

37. Where schools do not respond and are not improving, they will be closed or merged with other schools. We will be intolerant of poor performance and we will make sure that as primary rolls fall over the next few years we offer firm advice to Local Authorities about taking the opportunity to close schools that are not performing well.

38. We are determined that all primary schools will be good schools; and we have set ourselves a target that the proportion of schools in which fewer than 65 percent of children reach the expected level in English and maths will have reduced by 40 percent by 2008 – a dramatic reduction in the number of schools not serving children well enough.

Three-year budgets for more autonomy

39. As we set out in detail in the next chapter, we will introduce a dedicated Schools Budget, with guaranteed national funding delivered via local authorities. All schools will receive guaranteed three-year budgets, driven by pupil numbers and needs, which will give primary as well as secondary schools an unprecedented amount of control and certainty, and much more scope to plan and shape their future direction.

40. We will also continue to support new capital investment for primary schools. Within local authorities' devolved and other allocations, we expect to see investment in primary schools increase by 25 percent by 2005-06, bringing estimated spending on the primary sector to around £1.6 billion.

Building workforce capacity

41. We will put more of a focus on teacher development by linking career progression to high-quality professional development, which will increasingly be school-based, with the best teachers coaching and mentoring others (as described in Chapter 5).

42. We will also help schools make more and better use of a more diverse and flexible workforce. The role of teaching assistants is vital in supporting children's individual needs, in helping teachers use and interpret data, in managing behaviour, and in giving teachers time to plan and prepare lessons. The reshaping of the workforce in schools also means there are more and better career pathways for those who begin working with children and decide they would like to become teaching assistants, and then teachers.

43. By September 2005, every primary teacher will be able to spend 10 percent of their time planning and preparing lessons and assessing work, because of the reforms of the school workforce announced in January 2003. As we offer schools advice on how to move towards giving every teacher this time, we will build in a wide range of suggestions and models that look at ways of using this as an opportunity to bring more skilled adults into school to share their expertise and give children a broader and more rounded primary experience. Not all of these people will be qualified teachers (for example, they might be sports coaches, languages assistants, or chefs who help with teaching cookery) – the focus will be on the skills they have to offer that will add something distinctive to children's learning.

Building capacity by supporting primary leadership

44. If they are to take on the challenges we have set out in this Chapter, we will need the best generation of primary headteachers ever. We know that many primary headteachers are outstanding; and we want to use them to support their colleagues to help improve their schools. This year was the first full year of the Primary Leadership Programme – the largest programme of its kind in the world, and one of the most ambitious.

45. It is leading the way in improving the quality and consistency of education provided in primary schools. Primary Strategy Consultant Leaders, who are successful headteachers with a proven track record in delivering high standards in their own schools, provide support and challenge to other schools to help them improve.

46. In 2003-04, Local Authorities recruited just over 1,000 Consultant Leaders, and 3,500 partner schools took part in the programme. For 2004-05, there are 1,760 Consultant Leaders who will work with 3,000 new schools, and 1,500 that will continue for a second year in the programme. By the end of 2004-05, 6,500 schools (or 8,300, including the Consultant Leaders' own schools) will have been involved in the programme.

Networks of primary schools

47. To help raise standards, we will encourage primary schools to work together in networks. Many primary schools are small; and many feel isolated. Schools that belong to networks can:

- Support each other in raising standards, by learning and improving together (perhaps including shared training, teachers observing teaching in other schools, a shared Advanced Skills Teacher in a particular subject, or shared work to support transition to secondary school);
- Offer children a wider range of opportunities, by sharing resources and staff (for example, sharing Advanced Skills Teachers, a music specialist, or a particularly good sports hall; holding joint clubs; or clubbing together for trips);
- Provide more comprehensive services to their community, working together – so that a network can provide the extended services described above;
- Bring benefits for leadership and management, for example through the sharing of bursars, or federating to share a single, strong governing body or even to appoint a single executive headteacher to run several schools. This will be an important way to make sure that good local schools can stay both local and viable even if they become much smaller as primary rolls fall.

48. It may not be right for the same networks to perform all these different functions. But supporting effective learning networks of primary schools will be the single most important way in which we can build the capacity of primary schools to continue to develop and improve, and in particular to offer better teaching and learning and a wider range of opportunities to pupils and to their communities. From September 2004, there will be a funded programme for network development through the national Primary Strategy, focused on improving teaching and learning. We intend this to be the foundation for a far wider range of networking activities in future.

Timetable for Change

Taken together, our reforms mean that:

Now, in 2004:

- Our primary children are reading, writing and using numbers better than ever before
- Teaching in every subject in primary schools is better than it was in 1997
- Full service extended schools (both primary and secondary) are being established in our most deprived communities
- We are working with Local Authorities to try out new ways of working to take the burdens from schools
- We are moving into the second year of the biggest leadership programme run anywhere in the world, helping primary headteachers to help each other
- We are beginning a programme to support networks of primary schools

By 2008:

- We will have reached and sustained our literacy and numeracy targets of 85 percent of children reaching the expected level at the age of 11; and the proportion of schools in which fewer than 65 per cent of children reach this level reduced by 40 percent. Standards for pupils who have traditionally been failed by the system will be rising fastest, helping to close the social class gap
- Most primary children will be getting two hours of high quality PE and school sport each week; many will be learning a language from the age of seven, and getting the chance to learn a musical instrument at primary school
- Ofsted will show that standards of teaching have risen again across all curriculum subjects
- Primary schools will have universal access to broadband
- There will be many more extended schools, including at least 1,000 primary schools offering wrap-around 8am to 6pm guaranteed childcare
- The vast majority of primary schools will be part of an effective network that supports good teaching

Our Long Term Aim:

- Our world class standards maintained and raised for those groups which struggle most – closing the gap and achieving both excellence and equity
- Every child with at least two hours of good quality PE and school sport each week. All children with the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language from the age of seven and the chance to learn a musical instrument and to perform
- All schools making an extended offer to children and parents, either on their own or working with other schools, enriched by a huge range of out-of-school activities and opportunities, from chess to karate
- Every primary school part of an effective learning network
- Schools contributing to reversing year on year increases in childhood obesity

Chapter 4

Independent Specialist Schools

Goal: More choice for parents and pupils; independence for schools

1. Our central purpose for every pupil over the next five years is to raise the quality of education, teaching and learning, and to widen the range of real choices which are available. We intend to build on the achievements of the last seven years, to increase freedoms and independence; to accelerate the pace of reform in teaching and learning (covered in Chapter 5); and to extend choice and flexibility in the curriculum, particularly at 14-19 (covered in Chapter 6).

2. Underpinning each of these is sustained and rising investment in schools. The typical secondary school budget has risen by some 30% in real terms since we took office, from £2.7m to £3.6m, as we have devolved more money and responsibility to headteachers and school governors. In the budget in March the Chancellor announced further increases for education stretching to 2007-08.

3. This chapter sets out our proposals to ensure that every parent can choose an excellent secondary school for their child. At its heart is the development of independent specialist schools in place of the traditional comprehensive – a decisive system-wide advance. We are not creating a new category of schools – rather, giving more independence to all schools within a specialist system. There will be:

- Guaranteed funding and a wide range of freedoms for all schools;
- Extra freedoms and new roles for increasing numbers of high-performing specialist schools;
- More Academies, which operate as independent schools within the state system, in order to turn around persistent failure.

4. Our best schools already have many of the characteristics we want for every school: autonomy, specialism, freedom of heads and governors to manage and personalise their provision, and an ethos of success and community responsibility. Our further reforms will extend the practical independence and capacity of all secondary schools. For schools which are failing to achieve their full potential, it will encourage greater independence as they are able and willing to take it on. In areas of failure and under-performance, it will equip schools with the leadership capacity essential for successful self-governance, while also opening up provision to a range of new sponsors, through the academies programme and the creation of other new schools to meet parental demand.

5. We will never return to a system based on selection of the few and rejection of the many; we will not abandon intervention in failing schools; and we will not cast aside our ambitious targets for schools to keep on improving. Independence will be within a framework of fair admissions, full accountability and strong partnerships that drive improvement.

Issues and Challenges

6. We have already taken steps to give teachers and schools more freedom, giving them more control over their budgets, cutting bureaucracy by reducing by more than two-thirds the number of documents sent to schools centrally since 1999-2000 and introducing measures to make it easier for popular schools to expand. But we have still not done enough to give schools real freedom and parents real choice:

- In some areas, parents still lack secondary schools which they regard as acceptable, let alone excellent. Too many schools – particularly in some of our larger towns and cities – remain seriously weak and lack the leadership and governance to give confidence that

they are on track for radical improvement. There is too much variation both within schools, and between them.

- Unpredictable and short-term budgets make it harder for schools to plan ahead and take full independent responsibility for their future development. We need a funding system which enables schools to make bold decisions on investment for higher standards.
- Many successful schools believe they lack the independence they need to succeed – not only in funding, but in their ability to drive their schools forward without unnecessary external constraints.
- Not enough attention is given to the important role that governors should play in driving schools forward, schools are too constrained when it comes to building a strong and dynamic governing body.
- Too many pupils are still being taught in run-down buildings – despite the substantial increases in school buildings and repairs since 1997 – and we are only just beginning to make full use of digital and interactive technology to improve teaching and learning.

7. Our offer in developing a system of independent specialist schools is built on eight key reforms:

Offer to pupils and parents

Every parent and pupil to have the choice of an excellent independent specialist school in a system where there are:

- Guaranteed three-year budgets for every school from 2006, geared to pupil numbers, linked to a minimum per pupil increase each year for every school
- Universal specialist schools – and new rights and opportunities to make all specialist schools even better
- Freedom for all secondary schools to own their land and buildings, manage their assets, employ their staff, improve their governing bodies, and forge partnerships with outside sponsors and educational foundations
- More places in popular schools
- A 'new relationship with schools' to cut the red tape involved in accountability, without cutting schools adrift
- 200 academies by 2010 – and more new schools
- Every secondary school to be refurbished or rebuilt to a modern standard over the next 10 to 15 years
- 'Foundation partnerships' enabling groups of schools to work together to do better for the children in their area

These eight reforms will be underpinned by a transformed Local Authority role, with Authorities as the champions of pupils and parents.

What our offer means in practice

8. Taken together, these eight reforms will promote a new generation of independent specialist schools serving their students and communities with significantly extended freedom, diversity, and capacity.

Independent specialist schools

9. Independent specialist schools will have all the freedom needed to succeed in the service of their pupils and communities. They will set the highest expectations for their students and teachers, and put in place the means to achieve them. But they will do so within a system of fair admissions and equality of opportunity for all young people and their families. Our conception of independence is of freedom to achieve for all, not a free-for-all in which more state schools are allowed to ban less able children from applying and turn themselves into elite institutions for the few. Independence, in our policy, will create far more good local schools from which parents can choose; it is not a means for successful schools to start

choosing only the brightest children to teach.

10. Nor do we confuse independence with an opt-out subsidy to parents choosing private schools. Every penny of our investment in education will be used to enhance choice and quality within the state-funded system. We will not divert any part of it to pay or subsidise the fees of pupils in private schools. We will, however, continue strongly to encourage successful private and other school providers to set up new Academies in the state sector, on the basis of all-ability admissions and fair funding.

(i) Guaranteed three year budgets for all schools

11. From 2006 we will provide guaranteed three-year budgets for every school, geared to pupil numbers, with every school also guaranteed a minimum per pupil increase every year. This will give unprecedented practical financial security and freedom to schools in their forward planning. It will be made possible by a radical reform of education finance to end the long-standing confused responsibility between central and local government for setting the level of school funding.

12. At present, the bulk of school funding does not come to local authorities as hard cash. It comes as a theoretical planning total based on a range of factors, and there is no guarantee that it will be spent on education. The new dedicated Schools Budget will enable us to give all schools guaranteed three-year budgets, aligned with the school year, not the financial year as now. Schools funding from Local Authorities will increase by more than 6 per cent in 2005-06, and we plan that the dedicated Schools Budget will deliver increases at at least that rate in 2006-07 and 2007-08. We will consult with our partners on how the minimum guarantee should work for 2006-07 and beyond, particularly on the level at which it should be set to strike the right balance between stability and the effective targeting of resources.

13. There will be a consultation beginning in the Autumn about the arrangements for the new Schools Budget, including transitional protection where local authorities have spent more than their formula allocation in the past. No authority will receive less funding for education than its current level of spending, and we will seek to ensure there are no adverse effects for the rest of local government. Funding will continue to be channelled through Local Authorities, though they will not be able to divert this spending for other purposes. Local Authorities will deliver the national guarantee of extra funding to each school each year, but will retain an important and necessary role in reflecting local needs and circumstances.

(ii) Universal specialist schools – and better specialist schools

14. Almost two thirds of secondary schools have already achieved specialist status. All are committed to raising standards, are developing their own centre of excellence in one area of the curriculum, and are using their specialism to improve quality across the whole school. All have sponsors from business and strong links with the community. In all these respects their individual mission and capacity for self-governance are improved, and often transformed. As the numbers and types of specialism grow, schools with particular strengths will increasingly support each other in developing teaching and learning across the curriculum, and offer extra support and choice to pupils with particular aptitudes and interests.

Number of specialist schools by specialism, from September 2004

Technology (maths, science & design technology)	545
Arts	305
Sports	283
Science	224
Languages	203
Maths & computing	153
Business & enterprise	146

Combined	38
Engineering	35
Humanities	18
Music	5
<hr/>	
Total	19551
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15. Specialist schools have improved faster than the average, and add more value for pupils regardless of their prior attainment:

16. We intend that by 2008 every secondary school which is up to standard should be a specialist school, and every community should have one or more specialist schools, offering choice and excellence to parents and children alike.

17. We will also provide significant new opportunities for existing specialist schools, to enable them to drive forward and assume greater independent responsibility. Every specialist school comes up for 'redesignation' once every four years, with the Specialist Schools Trust advising schools on the process, and the Department for Education and Skills deciding on their progress and whether they should retain specialist status (which almost all do). The Trust has proposed that specialist schools should be able to take on a second specialism at the point of redesignation, to give the schools themselves a new horizon, and to enhance the availability and choice of specialisms within and between schools in each area. We welcome this proposal, and will begin to offer second specialisms during this year's redesignations. Schools will receive additional funding for taking on a second specialism, provided that they also make its benefits more widely available to other schools and the community.

18. We will also use redesignation to identify specialist schools which are being particularly successful, and give them the opportunity to take on extra roles and gain additional freedoms.

19. Successful specialist schools without sixth forms will be able to have a stake in sixth form provision, by teaching 16-18 year olds in their specialism, often as part of a partnership with other local schools and colleges to provide a wider range of options between 14 and 19. We will also make it easier for successful and popular specialist schools to establish their own sixth forms, with a strong presumption in favour of their being allowed to do so in areas where there is little sixth form provision, or where there is overall low participation or attainment. Chapter 6 gives further details.

20. High performing specialist schools will also be able, at redesignation, to take on leading roles in the system, including acting as:

- training schools, providing the best possible on-the-job training for new and existing teachers.
- Leading schools, working with partner schools to help them improve and to work together for all the children in their area. Foundation Partnerships (below) will be one important way for schools to do this.

(iii) Freedom for all secondary schools to own their land and buildings, manage their assets, employ their staff, improve their governing bodies, and establish or join charitable foundations to engage with outside partners

21. At present one in three schools enjoys some or most of these powers, in particular foundation schools and aided schools. But relatively few enjoy them all. In future all schools – except those which are failing – will have a right to take on all these powers by a simple vote of their governing body. This will give unprecedented freedom for all schools to serve their pupils, parents and communities. The strict requirement for fair admissions will remain; we will not allow an extension of selection by ability, so that schools cherry-pick pupils at the expense of parental choice and other schools.

22. Our mechanisms for extending these freedoms will be twofold. First, every school which is not a foundation school will have the right, by a simple vote of its governing body, following a brief period of consultation, to become one. At present, while national regulations allow schools to take this course, it is only possible to do so through a complicated and time-consuming process of local decision-making. We propose to sweep these obstacles away entirely, and all schools which wish to take on foundation status, and are not failing, will be free to do so.

CASE STUDY

Springwood High School, King's Lynn

The headteacher of Springwood High School describes the effect of Foundation Status on his school:

"As a school which takes responsibility for its own performance and destiny, Springwood sought foundation status, which it acquired in January 2002.

"There has been a real sense of liberation in the governors' new ability to take decisions about grounds and buildings developments. Significant changes have occurred in the relatively short time since January 2002 – a new Science laboratory, a complete redesign and refurbishment of the Technology block, a new staffroom, drainage of the playing fields – and the Governors were able to plan and agree all of these changes by their own authority.

"A further change has been the increased number of parent-governors sitting on the Governing Body. This change gives parents a much more influential role in determining the direction of the school which educates their children. They are obviously any school's most important stakeholders. There are no vacancies for parent-governors, and no difficulty about filling these positions.

"Springwood was ranked amongst the hundred most improved schools in 2002 and again in 2003 – few schools achieve this two years' running. Such rapid progress requires ambition and enterprise and as much mastery of your own ship as possible. Foundation status has played a part in creating our sense of ownership and empowerment to move the school beyond its previous parameters. It has not distanced us from other schools, as we are working with both primary and secondary partners more closely and productively than ever."

Freedoms of Foundation schools

Foundation schools:

- Own their own land and buildings (through a Charitable Foundation or the Governing Body), and can take decisions to improve them, or build new buildings, without needing to get agreement from the Local Authority; like all other state schools, however, they cannot borrow against these assets.
- Employ their own staff.
- Administer their own admissions arrangements (within the strict requirements of the national Admissions Code of Practice, which prevents any extension of selection by ability).
- May, if they wish, establish (or become part of) a charitable foundation or take on a faith sponsor; and we will now enable such foundations and faith sponsors to appoint a majority of governors where this is appropriate.

23. Secondly, we will enhance the flexibility and freedoms available through foundation status. In particular, we will make it possible for schools to strengthen their governing bodies, of their own volition, by for example including more sponsor governors. We will also make it possible for schools to set up charitable foundations which will be able to appoint the majority of the governing body of the school. This will extend generally the opportunity already available to a limited number of schools (which enjoy 'voluntary aided' or 'academy' status) to forge a long-term partnership with an external sponsor, including business, charitable and

faith sponsors. This opportunity will be attractive to some weaker and 'coasting' schools as a source of new dynamism, as well as to more successful schools – which is why we are opening the opportunity to all schools except those that are really failing.

24. As now, foundations will not be permitted to run school budgets for profit, or to deploy assets for any purpose not associated with the school. Nor will the role of parent governors be diminished. To support the crucial role of chair of governors, we will be promoting new training, support and mentoring programmes.

(iv) More places in popular schools

25. There is no 'surplus places rule' that prevents schools from expanding. All successful and popular schools may propose to expand, and we strongly support them in doing so where they believe they can sustain their quality. We have introduced dedicated capital funding to encourage expansion, and have given strong guidance to local decision-makers that they should allow expansion in all but exceptional circumstances.

26. We will introduce a fast-track process to speed up expansion to take less than twelve weeks (unless there is an appeal); and we will reinforce the existing strong presumption that expansion proposals should be agreed.

27. Alongside encouraging the expansion of successful schools, we are encouraging the leaders and governors of successful schools to establish entirely new schools in response to parental demand. The United Church Schools Trust, for example, is establishing a network of six new academies in response to parental demand, which it intends to manage in a federal relationship with eight private schools dating back to the 19th century. The Government warmly welcomes such initiatives; our proposals (below) for mandatory competitions for new schools will extend the opportunity further for other successful schools and educational providers to follow suit.

(v) A 'new relationship with schools' to cut the red tape involved in accountability, without cutting schools adrift

28. Inspection, accountability and intervention to tackle failure are essential if independence is to drive standards up. But they need to be of high quality, and bring with them the minimum of bureaucracy – and to improve them, we are designing a 'new relationship with schools'.

29. There will be a single annual review with the school on its performance, improvement priorities and support needs, stripping out bureaucracy both from Local Authorities and from this Department. The existing relationship between the school and its Local Authority link adviser – which too often lacks sharpness and professional credibility – will now be conducted by a 'school improvement partner' appointed and managed by the Local Authority within a system of national training and guidance. Where schools are failing, intervention will follow as necessary to turn the school around or close it; where schools are successful (identified through redesignation) they will only have a formal review once every three years, rather than annually. Most school improvement partners will be serving heads from leading schools.

30. The new relationship with schools will also mean:

- A new inspection regime. Shorter, more frequent, short-notice inspections led by Her Majesty's Inspectors will concentrate on the fundamentals of effective schooling, and halve the inspection burden on schools;
- Sharper school self-evaluation. A regular cycle in which schools assess their strengths and weaknesses rigorously to drive improvement;
- Simplified data and information systems, making sure schools are not asked again and again for the same information;
- A published school profile, giving parents better quality information on the school's performance and ambitions, to enhance choice.

31. We will combine all the current direct payments to schools for standards-related activities into a single Standards Grant to which every school will be entitled, and over which they will have complete discretion (except in the case of weak and failing schools, which may have some conditions put on their use of the grant). This will further reduce red tape.

32. Independence is a means to enhance school performance and not reduce it, so we will not scrap the essential targets for schools, relating to their GCSE and 14-year-old test performance. But following the success of our new approach to targets for the performance of children aged 11 – which now starts with schools setting targets themselves – we will extend this approach to secondary schools. Schools will thereby take greater independent responsibility for their targets.

33. We have recently published a joint document with Ofsted on the New Relationship with Schools which sets out in more detail how it will work. It can be found on the Teachernet website, www.teachernet.gov.uk.

(vi) 200 Academies by 2010 – and more new schools

34. We will expand the academies programme to provide for 200 independently managed Academies to be open or in the pipeline by 2010 in areas with inadequate existing secondary schools. The programme provides entirely new, independently managed schools in areas of low educational standards and disadvantage where there are insufficient good school places – either replacing existing schools where other measures haven't helped them improve, or creating wholly new schools.

35. Academies are promoted and managed by independent sponsors, including philanthropic individuals, educational trusts, faith sponsors and companies on a non-profit basis. They are all-ability schools with a specialism, a community mission, and a dedication to transforming educational standards, aspirations and opportunities. They are free to innovate as they wish, within the law and requirements on admissions, in order to transform standards in areas that have been persistently ill-served in the past. Sponsors contribute up to £2 million towards the initial capital cost, and make an on-going commitment in terms of governance, management and other support. Running costs are met by the government on the same basis as other local schools. Like all state-funded schools, Academies are inspected by Ofsted and their results are published. They will also be subject to the new 'single conversation' performance arrangements.

36. 12 Academies are now open; and a further 35 are in preparation. The 200 to be open or in the pipeline by 2010 will be either new constructions or refurbishments, whichever is more cost-effective. We expect there to be around 60 Academies in London boroughs.

CASE STUDY

Walsall Academy

Walsall Academy opened in September 2003, with a technology specialism. It replaced T.P. Riley Community School. Its sponsors are Thomas Telford School in Shropshire – one of the original City Technology Colleges, with an outstanding record of pupil achievement and innovation in the application of information technology to teaching and learning – in partnership with the Mercers' Company, a City of London charitable livery company which was among the original sponsors of Thomas Telford and supports other schools in the state-funded and private sectors.

The transition to academy status, with the new support and leadership brought to bear, has already raised the proportion of students gaining five good GCSEs from 13% in 2001 to 49% in 2003. There are now ten times as many students applying for a place in the school than before – with 608 applications for September 2004 compared to just 57 students in T.P. Riley's last intake.

Innovations in the new Academy include a school day organised into two long sessions, with students spending the whole morning or afternoon in a single curriculum area. There

are no bells.

37. Where possible we have promoted Academies in co-operation with local education authorities. Local Authorities typically supply the land, assist in the conception and development of the project, and play a valuable ongoing partnership role. However, the Government will not stand by and allow Local Authorities to sustain failure by refusing to engage with academies where they can meet parental demand for good school places. Where necessary we will use existing powers – and seek any additional powers necessary – to hold Local Authorities to their responsibilities. The Building Schools for the Future programme (below) also requires Local Authorities to consider academies and other options for new schools in their plans for upgrading the entire secondary estate in each locality.

38. In addition to academies, we will mandate competitions for new schools where they are needed, so that it is easier for new promoters – including parents' groups – to open schools in response to local demand. We will expect local authorities to close failing schools without delay.

System reform in London – the London Challenge

Over recent years secondary schools in London have been improving significantly more quickly than the national average. But there is more to do to give the capital the schools its parents demand.

The London Challenge – our programme for London schools – is driving radical improvement, including more and better teachers, intervention to improve weak and failing schools, the creation of many new schools, academies and 6th form colleges.

A new specialist system for London – independence and interdependence

London is at the forefront of the new specialist secondary system. There are already six new academies, 239 specialist schools, 37 full service extended schools and 27 secondary training schools.

For the first time there will be one admissions system for the whole of London, supported by all the London boroughs – so parents and pupils can easily apply to the schools that suit them best, and no children are left without places.

Over the next five years **20 brand new schools** will be opened in the capital, responding to London's growing population and giving more choice. The new schools will be located where there is a shortage of places and where many children go to school out of borough.

A number of the new schools will be **Academies** and in total we expect around 60 academies to be opened by 2010, with at least 20 in inner London boroughs over the next five years. More than 15 new sixth forms and sixth form colleges are being opened. The new provision will be found in a diverse mixture of schools, colleges and Academies.

The London teacher

In many professions, like law, finance, the media or government, working in London has a special status. We want London's teachers to share a similar pride. The new Chartered London Teacher status will recognise and reward the special professional skills of successful London teachers. Starting last September, Teach First is engaging 200 graduates a year, recruited directly after graduation from leading universities, to teach in London schools – a highly popular two-year programme supported by the private sector.

Too often good teachers leave London because they cannot afford to buy a family home. The London Challenge Key Teacher Home Buy scheme now offers interest-free equity loans of up to £100,000 to 1,000 London teachers who show potential to be leaders, to enable them to afford family homes in London.

The London Student Pledge

The Student Pledge sets out opportunities we want all young Londoners to have during their secondary education. For example – we want every young person to be able to attend an artistic or sporting event at a major London venue. More than 200 major

London organisations have signed up to offer opportunities as part of the Pledge. 100 London businesses have committed themselves to supporting schools through the Business Challenge.

The London Gifted and Talented programme is creating new opportunities for young people to identify and make the most of their talents. An innovative online system of teaching and learning has been established and already covers almost 100 topics. You can find information at www.londongt.org

The London Leader

Through the National College for School Leadership and the London Leadership Centre, we have also invested heavily in the leadership of London schools. That has included the development of consultant leaders – highly skilled heads able to coach and support others – as well as programmes to develop senior teams and middle managers.

(vii) Every secondary school to be refurbished or rebuilt to a modern standard

39. The physical state of the secondary school infrastructure was in a deplorable state in 1997, run down after decades of under-investment and neglect. The education of pupils, and the ability of teachers to teach, suffered badly. Some areas of the curriculum – such as music, languages and sciences – suffered particularly from poor facilities.

40. The ‘Building Schools for the Future’ (BSF) programme, made possible by a sevenfold increase in the schools capital budget since 1997, will give every school the buildings, facilities and information technology it needs to succeed. It will also drive reform in each locality, including more extended services in schools, the expansion of popular schools, the closure of failing schools, and the establishment of new schools – and new patterns of provision, including more sixth forms and sixth form colleges – in response to parental demand.

41. BSF brings together exciting new designs, systematic planning for school modernisation in each locality, and better methods of procurement to make sure we get good buildings and good value for money. Our exemplar designs by top architects will make sure that new school buildings and refurbishments provide the facilities needed for twenty-first century teaching and learning, and for serving the local community.

42. The BSF programme is being staged in several waves, with the aim of covering all local authorities over the next ten to fifteen years. Later this year, we will give all authorities information about which wave they are likely to be in, so that they can plan sensibly. By 2008, over 500 BSF schools will have been built, be under construction or planned in detail. And alongside this programme, each secondary school will continue to have its own devolved capital funding to spend on improvement as it sees fit, worth £87,250 to a typical 1,000 place secondary school in 2005-06.

43. BSF is not simply a school modernisation and replacement programme. It is a ‘once in a generation’ opportunity, locality by locality, to drive the creation of better schools – including new schools, Academies, the expansion of successful and popular schools, the creation of new sixth forms and the closure of unpopular and ineffective schools, as well as the development of more extended services for pupils and the community. Local Authorities are expected to draw up their plans after full consultation with parents and schools, and plans will be assessed according to rigorous school improvement criteria, and will not receive funding until Government and local people are satisfied that they meet the full potential for transforming standards and opportunities for young people in the area. The Government will be particularly exacting in areas where standards are low, and will expect boldness on the part of Local Authorities in championing the interests of pupils and parents, even where this means radical change.

(viii) Foundation Partnerships

44. We intend high-performing specialist schools to play a leading role in new Foundation Partnerships. These will build on the best of our existing collaborative arrangements – including Excellence in Cities and Leading Edge. Foundation Partnerships will enable groups of independent specialist schools to take on wider responsibilities on a collective basis, serving their students better, with funding devolved directly to the partnerships from Local Authorities. We expect that Foundation Partnerships will normally be developed in partnership with Local Authorities, and might cover areas such as:

- responsibility for school improvement across the partnership, with the associated funding devolved from the Local Authority, flexible sharing of resources across the partnership, and freedom about where and what support services to access;
- management of local strategies that require co-ordination, like the 14-19 curriculum offer, or teacher training;
- shared responsibility and devolved resources for provision for excluded pupils (including devolved funding for Pupil Referral Units);
- responsibility for special educational needs assessment and provision.

45. An increasing number of Local Authorities are beginning to adopt this kind of approach in working with their schools, and it is something we are keen to support. We will publish proposals later this year.

46. Taken together, we believe these reforms will ensure that the overwhelming majority of parents are able to choose a secondary school offering an excellent standard of education to their children. They build on the sustained progress made by teachers and schools in recent years. They go with the grain of all our reforms, supported by headteachers and school leaders since 1997. And they offer the prospect of England achieving world class standards for the great majority of our young people in the years ahead.

Changing the system to deliver reform

47. We outlined in Chapter 2 the central role Local Authorities will play in Children's Trusts, and the shift of focus towards leading, commissioning and co-ordinating rather than delivering services directly. This new Local Authority role will also support our drive towards increasing independence for schools.

Modernising the Local Authority role in Education

48. The best Local Authorities have long provided inspirational educational leadership and innovation in their localities, commanding the confidence of parents and schools alike. But some Local Authorities have been too defensive or ineffective in the face of low educational standards and high parental dissatisfaction. We expect Local Authorities to champion the interests of parents and pupils in their localities, particularly where radical change is needed to ensure that every parent has a choice of a good school and no pupil is failed by a poor education. At all levels – under-fives, primary, secondary and post-16 – Local Authorities should recast themselves as the commissioner and quality assurer of educational services, not the direct supplier, a role which enables them to promote the interests of parents and pupils far more confidently and powerfully than the old days of the Local Authority as direct manager of the local schools and colleges.

49. We will make faster progress where Authorities have enthusiastically set an educational vision, worked with employers, further education colleges, headteachers, parents, community leaders and others to get behind the vision, and have then supported and helped their schools to work independently to bring it about. For this, their partnership work with providers of children's services, local Learning and Skills Councils, employers and others with a contribution to make will be critical.

50. As part of their work to provide educational leadership and vision for the schools in their area, they will retain responsibility for important overarching roles, where local co-ordination is essential, including the development of capital strategies for their areas (including Building Schools for the Future), making sure every child has the best possible school place, school transport, and provision for Special Educational Needs.

51. This new role enhances the power of Local Authorities to develop education as part of their wider vision by making them more powerful and more supportive of the interests of parents and pupils. We believe that this role for Local Authorities presents real opportunities and will take this forward within the framework of the Government's overall strategy for local government. The introduction of a dedicated Schools Budget will have the same effect, ending the annual wrangle over the quantum of resources for schools between central and local government. With the funding for schools assured, Local Authorities can concentrate fully on their strategic and quality-assuring functions in education. It will also still be open to them to spend more on education locally than the national allocation, where they wish to do so in support of local schools and parents.

52. Rather than necessarily being the providers of school improvement themselves, we see Local Authorities helping to build up strong independent schools and networks of schools which can drive their own improvement. Through the school improvement partners, they will have an important role in holding schools to account, and retain the lead responsibility to intervene where schools are seriously underperforming.

CASE STUDY:

Knowsley

In Knowsley, collaboration and partnership underpin the authority's approach to reform. By changing the authority's role, they are fostering a genuine partnership of lead professionals, with collective decision making and joint leadership. The authority believes that the way forward for school improvement is for the best schools to lead the system and for the best teachers and heads to provide support and challenge for others.

The authority has one secondary collaborative and three primary collaboratives, involving all schools in the Borough. They have almost halved the numbers in the School Improvement Team and have devolved core funding for school improvement to the collaboratives. Management Support Consultants (mainly ex-headteachers) support schools in the secondary sector and report directly to the collaborative. The authority has also funded, through the collaboratives, lead development headteachers. Colleagues provide professional development opportunities for each other across schools through peer review, secondments, coaching and mentoring. The aims are to develop common behaviours and a "spiralling up" culture of high expectations and to build capacity within the system to manage and disseminate change.

53. We will continue to use Compacts to underpin partnership between central and local government. But where Local Authorities are struggling to perform effectively, with Ofsted judging their performance to be unsatisfactory, the Government will consider intervention. The form of intervention will depend upon the extent of the failure and the capacity of the Local Authority to respond to it effectively. Where evidence indicates that the authority is unlikely to be able to turn around its own performance, or where its attempts to respond have failed to deliver the necessary improvements, we will invite others to compete to take on either their whole role, or parts of it. This might be another Local Authority, a Foundation Partnership of schools (described above), or a private company.

Timetable for Change

Taken together, our reforms mean that:

Now, in 2004:

- There are 1,950 specialist schools in the system – almost two thirds of all secondary schools

- 17 Academies will be open by September, transforming the chances of children in our most deprived communities
- We are trialling the New Relationship with Schools in six Local Authorities

By 2008:

- All secondary schools that want to be specialist schools will have met the standard, with 95% of secondary schools specialists or Academies
- 600 schools will have had or be having new or dramatically refurbished buildings through the Building Schools for the Future programme
- 85 Academies will be operating, with a further 75 in the pipeline
- School funding will be secured through a dedicated Schools Budget
- There will be a reshaped and refocused role for Local Authorities
- A New Relationship with schools will be firmly in place

Our Long Term Aim

- A system of independent specialist schools giving every parent and pupil the choice of an excellent school
- No school in the country disadvantaged by its buildings or facilities
- Two thirds of schools with new or dramatically refurbished buildings through the Building Schools for the Future programme
- The Academies programme recognised internationally as a flagship programme for dealing with underperformance and difficult circumstances

¹ Some specialisms have been introduced more recently than others, which explains the smaller numbers for (for example) humanities and music.

Chapter 5

Personalisation and choice in the secondary years

Goal: Every young person achieving their full potential

1. As well as the choice of an excellent secondary school, every student should, within their school, have excellent teaching that suits them, building on what they know, fitting them for what they aspire to, and helping them reach their full potential.
2. The conditions for learning must also be right in every school – with good behaviour, regular attendance and excellent partnerships between schools, parents and the community.
3. Teaching in secondary schools is improving. The number of failing schools has nearly halved; and results for 14 year olds, and at GCSE, are improving steadily.
4. Since 1998, schools with the highest levels of disadvantage have improved nearly three times faster at GCSE than those in more affluent areas – thanks in part to our successful Excellence in Cities programme.
5. Both behaviour and attendance are also improving – with fewer violent incidents and fewer days lost to truancy.
6. There are 24,000 more secondary school teachers and over 30,000 more support staff in schools than in 1997. The average number of computers used for teaching and learning in each secondary school has risen from 101 in 1998 to 193 in 2003.
7. Ofsted judges over three quarters of schools to have high quality leadership; and they say that this generation of newly-qualified teachers is the best ever.

Issues and Challenges

8. But there are still serious challenges that must be faced and overcome.
 - Too many children still find the transition from primary to secondary school difficult – some fall back in their learning as a result.
 - We are not doing enough to make sure each child reaches their full potential. It is not just the lowest-performing children that are being let-down – there are children at every level who are bored or frustrated. Schools can do more to tailor or personalise what is taught to get the most from each pupil, and particularly to help groups of children who have traditionally underperformed, and to stretch the most able.
 - There is also not enough variety and choice within the curriculum or in opportunities outside the school day – for example, clubs and societies, trips, visitors or visits – to make sure that every young person is excited by school and builds the confidence and skills they need.
 - At the extreme this leads to some young people playing truant, or behaving badly at school. Low level disruption is a real irritant and barrier to progress in some schools. Seriously disruptive or even threatening behaviour is much rarer, but still totally unacceptable. And there is a close correlation between poor attendance at school and crime and anti-social behaviour.

- As children grow up, it can be harder for parents to stay involved with school – and some secondary schools do not do enough to work closely with parents in support of children's learning, or to see themselves as community resources.

9. In meeting these challenges, our offer to secondary pupils and parents will be:

Offer to pupils and parents

- A smooth transition from primary to secondary school
- Excellent teaching in every school based on real knowledge of individual pupils, helping all achieve their potential
- More use of ICT to support good teaching and learning
- Teachers who are masters of their subject, and who can enthuse and inspire, with excellent training for all
- An interesting, broad and rich curriculum with more choice and a wider set of out-of-hours opportunities – including sports, clubs and residential activities through schools
- Schools free of disruption, with better behaviour, and better management of excluded pupils
- A step-change in school attendance, giving better chances to children but also reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, and improving communities
- Secondary schools at the heart of communities, working well with parents, and forging good partnerships to support vulnerable pupils

What our offer means in practice

Personalisation of teaching and learning

10. A good secondary school has effective teaching at its core. Teaching is tailored to the needs of individual pupils, with progress regularly assessed. The National Curriculum is not regarded as a constraint or a straitjacket – it is the foundation for a wide range of curriculum options and for a variety of learning experiences and styles. Successful schools know that learning continues beyond the formal school day or week, with a wide choice of options and experiences beyond the classroom.

11. A great deal of work is underway to raise the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools. Training and support for teachers in the early secondary years – modelled on the primary school literacy and numeracy strategies – has produced the best results ever at age 14 and at GCSE, but the pace of improvement now needs to be quickened in six key areas.

(i) Moving from primary to secondary school

12. The failure to make a good transition from primary school is one of the biggest causes of poor achievement in secondary school. Building on what the best schools do already, we will:

- Introduce co-ordinated admission arrangements for all secondary schools from entry in September 2005 and for all primary schools from entry in September 2006. All local parents will fill in one application form and all will be sent their offers at the same time, with the Local Authority acting as a 'clearing house';
- Make sure better information about pupils is consistently passed between primary and secondary schools. For the first time this year, marks from the end of primary school tests will be transferred electronically directly to secondary schools. This will mean they can plan earlier for the new group of children;
- Promote new approaches to managing pupils' learning and welfare when moving into secondary school, including innovative approaches like 'schools-within-schools' and new-style 'house' systems, which can make large secondary schools feel more personal and intimate.

(ii) A new secondary strategy for teaching and learning

13. Secondly, we will develop the Key Stage 3 Strategy – designed to improve teaching for 11 to 14 year-olds – into a Secondary Strategy covering the whole 11-16 stage. The Strategy will help teachers give careful attention to pupils' individual learning needs, set challenging targets for them linked to high-quality assessment, and offer tools to teachers to make lessons pacy, challenging and enjoyable.

14. This new Secondary Strategy will put extra focus on the areas of learning that many pupils find most difficult – for example, writing and close reading skills in English, algebra in mathematics, and investigative work in science. This will help every single pupil achieve their potential even in difficult areas.

15. We will also give extra support to pupils who have not been well-served by the system in the past, including:

- **Gifted and talented students**, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many schools lack the confidence to attend fully to the needs of able pupils and ensure that they achieve their highest potential. The new National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth is a centre of excellence advising teachers on the best way to teach gifted young people, and to encourage them to go on to university, offering summer schools and on-line learning for gifted and talented young people so that they can meet and work with other like-minded children and be given extra stretch and challenge;
- **Low achieving minority ethnic groups**, by designing teaching strategies and materials more closely around their personal experiences and offering positive role models through academic mentors;
- **Pupils with special educational needs** by developing dedicated Strategy materials and training, including for Special Educational Needs co-ordinators, and key support staff who work with pupils with special educational needs.

16. We want to see a transformation in outcomes for looked-after children and young people over the next five years, with much greater stability in their lives. We expect local authorities to ensure more choice for looked-after children and young people about where they live, fewer out-of-authority placements and much less moving around between placements. Greater stability will lead to much better continuity in education: it will enable looked-after children to achieve more in school and will enable schools to do better for them. At the same time we want to see more personalised support and better access to activities and opportunities for looked after children and we will work to ensure that there are more, better trained, better rewarded foster carers.

(iii) ICT supporting personalised learning

17. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a powerful tool for learning, helping teachers explain difficult concepts, giving access to a huge range of examples and resources, and engaging pupils easily. It is also a vital tool for personalisation – giving the opportunity to tailor tasks to children without hours of extra work for teachers; and with the potential to do things like mark and analyse work automatically, picking out areas where a particular child has not understood, or where the whole class has missed and point and needs more explanation.

18. Since 1998 the Government has invested over £1 billion creating an ICT infrastructure in schools in England, connecting secondary schools using broadband, and training teachers. This investment has already had a dramatic effect but there is more to do both to equip all teachers to make the most of what is available and do develop better quality curriculum content and materials.

19. Electronic whiteboards, in the hands of competent and confident teachers, bring new dimensions to whole class teaching. Interactive slates hold the potential for learning that is both personalised and shared. Schools are increasingly investing in these types of technology, and we have provided £50 million over two years to accelerate this trend – enough for around 20,000 classrooms to be equipped with whiteboards. We will continue this

programme of investment in ICT over the next five years.

(iv) Effective subject teaching

20. Secondary teachers are usually specialist teachers with a real love of their subject. The most inspiring lessons come from teachers being able to pass on their enthusiasm for the subject to their pupils; but too often this inspiration is lacking. We intend to develop more subject-specific support across the curriculum, to help teachers develop their subject knowledge and teach better.

21. We will appoint Chief Advisers for all the key subjects, to champion their subject and plan its improvement, including better subject-specific training for teachers, working in particular with outstanding heads of department in specialist schools, and with subject associations. The Chief Adviser for Mathematics will take forward our response to the Smith report Mathematics Counts, and oversee the development of a national maths centre.

Subject Specialism: Extra support for Mathematics

In our recent response to the Adrian Smith mathematics enquiry, recognising the particular importance of mathematics, we announced that we would:

- Appoint a new Chief Adviser for Mathematics to oversee the implementation of the mathematics strategy
- Raise the value of the teacher training bursary for mathematics graduates from £6,000 to £7,000 from September 2005, and increasing the value of the Golden Hello for new mathematics teachers from £4,000 to £5,000 for trainees entering PGCE courses from September 2005 onwards
- Remove the cap on pay for mathematics Advanced Skills Teachers, currently just under £50,000, guaranteeing them a minimum salary of £40,000 (Subject to the statutory advice of the School Teachers' Review Body)
- Establish a National Centre for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching to provide strategic direction and leadership
- Develop guidance for a mathematics extension curriculum to stretch more able learners

(v) A richer secondary curriculum

22. The National Curriculum provides an entitlement to a broad, rich curriculum for every pupil. It needs to be kept under review, so that it fits young people for the changing demands of life and work in adulthood. Once Mike Tomlinson has reported on the 14-19 curriculum (which we discuss in more detail in the next Chapter), we will carry out a review to look again at what is studied by 11-14 year olds, and in particular at whether it offers good enough opportunities both for those at risk of disengagement, and for more able children who need to be stretched.

23. We will also widen opportunities beyond the classroom. Often, these provide some of the most memorable experiences at school – the school trip, the drama production, or playing in the school team. Our strategy for sport in particular will extend sporting opportunities for children in secondary school, building motivation and engagement as well as supporting health and fitness.

The PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy

Over £1 billion is being invested by the Government to support PE and school sport. An ambitious target has been set for three quarters of 5-16 year olds to spend at least 2 hours each week on PE and school sport by 2006.

Spearheading action will be the massive expansion of the School Sport Partnerships – families of primary, special and secondary schools that come together to enhance sports opportunities for all. This includes competitive sports, with many partnerships setting up or joining sports leagues.

Specialist Sports Colleges act as 'hubs' for the partnerships, and show that sporting excellence supports high standards as well as health and fitness. Wright Robinson School is the largest high school in Manchester, serving an inner city area rated among poorest and most disadvantaged in the country. It has concentrated on making links with primary schools, increasing participation and achievement in all its pupils (both sporting and academic), and improving training for staff and other adults. It has increased the proportion of pupils getting five good GCSEs from 7% to 43% in seven years.

(vi) Improving behaviour and attendance

24. Good behaviour is essential to good learning and good citizenship. Although OFSTED say that behaviour is unsatisfactory overall in only 5% of secondary and 1% of primary schools, low level disruption is a problem affecting all schools to some extent. More extreme incidents of bad behaviour, though rare, have a big impact on staff and other pupils, and affect some schools disproportionately, imposing unacceptable burdens on teachers and damaging the education of other pupils.

25. School attendance is improving. 1,300 former truants are back in school every day compared to last year, and attendance rates have improved in 133 of the 150 Local Authorities. But this is only a start in eradicating a culture of truancy, much of it accepted or even encouraged by parents, particularly among older secondary pupils. Parents have a duty to see that their children attend school; schools and Local Authorities need consistent support as they seek to enforce this duty. In 2002/3 just over a quarter of pupils in schools with absence rates above 11% got five good GCSEs, compared with nearly three quarters in schools with absence rates below 6.5%. And poor attendance, if not addressed, can also lead rapidly to more thorough disengagement, anti-social behaviour and street crime. Better teaching, and a more interesting curriculum, have a part to play in engaging pupils more effectively, but we need to go further. We will:

- expect every school to have a school uniform. School uniforms help to define the ethos of a school and the standards expected. They help give pupils pride in their school, and make them ambassadors for their school in the community. They can also be used as a visible sign of a new determination when re-starting a failing school.
- expect every school to have clear rules and codes of conduct, and to subscribe to our anti-bullying charter – which requires the headteacher, staff and pupils to sign up to clear responsibilities in cracking down on bullying.
- use Ofsted inspection, performance tables and our new school profile to improve attendance. We will, as headteachers have proposed, no longer focus just on absence that is 'unauthorised,' but look too at absolute levels of attendance at school.
- use truancy sweeps to target areas where truancy is a particular problem. And we will continue our successful work through the Street Crime initiative to mobilise the police, social services, education welfare officers and others to identify and deal with the children with the worst behaviour and attendance problems.
- support headteachers' decisions to remove from their school anyone – whether parent or pupil – who is behaving in an aggressive way. Pupils can already be permanently excluded for a one-off violent offence and we will support heads in taking immediate action. Our guidance to schools and Local Authorities makes clear that we would not expect governing bodies or appeal panels to reinstate pupils in these circumstances. Sentencing guidelines to magistrates also make it clear that assaults on teachers should attract severe sentencing.
- defend teachers from false allegations, ensuring that teachers are not subjected to damaging delays where their integrity is in question, and that swift action can be taken against those who make false allegations. We will publish proposals later this year.
- make sure disruptive pupils do not ruin learning for others – using learning mentors, learning support units, and, where necessary, joint arrangements with Pupil Referral Units to take them out of the classroom.

- extend the use of Parenting Contracts to set out shared responsibilities with parents on behaviour and attendance, and help parents get the support they need (recognising that many parents may be struggling with similar behaviour difficulties at home and will welcome support).
- confront the small group of parents who refuse to take their responsibilities seriously, with fixed penalty notices for parents of truants, prosecution for the worst offenders, and Parenting Orders imposed by the courts.

26. We will also address the issue of schools that are asked to take on large numbers of hard-to-place or disruptive pupils through the year.

27. We will expect groups of schools and colleges, including Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and special schools, to take collective responsibility for the education of young people in their area, through clear agreements which set out systems for managing excluded and seriously disruptive pupils. The agreements, reached through Admissions Forums, will set out:

- A procedure for allocating hard to place pupils which balances the wishes of parents, the needs of the child and the circumstances of the school, so that no school is obliged to take an unmanageable number of disruptive pupils.
- arrangements for collaboration among the schools on behaviour policy, taking more responsibility for the organisation and management of Pupil Referral Units and other out-of-school provision, ensuring that it meets the needs of each locality.

28. We will encourage Admissions Forums, schools and Local Authorities to secure the funding to support these agreements and to support the education of hard to place pupils – and will encourage Authorities to devolve funds to groups of schools to do this.

CASE STUDY

Swale Project, Kent

Eight secondary schools (including a grammar school) in Swale are collaborating to manage behaviour and reduce exclusions. The group have been delegated £300,000 by the LEA to allocate across schools according to need. This has funded family liaison workers, counsellors, social work time and police, often shared across several schools. Headteachers are also now collectively responsible for the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), and PRU places are shared out between schools, according to their needs, for preventive work. Headteachers have agreed to contribute £5,000 for each pupil they exclude permanently; but they are now often able to arrange managed moves between schools. There are clear indications of success – last year, there were 28 permanent exclusions from schools in the group; so far this year, there have been fewer than 10.

29. This Autumn, the Department will issue model agreements on the education of excluded and disruptive pupils drawn up in partnership with foundation and voluntary schools, Local Authorities and headteacher associations, and will also give advice on the process for reaching these agreements and making them work. There will be a strong expectation that every Admissions Forum will develop an agreement, and every school will sign up to one. We will seek legal powers so that where this does not happen, agreements can be required and enforced by the Secretary of State.

Partnership with parents and the community

30. Successful schools also have strong links to parents and the wider community, drawing strength from those links, and in turn helping to develop and strengthen their local community. At primary school, most parents and carers have a lot of contact with the teacher and the school. But parents can feel very distant from secondary schools; pupils begin to want more independence; and the teenage years can be difficult. As in primary schools, we will work intensively with schools to help them engage parents more effectively, with booklets for parents on helping with schoolwork, and practical advice for schools on how to work well with parents.

31. We will also make pupil and parent views part of school self-evaluation, so that every parent and every pupil has the opportunity to express their view on the quality of teaching and other school services as least once a year. We will promote standardised surveys of pupil and parent views to enable schools to compare themselves with others.

Example: Questions from standard pupil surveys as part of London Challenge

How often do the teachers praise you when you have tried hard?
How often do other pupils make fun of people who work hard?
How often do you behave badly at school?
How often are other pupils so noisy in lessons that you find it difficult to work?
Do you think that bullying is a particular problem at your school?
Do you think that the teachers deal effectively with bullying?
How often do you have a teaching assistant (other adult) helping the teacher in lessons?
How often do you do joint work (activities, lessons, projects) with pupils from other schools?

32. We will encourage schools to make more use of their websites for communicating with parents – for example, showing on a website what homework has been set, giving pupil timetables, and having a simple system for parents to email teachers.

Extended Schools

33. Partnership with parents and the community will also be supported by Extended Schools (which we discussed in Chapter 3). We want every secondary school to become an extended school, offering:

- Study support activities, giving a wide range of things to do for pupils before and after school and in lunchtimes. This might include sports clubs, access to libraries and computer suites, and supervised breakfast and homework clubs.
- Widespread community use of the school's facilities, including hiring out premises to voluntary or community groups, and use of specialist facilities like sports halls, art studios, school theatres or drama studios, and science and design technology labs.
- Family learning provided through the school, including parenting classes if they are wanted.

34. Many secondary schools will go beyond this, offering comprehensive services including healthcare. There will be 240 "full service" Extended Schools by 2006.

Changing the system to deliver our offer

Better teaching through investing in the workforce

35. Central to improvements in teaching and learning is excellent professional development for all teachers – with more emphasis on classroom observation, practice, training, coaching and mentoring. To build up teachers' demand for high quality training, and encourage them to drive their own development, we will refocus teacher appraisals to become teaching and learning reviews. These will ensure teachers are:

- focused on effective classroom practice, using assessment for learning effectively and using a range of teaching styles and strategies appropriately to promote personalised learning;
- involved in the professional development that best matches the needs identified by the reviews; and are also offering coaching and mentoring to other teachers where they have the teaching and subject skills from which other teachers can benefit;

- rewarded, and make progress in their careers, in ways that fairly reflect their classroom expertise and commitment to their continuing professional development (see box overleaf).

36. We will consult with our partners, including employers, trade unions and headteacher associations, about these proposals, and in due course will make formal submissions to the School Teachers' Review Body.

37. We believe that this better link between development and progression will help to make sure that there is strong demand from teachers and schools for high-quality development. We will also do more to make sure that there is a good supply of training and other professional development opportunities available to teachers, and have asked the Teacher Training Agency to take on a new role in co-ordinating their supply.

Teachers' TV

38. We will also launch, in early 2005, a new digital TV channel – Teachers' TV – which will be dedicated to sharing good practice, inspiring and giving insight, and helping professionals learn from each other. In a pilot of the channel, 90% of the test audience said they would watch the channel; 86% said that TV was better than any other medium for receiving training; and 88% said that the channel was effective at sharing best practice.

Workforce Reform

39. As well as improving teachers' training and development, we will continue to reform the workforce by building on our two national agreements with our employer and union workforce partners. The process of partnership and dialogue with employers and organisations representing teachers and support staff has resulted in a ground-breaking workforce agreement, and subsequent agreements on reforming the teachers' pay scale. We are committed to building on these strong relationships in taking forward our programme for workforce reform.

A New Teacher Professionalism

These changes will usher in a new professionalism for teachers, in which career progression and financial rewards will go to those who are making the biggest contributions to improving pupil attainment, those who are continually developing their own expertise, and those who help to develop expertise in other teachers. There are already four main stages in the career ladder for teachers, and we will build professional development into each one. We want to see:

- Teachers on the main pay scale aiming to cross the pay 'threshold' by getting Senior Teacher status. Getting this status would depend on evidence, assessed independently by other professionals from other schools, that the teacher has developed their professional expertise in the classroom, has been open to and has benefited from coaching and mentoring, has added value in terms of pupils' rate of learning, and has taken independent action to develop themselves professionally, both in school and beyond it.
- For senior teachers, pay progression on the upper pay scale will depend on demonstrating that they have both developed themselves professionally, and that they are providing regular coaching and mentoring to less expert teachers.
- For our most experienced classroom teachers (who have reached the new point 3 of the upper pay scale), the chance to work towards Excellent Teacher Status. This would depend on showing that they have developed themselves professionally; provided regular coaching and mentoring of other teachers; and undertaken an appropriate programme of action research and development.

- Beyond this, we hope to see more teachers coming forward to apply for the highly paid Advanced Skills Teacher posts, which will increasingly drive improvements in subject teaching across our school system.

Some teachers will progress more quickly than others up this career ladder.

40. The pay and workforce reforms are ensuring that classroom teachers get the right support from a more widely drawn school team, and are fairly rewarded for what they do. They are boosting recruitment to teaching while also bringing in tens of thousands of other highly skilled and trained adults. The reforms are ensuring a more personalised approach to pupils' learning, offering them extra enrichment activities, helping schools with marking and display, and supporting teachers so that they have more time to teach. There are more adults working beyond the classroom too, including in pastoral and administrative roles. In the next phase, schools will want to take the reforms even further, particularly as they pursue opportunities to become extended schools.

41. Our continuing work will include:

- the growth of diverse routes into teaching, including a substantial increase in Graduate Teacher Programme numbers. This programme – currently supporting over 5,500 trainee teachers directly employed by schools – has extended the important role of school partnership and leadership in initial teacher training. This and other on-the-job programmes (like TeachFirst, the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme and the Registered Teacher Programme) put schools centre-stage in selecting, recruiting and training new teachers.
- the extension of workforce remodelling to bring in a yet wider range of adults, working in and beyond the classroom, including where schools decide to take up extended school opportunities.
- the increase of undergraduate volunteering, including through the growth of the Student Associate Scheme.

Leadership

42. The quality of school leadership remains a critical determinant of the success of each school in raising pupil attainment. The programmes of the National College for School Leadership are already helping to ensure that we have the best prepared, best developed, highest quality school leaders our system has ever had. Over 12,000 headteachers and aspiring headteachers have taken the new National Professional Qualification for Headship. There are nearly 2,000 subject leaders on the “Leading from the Middle” programme, and over 1,000 experienced headteachers on NCSL’s Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers. 1,100 bursars have been trained on the Certificate of School Business Management. Following the recent independent review, we will help the National College strengthen its position as a strategically focused, powerful hub of school leadership, supporting our overall strategy.

43. Chapter 9 sets out our overarching strategy for building the capacity of the workforce in education and children’s services as a whole.

Timetable for Change

Taken together, our reforms mean that:

Now, in 2004:

- Standards in secondary schools are continuing to rise
- We will begin work to look at the curriculum for 11-13 year olds in the wake of Mike Tomlinson’s report

- School attendance is rising and truancy has fallen – 1,300 former truants are back in school every day since last year
- 98% of secondary schools have broadband

By 2008:

- We will have met our target for 85% of 14 year olds to achieve level 5 or above in English, maths and ICT, and 80 percent in science and sustained that performance
- In all schools, at least 50 percent of pupils will reach that level in English, maths and science – so no school drops below this minimum
- The review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum will have been completed, and be beginning to be implemented
- All schools will be offering some extended services, and there will be at least 240 full service extended schools
- There will have been noticeable reductions in the levels of poor behaviour in schools, in teachers' fear of attack and in the number of exclusions
- School absence will be reduced by 8 percent compared to 2003

Our Long Term Aim

- Seamless transition from primary to secondary school
- Secondary school standards continuing to rise, closing the gap as teachers improve their teaching to meet the needs of all
- Behaviour in secondary schools no longer a concern for parents or teachers, and absence from school in term time other than for sickness exceptional

Chapter 6

14–19 Education and Training

Goal: Every young person to be well-equipped for adulthood, skilled work and further learning

1. At the age of 14, young people begin to make educational choices that shape their future. We need to make sure that whatever choices they make, they are prepared as well as possible for adult life – and in particular, for success in skilled employment, in further learning, and – for those who want it and have the potential – in university.
2. Part of our aim must be effectively to raise the age at which young people leave education or training – so that within a generation it is exceptional for a young person under 18 not to be in some form of education or training. And we must do better for disadvantaged young people. To achieve this, we must introduce a more stimulating and stretching curriculum for all young people, and enable schools, colleges and work-based learning providers to work together to offer a richer mix of opportunities.
3. This chapter looks at the distinct experience of young people aged between 14 and 19, which depends both on the reforms set out in Chapter 5, on secondary schools, and in the next, on adult skills and further education.
4. We are already improving post-16 participation in education and training. In 2003 the number of 16-18 year-olds in full-time education increased by 25,000 over the previous year.
5. Results for this age group are also improving. Half of all 16 year-olds now get five good GCSEs, at grades A*-C. And in 2002-03, 90 percent of 16-18 year-olds taking A-levels got at least two passes.
6. Strong new partnerships are providing over 90,000 14-16 year-olds with the chance to study vocational subjects for part of the week in colleges or with training providers. New GCSEs in vocational subjects are proving popular, and 255,000 young people are currently doing apprenticeships.

Issues and Challenges

7. But it is in this age-range that our international weakness – and our failure to do justice to our young people – becomes starkly apparent.
8. The most important challenges we face are:
 - Narrowing our skills gap by making sure more young people stay on in education and training. At age 16 in England, 84 percent remain in formal education or work-based learning; at 17 this falls to 75 percent and by 18 to just 52 percent. The UK is ranked 27th out of 30 countries for participation at age 17. This feeds into our historic legacy of low adult skills, and contributes to the dramatic gap between those who do best in our system and those who do least well.
 - Offering young people a wider choice of flexible learning routes, which are engaging, relevant and of good quality; covering academic study, vocational options, and combined routes. These need to be underpinned by qualifications that encourage everyone to stay on after 16; and which reduce the exam burden, without reducing flexibility or 'dumbing down'.
 - Radically improving the quality and standing of vocational options, and in particular dramatically increasing employer involvement, while retaining the high standards of our post-16 academic qualifications.

- We must also provide higher standards and greater choice of sixth form and vocational provision for young people, in schools, colleges and workplaces. The chart above shows that, at present, provision varies dramatically between areas where there is no school sixth form provision at all, and areas where every school has a sixth form and there is little other provision – particularly vocational provision – for 16-19 year-olds. Even within this, in some areas with few school sixth forms there are good sixth form colleges; but in others there are not.
- Making sure that every young person – whatever route they choose – is given the skills and experience that employers require. Employers tell us that too many young people still come to them without the skills in communication, ICT and maths that they need; that schools and colleges do not do enough to prepare all young people properly for the world of work; and that they do not engage seriously enough with employers.
- Offering good support to young people and tackling the serious disengagement that can sometimes set in at this age. This means making sure that young people have good sources of advice and guidance; but also that they have places to go and things to do in the evenings at weekends, and in the holidays. Children with particular needs must also get the support they need as they emerge into adulthood – for example, we will offer better support to children leaving care.

9. In meeting these challenges, our offer to young people and employers is:

Offer to young people and employers

A transformed 14-19 phase, which offers:

- A wide choice of high quality programmes for every young person, with challenge at all levels and support to overcome barriers to progress
- Improved vocational and work-based routes, with qualifications every bit as demanding and valued as academic ones, and with better and earlier employer involvement
- Every young person able to develop the skills they need for employment and for life
- A world class academic offer which stretches the most able and fits young people well for university, the world of work and active citizenship
- The flexibility to combine school, college and work-based training; and to change direction, so that no young person is trapped by decisions at 14
- More school sixth form, sixth form college and vocational provision, to give more choice to students
- High quality advice and guidance to help young people make good decisions, and a wide range of positive activities for young people outside school or college
- All young people prepared for adulthood – especially vulnerable groups, including care leavers

What this means in practice

A vision for a reformed and personalised system

10. Whatever their talents and aspirations, all young people should have choices that interest them from 14, should be equipped with the skills critical for success in employment, should have a realistic, stretching goal to aim for by the age of 18, and should have the advice and support to enable them to achieve it. We need carefully planned and far-reaching reform if we are really to give young people the personalised opportunities and choices that will make this a reality.

11. A significant contribution to this vision should come from the work of the independent group led by Mike Tomlinson which is due to report in the Autumn. We have asked the group

to look at the fundamentals of the curriculum and at the qualifications that support it. We have said that we will assess the recommendations of the Tomlinson review on the basis of five key tests:

- Excellence – will it stretch the most able young people?
- Vocational – will it address the historic failure to provide a high quality vocational offer that motivates young people?
- Employability – will it prepare *all* young people for the world of work?
- Assessment – will it reduce the burden of assessment?
- Disengagement – will it stop the scandal of our high drop out rate at 16?

12. These tests will help us shape our response to the Tomlinson Review and our strategy for going forward. But we are already clear on the direction in which we need to travel.

A world class curriculum offer for all

Academic excellence

13. We will provide a world class academic offer which prepares young people well for university and for work, and to engage as active members of the community. The academically able have been well served by the traditional A-level route, but we need to review whether it is still fit for purpose in a world which requires ever higher levels of performance, underpinned by a broad range of skills.

14. Our goal is to build on recent changes to A-levels and the introduction of AS-levels to introduce greater breadth in the curriculum, while maintaining the quality and rigour of the A-level examination, and continue to support the modernisation of the exam system. A-level and the Advanced Extension Award must offer stretch and challenge to young people and ensure that we can identify the brightest among them.

15. We will also do more to recognise and incentivise the early achievement of qualifications – both academic and vocational – for example, by counting early AS-levels and other level 3 qualifications in performance tables for 16 year-olds.

16. The growing number of specialist schools will also help to bring more choice at 14, with schools offering a wider and more imaginative range of courses, particularly focused on their specialism. Depending on the specialism, these will support both academic and vocational routes.

A wider choice of stronger vocational routes

17. We aim to extend vocational options across all schools as part of our commitment to strengthening choice and the personalisation of the curriculum. This means giving pupils a wide range of opportunities to suit their diverse needs, abilities and interests, and ensuring that schools respond more effectively to employers' needs and encourage better employer involvement. As well as helping to raise attainment across the board, these developments will also motivate pupils and lead to greater participation in education and training post-16. They must be able to provide as strong a basis for higher education and good employment as the traditional academic routes.

18. To support this, we:

- introduced GCSEs in vocational subjects in 2002/03;

- are placing greater emphasis on work-related learning from 14, by funding 90,000 part-time college placements for pupils to pursue more industry specific qualifications;
- Will dramatically increase the number of 14-16 year olds studying vocational subjects in schools, colleges and training providers to just over 180,000 by 2007-08;
- Will continue to expand the 14-19 offer for those who are disengaged from learning, or disaffected by previous experiences, particularly through pre-apprenticeship routes which provide work-based learning for 16-18 year olds.

19. Apprenticeships have a key role in narrowing the skills gap at technician and craft level, and provide a high quality work based route for those young people that want it. The new re-launched Apprenticeships programme will deliver a stronger 'ladder of opportunity' beginning at age 14 and continuing into adulthood. It supports and encourages progression from the Young Apprenticeship for 14-16 year-olds into vocational or work-based learning leading to skilled employment, and also provides avenues into Higher Education through the Advanced Apprenticeship and Foundation Degree. By 2008, the numbers completing apprenticeships will have risen by three-quarters.

Employability and a stronger partnership with employers

20. We will build employers much more closely into the process of designing and delivering education and training. Employers tell us they need young people above all to have well developed skills in communicating (including writing well), using numbers and using ICT. But they need much more than this. To succeed in the contemporary work environment, young people must be able to handle uncertainty and respond positively to change, to create and implement new ideas, to have the capacity to solve problems and make sound decisions on the basis of evidence, and to be self-reliant and motivated. We must ensure that our offer to young people gives them the right opportunities to develop these skills, and we need the help of employers to make this a reality.

21. Employer involvement will not just be important for those doing vocational subjects. All young people need to be equipped to enter the world of work. We want employers to become more closely involved in helping schools and colleges to give every young person the skills they need for employability. Once Tomlinson has reported, we will involve employers closely in discussions about how to make sure all young people continue to build their skills in communication, application of number and ICT throughout the 14-19 phase in a way that really meets employers' needs.

22. All young people should undertake some work related learning as an essential preparation for adult life and employment. The old-fashioned week of work experience is not good enough. From autumn this year, work-related learning will become a statutory requirement for all pupils. Schools will be encouraged to use the full range of opportunities inside and outside the formal curriculum to bring out the relevance of what students are learning to the world of work, and to develop the skills needed for employment and enterprise.

23. Our Apprenticeships, including Young Apprenticeships, will clearly involve employers in delivery; and, through the Sector Skills Councils, which act as the training advocates and commissioners for groups of employers in each sector of industry, we will also involve employers more closely in the design and delivery of other qualifications and courses – including, for example, GCSEs in vocational subjects.

24. It will also be important for teachers, lecturers and trainers in schools and colleges who are delivering vocational courses to have recent experience in industry, and continuing close contact with the workplace. In the next chapter, on Adult Skills, we set out more about the reforms to further education which will help make sure that this happens.

A new, integrated youth offer

25. Greater choice, including a wider array of places to study, will bring real benefits to young people. But we should not stop there. We want to offer more young people more things to do and places to go in their communities – chances to get involved, and simply places to be and enjoy themselves. We know that for some young people these extra opportunities are taken for granted; but for others – particularly those in deprived areas – there is a real lack of interesting, accessible and affordable things to do.

26. We also need to make sure that young people are equipped and supported to make the right choices, both to manage more complicated and self-directed patterns of learning and to seize the opportunities available outside formal learning. We want to drive up the standard of careers education and guidance, making it more tailored to the needs of the young person and relevant to today's world of work. Both of these ought to give particular support to young people vulnerable to disengagement from education, training or employment, or at risk of substance abuse, teenage pregnancy or involvement in crime.

27. A new offer for young people should address risks like these but also promote personal development and active citizenship. It should draw on the experience and knowledge of Connexions and other existing programmes by bringing together:

- Access to exciting and enjoyable activities in and out of school or college that enhance young people's personal, social and educational development and reflect what they want to do – including sport, outdoor activities and residential opportunities.
- Easy access to the personal advice and support they need to fulfil and raise their aspirations, including high quality and personalised careers education, advice and guidance. We also want to continue to improve direct access to advice via the internet, mobile phones and in community locations.
- Better and earlier support for those demonstrating risk factors associated with poor school attendance and behaviour, poor attainment, youth crime, drugs and substance misuse and teenage pregnancy, and greater access to specialist services where needs go beyond school and college pastoral care.
- Support for parents and families, in a way that recognises their crucial role in supporting young people and helping them play that role throughout the important teenage years. Part of this support will include extended services offered by schools.
- Opportunities for volunteering and mentoring, building on our successful Millennium Volunteers programme and recognising that young people are ready and willing to support others when they are given the chance.
- The chance for young people to have a say in developing local support and activities. Only by involving young people in local service delivery will we be able to provide an offer that meets their needs and aspirations.

28. We will use Children's Trusts to bring together those who are currently working with young people across the statutory and voluntary sectors in developing this offer for teenagers. Too much support for young people is fragmented at present, with different schemes with worthwhile but overlapping aims, and too many separate funding streams. It is important that we build on the principles and success of the multi-disciplinary and collaborative working introduced by Connexions to put in place an even more powerful offer in every area.

29. This breadth of ambition requires careful thinking and consultation. We will work together across Government with the Home Office, the Department of Health, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Social Exclusion Unit and the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, and propose to publish a Green Paper on Youth this autumn to develop our thinking in

partnership with all those who will be involved, and especially with young people and parents.

Young people leaving care

30. All of this work comes together to help prepare young people for adulthood. For most children, the transition is a relatively staged one, with support from parents that changes over time. For young people leaving care, there is the risk that there is not enough preparation for adulthood, and that the transition is sudden, insufficiently planned and damaging.

31. There have been improvements in recent years, resulting from the Children (Leaving Care) Act, so that young people are better equipped to deal with the transition. But we will now:

- Make sure that there is absolute compliance with the Act. Some young people still report that they are asked to leave care earlier than they should be.
- Improve the consistency of financial support provided to care leavers.
- Develop an improved mentoring system, including increasing the use of peer mentoring and independent visiting, especially when young people leave the care system and set up home on their own or go into further and higher education.
- Encourage more participation in education, employment and training amongst care leavers.
- Make sure that care leavers have somewhere to go during college or university holidays, not requiring them to stay at university during the holidays if they would rather return to their local community.
- Require from Local Authorities better and more consistent planning and support for young people leaving care, in particular to meet their accommodation needs and with related practical and emotional support.

Changing the system to underpin our offer

Partnership between schools, colleges and workplaces

32. A key driver of our 14-19 reforms will be to strengthen the relationships between schools, colleges and training providers so that, wherever they are based, young people have the widest possible choice of routes. Ofsted's report on the 'Increased Flexibility for 14-16 year-olds' programme has praised the quality of collaboration it brought about between over 2,000 schools, almost 300 colleges and many work-based providers for the benefit of over 90,000 14-19 year olds.

33. Increasingly, we expect to see specialist schools, colleges and training providers forming partnerships to deliver a broad and flexible choice of courses across education and training. Young people will be based in one institution, which will have responsibility for their pastoral care and for managing their learning; but they may do the learning in a variety of places. The 39 pathfinders that have been running in different areas of the country have demonstrated how this can be done successfully through good staff training, identifying champions to lead collaboration, and learning from best practice, as well as good co-ordinated ICT systems for sharing information.

CASE STUDY

Engineering at Brumby School

Brumby school is one of four educational establishments serving a mixed catchment area in the centre of Scunthorpe. As part of a 14-19 pathfinder, a GCSE in Engineering was

launched, which depended on successful collaboration between the school, college and local industry – particularly CORUS.

Effective partnership between schools allowed teaching material to be prepared and shared by the schools, and all three schools block timetable on the same day for engineering.

Time is set aside with college staff for specialist inputs (for example, pneumatics, or use of engineering workshop facilities). Where school staff's experience in electronics was limited, the college provided support and development. The 14-19 Pathfinder also helped contribute towards the costs associated with travel for pupils to and from college and to CORUS and other employers.

34. We are also committed to eliminating any needless barriers to collaboration that arise from planning or funding systems. We need to take the lessons from our pathfinders and ensure that funding systems make joining up easier rather than more difficult; that planning is focused on ensuring that there is a wide offer and that no young person falls down the cracks between different institutions; and that a group of providers share responsibility and accountability for all the young people in their area.

35. The reforms that we outlined in the last chapter, and those that we outline in the next, for supporting standards and quality of provision in both schools and further education colleges will be central in underpinning our ability to make a good 14-19 offer. We need secondary school, FE colleges (including sixth-form colleges), and work-based providers of the very highest quality in order to make this a reality.

Choice of place to learn

36. We need to make sure that young people have a good variety of types of opportunity in every local area. Young people should not have to travel unreasonable distances to get access to the type of provision they want; and they should not be barred from having a particular type of provision because it does not currently exist in their local area.

37. High quality partnership between providers is the key to giving a better range of opportunities to motivate more young people to stay on and get the skills they need, and better collaboration between schools, colleges and employers is essential to widen the range of vocational opportunities. With the number of 16-19 year-olds increasing, and the aspiration that many more stay in learning, we estimate that over the next five years we will need around 100,000 extra places. That means we will need more school and college sixth forms and more apprenticeships and other vocational opportunities to give young people more choice.

38. There are areas where there is not a good enough choice of successful school sixth forms. Schools without a sixth form already have the right to submit proposals to create one. We will strengthen the presumption in favour of agreeing such proposals, in the following way. In areas where fewer than 20 percent of schools have sixth forms, high-performing specialist schools that want sixth forms will be able to make proposals to local decision-makers either for free-standing sixth forms or for collaborative provision – for example, new sixth form colleges in which schools have a direct stake in the teaching and management. Such proposals will be considered on a fast-track basis, with a strong presumption that they are approved unless there are exceptional circumstances, and we will set up a single capital budget for new 16-19 provision.

39. We will also make this strong presumption for approval where participation or achievement at 16-19 is low in an area, even if there is no particular shortage of sixth form provision, on the grounds that 11-16 schools that are already popular and successful are also likely to make a good quality sixth form offer.

40. It is important that new sixth form provision is part of good partnerships to make sure that young people are getting a wide and rounded offer. 11-18 schools with a specialism are already required to show how they will make their specialist expertise available to young

people in other schools and colleges post-16. Collaborative working also means we can give 11-16 specialist schools a stake in sixth form provision, by encouraging them to offer teaching in their specialism as part of a local 14-19 partnership.

41. In areas where a great deal of new provision is required, we will legislate to hold competitions to improve choice and bring in new providers – including good specialist schools and colleges. We will also require that all new provision is distinctly designed for 16-19 year-olds. In further education, this will mean sixth form colleges or centres with clear management arrangements and appropriate tutorial and pastoral care – so that young people are nurtured and supported through this phase of their life.

42. In London, we are already seeing the benefits of increasing choice. Joint work between the Department, the Learning and Skills Council and London Local Education Authorities means that more than 15 new sixth forms and sixth form colleges will have opened in the three years from the launch in 2003 of the London Challenge Strategy. The new provision will be through a mixture of schools, colleges and Academies, to ensure choice and diversity.

Financial incentives – the Education Maintenance Allowance

43. We know that in the past young people have chosen not to continue in education or training because of the opportunity to start work and begin to earn. We also know that in the past financial incentives in the benefit system have sometimes been distorting, and did not encourage young people to take up work-based training. These financial disincentives have acted as a barrier to participation; we are now dismantling that barrier.

44. We are now beginning to roll-out Education Maintenance Allowances across England. These give young people from less well-off families £30 each week while they study, conditional on good attendance. They will be fully introduced nationally for 16 year-olds from September 2004. The pilot schemes project an overall increase in participation of 3.8 percentage points in Year 12, with a particularly strong impact for young people from the lowest socio-economic groups, and for boys.

45. The joint Treasury, Department for Education and Skills and Department for Work and Pensions review, *Supporting young people to achieve: towards a new deal for skills*, was published alongside the Spring 2004 budget. It proposes a radical long-term vision for a single, coherent system of financial support for 16-19 year-olds. It will provide a stable stream of support which does not vary by activity and so will not distort choices, and will improve incentives to participate in learning by removing some of the perverse effects of the current system.

Building workforce capacity

46. The development of a broad and flexible choice of learning options across education and training for 14-19 year-olds poses new challenges for teachers and trainers in schools, colleges and work-based training providers. Experience from our pathfinders (described above) already illustrates the importance of good staff training. And *Success for All* (described in the next Chapter) is putting a stronger focus on staff and leadership development in the learning and skills sector. Once Mike Tomlinson and his working group have reported, there will need to be a carefully planned programme of work to train those who work with 14-19 year-olds to support their new role, building on the good practice from the pathfinders.

Timetable for Change

Taken together, our reforms mean that:

Now, in 2004:

- Our post-16 participation rate is rising, and there is a smaller proportion of young people not in education, employment or training
- GCSE and A-level results are the best ever, and we have met our target for half of all 16 year olds to get five good GCSEs
- The Tomlinson Review is giving us the opportunity to reshape 14-19 education and training
- We will be publishing a Green Paper on Youth to improve and bring together services for young people

By 2008:

- We will be well on the way towards a developed system of new pathways for young people, which stretch clearly from 14-19 and are well defined and clearly understood
- 60 percent of those aged 16 will be achieving the equivalent of five good GCSEs; and achievement and participation by children in underperforming and vulnerable groups (including in particular children in care) will be improving year-on-year. There will be no school where less than 30 percent of pupils get five good GCSEs
- Over 180,000 14-16 year-olds will be studying vocational subjects
- The proportion of 19 year-olds achieving at least Level 2 (equivalent to five good GCSEs) will have increased by 5 percentage points over 2004. The proportion of young people reaching Level 3 will also have increased, and the numbers completing an apprenticeship will have risen by three-quarters
- The proportion of young people not in education, training or employment will be falling
- A wide range of positive activities for young people will be available in every area, integrated with excellent advice, guidance and support
- Every young person leaving care will be getting the services they need to support them in the transition to adulthood

Our Long Term Aim:

- The idea of leaving education at 16 a thing of the past – virtually every 16-19 year-old engaged in education or training
- Vocational and academic routes seen as equally valuable
- Achievement both high and rising in every pathway
- A wider range of high quality places to study offering greater choice
- Every young person engaged in positive activities outside school and college; and, increasingly, the norm being for young people to volunteer to support wider opportunities for others as they grow older
- As a result, higher attainment and a turn around in our historically weak international performance

Chapter 7

Adult Skills

Goal: Employers able to recruit people with the right skills, and individuals able to get the training and skills they need for employment and development

1. Our world is changing. Where there used to be the notion of a 'job for life', there is now the certainty that for most people, careers will range widely and the ability to change and be flexible will make for success. We need to equip people to be 'employable for life'. Skills are at the heart of this, enabling people to take on new roles, and adapt to new circumstances.
2. The world is changing for businesses as well. As a nation, we will not achieve the standards of living and the quality of public services that we all want if we compete on the basis of low value added goods and services. To improve our productivity, we must close the skills gap. If businesses are to move up the value chain, become more profitable, and pay higher wages, they must be able to recruit people with the skills and qualifications to succeed in a knowledge-intensive, technology-rich, globally competitive environment.
3. More than any other sector of education and training, raising investment in adult skills is a shared endeavour. Better skills benefit us all – individuals, employers and the nation. We all need to contribute to raising our national game, investing time and resources in training to tackle long-standing skills gaps.
4. As the reforms set out in earlier chapters take effect, the skills of young people moving into the workforce will improve dramatically. But we cannot just wait for this new generation and ignore those already in the workforce. We need to help adults improve their skills, and employers train the workforces they need for success now.
5. Colleges and other training providers are central to achieving these goals. Many already do an excellent job of meeting employer and learner needs, and take pride in offering responsive, innovative, flexible training. Our objective is to help colleges and training providers achieve a new place in public esteem, celebrated as powerful and effective drivers of economic success and individual fulfilment.
6. More adults are developing their basic skills than ever before. Since 2001 around 550,000 adults have improved their literacy, numeracy and language skills and achieved a qualification.
7. There are a million more adults in the workforce qualified to Level 2 or higher than in 1999, and there were over half a million more adults enrolled in further education in 2002-03 than in 1998-99.
8. The number of adults studying for their first Level 2 qualification (equivalent to five good GCSEs) rose by 11 percent between 1997 and 2003.
9. Achievement is also rising, with the proportion of adult students in FE completing their courses successfully rising from 56 percent in 2000 to 68 percent in 2003. Success rates for adults at Level 2 increased by almost 4 percent in the last year.

Issues and Challenges

10. But it is clear from the analysis in Chapter 1 that this is one of the areas in which we have furthest to go.

- The first and overarching challenge is the skills and productivity gap. Despite making progress in recent years in closing the gap, the UK still lags behind its competitors in terms

of output per hour worked. Workers in France are about one-third more productive per head than UK workers, and the US and Germany also remain significantly ahead. The latest OECD comparisons show that we are 18th out of 30 countries in the number of adults over 25 with Level 2 skills (i.e. the equivalent of 5 A*-C GCSEs); and that our comparative position has got worse over 30 years, reflecting the weaknesses in the education system in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁰

- This lack of skills at Level 2 feeds through into a lack of skills at technician, higher craft or associate professional level (Level 3) – 44 percent of our workforce is qualified at this level, compared with 68 percent in Germany. These technician/associate professional skills are in acute demand in the economy.
- We also continue to struggle with a large number of adults who lack skills in literacy and numeracy. The Skills for Life survey published in 2003 showed that 5.2 million of our adults cannot read and write to the level expected of an 11 year-old; and 15 million adults have numeracy skills below that level.
- Our persistent weakness in adult skills is linked to weak employer and learner demand for training. This creates a vicious circle. Where employees do not have Level 2 skills to build on, employers are less likely to invest in higher-level skills, and less likely to develop new, higher-value products and services. And individuals with low skills and qualifications are least likely to be able to invest in training themselves; and tend to be suspicious of training because, almost by definition, the education system has failed them in the past. We need to break out of this vicious circle and stimulate and then satisfy stronger employer and learner demand.
- This means that we must do far more to ensure that training is of good quality and is matched to employers' needs. There have been very significant improvements in standards in further education in the last few years, but we need to keep improving quality to meet the rising expectations and demands of employers and learners.
- These failures in demand and in responsiveness are not helped by our qualifications. Employers and individuals find the qualifications system inflexible because it does not allow them to build the combinations of certified skills that most suit their needs in small, manageable units.

11. Our offer to adults and employers is:

Offer to individuals and employers

- Every adult to be able to get and build on the skills they need for employment – with free tuition for everyone in basic skills and to get the equivalent of 5 good GCSEs (Level 2)
- New Adult Learning Grants to help adults seeking their first full Level 2 qualification to meet the costs of learning
- Every employer to be able to develop the skilled workforce they need for business success – with responsive colleges and training providers delivering exactly what they need
- Training programmes that allow adults to build up small units towards a full qualification, so as to fit round other commitments, and to be able to combine units in ways which meet their and their employers' needs
- Revitalised apprenticeships for a wider age range, with learning on the job that ensures it meets both learners' and employers' needs
- Lifelong learning for all – for work or for pleasure – with the widest possible array of good quality courses, and easy access to them through the learndirect helpline

What this means in practice

12. We published last July the National Skills Strategy for tackling these long-standing problems. Our ambition is to ensure that employers have the right skills to support the success of their businesses, and individuals have the skills they need to be both employable and personally fulfilled. An alliance of Government Departments, key agencies, and organisations representing employers and unions has come together to implement the Skills Strategy.

Employers at the heart of our strategy

13. We gave the commitment in the Skills Strategy that employers will be at the heart of our approach. They hold the key to breaking the vicious circle whereby weak supply of skills holds back the potential of firms to grow, and invest in better skills. If we can make sure that training for adults fits employers' needs, we can be sure it will deliver something – better prospects of decently-paid, secure employment – that adult learners want.

14. Employers have a right to expect that training programmes will be up to date with industry's need and that colleges and training providers will be flexible and responsive. But they also have a responsibility to articulate their current and future skill requirements clearly, so that colleges and training providers have a clear understanding of what they should be aiming for.

15. The new Sector Skills Councils are the key to this. They enable employers in each major sector of the economy, both public and private, to identify the skills they need to drive productivity and business success, and to help shape training supply to meet those needs. We are making excellent progress in establishing Sector Skills Councils. 18 are now in place, with more in the pipeline. By the end of this year, they will cover 80 percent of the workforce. Each Sector Skills Council will agree with employers a Sector Skills Agreement, based on analysis of the drivers of productivity to achieve international competitiveness, and the skills that will be required to get there. They will set out the ways in which employers will work together, and with training providers, in order to boost investment in the supply of skills they need.

CASE STUDY

Skillset

Skillset was one of the first Trailblazer Sector Skills Councils. It covers the broadcast, film, video, interactive media and photo imaging sector. It is also one of the first four Sector Skills Councils to develop a sector skills agreement.

As part of their agreement Skillset are developing a comprehensive strategy to drive world class skills across the film industry. They are developing proposals for a voluntary training levy to support collective investment in skills for film, and co-regulation with Ofcom on skills development in broadcasting.

16. As well as this industry-wide strategic role, we want to make sure that individual employers can be in the lead in developing training that suits their individual business. Our Employer Training Pilots, which were designed to give employers more choice and control over training, have been successful and popular.

17. The pilots are currently covering one-third of the country. We will draw on the principles of these pilots, and their evaluation, as we decide the form of any national programme to support employer training, and as, from 2006-07, mainstream funds for adult training increasingly reflect this way of working. Employers will have more choice in deciding what forms of training they want, how it should be delivered, who they want to deliver it, and the overall package of training that will best meet their needs (including, for example, apprenticeships as well as basic skills training).

18. We are developing Apprenticeships for adults, working with Sector Skills Councils. The

Learning and Skills Council expects to run trials later this year. Meanwhile, we have raised the age cap so that all those who begin an Apprenticeship programme before they are 25 can finish it.

Employer Training Pilots

The pilots provided a package of support, including:

- Free or heavily subsidised training programmes to help employees gain skills or qualifications up to Level 2 (equivalent to five good GCSEs)
- Support for employers to meet the costs of giving staff paid time off to train
- Help to broker the sourcing of training, and ensure that training is provided in a way that suits the needs of learners and employers
- Information and advice for learners and employers, including universal screening for literacy and numeracy needs, and an assessment of overall skills need

Progress during the first year of the pilots has been promising, with over 10,000 employers and 60,000 learners participating, and a high proportion from small and medium sized firms (traditionally less likely to engage in training). The average completion rate is expected to be around 70 percent, which is high compared to other forms of work-based training.

Both employers and learners have expressed high levels of satisfaction. Employers are attracted to the flexibly delivered training and learners to the opportunity to obtain skills to do their job better and to gain a qualification.

The pilots have spurred more colleges and training providers to deliver training on employers' premises, at a time and in a manner suited to shift patterns. They have also encouraged tailoring of training to meet exactly the skills gaps identified.

Trade Unions playing a growing role

19. One of the most significant developments of recent years has been the new role of unions and their Union Learning Representatives in promoting learning and skills in the workplace. This recognises that investing in training and qualifications brings powerful shared benefits for both employees and employers – helping employees ensure they have the skills to secure decently paid, secure jobs, and helping employers raise productivity and develop their businesses. We have provided unions with financial support under the Union Learning Fund since 1998, and there are currently around 7,000 Union Learning Representatives active across all areas of the country. Backed by new statutory rights, introduced in April 2003, there could be as many as 22,000 in place by 2010, helping over 250,000 workers a year with their training and development needs.

Further Education tuned to business and learner needs – for personalisation and choice

20. For adults, personalisation and choice mean being able to choose training from a wider range of quality assured providers; being able to choose from a range of programmes and qualifications which are well designed and delivered to develop the skills each sector needs; being able to build up credits of achievement over time to a full qualification; and being able to train at times, in ways and in places that suit their working lives.

21. Employers should be able to choose between training suppliers, work with business support services that can integrate training needs within the wider development of the company, and get training delivered in a way that meets operational demands.

22. To make sure that Further Education colleges and other post-16 providers are able to respond to this demand, and adapt themselves to business needs, we are:

- Rolling out our programme of Centres of Vocational Excellence – these are FE colleges

and other providers with excellence or expertise in particular vocational area, with strong links to industry. There are over 200 Centres of Vocational Excellence in development, and there will be 400 by 2006. Beyond these Centres, many more colleges should aspire to be defined by their strengths in particular industrial sectors.

- Working with the Learning and Skills Council to strengthen college engagement across the board with employers. We are also trialling how far we can extend the range of services that colleges can provide to employers, including, for example, skill needs analysis, and business development and technology.
- Extending the role that colleges and training providers can play in working with young people as well as adults, to ensure they get the skills they need for their future careers, as we set out in Chapter 6.
- Through the *Success for All* strategy, our reforms of teacher training in further education, and our work to improve the standards of the workforce, we will set higher expectations about the proportion of staff who are qualified, who have recent industry experience, or are on secondment from business. We will ensure that many more staff teaching vocational courses have a formal link with an employer or employers to help ensure that their training remains up-to-date and relevant. As more training is delivered in workplaces, these links will become more widespread.

23. We want to support employers who want to invest, on a partnership basis, in developing new customised centres for training. We are exploring a Further Education Academy model which would allow employers to act as sponsors (on the same principle as Academies in the schools sector).

Access to learning for all

24. Lifelong learning is at the heart of our agenda. By this we mean learning across the whole of life – not just post-19 or post-16 learning, but the development of learning communities from the cradle to the grave. Skills and learning are not just about economic goals. They are also about the pleasure of learning for its own sake, the dignity of self-improvement and the achievement of personal potential.

25. We will continue to safeguard a varied range of learning opportunities for personal fulfilment, community development and active citizenship. Research shows that such learning has a positive impact in many different ways; on the individual and their sense of purpose, motivation, health and well being; on their family and on their children's learning; and on society and the individual's involvement in the wider community. They help people build the confidence to come back into learning, offering the first step to qualifications for those who want them.

26. We will continue to build up successful services such as the **learnirect** helpline, which helps find people the courses they want, by telephone or on the internet. These services are not only a convenience – they help to change the shape of our system by giving both more power and more responsibility to the learner themselves, to shape and drive their own learning. It is important that for adults, we have a system which encourages this sense of shared responsibility for learning, with individuals in control of their own learning destiny.

27. We will also continue to develop ICT based learning for adults. Last year nearly half a million adults took **learnirect** courses in ICT, basic literacy and numeracy and business and management skills. Increasingly, employers are seeing the benefit of making **learnirect** and other courses available to employees in the workplace and this is a trend that we continue to encourage.

28. We are clear, though, that it is right to focus the investment of public funds on adults with few or no skills – because this both tackles a primary cause of social exclusion, and helps

employers to get the flow of skills they need.

Adult Basic Skills

29. We will continue our successful drive to improve adults' literacy, numeracy and language skills. We are on track to meet our target of 750,000 adults with better basic skills by 2004, and 1.5 million by 2007. Between April 2001 and July 2004, a projected 2.3 million learners will have taken up an estimated 4.6 million learning opportunities.

30. English as a Second or Other Language training has expanded rapidly in recent years, to meet the language and literacy needs of those who do not have English as their first language. We will embed literacy and numeracy skills into other qualifications, so that basic skills are developed alongside more job-specific training and recognised through national qualifications.

31. Over the next three years, we plan to provide over 3 million learning opportunities for adult basic skills. These will be delivered in ways that suit learners' circumstances, such as the workplace, **learnirect** centres, mobile training centres, local football clubs, and through learning 'shops' in shopping areas. We also have a major programme working with offenders in prison and in the community.

32. As part of this, we will increase the focus on family learning, working with the LSC to jointly fund courses based in Children's Centres and Extended Schools. Some of these programmes will integrate basic skills into parenting and family learning activities, giving parents rounded help which covers both educational and social support for children.

A new entitlement to Level 2 skills

33. Building on the support we are giving to basic skills, we now need to go further and make sure that every adult can get to a full Level 2 qualification (the equivalent of five good GCSEs) – the level that opens doors to good employment and builds a foundation for higher-level technical and associate professional skills.

34. In the Skills Strategy, we announced a new entitlement to any adult who has not yet reached that skills platform to free tuition to help them get there. Learners will be able to enrol on publicly funded learning programmes leading to a full Level 2 qualification. They will be offered by colleges and training providers, as well as in the workplace. With the Learning and Skills Council, we will be seeking to expand the supply of training, focussed on those programmes and qualifications which will best support employability skills across the different sectors of the economy.

35. We are introducing the entitlement in the North East and South East regions from September this year, as part of the phased roll out to implement the Skills Strategy. In the light of progress in the trials, we aim to roll out the entitlement nationally from 2005-06.

Financial support for adult learning

36. We are backing up this entitlement with the offer of a new Adult Learning Grant of up to £30 per week for any adult studying full time for their first full Level 2 qualification.

37. We will also offer these grants to young adults studying for their first qualification at technician, skilled craft or associate professional level (Level 3). We have been piloting the grants from September 2003 in 10 areas, and will extend that to cover the North East and South East regions from this September, as part of the Skills Strategy trials.

38. We will shortly be consulting on new proposals for developing financial support for adult learners outside higher education, to make it more coherent and easy to navigate for the learner. The proposals include developing a pilot single application form for the various

different types of learner support, and looking at how the Career Development Loans scheme can be developed to help more low skilled adults.

A New Deal for Skills

39. As well as working with employers, it is important that we offer good skills training to adults who are not in work, or who have a succession of short-term, low-paid jobs where there is little training and development.

40. We are developing a New Deal for Skills with the Treasury and the Department for Work and Pensions. This will mean that benefit claimants get better advice and support and are helped to get the skills needed for sustainable, productive employment. The key elements will include a new skills coaching service giving better advice and encouragement for individuals needing to update their skills, and a 'Skills Passport' – recording skills gained – to support the move from welfare to sustainable employment.

Changing the system to deliver our reforms

41. To make a reality of these reforms, we need both to drive quality up dramatically, and to increase the responsiveness of the system. The key lies in contestability – rewarding and expanding successful colleges and training providers, while making sure that we are not funding any providers as of right, but extending the power of employers to choose the type of training they want, and encouraging new provision in the system to keep it dynamic.

More choice and control for employers

42. We need a fundamental shift, so that the supply of training and skills is directly shaped by the needs of employers. That is at the heart of our work to implement the Skills Strategy.

43. We are making good progress in building the infrastructure to do this, through Sector Skills Councils and Sector Skills Agreements. We are working closely with the Regional Development Agencies, to ensure a close link between training supply and the skills needed to drive regional economic development, integrated with business support services. Through the Employer Training Pilots we are putting employers in a position to choose the training they want, and how they want it delivered.

44. One of the key principles of the Employer Training Pilots is that employers can choose which college or training provider they want to use. Brokers help them to identify and source the best training supply to meet their needs. We want to apply that principle more widely, so that the LSC can fund those colleges and training providers that are best placed to supply the training employers really want.

Opening up training to new providers

45. These changes will reward those colleges and providers which are already demonstrating the commitment and ability to work in this way, and encourage the entry into the LSC-funded sector of a wider range of providers. At the same time, our quality improvement reforms will mean that we cease funding those providers that are not offering good quality. And the Strategic Area Reviews being conducted now by the LSC in each local area will assess where there are gaps which new providers could help fill. All this will create a stronger and more dynamic way to bring good new providers into the system, while cutting out poor quality.

Better, more competitive colleges

46. We have set out the first robust programme for quality improvement in further education through our *Success for All* strategy, which has been widely welcomed. This is designed to support and reward those many colleges and training providers which do an excellent job for their learners and employers, while taking vigorous action to turn round, close or merge

poorly performing colleges and providers. We now have 21 fewer colleges than in 2001. The shake up has been even greater amongst private training providers – 870 fewer are engaged in publicly-funded training – and this has been a key factor behind the dramatic increase in the number of trainees achieving qualifications.

47. We will accelerate quality improvement by:

- Investing public funds only in those colleges and training providers that offer high quality programmes. From August 2005, any provider with unsatisfactory provision (grade 4 or 5 at inspection) will be under notice to improve or risk having their funding withdrawn.
- Establishing a new single Quality Improvement Body to give clear focus and strong drive to quality improvement and responsiveness, and rationalise the plethora of organisations responsible for quality improvement across the learning and skills sector. It will give providers confidence in the quality improvement services they buy on the open market.
- Developing colleges' own capacity for self-improvement and strengthening their quality assurance systems.
- Rolling out a new national approach to teaching and learning across the sector. We have developed a set of teaching and learning frameworks, giving guidance on how best to teach in the highest priority areas. We began with construction, Entry to Employment, business studies, and science, and are now piloting frameworks for health and social care, ICT, maths and land-based skills. We will also establish professional networks of teachers and trainers to support these frameworks and bring about a step change like the one achieved by the literacy and numeracy strategies in primary education.

Building workforce capacity

48. As part of the work on quality improvement, we will transform the skills of the further education workforce. Lifelong Learning UK, the new Sector Skills Council, will drive forward the workforce development strategy for the sector to achieve our long term goal of a fully qualified workforce. Through targets for teacher qualifications agreed with colleges we are making good progress against our *Success for All* target of 90 percent full time and 60 percent part time teachers qualified or working towards a qualification by 2006. In 2003, we had reached 79 percent full time and 54 percent part time qualified.

49. We will also do more to develop leaders. As in other sectors of education, our reform programme for adult skills and training is critically dependent on the quality of the leadership in colleges and training providers. At its best, the quality of college leadership is inspirational. The newly-established Centre for Excellence in Leadership will provide leading edge training and development for leaders and managers across the sector. It will help to attract, retain and develop current and future leaders and prepare them for the challenge of our new agenda.

Managing the change

50. The Skills Strategy set out a vision for transforming our national investment in skills with the aim of achieving a new balance of responsibilities and funding between government, employers and learners. Government has and will continue to have responsibility to secure and pay for high quality initial education and training for young people. But Government cannot and should not fund all the skills investment needed to sustain a competitive economy.

51. The contribution that employers and learners make towards the cost of training is not as high as might be reasonably expected when we look at other countries. Many employers willingly invest large sums of money to train their staff. Over 25 percent of the UK workforce now work in organisations committed to, or recognised as achieving, the Investors in People standard. But many employers are not confident that colleges will necessarily deliver the

forms of training they want, in the way they want it.

52. So, as we set out in the Skills Strategy, this means reviewing the national funding framework. While we need to ensure that we protect those in greatest need, we plan to incentivise colleges to increase and diversify their income through contributions from employers and learners who gain the most benefit and who can afford it. We will be working with the sector to develop this new approach.

53. The LSC's planning arrangements will become a single, integrated annual process with a much lighter burden on colleges and training providers. Coupled with the tighter incentives for quality, this will encourage colleges to focus on their strengths. In parallel, there will be more frequent, but lighter touch inspections based on self-assessment. At the same time, we will take forward the agenda for simplification, reduction of bureaucracy and efficiency improvement that is set out in Sir Andrew Foster's first Annual Report of the Bureaucracy Review Group for the sector.

53. There is a substantial challenge in developing a more demand-led system and creating a network of colleges and other providers where quality is driven by providers themselves and is consistently at the standard now achieved by the best. With the LSC, and building on *Success for All*, we will set up a review to examine what these changes mean for the future organisation, governance and management of colleges.

Flexible qualifications framework

54. Finally, we will reshape the whole qualifications framework for adults, so that programmes allow individuals and their employers to take learning in small units and to combine units in ways that best meet the individual's and the employer's needs. A framework of credits and units will also enable more formal credit to be given to training provided by employers, and thus encourage greater joint financing of learning. Our aim is to have a unit-based credit framework for lifelong learning in place in England by 2010.

Timetable for Change

Taken together, our reforms mean that:

Now, in 2004:

- More adults than ever before are improving their skills and qualifications
- The standards and success rates in our further education colleges are improving dramatically
- Over 550,000 adults have improved their basic skills since 2001
- Learning is increasingly being tailored to employers and learners needs

By 2008:

- We will have improved the basic skill levels of 1.5 million adults since 2001
- We will be well on the way to increasing the number of adults in the workforce with a Level 2 qualification by 3 million between 2004 and 2010, supported by free training at this level
- We will have built the principles of the Employer Training Pilots into the way we work with all colleges and training providers, giving employers more say in the design and delivery of training

- There will be at least 400 Centres of Vocational Excellence, working in networks, with a good spread in each region
- We will not be funding any poor provision
- We will have established a new single Quality Improvement Body

Our Long Term Aim

- Our 2010 target of improving the basic skill levels of 2.25 million adults since 2001 met and exceeded
- Increased numbers of adults with Level 2 and 3 qualifications, closing the gap with our international competitors
- A successful and well-understood unit-based qualifications framework for lifelong learning
- Transformed employer attitudes to training, with greatly increased levels of demand for training, met through high quality, responsive colleges and training providers
- A dynamic, responsive sector that offers only the best of learning experiences and which stands comparison with the best in the world
- A skilled and self confident further education workforce with a strong culture of self-improvement and professionalism to develop, improve and innovate

20 OECD (2003), *Education at a Glance*.

Chapter 8

Higher Education

Goal: Access to a world class higher education system for all those with the potential to benefit

1. Higher education is a national asset. Its research pushes back the frontiers of human knowledge and is the foundation of human progress. Its teaching educates and skills the nation for a knowledge-dominated age. It gives graduates both personal and intellectual fulfilment. Working with business, it powers the economy, and its graduates are crucial to the public services. Wide access to higher education makes for a more enlightened and socially just society.

2. British higher education is a success story. Drop-out rates are low: the completion rate from academic first degree courses is the fourth highest in the world.

3. More young people than ever before are getting the life-changing chance to go to university. 44 percent of 18-30 year-olds are now entering Higher Education, compared to 12 percent of 18-21 year-olds in 1980.²¹

4. The return to individuals from achieving a first degree is the highest in the world and has hardly changed as the number of graduates has grown.

5. And in research our universities punch well above their weight on the normal measures of output and impact, with only the US ahead of us. The sector is mature and confident, with strong independent institutions.

Issues and Challenges

6. But higher education faces challenges if it is to continue to develop into a 21st-century force for economic development and social change:

- It is vital to maintain and develop a clear focus on teaching quality, as student numbers increase. Teaching quality is still too variable; and we need to make sure, especially with the introduction of variable fees, that all students are getting a good deal from their university teaching.
- There is a real need to widen participation. The economy and society need more people benefiting from higher education – labour market forecasts show us that their skills will be in demand, particularly in the growing area of associate professional qualifications served by Foundation Degrees – but we also need to make sure that access is fair. Participation by young people has increased over 40 years from 1 in 20 to 1 in 3,²² but with a stubborn gap between the higher and lower social classes.
- We must provide a fair system of student finance to support those who need it most in securing the benefits of higher education, and help universities bring in other revenue and build up endowments.
- It is vital that we sustain the excellent quality of our university research. The quality of research has increased over the last fifteen years, but we need to keep pace – countries such as China and India are fast developing competitive higher education systems.
- We need to build broader and deeper links between higher education and employers. Higher education contributes over £34 billion to our economy and supports over half a million jobs.²³ These links need to cover the application of research to innovation and enterprise; the engagement of employers in expanding and developing new foundation degrees; and partnership between higher education and employers to meet the ever-growing advanced skills needs in the workforce.

- To meet these challenges, we need to build the capacity of leaders in higher education to address the needs of varied stakeholders; to promote reforms to the system; and to help their institutions and the sector as a whole respond and evolve.

7. Working with, and through, higher education institutions themselves, our offer to individuals and employers will be:

Offer to individuals and employers

- High quality university courses with excellent teaching that bring real benefits to every student, both in terms of employability and personal development
- Access to university for those who have the potential to benefit, reaching out to those who might not otherwise consider university
- More and better flexible opportunities to study
- Better vocational Foundation Degrees designed with and for employers
- Grants for students that need them, an end to up-front fees for full-time students, and a way for graduates to contribute to the cost of their course that is fair and affordable, together with more support for part-time routes
- World-leading university research, well funded and well managed, that keeps us as a leading edge nation – both economically and intellectually
- Well developed engagement between employers and higher education to boost economic performance, innovation and skills in the adult workforce
- Higher education that continues to encourage independent thinking, challenge, and engagement in society and community, and meets national needs

What this means in practice

8. The Higher Education White Paper set out our detailed strategy for addressing these challenges, especially by tackling under-funding and giving students and employers more choice and involvement, as well as giving more freedom to the sector itself. We have already begun to put our strategy into practice.

High quality teaching and more personalisation

9. We must make sure that all students get the quality of teaching they deserve. Student choice and voice will be a major lever for further enhancements to teaching quality, particularly as we introduce variable fees. Higher education is already personalised in some ways, because of its focus on independent and self-directed study. There are also more and more flexible routes and courses being developed to meet different needs and provide choice to young people, increasingly using ICT both to support for flexible delivery and more flexible study.

10. But there also needs to be clarity about the teaching and learning practices and standards students have a right to expect. The new Higher Education Academy's forthcoming framework of professional standards for teaching in Higher Education will support teachers in meeting the needs of 'lifelong learners', developing new and varied modes of learning. All new teaching staff will receive training to meet the standards by 2006.

11. The use of Progress Files and Personal Development Planning enables the individual learner to reflect upon their own learning, performance and achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development.

12. We also need to be clear about the value placed on teaching – university teaching should be seen as just as valuable as university research. We are creating Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning which will reward institutions with a strength in teaching. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) published the outcome of the first round of

bids in June. 106 bids are going through to stage two (of which 24 are collaborations between institutions). The first Centres will be funded by March 2005.

Widening participation

13. We must also make sure that in time everyone who has the potential to benefit has the chance of higher education, and that access to higher education is fair. We will:

- provide more support to those who would otherwise be deterred from entering university on financial grounds by restoring the maintenance grant for the least well off students and ensuring that universities channel some tuition fee income into bursaries, giving £3,000 a year of support to the students that need it most from 2006;
- continue, through HEFCE, to use the Widening Participation allocation to help universities support students from non-traditional backgrounds;
- give more generous support than ever before to part-time students, to help encourage both supply and demand for more flexible ways of studying;
- ensure, through Access Agreements and the Office for Fair Access, that universities that decide to charge higher tuition fees are also reaching out to young people in schools and colleges which have not traditionally sent students to university, and making active efforts to attract and support these people.

A fair funding system

14. The move to variable fees will mean that the benefit higher education brings to graduates is better recognised; and will bring much needed additional revenue to higher education.

15. We have worked hard to make sure that our new system for making contributions is fair and reasonable, with no graduate asked to contribute until they are earning at least £15,000 a year, and contributions varying according to income. In addition, any outstanding contributions owing after 25 years will be waived.

16. We believe that variable fees will also play an important part in driving up quality in the system, making student choice a much more powerful force, and allowing institutions to reap rewards for offering courses that are popular and serve students well.

17. Variable fees give universities themselves much greater choice and control over the funding they raise, and should encourage them to focus still more closely on the needs of their students. An Independent Commission will review the first three years' operation of variable fees and consider their impact on both students and institutions. The Commission will report direct to Parliament in 2009. We have also announced that Sir Alan Langlands will report by mid-2005 on how the public sector and professions can sustain and improve recruitment opportunities for graduates, especially those who do not qualify for financial support.

18. The recent report by Professor Eric Thomas highlighted the significant opportunities available to universities, as registered charities, to seek donations from alumni and others for scholarships, buildings, new posts, endowments and other purposes; and how much further our universities need to go if they are to stand comparison with US universities (including state-funded US universities) in fundraising. We believe that the development of new independent sources of charitable and philanthropic income is a high priority for our universities, and will respond formally to Professor Thomas's report later in the year.

Maintaining and developing our research excellence

19. Research activity is valuable for many reasons – for the intellectual well-being of the

nation, for improving health, underpinning the development of social policy, and for helping us understand the past, interpret the present and plan for the future. But it also makes a massive economic contribution.

20. We will continue to focus our funding on the best researchers – funding good quality research and giving premium funding to institutions and departments which are world-class to help them lead our system.

21. But we will also make sure that there are ways for promising new research teams to develop and improve. Additional funding of £5 million from 2004-05 will benefit 62 institutions to support the staff development of their promising researchers. The Capability funding of £118 million to support emerging research in less well established disciplines will also continue.

22. We will make sure that we continue to support the Government's overall strategy of developing the sustainability and excellence of the UK science and research base. Spending on science and research in 2005-06 will have increased by £1.25 billion a year compared to 2002-03 – around 30 percent in real terms.

23. We believe that there is increasing value in research collaboration between institutions, departments and research teams. Well conceived collaboration can help us maintain a system able to compete with the best in the world, sustain provision in subjects and fields of study of strategic importance, strengthen emerging disciplines and support economic growth in the regions.

Better partnerships between universities and employers

24. Engagement between higher education and employers across a broad front is critical. We know that, though our research capability is very strong, our capacity for innovation does not always match it. The Lambert Review of links between higher education and business made clear that universities and businesses could each do more to work with the other. At their best, these links are highly interactive, with each partner well aware of what the other can offer, and what their needs are. A full Government response to the Lambert Review is being issued within the ten year investment framework for science and innovation.

25. The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) draws together support for reach out from higher education to business and the community. Funds are awarded to support universities and colleges, increasing their capability to respond to the needs of business, public services and the wider community, and to transfer knowledge. The second round of HEIF sees investment rising to a total of £187 million over the period 2004-06. 124 awards have recently been made to universities and colleges across England.

26. A network of 22 new centres for Knowledge Exchange activity are included in the HEIF funding. The centres will provide specialised shared services for business and community partners and will be exemplars of good practice. It is expected that funding for the centres will then continue for a further three years

27. Links developed to support applied research and innovation are only part of the picture. We know that we need more skilled graduates in the economy. Forecasts by the Institute for Employment Research show that of the 13.5 million total jobs expected to be filled by 2012, 50 percent – or 6.8 million – are in occupations most likely to demand graduates.²⁴ Almost half of these jobs will be at associate professional and higher technician level – best served through effective vocational degree programmes.

More choice and partnership with employers: Expansion of Foundation Degrees

28. As we continue to make progress towards 50 percent of young people having the chance to go to university, our drive to expand Foundation Degrees will be important. Foundation

Degrees help strengthen links between universities and employers, as employers take an increasingly active role in the development and delivery of courses, both to meet the needs of existing employees and potential recruits. They are often studied part-time in flexible ways. Studied full-time they normally take two years to complete.

29. Numbers of Foundation Degree students have grown from 12,000 in 2002/03 to 24,000 in 2003/04, and the number of applicants for full-time Foundation Degree places for September 2004 is up by 50 percent on the same point last year.²⁵ We are supporting the growth of Foundation Degrees by making 10,000 extra funded places available to institutions for these degrees over the next two years, and we expect this expansion to continue.

30. Better higher education-employer links, with advice from the Sector Skills Councils, will encourage the expansion of higher education's role as a key provider of high level skills training and continuous professional development, including taught postgraduate degrees.

CASE STUDY

Foundation Degree in Construction Engineering, Kingston University

The two-year Foundation Degree gives individuals a chance to gain a 'fast-track' preparation for industry, with the option to 'top-up' to BEng (Hons) level via further study.

Student Jason Bale (20) is working for the award-winning civil engineering company Edmund Nuttall. He is getting paid while he learns. The balance between study and practice is proving to be successful – Jason said "The course is very good at providing you with a balance of practical and academic knowledge, which you get the opportunity to put into practice on site."

Jason also feels that this course has given his career a head start. Nuttall's is offering him support during his studies, paying his course fees, giving him time off, and will continue to employ him after graduation.

Edmund Nuttall is involved with the Foundation Degree at Kingston University. Their director of human resources Graham Medcroft believes there is a close correlation between education, training and staff retention. "If workers feel they have a formal career path and that their employer is interested in them, then they'll stick with the firm," he said. "We have 150 people doing degree-level qualifications, including the Foundation Degree at Kingston. Early indications show that the Foundation Degree is a good course."

Changing the system to deliver our reforms

Autonomy and freedom

31. The higher education system is already more autonomous than other education and skills sectors. Universities are less heavily dependent on state funding (on average) than other institutions; there is a strong element of self-regulation, for example on quality; institutions' fees and charges are deregulated except for undergraduate study; and decisions on mission, provision of courses and the curriculum are very largely left to higher education providers themselves. The Government's reforms enacted in the Higher Education Act 2004 introduce new safeguards for potential students and students in the form of the Office for Fair Access, and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator to deal with student complaints. But there is still room for development of the system.

Student voice and choice as a driver for reform

32. The move to variable fees has been a major system change that will help deliver reform through the power it gives to student choice, and the responsibility it places on providers to respond to that choice as they benefit from increased fee income from a broader funding base. But choices need to be informed, so we will support students with high quality information on teaching quality, student progress and employment and salary outcomes across subjects by each institution by 2005 at the latest. The first national survey of students' views about the quality of their courses will take place in 2005, and the results will be

published in a clear and accessible form, to help other prospective students to make choices which are right for them.

33. We will also publish summaries of external examiners' reports, which will contribute to the public picture of the standards reached in different universities. We will work with higher education and the sector bodies to explore the most useful and efficient means of publicising this information, including through the Teaching Quality Information website and publishing it in their prospectuses.

University funding to match new patterns of study

34. As patterns of study develop and change it is important that the funding system reflects this. The Higher Education Funding Council is reviewing university funding. One of the aims of the review will be to ensure that actual costs of all types of courses – including distance learning, part-time and workplace learning – are all reflected in the funding method for teaching.

Reducing bureaucracy and improving accountability

35. Maintaining and increasing the independence and autonomy of universities remains a core goal, of which changed funding arrangements are a part. Right across government, we will try to ensure that institutions do not face duplicate or inconsistent demands from the many departments and agencies with whom they deal. The Higher Education Regulatory Review group set up in June 2004 to challenge existing and new regulatory requirements imposed on higher education will spur on this effort. We will also be looking to make accountability and inspection requirements increasingly proportionate to the potential risks in particular institutions or activities, with the general aim of reducing and removing these burdens wherever possible.

Partnerships in support of progression

36. We need to support widening participation and improve the flow of students with non-traditional backgrounds or vocational qualifications into higher education. 9 out of 10 young people with two or more A-levels enter higher education by the age of 21, compared with 50 percent of those with vocational qualifications at Level 3.²⁶ Addressing this means more intensive co-operation between further education colleges and providers of higher education.

37. Around 10 percent of higher education is already delivered through further education colleges. Many Foundation Degrees are offered through colleges, and the work described in the last chapter to drive up standards in further education will be critical to their success.

38. Proposals for Lifelong Learning Networks will engage area and regional providers and forge links to sector skills councils and Regional Development Agencies. They aim to bring coherence and clarity for students; offer individualised learning plans and choices, including choices between continuous study and modular approaches; and make it easier for students to move between courses and institutions in pursuit of their personal learning goals.

Collaboration to promote diversity, excellence and student choice

39. As higher education becomes more diverse – in terms of the courses on offer and students included – there will also be more pressure for collaboration, so that individual institutions can specialise, playing to their strengths and safeguarding excellence. Collaborations may entail informal alliances such as the Lifelong Learning Networks mentioned above; joint courses offered; individual disciplines, credit transfer arrangements; dual or multiple accreditation; collaborative research, whether pure or applied; and so on. Or they may develop into more formal cooperation and even merger.

Improving leadership and management capacity

40. In a complex and demanding system, characterised by a wide range of customer and stakeholder needs, it will be increasingly important to have highly skilled leaders and managers in our universities.

41. The new Leadership Foundation will help the sector to strengthen its leadership and management, investing in the leaders of tomorrow as well as those of today. Its vision of UK higher education leadership as world class and held in high esteem will have a pivotal role to play in this – by developing and commissioning high quality development programmes and championing examples of excellent leadership

Timetable for Change

Taken together, our reforms mean that:

Now, in 2004:

- More people, young and old, are getting the life-changing chance to go to university than ever before
- The quality of our research is outstanding – second only to the US
- We have very low drop-out rates, and very high rates of return to degrees
- Higher education makes a massive contribution to our economy and to the well-being of society and communities

By 2008:

- We will have increased participation towards the target of 50 percent of those aged 18–30 entering higher education by 2010, mainly through the expansion of work-related, employer-led Foundation Degrees
- Higher education will be benefiting from a new funding stream, over which institutions have control, as a result of variable fees
- We will be beginning to notice results in terms of employer satisfaction with the levels of skill in the workforce with experience of higher education, especially at intermediate and higher levels
- We will have made significant progress towards fairer access
- Our drop-out rate will continue to be low – and there will be fewer institutions with unacceptably high drop-out rates
- We will be retaining and strengthening our world-class position in research with further investment and steps towards collaboration
- All new teaching staff will receive training to meet professional standards and many existing teaching staff will also have taken up the offer

Our Long Term Aim:

- Young people from all backgrounds aspire equally to go to university, and those with the potential to benefit have the opportunity to do so
- Participation increased towards 50 percent of those aged 18–30 by 2010

- Our research position enhanced through further investment and our universities involved in national and international collaborations addressing the biggest global challenges
- Many more employers working with universities to innovate and apply new technology
- Higher education delivering graduates with the skills and knowledge that the economy needs from a variety of courses, including well-recognised employer-led higher vocational qualifications
- Students making well-informed choices about universities and courses, and receiving excellent teaching wherever they go
- Higher education financially strong, benefiting from varied funding streams involving the state, voluntary and private sectors
- Higher education continuing to challenge, stimulate independent thinking, and be a positive force for social change – globally, nationally and at local level

21 Provisional Higher Education Initial Participation Rate 02/03 – Source: DfES (2004) *Statistical First Release 07/2004*; and Great Britain, Age Participation Index, DfES.

22 Great Britain, Age Participation Index. Source: DfES, Dearing Report.

23 Universities UK (June 2002) *The impact of higher education institutions on the UK economy*.

24 Institute for Employment Research (January 2004) *Working Futures: New Projections of Occupational Employment by Sector and Region, 2002-2012*.

25 Numbers of Foundation Degree students from HEFCE. Applicant figures from UCAS, *Press Release, 29 April 2004*.

26 DfES, *Youth Cohort Survey, Cohort 8*.

Chapter 9

Managing the Transformation

1. This five-year strategy has set out an ambitious agenda for the reform of public services. In this chapter we look at how that agenda will be delivered:

- through a simpler, less bureaucratic system of planning, budgeting and accountability, releasing time and resource at the front line;
- by developing effective leadership at every point in the system and supporting the large, diverse workforce in education, training and children's services on whom successful public services depend;
- through exploitation of information and communication technology to transform learning, improve information and simplify administration;

2. We begin, however, by looking at the changing role of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in leading the agenda for reform.

The role of the Department for Education and Skills

3. We believe that the delivery of this strategy will require a major reform of the DfES. Our vision of the DfES of the future is that it will be:

a) More strategic

4. The core role of the Department will be to support Ministers in providing strategic leadership to the system. That means setting the overall strategic direction and the outcomes that are being sought for children, young people and adults; developing powerful and relevant evidence-based policy; and having the capacity to engage with those in the system so that they understand and share the direction of travel. To achieve this the Department is developing a new strategy unit and a more strategic analytical capacity, enabling us to learn from evidence and from international experience.

5. The corollary of this is that the Department itself will do less direct management and direct service delivery. It will increasingly be the 'system designer', setting in place the framework of legislation, incentives, information and funding to make change happen. It will use the guiding principles of this strategy – personalisation and choice, diversity, freedom and autonomy and stronger partnerships – to underpin its work.

6. The Department will continue to serve Ministers, Parliament and the public. In the past year alone it has had over 200,000 contacts with the public, 70,000 pieces of official correspondence and 4,000 Parliamentary questions. There will be a continuing drive to ensure that this work is done with maximum efficiency and effectiveness, using ICT to improve services to the public and benchmarking services against public and private sector comparators.

b) Smaller

7. These changes in role will enable the DfES to reduce its staffing by 1,460 by 2008 – a reduction of 31 percent on current levels. This will be achieved by less direct management of the system and less direct service delivery; by removing overlap between the responsibilities of the DfES and its agents and partners; and by continuing efficiencies. A smaller DfES will also help to reduce burdens at the front line.

c) More professional and expert

8. But we want to do a lot more than just reduce numbers. Our ambition for a smaller, more

strategic Department will also require a different mix of grades and skills and a deeper knowledge of both the needs of individuals and employers and of how the systems for children's services, education and skills work at local level.

9. We will continue to bring into the Department at all levels people with practical experience of delivering services at the front line and with professional skills needed by key services. At senior level, for example, 40 percent of the 30 most senior managers in the DfES have been recruited from outside the Civil Service, bringing a richer mix of skills and knowledge to the Department's leadership. At Board level five of the eight executive members have joined from outside Government, including a former Local Authority Chief Executive, a former College Principal and a former university Vice Chancellor.

10. For our existing staff we will give priority to:

- developing further their professional skills;
- giving them direct experience of the front line, building on our successful 'school immersion programme' of short attachments for staff in schools;
- developing core business skills like programme and project management;
- putting all the Department's senior staff through a high quality leadership and management programme.

d) Strong in its partnerships

11. Fundamental to the vision is, wherever possible, close working with and through partners and the involvement of front line practitioners in the Department's thinking about policy and system change.

12. This means at national level working particularly with other Government Departments to join up policy thinking and to ensure that the DfES agenda is strongly linked to the Government's policies to improve public health, reduce crime, promote culture and sport and develop strong communities.

13. The Department's family of Non-Departmental Public Bodies (including the Learning and Skills Council, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Higher Education Funding Council for England) plus Ofsted also remain essential partners at national level in driving forward the overall strategy and in bringing expertise and practical knowledge to the process of delivery.

14. At regional level the Department and the Learning and Skills Council will work increasingly closely with the Regional Development Agencies and through regional skills partnerships to ensure that action to improve educational attainment and skill levels is at the heart of regional economic development.

15. At local level, we will continue to forge strong partnerships with Local Authorities, using Compacts to underpin those partnerships. We have set out a reshaped role for them which mirrors what the best are doing already – giving strong strategic leadership for children's services and education; acting as brokers of powerful local partnerships through Children's Trusts; commissioning and developing new services, such as extended schools and 'educare'; and acting as the champion of parents and pupils, rather than focusing only on direct provision and delivery. The Local Authority role in the massive Building Schools for the Future programme is a good example of the practical application of this strategic role – Authorities are designing proposals to transform the schools' estate on an area wide basis, and building in their key priorities for improving and extending schools as they do it. Authorities will also be central to making the 14-19 phase work for parents and pupils, in close partnership with Local Learning and Skills Councils.

16. With new Directors of Children’s Services, Local Authorities will be the hub of activity to support and protect children and young people – including safeguarding children at risk, providing for pupils with special educational needs, and leading in supporting parents and families in the round.

17. This key strategic role for local authorities in children’s services and in education will be taken forward in partnership with local government, in the context of the development of the ten year strategy for local government.

18. There are many other partners – the voluntary sector, trade unions, foundations and trusts – with whom the DfES has developed effective relations. But a priority for the Department is the development of strong links at all levels with employers. We need employers’ help in ensuring that the education system is preparing young people better for work than it has in the past and in building stronger vocational routes to achievement. We described in Chapter 8 the need for more effective partnerships between universities and business in research and development. And we need employers to be active members of bodies like the Sector Skills Councils to tackle the shortages of skill which hold back our productivity.

19. We want finally to engage actively with those at the front line and their representatives. We believe that there are already leading edge examples of what is possible: for example, in the partnership we have forged with representatives of headteachers, teachers, support staff and employers in the school workforce agreement; and in the establishment of the Implementation Review Unit – a group of headteachers working actively with us to reduce bureaucracy in schools.

Simpler systems and less bureaucracy

20. We have committed ourselves in the earlier chapters of this strategy to simpler systems of funding, planning and accountability and less bureaucracy in every sector, releasing the time of front-line practitioners. The process of reform up to now has often been delivered top-down. It has produced significant improvements in services and performance and kick-started change, which would otherwise not have happened.

21. But this approach has sometimes been at a cost. It has often resulted in too many separate initiatives, supported by separate funding streams and separate management processes. At local level, time has been taken up joining up these national initiatives and coping with the demands of separate requests for information and accountability.

22. So our commitment to the front line is:

- fewer interventions from the centre: more focus on outcomes and less prescription of detailed processes;
- fewer separate planning requirements and funding streams: where possible, more scope for local people to set targets which match local need and to use resources flexibly;
- streamlined systems of audit and inspection; and
- information collected once and, then, made available in a form which can be used many times by different players.

23. The strategy contains many examples of how these commitments will be fulfilled in the next few years. The most complete example of what is proposed is the “New Relationship with Schools”, described in Chapter 4, which will be trialled in some schools and local authorities this autumn. But the same principles will be applied in the reform of children’s services and in the further and higher education sectors. In each case we are looking to involve groups of practitioners in the identification of unnecessary burdens and in acting as gatekeepers against further bureaucracy.

24. The process will be driven from the heart of the system. The Department, Ofsted, its Non-Departmental Public Bodies and our partners in local government will work together to reduce overlaps between them, to simplify information systems and, wherever possible, to reduce demands. A particular priority will be to reduce the overlaps between different inspectorates, ensuring that they work to common frameworks and do not duplicate effort. We believe that across the Department, NDPBs and Ofsted together, it should be possible to reduce their administration costs by at least 15% and release significant time and resource for the front line.

25. This thinking has contributed to the wider review of public service efficiency being conducted by Sir Peter Gershon. We have moved on from a world where frontline managers knew that “efficiency” meant cuts in their budgets. Our commitments to increased funding are real and sustained. But we are committed to working with our partners to help them make the best possible use of the significant resources now available to them through greater efficiencies and better productivity. Over the Spending Review period the Department, in partnership with key stakeholders, will work to secure efficiency and productivity gains throughout education and children’s services amounting to £4.3 billion, by reducing administration costs, reforming procurement and unlocking productivity gains from technology and workforce improvement.

The People to Deliver

26. The more we look to the front line to lead reform, the greater the need for a highly skilled and motivated workforce. The workforce in children’s services, education and training contains 4.4 million people on some estimates. It is vast and diverse: from childminders to university lecturers, teaching assistants to Local Authority employees, social-care workers to teachers and nursery nurses to further education lecturers. It is a workforce dedicated to the people it serves, with a strong motivation for public service and providing countless examples of remarkable achievement, often against the odds, on a daily basis.

27. But it is also a workforce feeling the pressure of growing public expectation and increasing demands for accountability. The emphasis on personalisation and choice in this strategy – coupled with the rapidly changing pressures of society and the economy – will raise the bar of public expectations further. It will put an even greater premium on well-trained, committed staff, recognised and valued for what they do.

28. This strategy contains proposals for investing in the development of the workforce in each key sector. Underlying this is a basic offer to them all:

- clarity about expectations and minimum standards;
- investment in training and professional development;
- opportunities to learn skills and progress;
- rewards and recognition for success;
- fewer burdens, less bureaucracy.

29. For the **children’s workforce** this means a new common core of skills, knowledge and competence for frontline practitioners and a new climbing-frame of qualifications to boost recruitment levels and support career progression. We will publish later in the year a workforce strategy setting out our plans for developing a children’s workforce with the capacity, flexibility, skills and motivation to help children and young people thrive.

30. In the **school workforce** teacher numbers have grown by over 28,000 since 1997 and, at over 427,000, are at their highest since 1981. The number of support staff stands at over 240,000, including a doubling in the number of teaching assistants since 1997. As a result of

the School Workforce Agreement shared by Government, the great majority of the unions and local authorities, the school team is now as diverse and flexible as the best multi-disciplinary teams found in any leading profession, including medicine. Much, however, remains to be done to free teachers to teach and to reduce bureaucracy. Earlier in this strategy we also set out a new commitment to the professional development of teachers including a greater emphasis on better subject teaching.

31. The further education workforce, which totals some 600,000, is also the subject of a workforce development strategy, to which partners in the sector have contributed. The aim is to generate better data on the numbers of staff, their roles, pay and turnover; attract and retain the best people; train and develop the workforce of the future and provide a new infrastructure for a new sector. The sector's pursuit of improvement has already begun with the reform of the initial training of college teachers.

32. For the higher education workforce, the Government has provided £330 million between 2001-02 and 2003-04, and will provide an additional £167 million in 2005-06, to help universities develop human resource strategies. These will address their future staffing needs, staff development, equal opportunities issues and more flexible ways to recognise and reward staff for the contribution they make.

33. Our strategy involves important structural changes to lead these workforce reforms. We are establishing a Sector Skills Council for Children and Social Care to provide a focus for the identification and development of key skills in the children's workforce. The Teacher Training Agency will have a new role as a focus for the development of the school workforce. And the Lifelong Learning Sector Skills Council (now known as Lifelong Learning UK) will create a partnership of employers whose main business is to provide learning to the rest of industry and commerce. LLUK will be operational by the end of 2004.

34. The efforts of the professional and paid workforce are vitally augmented by the enormous unpaid contribution supplied by volunteers. We need to make more and better use of volunteers and others from the community and from industry who can help contribute to children's services and learning. Approximately 1.8 million of the total children's and school workforce of 3.5 million, for example, are unpaid volunteers, and they already play a key role in our thinking. We also rely heavily on the army of volunteers who are governors and whose development we will continue to support. But in education and training more generally, we have been less good at recognising the importance of volunteers. We intend now to put this right by including in our future strategies a clear strand that is about using the dedicated people – including young people – who volunteer in education and training more effectively to support our aims.

35. There is also increasing recognition of the benefits of undergraduates working in schools and further education colleges, either as a volunteer, for degree credit or in some circumstances in a paid capacity. They provide excellent role models to encourage more young people to stay on in education and often inspire young people with their passion for their subject. Teachers welcome the enhanced curriculum support and access to extra resources. Many undergraduates then consider teaching as a career. We will work with the higher and further education sectors, with schools, subject associations and professional institutes to ensure that the right structures are in place to provide more opportunities for undergraduates to work in schools and colleges. For similar reasons, there is a strong case, which we will pursue, for undergraduates working in children's services.

An example of more strategic use of undergraduates working in schools – the Student Associates Scheme

Rohan, a science undergraduate, recently completed a placement at an inner city comprehensive in London. He taught a whole class, under supervision, across the range of science subjects, covering topics such as DNA and genetics. Rohan was able to capture the imagination of pupils with practical experiments which included extracting DNA from kiwi fruits. He added to the development of pupils' skills by encouraging and

supervising internet based research activities.

The school were very pleased with the placement which they felt benefited both the pupils and the staff. Such was the impact of his work he has already been offered a further placement this academic year.

Rohan feels that he has greatly benefited from his placement, which he found overwhelmingly positive. Despite the challenging surroundings he was able to make a real impression, and he has gained experience which would otherwise have been unavailable to him. He also felt well supported by the head of department and other staff team members at the school.

Leadership

36. An effective workforce needs good leadership. As we put more emphasis on those in the system leading reform, we will increasingly need leaders (and leadership teams) who can combine the ability to manage people and money with the creativity, imagination and inspiration to lead transformation.

37. We have invested heavily in leadership development in the last few years and supported the setting up of centres of leadership excellence for schools, colleges and universities. We have begun to break the common assumption of some years back (widely shared in the public sector) that, if someone was a good teacher, academic or administrator, they were automatically qualified to lead. It is now accepted that good leaders and managers require specific skills and qualities, which need to be grown and developed.

38. Over the next five years we will continue to give priority to developing effective leadership at every point in the system – from the small primary school to the DfES. We shall support and encourage the development of the existing cadre of senior managers and the earlier identification and development of future leaders. We will encourage thinking about how organisations develop effective leadership teams. We shall ensure that successful leaders continue to be rewarded for their success and weak leadership is identified and tackled swiftly.

39. For schools, we will continue to develop the National College for School Leadership as a world class centre of leadership, focussing its work on the areas where it will have the greater strategic impact in transforming the education system. Our aim is that by 2009 all aspiring headteachers will be required to have the National Professional Qualification in Leadership as a mark of their effective leadership.

40. In further education, we will continue to support the work of the new Centre for Excellence in Leadership, which has already provided 1,000 people with a range of leadership and management development. In higher education, Universities UK and HEFCE have established a Leadership Foundation, which will be the engine for raising the status of professional, effective leadership in universities.

41. Leadership development will also be a central element in our programme to improve the quality of children's services and to implement the Green Paper, *Every Child Matters*. There will be a strong emphasis on cross-sector collaboration in this work: for example, a cross-sector leadership programme is being developed for Directors of Children's Services, the police and the voluntary sector. And there will be joint working with bodies like the National College for School Leadership and NHSU.

Technology to Support Reform

42. As well as having the right people to deliver our strategy, we intend to make ambitious and imaginative use of technology a central element in improving personalisation and choice across the system. Recent years have seen increasing access to online information and services. Over half our homes are now online, many more have digital television, and everyone can get online through work, school or college, a library or a UK Online Centre.

But with increasing access come higher expectations. Customers expect 24 hours a day online services. They expect public services to equal the quality of the best commercial services. And they expect those services to add value, to be tailored and to join up with other on and off-line interactions.

43. The Government has invested heavily in ICT in education – and met challenging targets. All colleges and universities now have broadband. Over 99 percent of schools are connected to the internet (60 percent at broadband speeds, with a target of 100 percent by 2006). There is a computer for every eight pupils in primary, and almost every five in secondary.

44. These are major developments. Together they give us the opportunity to personalise the education experience in a number of ways:

- Through new levels of learning support – online information, advice, and guidance. Direct gov, a citizens' portal to which we are making a major contribution, will offer comprehensive support services, allowing prospective students, for example, to fill in UCAS forms and apply for loans online.
- Through change in the nature of learning itself. The best interactive materials already make it possible to engage students put off by traditional teaching; to learn at their own pace, in their own time, in their own style; to learn alone and to learn together.
- Through quicker and more productive working for teachers. ICT makes it easier to mark work and monitor pupils' progress.
- Through enriching the process of teaching. ICT allows both whole class teaching, using an interactive white board, and work with individuals or groups at their own screens.
- Through new forms of collaboration. Networks are an emerging feature of the landscape – networks of schools working together to solve shared problems, networks of schools and care agencies sharing information about vulnerable children, networks of schools, colleges and universities developing and sharing materials. Community learning, for families and adults wishing to upgrade their skills, offers another form of network, linked by ICT to education hubs such as schools and colleges.

Future Priorities

45. Future investment in technology to support our wider strategic objectives will focus on three priorities:

- Tailored learning or support for individual citizens.
- Support to front line professionals, to assess and monitor learners – and to develop their own skills.
- Integrated systems, to facilitate the exchange of information and learning materials between institutions and sectors.

46. These three priorities are likely to overlap – the same system that provides an online service direct to citizens can underpin support for professionals and contribute to reducing administration costs. Wherever possible, we will make use of savings in administration to increase investment in the other benefits.

47. The implementation for our e-strategy will stretch over a number of years, as capability builds. But in the immediate future we can expect to see more examples of:

- A broader choice of curriculum, for example through partnerships between schools and colleges using video conferencing and interactive materials to extend the number of languages a school can offer.
- Tailored learning activities, presented through interactive whiteboards, and made available in the home through the school or college extranet.
- Virtual networks between education and industry, facilitating greater collaboration and understanding.
- Online assessment with personalised feedback.
- Local primary schools as community hubs, connecting online to neighbouring secondary schools to help students moving between the two and to allow teachers from the two schools to work together to support them.

48. If we are to achieve our ambitions, these examples must become common practice. Key to success will be the deepening of capacity across each sector, and the extension of broadband not just to schools, colleges and universities but to the home and the workplace too.

Putting the Consumer First

49. This is a huge programme of change on a scale which matches anything that happens in the private sector. It will require persistence, determination and a belief that change is possible. It must be driven above all by a single objective – that of improving the outcomes for children, young people and adults.

50. The cause for optimism that it can be done rests on three grounds. First, the workforce has over a decade and more – and particularly since 1997 – shown an ability to adapt and improve at a rate they themselves did not believe possible. Secondly, the reform programme will continue to be supported by investment in the services and the people who provide them.

51. Thirdly, this is a workforce that already draws its motivation from the achievements of those it serves: the sudden breakthrough in a child's understanding; a mother helping her baby to develop; a talented student whose insights shine new light on a research project; an adult able to read a book for the first time. It is not such a big step for this workforce to put the consumer first, to develop a passion for improving public services and to lead reform.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

This is our ambitious strategy for education, skills and children's services for the next five years and beyond.

It seeks not only to address our historic weaknesses, but also to improve every aspect of what we do. It puts a clear focus on children, learners, parents and employers, not just in setting out what we want to offer, but in designing ways of doing it that promote personalisation and choice.

This means change across the whole system. It means more diversity to give choice; more autonomy to give freedom for excellence; more investment in those who work at the front line, and those who lead them; and stronger partnerships to bring people together around the needs of the individual. Some of these changes will be more comfortable than others; but all of them are necessary and right if we are to give the children and learners who are our future what they deserve.

The world is changing. We cannot stand still. We have a vision of the future, and we have the clear principles and strong proposals that will help us realise the vision.

Over the next few months, we will be doing more to set out the details of our proposals and to share them widely. We are clear about our direction of travel; but we know we need strong partnerships to make it work. We welcome comments and suggestions on the way forward for learners and children, and look forward to working with you to make it a reality.