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## ABSTRACT

The Excellence in Cities (EIC) program was introduced in the United Kingdom in 1999 to improve school achievement. It involves partnerships between the government, local education authorities, and local schools, and it works to transform and improve secondary education. This report describes how EIC has begun to transform the educational experience of city children in 48 Phase 1 and Phase 2 local education authorities where the program has been implemented for 2 years and 1 year, respectively. It examines emerging statistical data, preliminary findings from independent evaluation of the program, and illustrative case studies emerging from EIC partnerships and their schools. The following six sections are included: (1) Excellence in Cities: The Story So Far; (2) Meeting Individual Pupil Needs: The Three Key Strands Learning Mentors, Learning Support Units, and Provision for the Gifted and Talented; (3) Strengthening School Provision: From City Learning Centres to Beacon and Specialist Schools; (4) The Primary Extension Project; (5) Making a Difference: Measured Impact; and (6) Action for the Future. (SM)



# *schools*

extending **excellence**

Annual Report 2000–2001

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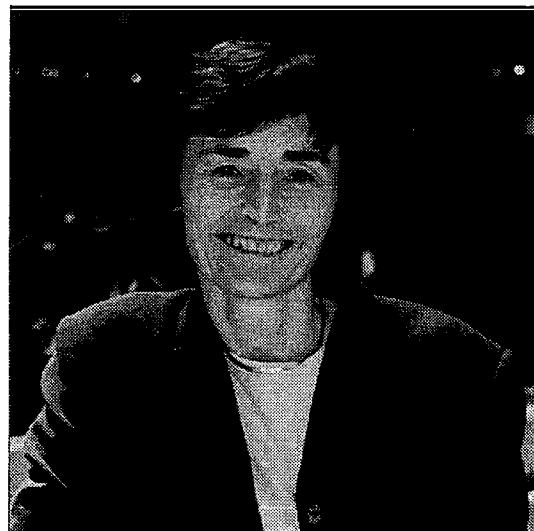


# Foreword

We introduced the Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme in 1999 at a time when standards in many city schools had been too low for too long – a reflection of the lack of recognition of their need for additional resources and support over many years.

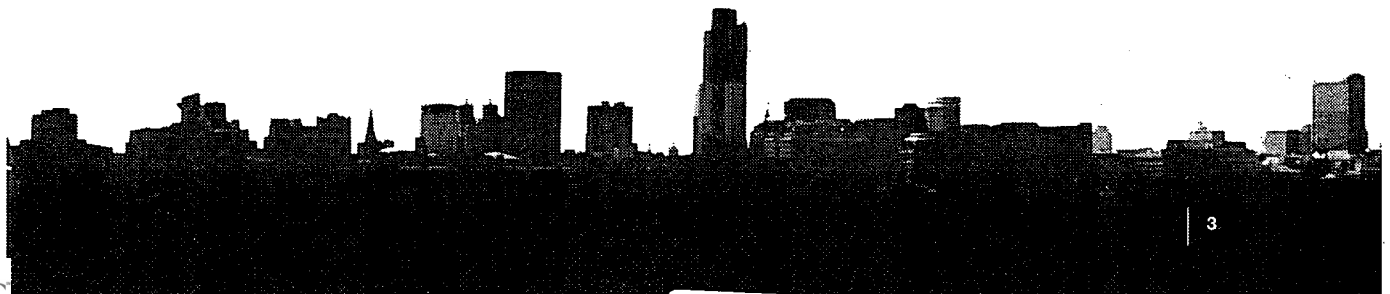
The Excellence in Cities programme has changed that picture beyond all recognition. Standards in Excellence in Cities schools are rising faster than in other schools. Improvements in Key Stage 3 tests last year were stronger in EiC schools than elsewhere, with an improvement 4 times greater for English. The percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more good GCSEs or equivalent has risen faster in EiC schools than others, especially where there are large proportions of deprived pupils.

The programme has done this through very substantial new resources; a new partnership – between Government, local education authorities, and their schools; and education tailored to the needs of individual pupils. It gives new opportunities to gifted and talented children whose



needs have been neglected in the past, help from Learning Mentors for children who are facing barriers to learning, and work in behaviour and basic skills in Learning Support Units for disruptive pupils.

We are also investing in the infrastructure of city schools. We have put in place a network of City Learning Centres with state of the art technology, increased the number of Specialist and Beacon schools in EiC areas and enabled over 100 small



groups of schools to develop their own solutions to shared problems through Excellence in Cities Action Zones.

The goal remains the same – nothing less than the transformation of secondary education in our cities so that city children and their parents can expect and gain as much from their schools as their counterparts elsewhere.

The progress city schools are making has encouraged us to expand the programme in successive years so that it now covers 58 authorities, some 1000 secondary schools and over 1000 primary schools where there are new opportunities for gifted and talented children, as well as support through Learning Mentors and Primary Learning Support Units.

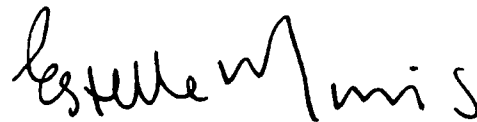
We have introduced Excellence Challenge for those over sixteen. Excellence Challenge builds on the success of the Gifted and Talented strand, increases aspiration and will widen participation in Higher Education.

Excellence in Cities has been introduced with speed and commitment. I am delighted that we have come so far and so fast. It would not have been possible without the education and commitments of schools and their headteachers, teachers,

support staff, Learning Mentors, and pupils themselves. Nor could we have achieved so much without EiC co-ordinators, and local authorities themselves who have been key to the new partnerships.

There is much that is still to be done to transform education in our cities. We have laid the foundations but the full value of the programme will only be realised when it is fully embedded and when:

- the Gifted and Talented programme has gone beyond the identification of pupils and the provision of enrichment activities to make a real and sustained impact on the curriculum across the whole school;
- Learning Mentors and Learning Support Units are a full part of pastoral and behavioural systems in every school; and
- all aspects of the programme reflect and sustain the initial vision of Excellence for all our city schools and their children;
- parents feel confident in city schools.



ESTELLE MORRIS  
Secretary of State  
for Education and Skills

# Excellence in Cities: The story so far...

## INTRODUCTION

Last year we reported on the fulfilment of the initial 13 pledges made in the Excellence in Cities Launch document and progress on the main strands of the programme in the 25 local authority areas where Excellence in Cities had been implemented.

We also reported the announcement of:

- The second phase of EiC expansion from September 2000 to include a further 23 authorities and a Primary Pilot (now called the Primary Extension Project) covering over 1000 primary schools in the phase 1 EiC authorities.
- The third phase of expansion of the programme from September 2001 to include ten more authorities and – through Excellence Clusters – smaller pockets of deprivation outside the major cities and.
- Excellence Challenge (also from September 2001) to widen participation and to extend opportunities for Gifted and Talented students post 16.

## What this report covers

Implementation of the first of these announcements as well as the continuation of the programme in Phase 1 authorities forms the core of this report which covers the period between September 2000 and September 2001.

In this report we describe how Excellence in Cities has begun to transform the educational experience of city children in the 48 Phase 1 and 2 authorities where the programme has been implemented for two years and one year respectively. The programme is ambitious. To make it possible the Government is currently investing some £200 million which is set to rise to over £300 million by 2003–4

In judging the success of the programme this report looks at the emerging statistical data, preliminary findings coming through from the independent evaluation of the programme and illustrative case studies emerging from EiC partnerships and their schools.



We also look at:

- emerging issues; and
- policy development.

### **Successes so far**

- the Excellence in Cities strand infrastructure is firmly in place across all Excellence in Cities partnerships – with completion of the final roll-out of EiC Action Zones and City Learning Centres on target;
- the core values – high expectations, diversity, networking and extending opportunity – are informing the work of all partnerships;
- through Excellence in Cities, partnership working between secondary schools and their local authorities has become an increasing reality;
- improvements in Key Stage 3 tests are stronger in EiC areas than elsewhere. Particularly good are improvements in English and Maths, with an improvement 4 times greater for English in EiC areas than for non-EiC areas from 2000 to 2001;
- the GCSE performance tables for 2000 and 2001 show that on average results are rising faster in EiC schools than elsewhere;
- pupils with barriers to learning are being helped to overcome them through the intervention of Learning Mentors;
- successful Learning Support Units are taking disruption out of the classroom and improving behaviour;
- opportunities for gifted and talented young people are improving – although more needs to be done to maximise impact in the classroom;
- progress continues to be made in strengthening EiC schools as institutions through the EiC Action Zone, City Learning Centre, and Specialist and Beacon school strands and there are encouraging early findings from the research consortium evaluating the programme.

### **BUT FIRST...**

#### **The way we were**

We have travelled a very long way since Excellence in Cities was first launched back in March 1999. The Launch document began by pointing out that:

“Many schools and pupils in inner cities achieve spectacularly, but too many do not...For too many years we have tolerated low standards and disruption in our classrooms, wasted individual talent, and disappointed many families who aspire for their children to succeed.” It was that tolerance of low standards and waste of individual talent that Excellence in Cities set out to challenge and remedy.

## Meeting the challenge

Excellence in Cities set a new standard for partnership between local authorities and their schools, with the common purpose of raising standards in secondary education in EiC areas. Areas for inclusion in the programme were identified against common criteria and did not have to bid for inclusion. The components of the Excellence in Cities strategy were identified centrally but with the flexibility for them to be effectively delivered locally.

The only requirement for participating schools and Local Authorities – and it was a tough one – was that they should form a real partnership and develop delivery plans which would satisfy ministers on three counts:

- the programme would be effectively delivered;
- the plan would raise standards so that city parents and their children could expect and receive the same educational opportunities as their counterparts anywhere else in the country; and
- the plan would be in line with the core values of EiC and the needs of participant schools.

## The core EiC values

The core values set out for EiC are crucial to the success of the programme. It is worth recording how they were first expressed:

## HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL

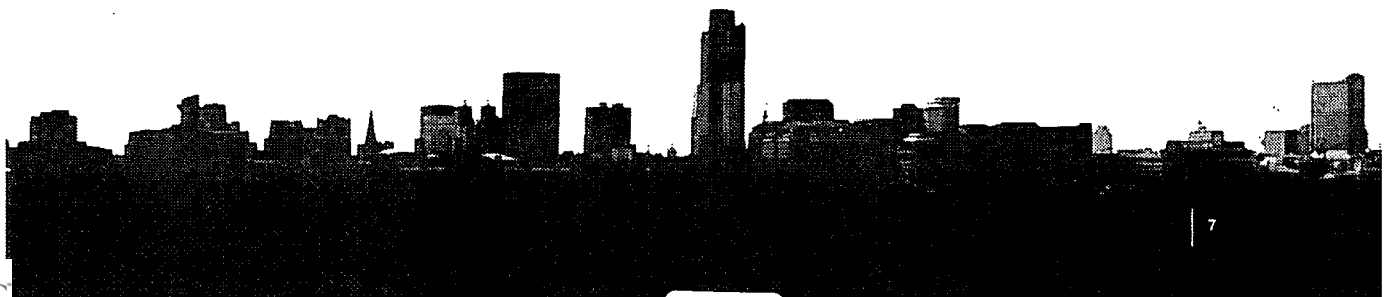
EiC will encourage all schools to have high expectations of every individual pupil and all young people to have high expectations of themselves. It will seek to meet the needs and aspirations of all young people whatever their gifts and talents and to remove systematically the barriers to their learning, whether inside or outside the school. No pupil's education should be confined or restricted because of the school they happen to attend.

## DIVERSITY

EiC is designed to increase the diversity of provision in secondary education in the major conurbations. Diversity in Excellence in Cities will differ dramatically from the past in two important respects. Firstly – as with the Government's wider approach – it is not for a few at the expense of the many.

Through the establishment of more Specialist schools, more Beacon schools, more Education Action Zones and through City Learning Centres, many secondary schools will take on specialist functions in addition to their core function of providing a good rounded education for all their pupils.

Secondly, the additional resources a school receives under the programme are designed to bring higher performance not just to that school but to other schools in the area too.





## **NETWORKS**

EiC is based firmly on the belief that schools working together, collaboratively, can achieve more for pupils, parents and communities than schools working in isolation. Of course, each individual school is responsible for continuously improving its own performance. But by working with others to share best practice, tackle common problems and offer specialist opportunities to pupils from a range of schools, each school can help to enhance performance across an area. Promoting diversity, recognising excellence and disseminating good practice are essential to these networks working effectively. Pupils should see themselves as members not just of a specific school community but of a wider learning community committed to his or her success.

## **EXTENDING OPPORTUNITY**

Some schools in large conurbations have always succeeded. Yet others, often close by, have suffered. The EiC programme is intended to bring success to every school rather than concentrate it in a few locations. The investment that the EiC programme brings to an area should therefore extend opportunity. Rather than reinforcing current inequalities, it should enhance quality. Its purpose is to make *Excellence for Everyone* a reality rather than just a slogan.

## **How the core values have worked in practice**

After two years' experience of the programme in Phase 1, and one year in Phase 2, we have seen these core values translated into action which is significantly changing pupil experiences across Excellence in Cities. The programme is being built upon in the follow up to the White Paper 'Schools *achieving success*'. The following paragraphs offer some examples of ways in which the values of Excellent in Cities have been put into practice. The examples are not comprehensive and, of course, the values go wider than the specific strands of EiC.

## **High expectations of every individual**

This value permeates every aspect of Excellence in Cities but has its greatest application within the work EiC partnerships have done to enhance opportunities for gifted and talented pupils, and within the work undertaken by Learning Mentors and within Learning Support Units. The establishment of gifted and talented cohorts in itself means looking at individual pupils and inclusion in the cohort is a clear signal of high expectations. But with enhanced opportunities for this group of pupils comes recognition of the individual curricular requirements of other pupils too – the implications for all pupils of this strand are profound. In Learning Support Units the

close attention given to the curricular and behavioural needs of the individual within small groups of pupils is rooted in high expectations and individualised learning – and Learning Mentors too are committed to raising standards and expectations of those referred to them because of the barriers to learning which they face. City Learning Centres (CLCs) also provide opportunities for learning that teachers can tailor to individual needs.

### **Diversity**

The increased numbers of Specialist and Beacon schools and the provision of City Learning Centres – 57 now operating in Phase 1 and 2 authorities – as well as the establishment of nearly 100 EiC Action Zones has made a reality of this aspiration. Today, children in Phase 1 and 2 EiC areas in particular are benefiting from a range of institutional provision and choice which was simply unavailable in March 1999 and was only available in limited form in EiC areas when the first Annual Report was published.

### **Networks**

All EiC partnerships have enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to work together to common values. The strength of partnership working has been both impressive and energising. It has:

- empowered headteachers and schools;
- helped local authorities to develop new relationships with their secondary school partners;

- made it possible to shape the seven key EiC policy strands so that they reflect local needs accurately; and
- worked through consensus.

Below partnership level, schools working in clusters to deliver aspects of the EiC programme have benefited from the close co-operation and mutual support that cluster working affords.

### **Extending opportunities**

All pupils in EiC schools have secured enhanced opportunities especially through the Gifted and Talented programme but also by removing barriers to learning, offering state of the art technology to pupils through the City Learning centre networks, strengthening schools as institutions through Specialist or Beacon School status and EiC Action Zones.

### **The Seven Key Strands**

The seven key strands that comprise the EiC programme are:

- Learning Mentors.
- Learning Support Units;
- extended opportunities for gifted and talented pupils;
- a network of new City Learning Centres.
- EiC Action Zones;
- more Beacon Schools; and
- more Specialist schools.



## How far have the key strands been implemented?

The table below sets out key statistics showing the number of schools and pupils covered by EiC, and how far the infrastructure of the programme has been set in place at the time of publication of this Annual Report.

### Excellence in Cities – Key Statistics

Schools involved in EiC programme <sup>1</sup> :	
secondary	995
primary	1,346

Pupils <sup>2</sup> :	
secondary	945,609
primary	461,435

Learning Mentors:	
secondary	2,265
primary	1,155

Learning Support Units:	
secondary	526
primary	63

City Learning Centres	57
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EiC Action Zones	96
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Specialist schools	255
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Beacon schools	363
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<sup>1</sup> Register of Education Establishments.

<sup>2</sup> Annual School Census 2001.

This provision has meant rising annual investments. The following table identifies the main costs underpinning the programme.

### EiC Funding allocations from the launch of the programme to date

	1999-01 £m	2001-02 £m
<b>Secondary</b>		
Learning Mentors/LSUs	64.9	65.5
Gifted and Talented	31	34
EiC Action Zones	12.72	28.6
Specialist Schools	13.8	24.8
Beacon Schools	10.8	12.9
CLC Capital	31.7	70
CLC Running Costs	2.5	9.1
<b>Primary</b>		
Primary Learning Mentors	18	31
Primary LSU	7.7	3
Primary Gifted and Talented	2.7	4.6
<b>Excellence Clusters</b> (Primary and Secondary)	0.1	6.7
Support Funding**	12.2	12.9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>208.1</b>	<b>303.1</b>

\* This figure includes Specialist Schools in EiC areas which were designated prior to EiC.

\*\* Support funding includes Training and Development, innovations projects and programme start up costs.

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# Meeting Individual Pupil Needs

## THE THREE KEY STRANDS: LEARNING MENTORS LEARNING SUPPORT UNITS THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

It has always been an essential part of the thinking behind Excellence in Cities that the programme should be more than the sum of its parts. Each element gains from its interaction with other elements. As far as the pupil is concerned the programme should be part of their total learning experience. But each element needs to be managed and evaluated separately –

alongside the management and evaluation of the overall programme. This section looks at the three strands that affect pupils most directly. The next section is devoted to the strands of Excellence in Cities which strengthen schools and then – after a brief consideration of the Primary Extension Project – we consider the emerging evidence of the success of the programme as a whole.



# LEARNING MENTORS

Excellence in Cities Learning Mentors have been working with teaching and pastoral staff to identify, assess and develop those pupils who need extra help to overcome barriers to learning inside and outside school. Pupils suffering multiple disadvantages are a particular priority for support.



An obvious strength of Learning Mentors is that they are a single point of contact for accessing community and business programmes such as out-of-school study support. They co-ordinate and support the work of community and business mentors working with children in and outside school, so that mentoring meets the needs of the young person in a focused and integrated way. They are also a single point of contact for access to specialist support services, such as the Social and Youth Services, the Education Welfare

Service, the Probation Service and the Careers Service.

Just what being a Learning Mentor means in practice is illustrated in the words of Lyndsey Yates, a Learning Mentor from Leeds:

*"I cannot easily explain my role in a few choice sentences because individuals are not easily categorised or described into neat packages. My work can be practical or emotional, rewarding or frustrating, upsetting or joyous. One day may see me working with a child on reading skills; another day I may contact social services, dry up the tears of a child, have a laugh with two others then feel like banging my head against the wall for another. All my mentees are individuals so I have to tailor my support and guidance to suit."*

*"At times it is very difficult not to become too emotionally involved. I feel very passionate about my work but I have also learnt to acknowledge that when I am not suitable for a certain child I still have to refer on. I do believe that my mentees will go on to do amazing things with their lives, and the successes I have witnessed are from the children who believe in themselves."*

*"Being a Learning Mentor is not for the faint or cold hearted – it's an opportunity to make that difference."*

As Learning Mentors have become more established during the second year of the programme, and have built up experience in the field, the need to spread their good practice has been a major priority for us. Working with consultants, the DfES has drawn together examples of good practice from the Phase 1 and Phase 2 partnerships. This has recently been published as *Good Practice Guidelines for Learning Mentors*. The document outlines the good practices that are the key to the success of the impact of Learning Mentors in schools.

One of the most important lessons we have learned is that Learning Mentors are at their most effective in those schools where they have been integrated from the start into the life of the school, into its

management and pastoral systems and where there are co-ordinated and well understood referral procedures. This is reflected in early findings from:

- OFSTED;
- the independent research consortium which is evaluating the programme; and
- the study of good practice underlying *Good Practice Guidelines for Learning Mentors*.

But what is very clear is that Learning Mentors are having a real impact and are a vital resource which has been enthusiastically welcomed by EiC partnerships and schools. The need for integration into schools systems and the benefits accruing are highlighted in the table below.

### Learning Mentors

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>How benefits are best gained</b>
<p>For pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● attainment, confidence, attendance and behaviour.</li> </ul> <p>For the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● more time for teachers to teach;</li> <li>● speedier follow-up to home/school problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● learning mentors must be integrated into schools' management and pastoral systems for school inclusion;</li> <li>● clear systems of referral are essential.</li> </ul>

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## LEARNING SUPPORT UNITS

School-based Learning Support Units are for pupils at risk of exclusion, providing separate short-term teaching and support programmes tailored to the needs of difficult pupils. They aim to keep pupils in school and working whilst their behaviour problems are tackled, helping to re-integrate them into mainstream classes as quickly as possible.

Phase 2 EiC areas have learned from the experience of Phase 1 areas in setting up a further 120 LSUs, bringing the total number of LSUs in EiC areas to over 400<sup>4</sup>. LSUs have evolved considerably over the year with many adapting their method of operation in the light of early experience.

We commissioned a review of best practice which highlighted key issues for LSUs. There is a rich variety of provision and a vast range of experience to draw upon as LSU managers meet in area teams to share their knowledge of what works. There is a widespread recognition that LSUs are most effective where they fully integrate into the life of the school and where LSU managers are empowered to improve whole school strategies for behaviour management. Many are now working much more closely with Learning Mentors, SENCOs and out-of-school support services.

At the end of the report period the DfES established The Behaviour Improvement in Practice Project to aid this process. The project is drawing on work with Birmingham, Islington, Knowsley, Manchester, Newham, Newcastle and Sheffield LEAs to produce a wide range of training materials to help all LSU managers influence classroom practice in their schools in order to reduce the incidence of poor behaviour.

OFSTED evaluation suggests that where Learning Support Units are working well, there is a positive impact on the incidence of exclusions, lateness, occasional absence and parentally condoned absence. The units can change the lives of pupils who might otherwise have dropped out. What marked the good Learning Support Units was a clear referral system, clear strategy and structure for what pupils have to do, regular review of pupil targets with specified times for feedback on progress. Good liaison with parents was also crucial and good monitoring by senior staff was essential. Conversely the downside is where weak management and ill-defined roles are reflected also in poor liaison with parents and others. Monitoring and evaluation is not yet a good feature.

<sup>4</sup> There are an additional 590 LSUs in non EiC LEAs.

### LEARNING SUPPORT AT BENFIELD SCHOOL NEWCASTLE

Nick Weaver, the LSU manager comes from a background of working with emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children and has been running the new LSU with his assistant Judith Bell for a year. Together, these staff handle a steady stream of referrals in a room that has a calm, well organised and purposeful learning atmosphere that typifies all successful LSUs. Across the corridor from the main LSU room, Hilary Wilson the Education Welfare Officer joins Nick and Judith to run

a second LSU room designed to provide a haven for the more timid and frightened pupils that make up a significant proportion of Hilary's caseload of school refusers. Senior staff support her attendance work by joining her on regular sweeps of the area visiting all targeted homes on designated evenings. Rewards and success are displayed and the caring atmosphere builds confidence so that pupils can be re-engaged in the main school. Here then is one example an LSU contributing to whole school strategies by initiating a multi-agency approach and targeting its support to the priority need of the school.

The table below summarises what the best LSUs offer and identifies the main issues for Learning Support Units which have yet to equal their success.

### Learning Support Units

#### Benefits

##### For pupils:

- a calm environment where problems can be individually and intensively addressed;
- improvement in basic skills, behaviour and motivation.

##### For the school:

- reduced need for exclusions;
- reduced disruption in the classroom.

#### Issues

- LSUs must be well established and integrated within the school;
- they need clear referral procedures; they need to operate in close co-ordination with appropriate agencies.

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## GIFTED AND TALENTED

The introduction of measures to improve the attainment, motivation and self-esteem of gifted and talented pupils, and to ensure that schools are prepared to meet their needs was a major first for the Excellence in Cities programme. It also required the largest culture shift of any part of the programme. A culture shift which all the evidence shows has generally been successfully achieved within Excellence in Cities and Excellence Clusters to the benefit of the target population – 5 to 10% of pupils in each school.<sup>1</sup>

Through Excellence in Cities, Excellence Clusters and Excellence Challenge, we are providing an intensive programme for pupils in over 1,000 maintained secondary schools, over 400 maintained primary schools and a number of post-16 institutions in some 70 LEAs.

Pupils in EiC cohorts have benefited from attendance at Summer Schools<sup>2</sup>, a variety of out of hours activities and increasingly (but not as yet as much as we would wish)



from real changes in teaching and learning in the classroom<sup>3</sup>.

OFSTED has published its own report on the Excellence in Cities Gifted and Talented strand. This provides clear evidence of the benefits Gifted and Talented work can bring, but also shows that more needs to be done to change teaching and learning in the classroom so that the potential of

<sup>1</sup> A new National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth will cater for the needs of the Gifted and Talented throughout the country.

<sup>2</sup> Nationally, children will also benefit from the annual programme of 500 summer schools for gifted and talented 10–14 year olds, and World Class Tests in maths and problem solving for pupils aged up to 9 and 13. There are also new resources now available to teachers including working guidance on teaching the national curriculum to gifted and talented pupils and a parallel database of resources, both available online at [www.worldclassarena.org](http://www.worldclassarena.org) and [www.nc.uk.net/gt](http://www.nc.uk.net/gt). Further materials will be developed next year.

<sup>3</sup> The DfES is committed through Schools: *Achieving Success* to ensuring that support for gifted and talented pupils is integral to all our strategies to improve teaching and learning nationally, building on the success of Excellence in Cities. The creation of a National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth was announced in the White Paper. The Academy will run a year-long pilot programme aimed at academically able pupils beginning in summer 2002.

the strand – and the children it caters for – is fully realised. The main findings of the report were:

- partnerships have increased the number and quality of additional activities for these pupils, often out of school hours. Pupils have benefited significantly but there is as yet limited evidence of the impact on attainment, and the activities often need to be better integrated if they are to have a long-term effect;
- the essential need is for schools to concentrate on improving the planning and teaching of the mainstream curriculum to these pupils. The Gifted and Talented strand offers a promising basis as long as schools establish a secure approach to its management;
- management of the strand is good in two-thirds of schools but the support of senior management is crucial; the responsibilities of subject leaders need to be clarified; and effective monitoring of the benefits of provision is rare;
- there is a need for more subject-specific support and professional development for subject teachers, including a focus on assessment and pedagogy; and
- schools have experienced difficulty in identifying pupils. Methods have generally been rudimentary and schools

have not yet solved the problems associated with identifying gifted and talented children who are underachieving.

The DfES is responding to the OFSTED report as follows:

- Tighter monitoring at partnership and national level to ensure that all schools and partnerships are implementing the strand effectively, in line with our guidance, and that effective support is available for those experiencing difficulties.
- Encouraging partnerships to be more proactive in helping us to identify and spread effective practice.
- Challenging partnerships to make maximum use of the various resources we are developing to support gifted and talented education generally – many of which address the areas identified by OFSTED as needing further attention – and to get more involved with a range of other initiatives we are engaged in, and
- Proposing further work to tackle specific issues, including guidance and support for schools implementing the strand in the face of teacher recruitment difficulties, and pilots to support the development of more innovative approaches to classroom teaching and learning at secondary level.

### RAISING THEIR GAME

Science teachers at St Aelred's Catholic Technology College, St Helen's have raised boys achievement in Science by providing six Masterclasses in Science during the school day. The Masterclasses have resulted in a significant rise in the number of boys achieving level 8 in Science at Key Stage 3.

In the Tom Hood School, Walthamstow, the Gifted and Talented cohort is receiving additional teaching support to increase performance in French. The Gifted and Talented pupils receive additional linguist support to follow a specifically designed programme of study. The programme concentrated on pupils in Years 8 and 9 and the oral skills of the pupils involved have increased by up to two levels.

The table below summarises both the benefits that are being delivered in some EiC partnerships and what needs to be done make sure that all pupils in gifted and talented cohorts gain maximum benefit.

### Gifted and Talented

#### Benefits

##### For pupils:

- recognition of their needs.

##### For the school:

- enhanced activities and individualised learning;
- a lifting of expectations.

#### Realising the benefits for all gifted and talented pupils

- ensure real changes in teaching and learning in the classroom;
- to do so not only for gifted and talented children but – through increased attention to individual needs – all children.

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# Strengthening School Provision

FROM CITY LEARNING CENTRES TO BEACON AND SPECIALIST SCHOOLS

## CITY LEARNING CENTRES

During the last academic year there has been tremendous progress in the establishment of a network of City Learning Centres which will be one hundred strong by 2004. Thirty City Learning Centres were open and fully functional by the end of the period covered by this report; a further 54 Phase 2 Centres are due to open by Summer 2002; and 21 additional Centres to follow in Phase 3 – making up the total of 105.

CLCs are usually based on school sites but are designed to be distinctive and different, providing innovative learning opportunities using state of the art technologies.

All the open CLCs, and even several that are not yet fully open, are delivering a wide and diverse range of activities for students at their partner secondary schools, for local primary schools, for teachers at the surrounding schools and for the wider community. These include:

- multi-media projects to support a wide variety of curriculum subjects, for

example using video and web design with pupils studying Shakespeare

- developing links with museums and libraries to provide in-depth expertise to students for specific projects
- linking students with schools overseas via video-conferencing to support modern foreign language teaching
- training teachers to make more effective use of advanced technologies in their curriculum teaching
- fostering links between local schools, for example by hosting meetings for groups of subject teachers or Key Stage co-ordinators
- after-school homework and mentoring clubs
- cyber cafés, available to the local community after school hours
- delivering courses for the local community, from basic ICT to the European Community Driving Licence



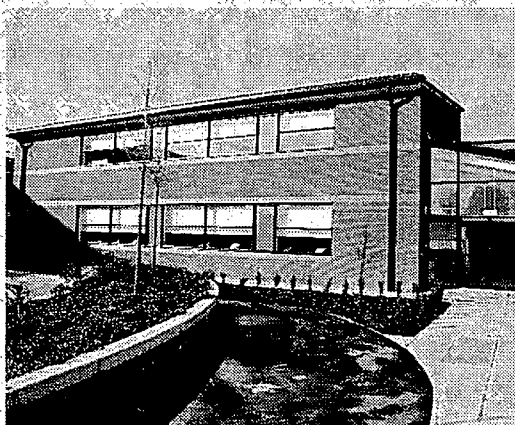


- becoming accredited training providers for companies such as Microsoft and Cisco
- developing links with local further and higher education establishments.

Given the long lead time for the establishment of City Learning Centres, their impact is only just beginning. But as the two case studies below demonstrate, they offer an exciting vista of new teaching approaches and curricular innovation.

### REFUGEE PROJECT AT THE NORTH WEST MANCHESTER CITY LEARNING CENTRE

This project, a partnership between the CLC, Adult Education Centre and local schools, brought together pupils and adult learners from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kosovo to work on an IT project: 'Welcome to the UK'. Students, who all attended English Language classes at the Adult Education Centre used this project as a framework to express their feelings about living in their new community. They took pictures with



digital cameras of themselves and their neighbourhood. These were then developed using Photoshop and PowerPoint into a presentation, a display board and a website. Some images were

further developed into textile designs.

Participants in the project enjoyed meeting new people; learning new skills and improving their spoken English, and gained a better understanding of the cultural differences between their own countries and the UK.

A number of teachers have taken up DfES best practice research scholarships to further develop the outcomes of this project.

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# E-DIG IN ANCIENT EGYPT AT TOWER HAMLETS CLC

This project involved an innovative partnership between the British Museum and the CLC to deliver archaeology workshops to pupils of the CLC partner schools.

The first workshop explained the principles and purpose of archaeology and excavation and gave students the opportunity to examine and discuss objects from ancient cultures.

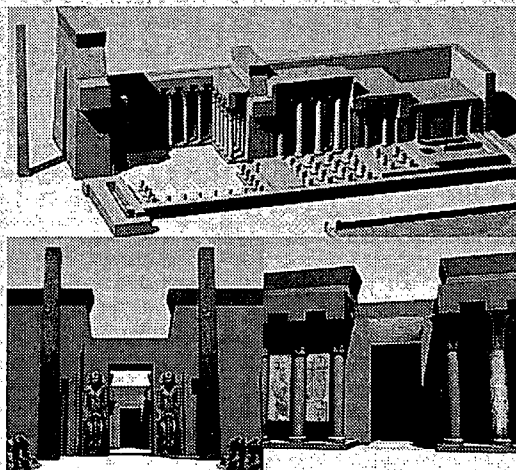
During the second workshop the students were given the opportunity to apply the

archaeological knowledge that they had gained. This involved them in completing a web-based activity that simulated some of the activities involved in an actual excavation. The session ended with a

video conference with the archaeologist responsible for the excavation on which the activity was based.

The students learned about archaeological practices and the cultures of ancient Egypt, practised new ICT skills and some undertook follow-up activities in the Centre using computer-aided

design software. The project will be repeated at other CLCs and schools following this successful pilot.<sup>5</sup>



There is no doubt that the City Learning Centres have provided an enormous resource for schools. The benefits are tabulated in summary form below alongside the challenges still to be met.

## City Learning Centres

### Benefits

For the pupil and the school

- access to state of the art ICT facilities not normally affordable to schools.

### Challenge

- embedding the new resources and centres into the overall ICT and EIC strategy for their areas;
- meeting the curricular challenge.

<sup>5</sup> Website addresses for the CLCs where readers can find more information on these and other projects.  
case study 1: [www.clcconnect.com](http://www.clcconnect.com) case study 2: [www.towerhamlets-clc.org.uk](http://www.towerhamlets-clc.org.uk)

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## EXCELLENCE IN CITIES ACTION ZONES

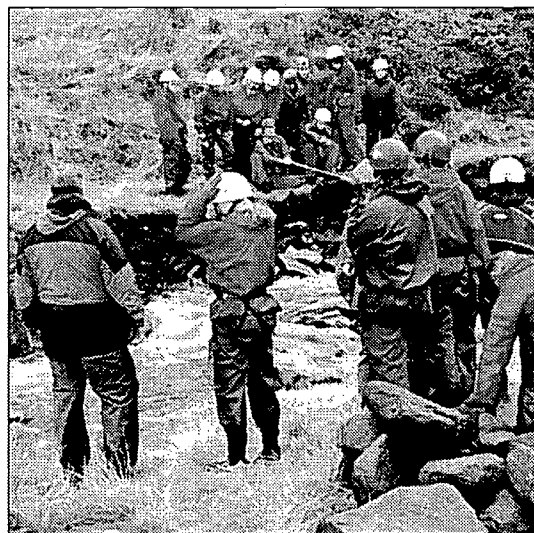
In December 2000 there were only 26 EiC Action Zones – by September that number had more than trebled to 81. Everything is on track so that by April 2002 all of the proposed 102 EiC Action Zones will be in operation.

It has been a successful year. The EiC Action Zones have developed their own distinct characteristics and have moved out of the shadow of the statutory EAZs. Many of the EiC Action Zones work in partnership with their neighbouring large zones. In one case, Wythenshawe, the EiC Action Zones shares the same management team as the statutory zone.

Several zones have highlighted OfSTED reports on zone schools where the zone has made an impact on raising standards in the schools. The most recent report received is on Thrybergh Primary School in Rotherham. The report notes the EiC Action Zone's provision of access to a

good range of expertise and curriculum development and the significant impact of the new computer suite on raising standards.

The Action Zone includes Thrybergh Secondary School whose students are pictured below.





## KEYS TO SUCCESS

Keys to Success, an EIC Action Zone in Nottingham City, is working in partnership with local colleges to provide parents and the local community with access to education. The Broxtowe College Adult Learning Centre has secured a bid to locate an On-line Learning Centre with state of the art computers within the Keys to Success premises. This on-line centre will provide adult education to parents and the local community. In addition, the zone is offering parents the opportunity to learn about the literacy and numeracy hours in schools by working in partnership with the Basic Skills Agency and New College, Nottingham.

The zone has also entered into partnership with the University of First Age (UFA) to extend out of hours learning opportunities across all schools. The clubs are up and running and range from academic subjects to fun ones including the weather!

## EiC Action Zones

### Benefits

#### For the schools

- clear and direct benefits to the zone schools themselves – additional resources targeted on shared problems

### Challenge

- to ensure that action zones are fully integrated with the other strands operated by EiC partnerships.

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## BEACON SCHOOLS

The Beacon schools initiative is designed to raise standards through the dissemination of good practice. From the beginning it was appreciated that Beacon Schools could offer a tremendous resource within Excellence in Cities areas where there were very few, and where there was most to be gained from the spread of good practice.

Much of the original aim has been successfully met with over 400 Beacon schools now in EiC areas. But there is still a need for a greater strategic use of Beacon Schools within EiC areas. Used in conjunction with Specialist schools and EiC Action Zones, they offer a powerful tool for strengthening EiC schools as institutions and making them increasingly effective in terms of raising standards and more effectively responding to the needs of their pupils.

Emerging evidence suggests that Beacon schools can have a powerful energising effect across groups of schools when used in this way. This impact is by no means confined to secondary Beacon schools; primary schools can contribute just as powerfully when they are part of a primary extension partnership. (See case study on the opposite page.)

Beacon schools offer advice on a wide range of areas including specific curriculum subjects, pupil monitoring, school management, provision for gifted and talented children, improving parent involvement, special educational needs, and anti-bullying strategies.

# HEADTEACHER DEVELOPMENT: STOCKSBRIDGE JUNIOR SCHOOL, SHEFFIELD

Stocksbridge Junior School in Sheffield, a Beacon school, wanted to support aspiring Headteachers. It offers

professional development opportunities that will attract and have an impact on the training and future development of candidates for the National Professional Qualification for

Headship (NPQH). The existing NPQH model involved no formal facility to visit and observe/exchange views on leadership and management issues with other schools. The opportunity to encourage candidate networking was also seen as a key area for development. In collaboration with the DfES and the Yorkshire and Humberside

***"The most satisfying aspect is being able to help and exchange ideas with other Schools. We have learned from them too, and we've gained new ideas and experience."***

Dave Foster, Headteacher, Stocksbridge Junior School

region of NPQH, Stocksbridge has been piloting in-school training for NPQH candidates. The school has provided the opportunity to experience school-based dissemination of good policy and successful practice; to liaise with a strong leadership team on issues of the

candidates' choosing, e.g. strategic management and challenges facing new leaders; school development planning; assessment; budgeting; and preparation for OFSTED. Candidates

also have the opportunity to role-play, viewing the school in preparation for applying for Headship. The work has impacted on the management teams of other schools in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, and the initiative has been used as a national pilot model for school-based developments in the new NPQH training from April 2001.

## Beacon Schools

### Benefits

For the school

- additional resources to spread good practice – improving the self-image of the school and its capacity to help pupils

### Challenge

- to use Beacon Schools creatively as part of an EIC strategy to build the capacity of surrounding EIC schools.

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# SPECIALIST SCHOOLS

The strategic approach adopted by EiC partnerships to increasing the number of Specialist schools makes an important contribution to maximising the benefits of the Specialist Schools Programme. The number of Specialist schools in each partnership has been enhanced through EiC. There are now 251 designated Specialist schools across EiC partnerships compared with 167 in September 2000. Over 30% of all Specialist schools are now in EiC areas.

In placing a special focus on the teaching of technology, languages, sports and arts, these schools have made a contribution to the delivery of other EiC strands such as provision for gifted and talented pupils in the specialist subjects by sharing good practice with others. The EiC dimension provides a clear framework in which Specialist schools have increased the

learning opportunities among a network of schools and the wider community.

EiC partnerships have led the way in developing a collaborative approach to Specialist schools provision and increasingly this approach is being explored as a model for non-EiC authorities in planning their strategic approach to the role of Specialist schools.

With the expanded Specialist Schools Programme there will be opportunities for all partnerships to review their Specialist schools profile in order to take account of the introduction of the four new specialisms: business & enterprise, engineering, science and mathematics & computing.

The table below identifies benefits and challenges.

## Specialist schools

### Benefits

#### For the school

- enhanced reputation;
- additional resources.

#### For other EiC schools

- a strategic resource.

#### For pupils

- enhanced provision.

### Challenge

- making sure that all specialist schools are used as part of a network of strategic support in EiC areas to EiC schools.

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# MAKING THE PERFORMING ARTS MATTER IN NORTH CENTRAL BRISTOL

Cotham School became a Performing Arts College under the Specialist School Initiative in September 2000. A four year plan has been constructed between staff at Cotham, partner schools, two universities and local Arts Organisations to promote the Performing Arts and thereby to raise standards and to widen participation, both in Dance, Music and Drama and the wider community.

Just three of the initiatives that have been provided as a result of Cotham's specialist status within the Bristol EIC Schools Community are set out below:

- Specialist drama workshops and performances for all students from

Year 7 to Year 13 delivered by leading companies and practitioners such as the Bristol Old Vic Theatre and Trestle Theatre company

- a week long dance residency with Shobana Dance Company providing workshops in classical Indian and contemporary dance for students at Cotham, INSET for local dance teachers and workshops for local dancers and other schools
- a composer in residence who works alongside all GCSE and Post 16 music students in a brand new purpose built Performing Arts Centre.

Other work is being undertaken in partner schools and the wider community.

*"I feel privileged to have experienced so much in the Arts since the school became a Performing Arts College. I have enjoyed having professionals teach me – especially with the Scene Youth Theatre and the gospel choir. I have learnt a lot of skills and can express myself in many more ways."*

A Cotham pupil

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### MAXIMISING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND POTENTIAL OF THE SPECIALIST SCHOOLS STRAND: A STRATEGIC VIEW FROM BIRMINGHAM

The Specialist schools strand is a key means of achieving the outcomes identified in Birmingham's Educational Development Plan. Heads from each of the six networks, identify eligible schools taking account of such criteria as deprivation and need, tackling underachievement, overcoming barriers to learning, closing the equality gap and a school's capacity to link with other EIC strands. Schools, including special schools, then submit their case to the Partnership which decides which applications should proceed.

The network of Specialist schools has helped collaborative working and extended opportunities in other schools by disseminating good pedagogical practice in the individual specialisms across EIC networks. Other ways in which Birmingham's Specialist schools have contributed to collaborative work with others have involved a greater focus

on transition between Key Stages, support for gifted and talented pupils within networks, and making links to other corporate strategies such as the School Sport Co-ordinators Programme.

Bartley Green School's experience in Edgebaston offers a good example of the strategic approach. Its headteacher,

Christine Owen, emphasises the benefits. "We found the process of applying for Specialist school designation to be a powerful focus for school improvement which affected standards and ethos across the whole school and has helped our neighbours too." As part of its Technology College outreach, the school has helped local primary schools with technical ICT support,

equipment, and training for ICT-leading to accreditation for learning support assistants. It has also piloted a Design and Technology modelling pack to help deliver the curriculum for Year 6 pupils. Bartley Green School's science, maths, and ICT teachers are also delivering enrichment to Year 6 gifted and talented pupils on a weekly basis.



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# The Primary Extension Project

The Primary Extension Project has been running for a full year in Phase 1 areas and has involved over a thousand schools. Not all of these run all the strands available under the extension, although many do. And of course, not all the primary schools within the EiC phase 1 areas are in the extension project – only those targeted by their partnerships. The extension has been warmly welcomed by Phase 1 schools and partnerships. Phase 2 and 3 partnerships and their schools have indicated very strongly that they would like to be included in due course. Whether this proves possible will be determined during the Government's 2002 Review of its spending, which sets the levels of funding for different services.

The Primary Extension Project covers three strands of the secondary EiC programme:

- Gifted and Talented children.
- Learning Mentors, and
- Learning Support Units.

Predictably, the strand which has been most speedily put in place has been the Learning Mentor strand with Gifted and Talented provision a close second. Learning Support Units which need space and a small degree of capital work (refurbishment generally rather than new classrooms) have taken a little longer. Nonetheless the Primary Extension Project of Excellence in Cities has made real progress and it is not too early to make some judgements on the provision becoming available although any outcome evidence needs to be treated with a degree of caution given that this part of the EiC initiative is still relatively new.

Emerging findings are beginning to come through and are considered along with the overall evidence for the national development of EiC in the next section. The general tenor of the findings is that Learning Mentors are proving extremely valuable and are already being well used for the most part. On Learning Support Units, OFSTED takes the view that it is too early to make general judgements but have



noted that Primary LSUs are developing in more isolation and therefore in more differing ways than their EiC secondary counterparts. This is something we will need to look at in the coming year. However, there is cautious optimism about the development of primary Gifted and Talented provision where the signs are set fair for some valuable developments.

Within the Department this kind of feedback has been mirrored in our own findings. For instance with Primary Learning Support Units, although we have seen some interesting developments they are very recent. For example Leeds has used its funding to set up Pupil Development Centres at Quarry Mount, Cottingley, Whingate, Woodlands and Gledhow schools, which only started operating during the autumn term 2001.<sup>6</sup>

With Learning Mentors too our feedback supports the emerging findings of others:

- the feedback and anecdotal evidence we are getting from Primary schools is that Learning Mentors and teachers have been working together very successfully with children in re-engaging them with learning case
- the national five day training package for Primary Learning Mentors continues and has been very well received across the Primary Extension Project. The feedback we have received confirms that the training helps to underline the status and importance of the Primary Learning Mentor in enabling children to achieve;
- a package for Learning Mentor line managers and headteachers to raise the profile of the role in schools and emphasise the value of what can be achieved has also been put together; and
- The Department for Education and Skills is working to assist networking.

<sup>6</sup> Leeds Primary LSUs Referral criteria are broadly that pupils have emotional, social or learning problems. This includes pupils with disruptive behaviour. Pupils who attend are in Years 3 and 4 and parental agreement is sought. The LSUs are intended to be centres of excellence. They are also available to neighbouring primary schools' so far most of this sharing is through outreach visits. The staff social workers or nursery nurses. Pupils attend part-time – normally for six weeks. Some other pupils – viewed by staff as "good role models" – also help out. The main aim is to get pupils ready to learn and reach their full potential.

And so too with the Gifted and Talented primary strand although it is worth pointing out some of the aspects peculiar to primary experience.

- Support is concentrated mainly on pupils in Years 5 and 6, though, in some participating primary schools, younger pupils will also benefit.
- Alongside the teaching and learning, and study support programmes, there is a

further programme to improve the transition of Gifted and Talented pupils between primary and secondary schools.

- The co-ordinator at school level is called the 'responsible teacher' and is supported by a lead co-ordinator. The lead co-ordinator, working with all schools in a cluster or even all schools in a partnership, is responsible for introducing the strand in Primary Project schools.<sup>7</sup>

#### IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED PRIMARY CHILDREN

Pilgrims Way Primary School, Peckham provides a useful example of the primary Gifted and Talented strand in action. The school has been helping teachers to improve their identification of Gifted and Talented pupils, and particularly those pupils who are underachieving, by using perceptual tests (rather than language based ones) for the pupils, providing training in recognising the characteristics of underachieving pupils, and using subject specialists to identify ability in

particular subject areas. The teachers' growing understanding of this issue has led to improved provision within subject areas which allows the children greater opportunities to demonstrate their potential.

Southey Green Junior School, Sheffield has been providing additional Master Classes in Maths in response to the recognised potential of Year 6 pupils. A 13-week Maths programme was developed in order to teach the pupils Level 6 mathematical concepts. The children really enjoyed the extra lessons and the additional challenge of the higher level work.

<sup>7</sup> Across the country not just in the EIC areas, primary pupils will benefit from guidance to help primary teachers work with able pupils in English and Mathematics, guidance on using the national curriculum covering every statutory curriculum subject, a website directory of website resources and World Class Tests.

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# Making a difference: Measured impact

So far this report has looked at the history of the programme to date, the infrastructure that has been put in place, what that has meant in terms of individual strands and how the Primary Extension Project programme has developed.

But – although some of the evidence available about the impact of the programme as a whole has been identified at the outset, this report has so far concentrated on individual strand progress. What is the evidence of success looking at the programme as a whole – a programme that must be more than the sum of its parts?

There is increasingly emerging evidence from a variety of sources showing that the programme is having a positive effect across the 47 Phase 1 and 2 partnerships, and that pupils and schools are increasingly showing its benefits.

One of the most important sources of evidence is the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI). The key messages are:

- Excellence in Cities is beginning to

have a beneficial impact;

- most schools are using the additional resources well;
- work of learning mentors has been particularly encouraging.
- Learning Support Units are offering effective provision for disaffected or troubled pupils;
- provision for gifted and talented pupils improved in more than half of the schools seen with only a very small minority performing unsatisfactorily.

That last finding echoes the OFSTED report on provision for the Gifted and Talented already referred to in Section 2.

## PERFORMANCE TABLE RESULTS

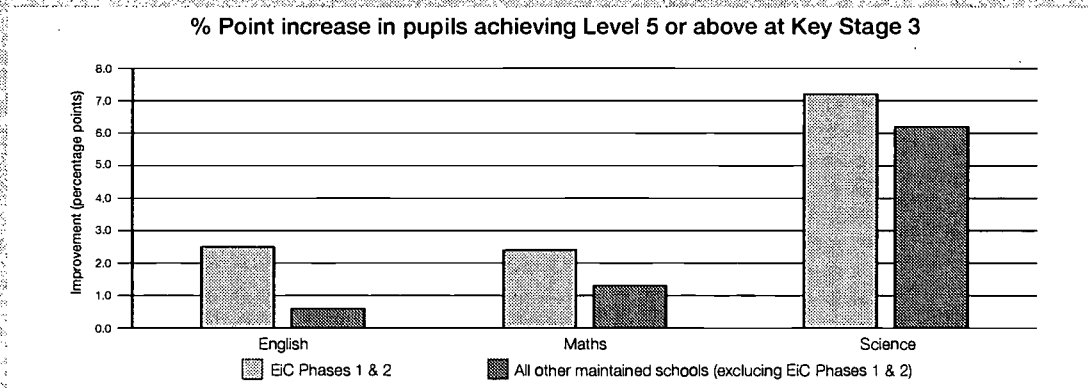
While HMCI is cautious about the measurable impact of Excellence in Cities in terms of attainment, the performance tables for 2000 and 2001 show that on average results are improving faster in EIC schools than elsewhere.



### Key Stage 3

Improvements in Key Stage 3 tests are stronger in EIC areas than elsewhere. Particularly good are improvements

in English and Maths, with an improvement 4 times greater for English in EIC areas than for non-EIC areas.



Given that a lot of Excellence in Cities partnerships have targeted much of their resources upon Key Stage 3 children, this is particularly encouraging. Moreover it suggests that when the Key Stage 3 strategy combines with EIC the impact will be even more powerful. It also puts down an encouraging marker for future improvements in GCSE performance.

### GCSE

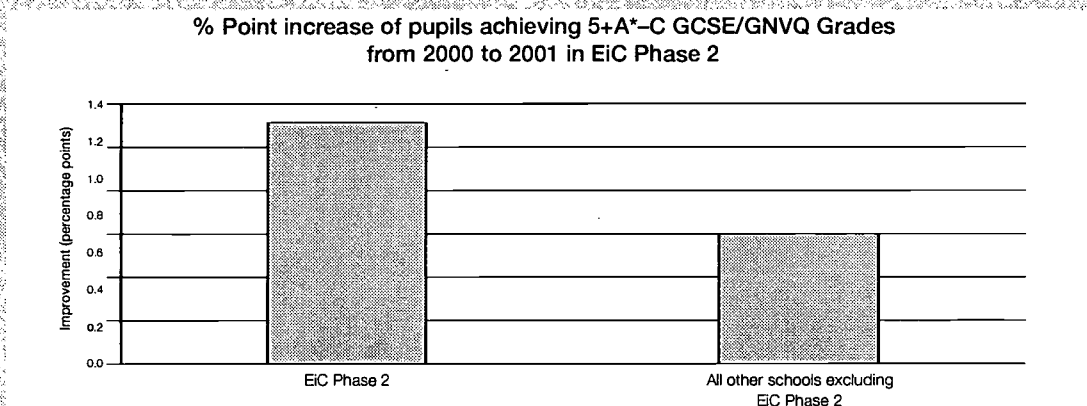
In Phase 1 LEAs, where EIC has been in place for two years, the percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE rose from 34.1% in 1999 to 37.0% in 2001 (an increase of 2.9 percentage points). All other schools not within EIC Phase 1 rose from 47.0 to 49.0 (an increase of 2.1 percentage points).<sup>8</sup>

The percentage of pupils attaining 5 or more good GCSEs has improved particularly strongly in London where the average percentage point increase between 1999 and 2001 was 3.8 – from 32.8% to 36.6%.

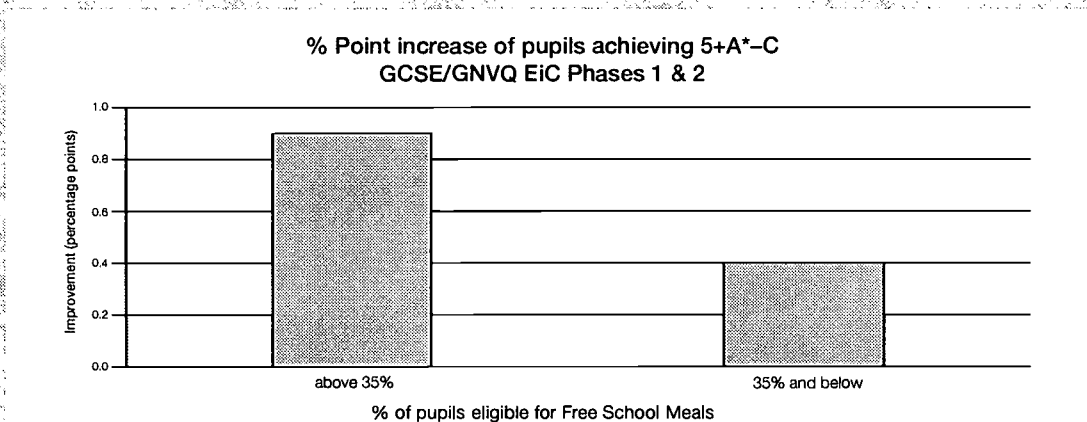
Where partnerships and LEAs are strong, EIC has made the largest impact – four of the five most improved LEAs are within EIC. Where there are poor results this generally reflects poor capacity within the Local Authority which the DfES is working to improve through its intervention strategy.

8. The comparison figure here includes schools in EIC Phase 2.

In the LEAs where EiC has been in place for only one year the percentage of pupils attaining 5+ or more good GCSEs or equivalent improved by 1.3 percentage points between 2000 and 2001, compared with a 0.7 percentage point rise in non - EiC areas.



Schools in Phase 1 and 2 with large proportions of disadvantaged pupils (over 35% qualifying for free school meals) improved their 5 A\*-C GCSE results at twice the rate of those with lower levels of deprivation. This shows that targeting resources where they are needed the most appears to be having an impact.



## **The Primary Extension Project and Key Stage 2**

The Primary Extension Project has been very well received by schools and authorities, and feedback on all strands has been very positive. Primary Project schools show a slightly greater improvement between 2000 and 2001 than other primary schools in English and Science in Key Stage 2 tests, although we would expect the impact to take some time to show in the Key Stage tests.



## **OTHER SOURCES OF EVIDENCE**

Other sources of evidence (feedback to policy teams direct, through Education Advisers and commissioned consultants, and through the Headteacher and CEO reference groups (which the DfES has established so that Excellence in Cities can benefit from the input of practitioners and authorities) support the view that the programme is beginning to have a sustained effect:

- Consistent feedback from headteachers is that EiC has given them the resources to tackle fundamental barriers to raising attainment, and has given them – with their LEAs – a new sense of ownership and control of standards across the schools in their area.
- Very positive feedback from partnerships – schools and LEAs – about the new ways of working that EiC has encouraged and in many cases made possible.

## **Provisional Findings From The Major Evaluation**

Finally there are the provisional findings from the major evaluation which is being carried out by a consortium of research bodies – the National Foundation for Educational research, the London School of Economics and The Institute for Fiscal Studies.

When Year 11 pupils in Phase 1 areas, established in 1999, were compared with pupils of the same age in Phase 2 areas, which were established a year later, the findings were as follows:

- Phase 1 pupils were more likely to indicate that their school gives them the opportunity to set targets for their school work.
- Phase 1 pupils were more likely to indicate that all their teachers usually set homework; make sure they do their homework and always mark their homework; Phase 2 pupils were more likely to report that hardly any of their teachers do this.
- Phase 1 pupils were more likely to report that all their teachers can keep order in class.
- Phase 1 pupils were more likely to indicate that the library and technology facilities at their school were excellent.
- Phase 1 pupils were more likely to indicate that they often use email, word-processing and spreadsheets at school.

# Action for the future

Our priority now is to help all EiC partnerships to drive up standards at the pace of the best. We are entering into discussions with partnerships to see what can improve existing potential so that they move forward even more effectively. In a few cases, where there are problems about capacity at LEA or school level, we are putting together a tailored package of management support.

Several of the key strands of the programme are capable of further development and we are working with schools to ensure that they get the best value from each strand. We have just published good practice guidelines for Learning Mentors, and are creating Networks of mentors through regional

conferences and the National Mentoring Network.

A project to share the practice of effective Learning Support Units is under way in eight LEAs with the aim of getting the best LSU managers to develop others, and of strengthening the ability of classroom teachers to manage difficult pupils.

We are also publishing good practice guidance based on earlier work across all EiC partnerships. Similarly, we are using the experience of the first City Learning Centres to ensure that those now coming on stream learn from it and there are now healthy CLC manager networks.

To realise the full potential of EiC, we have begun piloting some new approaches for



helping EiC secondary schools improve and transform the education of their pupils. These approaches:

- stimulate a range of types of partnership working among schools – bilateral and among groups of schools – tackling curriculum, pupil support and school management;
- concentrate on developing leadership and management within the schools;
- deploy both rigorous challenge to schools' ways of operating and sensitivity to their needs.

They are tailored to take account of the strengths of the schools, the maintaining LEAs and the EiC partnerships.

In the coming year we will be developing these leadership and management development strategies which will, we hope, become an additional strand to the EiC programme. For it is the senior management teams of our schools and their staff which represent the single most important factor in the success of the programme.



Chief Education Officers and EiC Co-ordinators review progress and consider the way forward in joint session at the January 2002 Annual Conference



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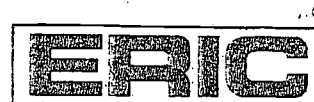
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