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ABSTRACT
          Curriculum 2000 was developed to give learners in England an
opportunity to engage in a post-16 education experience providing both depth
and flexibility. In its second year of existence, Curriculum 2000 was
evaluated in a study involving more than 50 schools, sixth form colleges, and
general further education colleges across England. Participating
organizations were asked to provide a case study in 1 of 10 areas. The case
studies documented the success that Curriculum 2000 enabled schools and
colleges to achieve in the following areas: (1) provision of breadth through
the curriculum (breadth through partnership, vocational qualifications other
than vocational A-levels, enrichment, and information and computer
technology); (2) tutoring (using tutoring to boost student motivation and
achievement); (3) development of curriculum packages (planning the curriculum
packages to include additional vocational qualifications, using additional
qualifications to meet industry needs); (4) whole-institutional approaches
(funding and resource distribution, conditions of service and staff contacts,
examination and assessment policies and procedures); (5) use of information
learning technology (setting up a strategic planning group, identifying
required resources); (6) partnership arrangements (enhancing teaching and
learning, building networks); and (7) progression (from Key stage 4, within
Curriculum 2000). An appendix constituting approximately 40% of this document
presents the case studies from 10 colleges. (MN)

learning
and skills
development
agency

Curriculum 2000
innovations, opportunity and change

Tony Tait, Gillian Frankland,
Sharon Moore and David Smith

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preface / participating institutions

Preface

Curriculum 2000 is now in its second year. As I write, the first cohort of students are preparing for their final assessments and turning their thoughts to employment or higher education. Although there have been areas of concern, addressed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) reviews in July[1] and December 2001[2], the new curriculum and qualifications remain well supported by students and professionals alike.

Curriculum 2000: innovations, opportunity and change is aimed at senior managers, curriculum managers, teachers in schools and colleges and those involved in 14–19 education at local, regional and national levels. The publication is based on work carried out in over 50 schools, sixth form colleges and general FE colleges. It arises out of research by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) into Curriculum 2000, including work conducted by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)-funded Vocational Learning Support Programme (VLSP). Participating organisations were asked to provide a case study on one of the following areas to demonstrate the innovative activities brought about by Curriculum 2000:

- the delivery of combined vocational and general programmes
- the role of other vocational qualifications such as BTEC National Diplomas, progression awards and technical certificates
- the delivery of programmes that offer genuine breadth and differentiation in subject choices
- the use of vocational 3-unit qualifications, AS-levels, BTEC qualifications, progression awards and technical certificates for part-time students and work-based learners
- the use of unit-based/modular qualifications and opportunities for unit certification
- innovations in teaching and learning to support access to Curriculum 2000 qualifications, with an emphasis on information learning technology (ILT)
- innovations in developing progression routes into work and higher education for students
- whole-institutional strategies to deliver the flexible curriculum cost effectively
- local Curriculum 2000 partnership arrangements
- other innovative approaches that enable greater flexibility and breadth.

Extracts from the case studies and other feedback form the basis for Part 1 of this publication. Part 2 includes a selection of 10 case study reports. Written by the institutions, they have been selected to provide readers with more details about the innovative work being carried out in schools, sixth form and FE colleges and the challenges they face in implementing the new curriculum. Included in all the case studies were issues that schools and colleges saw as challenges for themselves, partner institutions and national agencies over the next 12 months. This information is being used by LSDA in its contribution to strategic debates and discussions about the future of Curriculum 2000 and wider 14–19 developments.

In the publication *Curriculum 2000+1* (2001), LSDA reported that Curriculum 2000 had started to:

- increase parity of esteem for vocational qualifications
- enhance and broaden GCE A-level programmes by introducing vocational elements
- increase the range of subjects offered to learners, especially in schools
- raise the profile of key skills
- increase the uptake of information and communication technology (ICT), languages and mathematics
- provide a cross-institutional focus for inter-departmental collaboration and change, including cultural change
- increase the emphasis on the role of ongoing guidance.

It also suggested that 'a great deal of learning will need to be consolidated, shared and extended over the next 12 months if Curriculum 2000 is to achieve its intended aims'. LSDA hopes that the developments described in this follow-up publication will contribute to the learning and support which institutions will require in order to embed the new curriculum and qualifications into post-16 provision. We also believe that the approaches described here will be relevant to the wider changes in 14–19 provision in the coming years.

This book is part of a support package for institutions that deliver Curriculum 2000. Schools and colleges might also be interested in:

- the publication *Curriculum 2000+1* – what challenges faced institutions as they planned for the second year of Curriculum 2000? Topics covered include guidance and progression, retention, tutoring and resources. A follow-up publication will be published in spring 2002.

- our dedicated Curriculum 2000 website with information, support materials, case studies, newsgroups and useful links. Visit www.LSDA.org.uk/curriculum2000

- seminars and events

- the Vocational Learning Support Programme (www.vocationallearning.org.uk) and Key Skills Support Programme (www.keyskillssupport.net).

Finally, thanks are due to all the institutions that contributed to this publication (see page iii). The commitment of tutors and managers at a time when they were under great pressure to implement and deliver the new qualifications is greatly appreciated. Special thanks are also due to the team of LSDA consultants who worked with the institutions and helped to prepare this publication: Gillian Frankland, Sharon Moore and David Smith.

If you would like further information on the work cited in this report or any other aspects of LSDA's work on Curriculum 2000, please contact me at ttait@LSDA.org.uk

Tony Tait, Development Adviser

[1] *Review of Curriculum 2000 – QCA's report on phase one.* QCA, July 2001.
[2] *Review of Curriculum 2000 – QCA's report on phase two.* QCA, December 2001.

Participating institutions

Arrow Vale Community High School

Aston Comprehensive School

Blackpool and The Fylde College

Bolton Institute

Bridgwater College

Burton College

Carmel Sixth Form College

Coombeshead College

Cricklade College

Deanery High School

Droitwich Spa High School

Dudley College of Technology

East Berkshire College

Esher College

Exeter College

Gateshead College

George Stephenson Community High School

GLOSCAT

Greenshaw High School

Guildford College

Haybridge High School

Hertford Regional College

Huddersfield New College

Joseph Priestly College

John Leggott College

Kingsley College

Leicester College

Lewisham College

Longbenton Community College

Loreto Sixth Form College

Ludlow College

Newbury College

Newham Sixth Form College

North Bromsgrove High School

North West Consortium

Otley College of Agriculture and Horticulture

Redditch Post-16 Consortium of High Schools

Rivington and Blackrod High School

Rothwell Partnership

Ryde High School
Seaton Burn Community College
Somerset College of Arts and Technology
South Bromsgrove Community High School and Technology College
South East Essex College
St Augustine's High School
Stourport High School and Language College
Sutton Coldfield College
Tameside College
The Castle School
Thomas Alleyne's High School
Thurston Community College
Trinity High School
Wilmslow High School
Worcestershire Local Education Authority
Wyedean School

issues, guidance and recommendations

Part 1

Providing breadth through the curriculum

Curriculum 2000 meets the needs of practitioners and commentators who, for a number of years, have been calling for a post-16 education experience that provides breadth and flexibility. The definition of breadth, however, is up for debate as are the means by which it is delivered. Some examples are:

- mixing academic and vocational qualifications

- delivering the wider key skills

- mixing humanities subjects with the sciences

- providing enrichment programmes, enhanced personal support and overarching certificates

- offering General Studies and Critical Thinking AS-levels

- providing more occupational qualifications such as BTEC awards or NVQs alongside GCE A-levels and vocational A-levels, perhaps with work experience

- combinations of the above.

Approaches taken by schools and colleges vary, sometimes as a result of their differing funding regimes. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is to take responsibility for funding school sixth forms as well as further education so we may well see some convergence in practice.

Different approaches to breadth

Breadth through partnership

Simply providing more subjects at post-16 was not an option for many schools and colleges wishing to increase breadth. For these institutions, working in partnership was a more realistic alternative. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken within Worcestershire LEA to enhance the opportunities provided by Curriculum 2000 using partnership arrangements. The LEA has placed significant emphasis on the use of ICT and working in partnership to offer a greater number of vocational A-level and GCE AS and A2 subjects.

Breadth through vocational qualifications other than vocational A-levels

Some institutions offered breadth by enabling students to achieve vocational qualifications other than vocational A-levels. However, in the majority of cases students only took up these options in order to enhance their chances of gaining entrance to a particular occupation.

Breadth through enrichment

Enrichment programmes were the most frequently used means of enhancing breadth. Some programmes could also lead to awards such as the ASDAN or the Duke of Edinburgh's awards. Institutions also cited the use of the wider key skills. The wider key skills of Improving own Learning and Performance, Working with Others, and Problem Solving were frequently used to underpin a variety of tutorial, enrichment and broadening activities. Some institutions also embedded careers education into their tutorial programmes using related activities to accredit key skills.

Aston Comprehensive School in Sheffield has adopted a model that provides an enrichment programme which combined with Curriculum 2000 qualifications leads towards a Diploma of Achievement. This includes elements as diverse as pre-driver training and DIY, but also incorporates a variety of ICT activities and awards. The diploma also delivers key skills opportunities, which the school aims to develop further during the next academic year.

In addition to the diploma programme, every student is trained in mentoring skills and has the opportunity to mentor Year 7 students in literacy and numeracy skills. Each student also has a tutorial period with a personal tutor whose task it is to provide elements of personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship and careers guidance.

Breadth through Curriculum 2000 qualifications and subjects

Coombeshead College provides breadth through qualifications and offers all students a chance to study between three and five subjects. The college actively encourages students to consider combinations of vocational A-levels and AS-levels. Key skills in Communication and IT are compulsory in Year 12 and Coombeshead offers a range of other opportunities through an enrichment programme:

□ Wednesday afternoon activities – arts, sports and voluntary work
□ Young Enterprise
□ music/drama productions
□ trips
□ student council.

Students can also achieve awards/qualifications through the enrichment programme. For example:

□ Young Consumers Award
□ Foreign Languages at Work (FLAW) certification
□ Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT)
□ first aid
□ sports leadership.

Esher College emphasises the value of breadth through vocational and academic subjects and is committed to tutorial work. Each student has a learning programme consisting of three interrelated elements:

- □ core studies
- □ extension studies
  - □ complementary studies courses – eg sport, drama and current affairs
  - □ IT key skills – for Year 13 students who are not studying a specialist IT course elsewhere in their programme
  - □ personal social and vocational education (PSVE) – a formal tutorial programme.
  - □ work experience – one full week in the summer term
  - □ AS/ES (extension studies) – a course for second-year students based on AS-level General Studies, Critical Thinking, and Public Understanding of Science and Citizenship, which is delivered in two periods a week
- □ key skills.

For extension studies, students undertake a broadening AS-level, which is usually in contrast to the core subjects, although occasionally the subject may be complementary. This part of the learning programme ensures that students experience a diverse all-round education at the college and prepares them not just for higher education but also for employment, citizenship and personal responsibilities.

A similar approach has been taken by Burton College. Having adopted a flexible timetable to provide breadth through GCE and vocational A-levels, the college has also paid particular attention to the role of BTEC awards in Curriculum 2000. In the future the college will be identifying areas of AS-level, A2, vocational A-level and BTEC National Diplomas and Certificates that overlap. They anticipate identifying a whole range of career routes using all of these awards and plan to produce a timetable that mirrors career options, thus allowing students to make choices that reflect their future intentions.

Breadth through ICT

Deanery High School, working with Phase 3 Technology College funding, is an accredited Cisco and Microsoft training provider. Its links with businesses and industry are strong and these provide additional learning opportunities for their post-16 students, for example the Gold CREST Award. As such, ICT plays a significant role in broadening the post-16 experiences of their students. Students are also encouraged to mix GCE A-level and vocational A-level qualifications and to study a broad range of subjects from different subject domains. However, the traditional science/maths and English/humanities/languages pattern tends to persist in student choices.

Tutoring

There is much evidence to suggest that effective tutoring increases student motivation and leads to improvements in achievement. Tutoring has long been seen as a major strength of sixth forms, but the role has changed and carries increased responsibility. Research into Curriculum 2000 has indicated that the tutoring role has been transformed from a largely pastoral and administrative function to what is frequently regarded as a central feature of a learner's experience. Furthermore, how tutor time is used today is significantly different from previous years.

What the case study institutions said about...

How the tutor role has developed

The role of personal tutor is one of four elements that Hertford Regional College takes into account when planning its students' Curriculum 2000 programmes. All students at the college are allocated a personal tutor, who works with students to help plan appropriate programmes. Deanery High School recognised that its sixth-form tutoring needed to be extended as tutors in the first year of Curriculum 2000 found that their responsibilities had increased greatly. Many institutions reported that initially they had not yet developed systems to deal with the changing role. They found that they had to quickly set up systems to monitor students, to establish effective communication channels between all departments and to help students cope with the heavy workload demanded at specific times in the year. Esher College described its tutors as being responsible for students' welfare, both in terms of academic progress and personal wellbeing. It believed that the tutoring role could be described in three ways, if the many different functions were to be considered.

Figure 1. The tutoring role at Esher College

The tutoring role means giving students access to:	The tutoring role requires tutors to be responsible for:	The tutoring role requires tutors to:
advice that helps them to build a balanced and realistic learning programme	ongoing training and support for their students	check absence or illness
an appropriate induction for each component of their programme	making use of systems that support communication between students, personal tutors and subject tutors	plan and prepare the tutorial programme
explanations of school or college procedures	making formal records when meeting students	be responsible for a group of students
a support system, if they wish to transfer subjects	writing student profiles and references when required.	make formal records to monitor student progress
study skills support across the programme		carry out individual and group tutorials
regular review and monitoring of individual progress		be part of parents/HE/careers evening events.
advice on progression – either long-term career, higher education or employment opportunities		
work placement preparation and monitoring.		

The use of tutor time

Most of the case study institutions had evaluated the purpose of tutorials and investigated how the time could be best spent. Coombeshead College offers a broad tutorial programme that not only involves action planning and target setting but also includes visiting speakers, group debates and social activities. Tutor time for the new curriculum has to be meaningful and flexible if it is to meet students' individual needs. Research from the Coombeshead College's first year review of Curriculum 2000 indicated that students wanted more one-to-one sessions and fewer group tutorials. Meanwhile, South East Essex College has provided online subject-specific support, which gives students more responsibility for their own learning.

All of the institutions were aware of the need to seek and consider the views of staff and students when planning the content and structure of tutoring programmes. This, they said, is the best way of ensuring that all tutors are fully committed to the programme and its implementation.

Adopting a whole-institution approach

Schools and colleges suggest that a whole-institution approach is essential for successful tutoring. Many indicated that they intend to recognise the value of the role in terms of enhanced staff responsibility, which will inevitably give tutoring a higher profile and status among staff and students alike. At Leicester College tutors are responsible for ensuring that incoming students receive the appropriate guidance. They use screening and diagnosis of preferred learning styles as well as prior achievement in the key skills to inform individuals' learning programmes.

Tutoring as part of the student's individual learning programme

Tutoring needs to be placed firmly within the learning programme if it is to be valued. The case study institutions shared this view. They indicated that tutors' time should be seen and presented from the outset as an integral part of the students' learning programme – not as a 'bolt-on' extra. In this way, students will see that one reason for their success and achievement is that they have been supported and helped throughout their programme.

Linking tutoring with key skills programmes

Many of the staff who contributed towards LSDA's Curriculum 2000 research noted that during 2000/01 their centres had in some way linked the tutoring function to the arrangements for monitoring and delivering key skills. This linkage can be identified in the case studies and is generally supported by many as one way to keep track of progress and key skills achievement. Esher College is one institution that separates the responsibilities for the delivery and assessment of key skills (subject teachers/departments) and the recording of key skills achievements (personal tutors).

Making tutoring effective

The case study materials suggested that centres are continuing to plan tutor time carefully, seeing it as the lynchpin to student success. They also gave a number of clues to indicate what makes programmes effective.

Valuing the tutors and tutor time

The research showed that tutoring has been given a higher priority since the introduction of Curriculum 2000. Giving tutors adequate preparation time helps to increase the value and status of the role and helps to ensure that sessions are well planned and make effective use of students' time.

Good communication links

Communication lines between subject tutors, personal tutors and key skills tutors need to be clear and effective in terms of addressing the needs of individual students.

Staff training and development and ongoing support

In order to carry out the role of personal tutor effectively, many staff will require some form of training and development in guiding and supporting students. While training and development will need to be available at the outset of taking on the role, many tutors indicated the value of ongoing support from more experienced tutors in order to assist them as the role develops over the course of the academic year.

Tutoring systems – policy manuals/student booklets/tutor handbooks

Many centres have produced policies and manuals that clearly outline the basis on which the tutorial system operates and the roles and responsibilities involved. Dissemination of this among all staff, with summaries given at induction to students (and to prospective students and parents), helps to ensure that once enrolled on Curriculum 2000 programmes, students are fully aware of the system and regard it as an integral part of their programme.

Taking an institutional approach

Taking a whole centre approach means that senior staff are involved. This gives the role of personal tutor a higher profile than in the past and actively ensures greater consistency of practice across all tutors within the school or college. One particular feature has been the need to emphasise to students that the input from their personal tutors is an important part of their learning programme and can contribute significantly to their ultimate success on Curriculum 2000 courses.

Developing curriculum packages

Curriculum 2000 set out to facilitate a more diverse post-16 curriculum. The aim was for students to combine qualifications traditionally thought of as academic with those classed as vocational. In the main this has led to students combining the vocational A-level with the GCE AS- and A-levels. Due to changes in the qualification structure it has also been possible for 'traditional' A-level students to study the single award with A-level subjects, sometimes in one year or across the two years.

Some centres have gone one step further. As well as allowing students to take vocational A-levels with GCE AS- and A-levels, they offer additional vocational qualifications to develop subject-specific curriculum packages. Such packages can offer students greater breadth, enhance their skills profile and support progression either into employment or higher education.

Further possibilities have arisen due to the unit-based structure of a range of vocational and academic qualifications. This has been facilitated by the development of smaller three-unit qualifications, common size units and unit accreditation.

The nature of additional vocational qualifications

In many cases the additional qualifications offered by institutions are industry specific. At Blackpool and The Fylde College, vocational A-level Travel and Tourism students were offered an additional package of vocational studies to complement their Curriculum 2000 studies. One of these additional qualifications was NVQ Level 1 in Spanish, which was linked to an overseas residential to Madrid in the second term. It proved very popular with the students. A package of travel qualifications was then offered throughout Year 1 – the OAG Travel Itinerary Planning Certificate, followed by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) fares and ticketing course certificated by TTC Training/Lufthansa. On completion of these courses students were enrolled on the BTEC Intermediate Certificate in retail travel operations. This qualification provided the underpinning knowledge and understanding for the NVQ Level 2 in travel services, which was useful for those students who decided to progress straight into employment.

The obvious common feature of these vocational qualifications is their relevance to the main programme of study. Detailed planning by the curriculum team has ensured that the vocational qualifications offered directly benefit students in terms of future progression, complementary part-time work they may be undertaking and extra-curricular activities such as trips. Student attendance and motivation on these additional qualifications and the main programme of study have been good throughout the year.

Developing a unitised curriculum

At Hertford Regional College, a curriculum review led to the development of a unitised curriculum package. This package was developed for students who wished to progress to employment in areas such as personal administration, possibly through an HE business course. Previously, such students might have studied a Level 3 NVQ, however, this qualification is no longer regarded as appropriate for 16-year-old students who do not have much employment experience. Hertford Regional College had offered the Diploma in secretarial procedures. The qualification required students to sit many examinations, all of which had to be passed if certification was to be achieved. Consequently, the course had a high drop-out rate. Now the college is using Curriculum 2000 to full advantage. Its curriculum package was developed as a result of the unit-based nature of the new vocational qualifications. It offered students the opportunity to study business through the part award, IT through the part award, text processing at Levels 2 and 3, as well as key skills at the most appropriate level. Also included in the programme was a two-hour tutorial entitlement and access to cross-college enrichment activities. Other programme areas within the college are now considering putting together such unitised programmes.

Key themes in developing curriculum packages

While there is variety in the type of centre and nature of the additional vocational qualifications offered, key themes emerge from the descriptions of current practice:

Planning the curriculum packages to include additional vocational qualifications

Institutions that provided case study material highlighted the need for a curriculum management team or implementation group to plan and develop the curriculum packages. Often such teams included staff from across the curriculum areas and different departments. The institutions noted that in developing such packages it was essential to attract students, but also to provide them with realistic goals.

At Otley College of Agriculture and Horticulture a curriculum management team worked together to 'generate ideas and ensure that agreed models for additional qualifications, key skills and enrichment were embedded across all areas of provision'.

At Burton College the Curriculum 2000 implementation group produced a report to inform curriculum developments and the role of additional qualifications. This report considered models of delivery, guidance and induction, staff development, key skills, tutorials, enrichment and resources.

The business team at Newbury College felt that the lower-than-average entry qualifications of many students warranted the development of a package with mixed Level 2 and Level 3 provision. They launched a programme entitled 'e-business skills'. This programme included AS-level Business, BTEC Desktop award, a certificate in telematics, English for business communications, and bookkeeping, accounts and commercial numeracy. In addition, students were registered for key skills, which could be evidenced from other elements of the programme.

Complementary provision

In all cases the additional vocational qualifications and curriculum packages offered supplemented vocational A-levels and GCE AS- and A-levels. They did not provide complete diversification. This can clearly be seen in the Blackpool and The Fylde College example. The college will be continuing the study of additional qualifications for year two of Curriculum 2000 provision, when students will be offered the opportunity to develop their skills further with the Level 2 fares and ticketing course and complete the BTEC Advanced Certificate in retail travel operations.

Using additional vocational qualifications to meet industry needs

In choosing additional vocational qualifications to include within their curriculum packages, institutions took account of the requirements of the particular industry or profession to ensure that they supported progression.

Newbury College feels that its curriculum package meets the needs of their students and also matches local employment needs. However, it recognises that employer awareness of the programme is currently low, and this is an area it must improve upon.

Management of the additional qualifications into a programme of study

Integration of additional vocational qualifications into a whole programme of study was thought to be essential by all institutions. Newbury College notes 'greatest success with mixed provision is seen when additional qualifications are a *mandatory part* of that provision, for example AS-level PE in vocational A-level Leisure and Recreation'. Blackpool and The Fylde College notes 'the timetabling [of additional qualifications] worked well ... because the qualifications were offered as an integral part of the course'. The publicity leaflets for programmes included the additional qualifications that would be part of the programme.

The value of additional vocational qualifications to students

There was little doubt among institutions that the additional vocational qualifications offered had to be attractive to students. Furthermore, students had to value the qualifications and understand how they would benefit from achieving them.

The following comments come from students at Blackpool and The Fylde College:

The course and the additionalities gave me a valuable insight into the world of work.

Useful ... the industry-related nature of the qualifications has helped with job prospects.

I have received a pay rise in my part-time job after completing the additional course in First Aid at Work.

Recognised issues

Although institutions that have offered additional vocational qualifications see the value of them, issues were identified that need to be resolved and further development work that needs to be undertaken. These included:

□ the unitisation of First and National Diplomas – how will this affect the use and role of the qualifications within the curriculum packages?

□ avoiding areas of duplication that exist within GCE AS- and A2, vocational A-levels and diplomas. Perhaps modules of learning could be developed using ILT that would lead to a variety of qualifications?

□ the need to ensure that parents and employers are aware of the programmes on offer and how they might benefit the students

□ ensuring that there is an awareness from all team members of the intensity and level of work required by the inclusion of the additional qualifications.

Whole-institutional approaches

Curriculum 2000 has brought significant changes to the ways that schools and colleges conduct their planning activities. Some institutions have chosen to see the reforms as an 'add on' or another factor to consider when planning for the future. However, research indicates that the majority of institutions, regardless of their type or size, have integrated Curriculum 2000 into their whole-institutional planning process. Leicester College is an example of an institution that has adopted a whole-institutional approach (see page 59).

Analysis of the case study reports shows that Curriculum 2000 contributed towards schools' and colleges' consideration of a number of factors including:

Funding and resource distribution

The changes to the funding methodology during 2001 for 16–19 year olds in full-time education were an issue for general FE and sixth form colleges. Although funding decreased for individual Curriculum 2000 qualifications, it was increased again to fund tutoring, key skills and enrichment. The alterations focused attention on resource distribution and had corresponding effects on other issues highlighted below.

Conditions of service and staff contracts

There are many ways in which staff can be contracted to provide learning opportunities for young people. For instance, not all learning needs to be facilitated by members of staff on academic contracts. Support staff play very important roles in supporting learning and an academic member of staff need not always undertake the tutorial functions. Schools and colleges have used various contractual models to support student learning with Curriculum 2000.

Timetabling and the use of staff and accommodation

In order to facilitate mix-and-match opportunities for students, institutions often adopted a block timetable, with between four and seven blocks, from which students could select qualifications and enrichment activities. Stresses were reported on some IT accommodation as a result of the need to deliver the subject to all students as part of their key skills entitlement.

Use of ICT and ILT

The case studies illustrate how schools and colleges have implemented strategies and developed their ILT provision to support Curriculum 2000 changes. Institutions have provided descriptions and commentaries on a range of ILT innovations that they have implemented. (See Part 2.)

Teaching and learning strategies

Initial feedback from schools and colleges indicated that Curriculum 2000 had resulted in greater use of more didactic and teacher-centred modes of delivery. However, as teachers have become more used to the standards and details of their subject specifications so more student-centred approaches are being used.

Curriculum planning

Schools and colleges undertook a considerable amount of curriculum planning in order to introduce Curriculum 2000. This work continues with institutions using Curriculum 2000 as a base for various innovations, as demonstrated in the Leicester College and Worcestershire LEA case study reports.

Examination and assessment policies and procedures

During the first year of Curriculum 2000, schools and colleges reported a significant increase in the number of assessments to be undertaken and the number of formal examinations to timetable. Students encountered far more examination clashes than in previous years. Although the government is reviewing examination and assessment requirements for Curriculum 2000 qualifications, schools and colleges themselves have taken the opportunity to re-evaluate and improve assessment policies and procedures.

Partnership working

Part of the LSDA research looked at how participating schools and colleges have used partnerships to enhance the quality of their students' experiences of Curriculum 2000. The case studies indicate that these institutions see real benefits from partnership arrangements and are identifying ways to strengthen them for subsequent years. It is worth noting that the government has indicated that it wishes to see greater collaboration between institutions providing post-16 education and more involvement of business and community organisations in post-14 programmes.

Student guidance and progression

The need for innovation in supporting student progression has been identified at the following stages:

☐ from Key stage 4 to advanced-level work in Curriculum 2000
☐ from individual units of assessment within Curriculum 2000 qualifications
☐ from year one to year two advanced-level work in Curriculum 2000
☐ from Curriculum 2000 to higher education, a gap year or employment.

Conclusion

The aim of Curriculum 2000 is to offer a more flexible curriculum for post-16 students, allowing them to mix academic and vocational options. Furthermore, the reforms come at a time when distance learning is a reality rather than a concept. The curriculum of the future will need to demonstrate greater breadth and flexibility to meet the needs of a potentially more diverse group of learners. This will require whole-institutional planning and collaboration with other organisations.

Institutions are already seeing the benefits of Curriculum 2000. They state that it has, for the first time, enabled them to introduce a meaningful and fully unitised programme of study. They also report more collegiate approaches to planning, learning and assessment.

Use of information learning technology

The case studies collected as part of LSDA's Curriculum 2000 research illustrated how centres have implemented strategies and developed their ILT (sometimes referred to as ICT by the case study institutions) provision to support Curriculum 2000 changes. Institutions have provided descriptions and commentaries on a range of ILT innovations that they have implemented. Examples of strategies and development work undertaken include:

□ developing online teaching materials to support units of study, using a college template for all courses – Leicester College

□ developing joint arrangements for the delivery of programmes between a school and a college using online materials, video-conferencing and online tutorial support – Somerset College of Arts and Technology

□ innovative approaches to teaching and learning using ICT, including CD-ROMs for students with course plans, teaching materials and resource links – Wilmslow High School

□ delivering jointly taught programmes in three AS courses using ICT across three partnership schools – North West Consortium (Tyneside)

□ developing resources and mechanisms through ICT to complement other support in integrating key skills delivery – Gateshead College

□ creating and consolidating learning materials using tools developed by the college ILT team to produce online course plans for students with key assessment dates and resource links – South East Essex College

□ collaborative arrangements between schools in rural areas to increase further student choice through the development of online learning and tutoring – Worcestershire LEA.

While the strategies implemented are all different, common issues do begin to emerge, as considered below.

The amount of pre-planning that is required

At Leicester College there is a whole-college strategy to develop flexible learning materials. This strategy has influenced the development of online teaching materials for Curriculum 2000 courses. The ILT strategy was published in August 2000. In October 2000 curriculum models incorporating online delivery were proposed. One month later a 2-day staff conference was held, which included the use of managed or virtual learning environments. Throughout the year pilots, templates and evaluations took place. In May 2001 staff were asked to submit materials, which were put onto a college intranet. The college recognises that there is still work to be done in 2002.

The setting up of a strategic planning group

At Wilmslow High School an ICT development group was set up in April 2000, with a timetable allocation made for this. The group consisted of three teachers, who were to consider how ICT could enhance their teaching and learning styles, and the school information systems manager, who was able to provide technical support.

In North Tyneside, three secondary schools came together to look at mechanisms to support post-16 collaboration. The initial target of the consortium was to deliver jointly taught programmes using ILT initiatives. The key personnel involved initially in the projects were the head teachers/principals of the three schools who, as the project developed, took on coordinating and steering roles. To support the developments the head teachers/principals established regular steering group meetings to set targets and goals. This strategic group was supported by an operational group of subject leaders across the three schools.

Identification of required resources

During 2000/01 Gateshead College implemented a set of initiatives to embed the delivery, teaching and learning of key skills. These initiatives included ICT developments. In order to bring about the required ICT developments, resources were carefully selected or specifically developed to meet the needs of Gateshead College.

In North Tyneside, three schools working together as a consortium to deliver joint lessons across three sites identified early on the required resources to enable such an initiative to take place:

All three schools have had to fund hardware improvements, which have included: video-conferencing equipment, ISDN line installation and rental, teaching materials and new course books.

The importance of staff training

At South East Essex College the curriculum changes coincided with the availability of new software tools for lecturers, developed by the college's ILT team. A project to develop online course plans for students, linked to resources, was therefore initiated. The college realised that the active participation of the teaching staff was essential if this project was to be successful. Participation was encouraged through a staff development programme and the loan of laptop computers.

Leicester College identified that ILT innovations require 'considerable staff development'. Although this can be seen as a strength in terms of creating a more able workforce, it can also be costly.

Many institutions saw ILT as the only way forward to improve learners' achievement and the numbers of students attending school or college. In the recent White Paper, *Schools: achieving success* (DfES, 2001), it is noted that 'ICT can transform the way that education is delivered and open the way to a new pedagogy'. Looking specifically at education from 14 onwards, it noted that not every education provider will be able to offer the full range of opportunities, and therefore partnership working and ICT investment to support those links are crucial.

In all the LSDA case studies the ability to increase opportunities for students through the use of ILT was a major factor in the development process. All the institutions saw positive outcomes from their ILT developments so far, but all also acknowledged that there are issues to resolve and that the development of an effective ILT provision is a continual process.

Worcestershire LEA acknowledged that further developments need to take place in order to further enhance the ILT developments, particularly:

☐ more widespread use of the resources that are installed

☐ more collaborative working arrangements to make use of ICT

☐ the need for more frequent online or face-to-face contact for those pupils 'receiving' online delivery

☐ a detailed evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses associated with e-learning in the county

☐ the need for schools to develop ILT partnerships with other post-16 providers, such as colleges, training providers, business and employers.

Partnership arrangements

Part of the LSDA research looked at how the schools and colleges involved have used partnerships to enhance the quality of their students' experience of Curriculum 2000. The case studies indicated that these institutions see real benefits from partnership arrangements and are identifying ways to strengthen them for subsequent years.

In some parts of the country, partnerships are an established feature – in many cases, reflecting the relationships built up under the umbrella of local Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) programmes. The LSC has made clear its intention to encourage partnership arrangements in order to enhance the quality of provision available to learners (pre- and post-19) at the local level.

The LSDA case studies identify some important issues for institutions to consider as they look at what partnership working may mean for them.

Adding breadth to the curriculum

For the institutions involved in the North Bromsgrove Project Partnership, the benefits of partnership were clear. North Bromsgrove High School is an expanding school that has experienced substantial growth in the lower school and steadily increasing numbers in the sixth form. The school wanted to be in a position to offer a wide and flexible range of sixth form courses under Curriculum 2000. Working in partnership with further education enabled North Bromsgrove High School to increase the range of courses available to students. It also provided the opportunity for 16–19-year-old students to appreciate the potential for progression from GCE A-level or vocational A-level courses onto HND courses.

Redditch high schools also saw that consortium working arrangements could ensure that a breadth of subjects is maintained with viable numbers of students in each group. A major benefit of partnership working for the schools was that student choice was maintained and minority subjects protected.

Enhancing teaching and learning

Making best use of technology to enhance the quality of teaching and learning has also motivated schools and colleges seeking to develop partnership arrangements with neighbouring institutions. ICT is increasingly offering new opportunities for improving students' experience throughout their Curriculum 2000 programmes.

In Worcestershire, the local education authority and the LSC are currently reviewing the disparate ICT provision that already exists in the county. The aim is to investigate the viability of a partnership approach, by providing ICT-based teaching and learning materials. One idea being considered is the feasibility of creating either an actual or virtual sixth form centre. Schools and colleges in the partnership could then access this site in a number of ways: for teaching inputs or support, or for teaching and learning materials.

Building networks

Teachers and lecturers have always emphasised the importance they attach to belonging to effective professional networks. Belonging to useful networks gives access to knowledge, experience, skills and insights that might not otherwise be available within a single institution. In some of the case studies presented, institutions have pre-existing partnership arrangements forged over many years.

In a number of areas, local LSCs are already having a positive impact on encouraging partnerships. At Bolton Institute, staff are seeing the benefits of working in partnership to build effective networks. They have become actively involved in the local learning partnerships and have actively participated in the initial work of the LSC. The Open College Network in the area has for some time been focusing attention on how best to provide access to vocational programmes for 16–21-year-old learners. Building on the cooperation that this network has already established will help ensure more coordinated provision and that, crucially, will provide progression links between Curriculum 2000 programmes and local FE/HE courses at higher levels.

At Guildford College, the senior management team has recognised that partnerships are now on the local, strategic agenda and has already entered into partnerships with a range of local providers. The college has had a long-standing partnership with a number of local institutions with sixth forms. For example, one local school sends students to do media studies at the college. The college reciprocates by sending its students to do religious education and design courses at the school. The school has recently redesigned its sixth form timetable to match that of the college to better facilitate the exchange.

Taking the first step

The case study materials demonstrate that schools and colleges are at different stages of development in partnership working. In starting to set up partnership working, Redditch high schools saw the appointment of a coordinator (on secondment) with a specific brief as the first step. In Worcestershire, the LEA and LSC also supported the idea of giving responsibility to one person for setting up partnership arrangements. In both cases, the role included:

□ looking into the implications of the LSC funding formulae for school-based sixth form provision

□ auditing and mapping existing collaborative arrangements

□ identifying best practice and lessons learnt from existing partnership arrangements

□ examining the subjects on offer by each consortium member and whether (under LSC funding) they are viable courses that can continue to be delivered within the institution's sixth form or should be placed under a consortium provision

□ looking at the viability of setting up a consortium between the sixth form centres involved and drawing up proposals for structure and timetabling, given the constraints of each institution's timetable arrangements

□ drafting a working document for consultation between all partner institutions

□ exploring the feasibility of alternative collaborative delivery mechanisms, such as video-conferencing, online courses and a virtual sixth form centre.

However, in both cases the most important first step has been to establish an atmosphere of trust and goodwill between the institutions involved, with the clear objective that such arrangements are about offering students the best possible post-16 education experience.

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The key issues in partnership working

The case study institutions have identified the key issues that partnership working presents for them.

Develop a sense of ownership

If any partnership is to prove successful and durable, it is essential that staff in all participating schools and colleges feel committed to it and are aware of the implications of the arrangements for their own institutions. Establishing some form of steering group that has representation from each institution is necessary. Where a coordinator is involved, that person should be accountable to that group and needs to be responsible for ensuring that all staff affected are kept informed of developments.

Establish clear ground rules

Whatever the nature of the partnership agreement, it is essential to produce clear written statements of exactly what is involved for each participating institution. Ensuring that the senior management in each institution are fully supportive and in agreement with that 'contract' is crucial.

Learn from others' experience

Staff should always seek to learn from others' experience. There are many examples of partnership arrangements in existence and it is invaluable to find out how others have tackled similar issues. Tapping into the experience of the local LSC, local education authority and Education Business Link Organisation (EBLO) may yield dividends in terms of knowledge about funding or other support mechanisms that could be utilised.

Timetabling

Building links between timetables will be a starting point for institutions that wish to work in partnership to offer students programmes that contain courses offered at different venues. Institutions frequently start by selecting specific courses and blocking timetables across a number of days. Such moves obviously have far-reaching implications for the individual institutions concerned, and require time and trust if they are to be successful.

Funding

It goes without saying that funding follows the student and that each institution in a partnership will need to receive the appropriate payment for the course and time it is delivering to students. This will inevitably lead to more complex funding arrangements than many institutions have been used to, but funding student programmes on a pro rata basis is a requirement. Additional pro rata costs for transport may also need to be explored.

Maintain a balanced curriculum

If the intention is to enable students from participating institutions to construct their programmes from courses offered across different sites, there will need to be coordination to ensure that breadth and balance are maintained and access provided to all key aspects of the curriculum. A good example of this is key skills delivery, where ensuring consistency of approach and avoiding duplication and repetition for students are essential. Effective planning to ensure the full range of opportunities to meet all the key skills requirements will be needed.

Location

Institutions that are committed to working together will need to consider the logistics of sharing sites and locations. Some partners in an arrangement may not be able to offer good transport links. Each partner will need to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their location and what can realistically be contributed to a partnership agreement.

Transport between sites

Arranging safe and reliable transport for students whose courses require time in different campuses is essential, and building in travelling time requires careful thought. Consideration will need to be given to whether public transport or the institutions' own transport is used. Again, issues of cost will need to be considered.

Monitoring

Liaison between school and college staff to monitor progress and absence is a crucial factor in the success of partnership working. It also has major implications for funding; the costs of tutors' time being a major feature. Attendance by staff at the parents/open evenings provided by partner institutions may also be required. Contributions may also be needed to the end-of-year reports produced by partner institutions.

Progression

The need for innovation in supporting student progression has been identified at the following stages:

- from Key stage 4 to advanced-level work in Curriculum 2000
- from year one to year two advanced-level work in Curriculum 2000
- from Curriculum 2000 to higher education, a gap year or employment.

Each point brings with it different issues.

From Key stage 4

Institutions have reported that it is important to explain Curriculum 2000 and its benefits in a comprehensible way not only to students but also to parents and guardians. Different centres within a locality using different names for the same qualification was not helpful during this progression point in September 2000. GCE AS-levels and A-levels were used for year one of GCE A-level study. A2 was used by some centres to explain the full programme while others continued to use A-level to encompass both. The vocational A-level was referred to as the AVCE or VCE A-level. Some centres referred to double awards while others talked of 12 units, also using different signifiers for six and three-unit awards.

Centres have also reviewed their entry requirements for certain Curriculum 2000 programmes. The volume of study undertaken by students in year one is increasingly determined by sophisticated scoring of GCSE results.

Good relations between local institutions are important in assisting partners in building appropriate pathways for young learners. Impartial advice is reported as an essential feature of preparing students in their progression.

From year one to year two of Curriculum 2000

Institutions have had to develop new procedures to facilitate progression at this stage. Students need to be fully informed of their options. Decisions on 'cashing in' and accepting grades need to be made bearing in mind the student's progression route. Performances in vocational A-level unit assessments will need to be revisited to plan for year two.

Selection of courses for the second year of study not only requires students to make important decisions, it also requires schools and colleges to reflect upon their subject and qualification offerings. In addition to student choices, consideration needs to be given to class sizes and the resources available to teach second year groups. Schools and colleges report on the need to provide students with the opportunity to depart from year one and Key stage 4 decisions. Careful use of the time after the June examinations can help in this process.

From Curriculum 2000 to higher education, a gap year or employment

There has been a significant amount of work undertaken by centres in supporting students to make UCAS applications. Staff and students alike have taken a keen interest in what HE admissions tutors are saying about their entry requirements. Less work has been done with employers to explain what the changes mean.

Universities have taken a variety of approaches to Curriculum 2000 and its use in placing students on appropriate HE programmes and qualifications. UCAS introduced a new tariff system for universities and colleges to use; while some have used it, others have not. Offers are being made to Curriculum 2000 students for entry into higher education in September 2002 either by using the UCAS tariff or qualification grades. However, there is a clear message from schools, sixth form colleges and FE colleges. National strategic-level interventions by the government are needed to provide universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) with a clear steer or further incentives to ensure that students can participate in higher education having undertaken a broader programme of advanced or Level 3 study.

case studies

Part 2

Blackpool and The Fylde College

Blackpool and The Fylde College is a beacon college with accredited status. It has approximately 4000 full-time and 17,000 part-time students on four main campuses. Courses offered range from GCSEs and GNVQ Intermediate and Foundation levels, through to AS and A2s, vocational A-levels, BTEC Diplomas, NVQs and specialist employer provision.

Implementing Curriculum 2000

Curriculum 2000 was introduced at the college in September 2000, offering students the ability to mix and match A-levels, AS-levels and vocational A-levels. All students included key skills, enrichment and tutorials within their programmes, and were offered professional guidance to assist in selecting appropriate courses of study that would meet their career aspirations.

In the first year of Curriculum 2000, the college drew up a timetable, clearly identifying possible combinations of AS-levels, single awards and double awards. Separate timetables were devised for the different sites, however, the timetabled day from 9am–4pm was similar. All vocational A-levels were timetabled for 10 hours per week for the double award, while AS-levels were timetabled for 4.5 hours per week. In addition to this, an extra five hours a week was timetabled for key skills, tutorials and enrichment.

The use of other vocational qualifications within the curriculum

This case study concentrates on two specific vocational areas and considers the use of BTEC, City and Guilds, OCR and other vocational qualifications within Curriculum 2000. The two curriculum areas were chosen due to the extent of additional qualifications that are offered to students. In both cases the additional qualifications reflect industry needs and demands for students hoping to progress to employment, either on completion of the courses or after the completion of HE courses.

The school of tourism, leisure and hospitality offers vocational A-levels in both leisure and recreation and travel and tourism, following several years' experience of delivering the GNVQ Advanced Leisure and Tourism. The school offers specialist BTEC National Diplomas in sports science and public services. Therefore, the leisure and recreation students tend to be those wishing for a more general approach to the industry and hoping to progress either to higher education or employment in one of the many leisure facilities available in the Blackpool and The Fylde area.

Specialisation is also offered in outdoor activities, which is appropriate to an area close to the Lake District and the coast. Additional qualifications in this area included: Community Sports Leader Award, a recognised industry qualification; First Aid at Work; the Rugby Coaches Award and First Aid – Sports Injuries Award. All sports students were also offered the opportunity to join the college Football Academy that operates in conjunction with Blackpool Football Club and Squires Gate, an amateur side – this did not lead to a formal qualification.

All the other additional units led to specialist qualifications. In the case of the Community Sports Leader Award, First Aid at Work and First Aid – Sports Injuries Award, all students completed these qualifications as an integral part of the course. The qualifications were offered in timetabled hours as part of the normal programme. Other qualifications, such as the Rugby Coaches Award, were selected by students and taken in addition to timetabled classes during twilight sessions and Saturday mornings. All the students were also able to take advantage of the enrichment programme to develop their interests in other sporting areas.

Students responded well to this offer in year one and will progress in year two to take, as part of the programme, the Higher Sports Leader Award (recognised by HEIs), Welcome Host, Basketball Leaders Award, and Basketball Referees Award. Furthermore, they will also be encouraged to take the AS-level in PE.

Students who chose vocational A-level Travel and Tourism were also offered an alternative package of qualifications relating to the industry, if they did not choose the alternative offer of AS-levels. Additional units were offered on one day and five hours were set aside. In the morning, the students took NVQ Level 1 in Spanish. This was a popular choice as it linked to an overseas residential in Madrid. In the afternoon, all students were offered a package of travel qualifications. During the initial weeks, the students were offered the OAG Travel Itinerary Planning Certificate. This was followed by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Fares and Ticketing course certificated by TTC Training/Lufthansa. On completion, the students were enrolled on the BTEC Intermediate Certificate in retail travel operations. This qualification provides the underpinning knowledge and understanding for the NVQ Level 2 in travel services, and provides a route for students who may wish to progress to employment in travel agencies at the conclusion of the course. In year two of the course the students will be able to progress to IATA Level 2 in fares and ticketing and complete the BTEC Advanced Certificate in retail travel operations. Alternatively the students will be offered the City and Guilds ABTA Tour Operators Certificate (ABTOC), if they wish to specialise in tour operations.

In addition to the timetabled qualifications noted above, all students took the Welcome Host qualification as part of their customer services unit. Vocational A-level students were also offered the Viasinc Galileo Fares and Ticketing course as part of their IT classes. There is little doubt that the additional qualifications are a major attraction to the students who wish to take specific vocational qualifications to support their career aspirations. The travel and tourism students were also able to access the sports and fitness enrichment programme.

An alternative vocational area where additional qualifications are expected is in the School of Engineering. The school has continued to offer BTEC National Diplomas in electronic and communication engineering and engineering technology. These students are timetabled for 18 hours a week and all students take a number of additional qualifications that are related to industry. The National Diploma in engineering technology has a practical approach, whilst introducing a wide range of engineering technology subjects. Additional qualifications include First Aid at Work, a qualification welcomed in an industry where health and safety are a priority. Linked to the IT units, the students completed City and Guilds Computer Aided Design 2301, City and Guilds Visual Basic Level 2 and City and Guilds Computer Numerical Control. Due to the practical nature of the courses, the students are also able to complete units from different NVQs linked to the industry. To date, students have completed eight units of the NVQ Level 2 in engineering manufacture. However, NVQ Level 1 in performance engineering operations replaced this in September 2001. Students also achieve two units of the NVQ Level 2 in electrical and electronic manufacture. Student evaluations were very positive about the additional units. The integration within the course ensures high attendance and motivation.

Evaluation of the additional qualifications is leading to new developments for year one and adjustments for year two in line with changing the curriculum model for vocational A-level Travel and Tourism. The team has decided to retain the curriculum model used this year in leisure and recreation but increase the input of practical activities. For travel and tourism the additional qualifications available have greatly extended following QCA approval for a number of City and Guilds qualifications. These smaller, bite-sized qualifications will underpin the input for vocational A-level units and enable students to start achieving certificates in the first term, which the college hopes will increase motivation.

Burton College

Burton College offers AS-levels in 26 subjects. In addition, there are five vocational A-levels. All are timetabled in blocks. There are a further five vocational A-levels not yet integrated into the timetable. The college offers eight National Diplomas and 15 National Certificates.

All students on full-time programmes are expected to undertake key skills. All full-time courses have a one-hour tutorial. Full-time courses usually have 18 hours of class contact time, which includes three hours for key skills.

Figure 2. Combinations taken by students mixing academic and vocational qualifications

Vocational A-level	Additional qualifications	Number of students
Business	AS-level IT	8
	AS-level Law	4
	AS-level Media Studies	2
	GCSE English	1
	GCSE Mathematics	5
	AS-level Accounts	1
	AS-level Art and Design	1
Art and Design	AS-level Art and Design	19
	AS-level Photography	3
	AS-level Dance	1
	AS-level English	2
	GCSE Maths	2
	A-level Art and Craft	1
	GCSE English	4
	AS-level Music	2
Health and Social Care	AS-level Psychology	2
	First Aid Certificate	15
	GCSE Psychology	1
	GCSE Maths	1
	A-level Communications	1
Travel and Tourism	GCSE Spanish	7
	GCSE Maths	3

Performing Arts	AS-level English	1
	AS-level Media Studies	2
	AS-level Dance	6
	GCSE Music	5
	AS-level Drama	6
	GCSE Psychology	1
	GCSE English	4
	GCSE Dance	5
	GCSE Maths 1	1
Sport and Recreation	A-level English	1
	AS-level PE	1
	First Aid Certificate	7
	Community Sports Leader Award	4
	AS-level Dance	1
Construction	GCSE Maths	1

National Diploma	Additional qualifications	Number of students
Computing	A-level Maths	3
	AS-level General Studies	3
	GCSE Maths	9
	GCSE English	3
IT	GCSE Maths	3
Childhood Studies	Food Hygiene Certificate	13
	First Aid Certificate	13
	GCSE Maths	2
Performing Arts	A-level Music	2
	A-level Art and Craft	1
	GCSE Maths	1
	AS-level Dance	1
Art and Design	A-level Art	2
Design	A-level Art and Design	6
	A-level Photography	1
	GCSE Maths	3
	GCSE English	4
Motor Vehicle Engineering	GCSE Maths	1
Sports Science	AS-level Computing	2
	GCSE Maths	2
	First Aid Certificate	1
	AS-level Psychology	1
Photography	AS-level Art and Design	3

The role of vocational qualifications in Curriculum 2000

The college's Curriculum 2000 implementation group produced an interim report on the success of the reforms. The report included models of delivery, guidance and induction, staff development, partnerships, key skills, tutorials, curriculum enrichment and resources.

The group noted that 220 students undertaking vocational qualifications were also studying AS-level subjects. However, the AS-levels were often seen as supplementing the vocational qualification, rather than diversifying the individual student's study. Thus, business is supplemented by IT or law; art and design by photography; health and social care by the First Aid Certificate and psychology; travel and tourism by Spanish; performing arts by dance and music; and leisure and tourism by the First Aid Certificate and Community Sports Leader Award.

Figure 3 gives an overview of the diversity and possible overlap of full-time programmes. There are possible overlaps in art and design, business studies, computing and performing arts.

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Figure 3. Possible overlaps in subjects

Subject offered	AS-level	Vocational A-level	National Diploma
Accounts	☐		
Art and Design	☐	☐	☐
Biology	☐		
Business Studies	☐	☐	
Chemistry	☐		
Childhood Studies			☐
Computing	☐		☐
Construction		☐	
Dance	☐		
Design			☐
Drama and Theatre Studies	☐		
Early Years			☐
Electrical Engineering			☐
English	☐		
French	☐		
Geography	☐		
General Studies	☐		
German	☐		
Health and Social Care		☐	
History	☐		
Hospitality and Catering		☐	
Italian	☐		
Law	☐		
Leisure and Recreation		☐	
Leisure and Tourism		☐	
Media Studies	☐		
Motor Vehicle Engineering			☐
PE	☐		
Performing Arts		☐	☐
Physics	☐		
Psychology	☐		
RE	☐		
Sociology	☐		
Spanish	☐		
Sports Science			☐
Travel and Tourism		☐	

Strengths of Curriculum 2000

- the diversity of curriculum areas available for students
- key skills available to all full-time students
- comprehensive tutorial programmes
- working group for Curriculum 2000 implementation
- many examples of students choosing additional qualifications
- curriculum enrichment programme available
- additional support available for numeracy and literacy.

Weaknesses of Curriculum 2000

- duplication in some curriculum areas
- partially integrated timetable
- uptake of key skills, retention and achievement are poor
- National Diplomas yet to be modularised
- additional qualifications tend to be in a similar subject area
- update of additional support is variable.

Key skills

The college has a policy that all full-time students should have access to key skills. All Modern Apprentices have to do key skills. It is compulsory for 16–19 year olds and optional for adults.

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Key issues for the college

Several career options have been identified. These could be extended considerably to give a full range across the whole curriculum for 16–19 year olds.

As there will be major changes to the timetable, it is an opportunity to consider the breath of curriculum on offer, look for areas that need developing and cut down overlapping qualifications. This should increase efficiency.

The delivery of key skills has been problematic. Procedures need to monitor the progress made to improve uptake, retention and achievement.

National Certificates and Diplomas are being modularised and external examinations introduced. The new programmes will need substantial development and decisions made on suitability. The effect of external examinations on retention and achievement needs to be monitored. The relationships between these qualifications, NVQs and Modern Apprenticeships need to be investigated.

Ways to improve the uptake of additional vocational qualifications need to be investigated.

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Coombeshead College

Coombeshead College is an 11–19 comprehensive establishment with approximately 1500 students. It has a post-16 population of approximately 280 students. The college offers the following post-16 courses:

☐ 24 AS/A2 subjects
☐ seven vocational A-level courses (six unit and 12 unit)
☐ childcare
☐ motor vehicle
☐ sound engineering
☐ journalism
☐ some GCSE subjects.

Each timetable block is five hours.

☐ AS/A2 = 5 hours a week
☐ six-unit vocational A-level = 5 hours a week
☐ 12-unit vocational A-level = 10 hours a week
☐ sound engineering = 5 hours a week per level
☐ childcare/motor vehicle = 3 days a week, plus work placement
☐ journalism = 5 hours a week, plus work placement

All students choose between three and five courses to study, except for childcare and motor vehicle. The college creates its timetable blocks based on student demand. Working in this way, without pre-established blocks, means that the college can be more flexible in responding to demand; hence some subjects appear in two blocks. This increases access to a wider range of options. The college has arranged blocks, as far as possible, to allow for popular combinations both with AS courses and increasingly for AS/vocational combinations. For example, performing arts with AS-level Music, childcare with AS-level Psychology, and AS-level English with journalism.

Key skills in communication and IT are compulsory in Year 12 and the college intends to continue with this. It sees key skills as an important part of any post-16 package as it cuts across all curriculum areas. Students have an hour a week with their tutors on key skills. Each subject area identifies areas of work that can be used as evidence for assessment at Levels 2 and 3.

The college offers a range of additional enrichment opportunities:

☐ Wednesday afternoon activities, eg arts, sports and voluntary work
☐ Young Enterprise
☐ music/drama productions
☐ trips
☐ student council.

It also offers additional qualifications, for example:

- Young Consumers Award
- FLAW certification
- CLAIT
- first aid
- Sports Leadership Award.

Work experience is compulsory for all vocational A-level, childcare and motor vehicle students. This takes place on a weekly basis for some, and during block times for those taking a larger number of courses. All students are encouraged to undertake some work placement during their time in the sixth form. Motor vehicle students have a day a week at a local FE college using specialist facilities. Tutor time takes place for 30 minutes every day. This time is used in the main for small-group work and individual reviewing of student progress.

Specific Curriculum 2000 developments

The college offers six and 12-unit courses. This has led to more students combining vocational courses with AS-level subjects. The college actively encourages students to consider vocational and AS combinations, especially students who have mainly C grade GCSEs.

Before Curriculum 2000 the majority of students combining vocational with advanced-level studies were in the following areas:

- health and social care plus one A-level
- performing arts plus one A-level
- sound engineering plus half an A-level (often with music technology).

Students considered choices in order to gain access to specific HE courses, notably teaching and nursing. Now students are combining subjects across all subject areas. Students taking AS-level see the opportunity to take one vocational course without it affecting their need to achieve three A2s for entry to university. Those normally taking only vocational courses see the AS-level as a useful additional qualification. Some students will go on to study for the A2.

Childcare students studying for diplomas now have the opportunity to study an AS-level alongside their course. Students in this area have expressed an interest in teaching. At present, it is not possible to go into teaching just with a childcare diploma. The college has been in contact with the local teaching training college, which would seriously consider these students if they had an A-level alongside their diploma. Likewise, most sound engineering students are taking a package of subjects, including vocational A-levels and A2s. This broadens their progression opportunities.

The college has also created a unique certificated post-16 journalism course in conjunction with the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ). This course is proving popular with students who are considering a career in the media. Most are taking the journalism course alongside advanced-level subjects. They see the journalism course as a good fourth choice, as it still allows them to achieve three A2 examinations if they want to go onto university. However, this course has led a student straight into journalism at age 18.

IT is in great demand, both as a specialist course and in general teaching. This year, the college will be starting a vocational A-level IT course for Year 12. In Year 13 a distance learning IT course is being piloted.

With the introduction of Curriculum 2000, post-16 courses are seen as a series of one-year courses. Students are assessing their progress each year before deciding what to take forward. The college has between 10–15 students who are finishing one AS course, taking their other subjects through to A2 and wanting to pick up a new AS course – notably IT, but other subjects as well.

The introduction of the six-unit qualification has certainly encouraged more students to take up at least one vocational course. This represents 32% of the college's current population coming into Year 12.

In recent years, the college has had an increasing number of GNVQ students successfully applying to university. Last year 13% of its HE applicants were GNVQ students. This has encouraged students to take the new vocational A-level route, especially if they can continue their vocational studies with one or two AS examinations.

Key issues for the college

Video-conferencing

The college would like to look at video-conferencing as a way of offering a wider range of subjects. It also wonders if some of its current courses could be taught in this way – possibly electronics, government and politics, and languages.

Student courses... three, four or five subjects?

In the first year of Curriculum 2000 the college established a model of delivery for students based on four subjects. This has not worked for all students, resulting in some of them dropping from four subjects to three. The college is now using predicted grades as a guide to placing students on the appropriate number of courses.

HE/careers in relation to journalism and childcare

The college intends to develop links with local HE establishments to encourage them to consider the Childcare Diploma plus one A2 as a route into teaching. It also wants to raise awareness of its journalism course nationally. Working with the NCTJ it hopes to offer the course to other centres. The college then hopes that local newspaper organisations will see it as a valuable training course for prospective journalists and that HEIs will accept the qualification as part of a university offer for media or journalism courses.

Expansion of the college day

Most courses run during the college hours of 9am to 3.45pm. In order to increase access to courses and provide more opportunities for students, the college will be looking at holding twilight and evening sessions.

Deanery High School

Deanery High School is an 11–18 Church of England, voluntary-aided, mixed comprehensive high school with 1630 pupils on roll, including 230 at post-16. It is a specialist technology college. The school, particularly the sixth form, has close links with Liverpool Hope University College and a number of the university's courses are delivered from Deanery High School. The school has a well-established ICT training department, which provides training for staff as well as local primary schools and the community. It is a regional New Opportunities Fund training centre and an accredited Cisco and Microsoft training provider. Links with businesses and industry are particularly strong and these give post-16 students additional learning opportunities, eg the Gold CREST Award. The school offers 29 AS-levels, three vocational A-levels and two Intermediate GNVQs, together with Cisco and Microsoft courses.

Most course combinations were possible in September 2000. Students were encouraged to mix GCE A-level and vocational A-level courses and to study a broad range of subjects. Some students responded to this opportunity although the traditional science/maths and English/humanities/languages pattern persisted.

The timetable was organised into five blocks and each subject represented five one-hour lessons. Students studied courses in four blocks. The fifth block was for enrichment, and students could choose from a range of activities, most of which produced evidence for their key skills portfolio. Key skills were also taught and tracked through AS-level courses. Personal tutors in the lower sixth had a one-hour tutorial period available each week for tutoring. Progression to A2 or an equivalent upper sixth course was possible from all lower sixth courses.

Strategies to deliver a flexible curriculum

Senior curriculum managers agreed in the autumn term of 1999 that they wanted to offer maximum flexibility to all their students, especially in the first year when everything appeared new. The school was also conscious that information for students and parents was very late arriving and that universities and colleges were reluctant to commit themselves to their requirements at the time sixth form students were being asked to choose course combinations. Late confirmation of so many details of Curriculum 2000 made planning and student guidance difficult.

Curriculum leaders met in October 1999 to discuss and agree features of their provision such as:

☐ the number of subjects to be studied
☐ whether January modular examinations would be taken by some or all students
☐ entry criteria and guidance timetables.

It was agreed that the school would not require students to study a science, an arts and a humanities subject. Instead, it would encourage them to study a broader curriculum through the flexibility that was to be offered. Key skills had always been a part of post-16 provision. Under Curriculum 2000, key skills were extended to all students. Teaching was undertaken by specialist key skills staff and managed by a key skills coordinator, who was appointed in September 1999. The teaching was designed to equip students with the skills and understanding to pass the external key skills test. The portfolio of evidence came from enrichment studies, AS/vocational A-level courses, plus Cisco, Microsoft and CLAIT courses.

It was recognised very early on in staff discussions that a much more comprehensive guidance programme would be required before and during the first year of Curriculum 2000. Sixth form tutoring, which had long been considered a strength of the sixth form, would have to be extended and there would be a need to provide comprehensive INSET for guidance tutors. Curriculum leaders and subject staff would also require INSET time once all the specifications were confirmed. This took place in the period March–July 2000. The management and coordination of Curriculum 2000 was shared between the deputy head of curriculum and the director of sixth form.

In the future

Exactly what will Deanery High School expect from its students in terms of the number of subjects studied and when they will take their examinations?

◻ Departments will be looking at changing teaching and learning strategies to create more opportunities for independent learning. The school is also offering some distance learning courses (using ICT) for 2002 in conjunction with another sixth form and a sixth form college.

◻ The commitment to key skills will continue in the light of DfES guidance.

◻ The provision of courses for students who wish to stay in the sixth form, but find four subjects too difficult, will be a curriculum development area for 2001/02.

◻ The guidance programme for the new upper sixth is being developed and will be monitored and evaluated from September onwards.

◻ In 2001/02 the school will also research the provision of degree-level modules for able students.

◻ A more rigorous monitoring and evaluation programme is to be introduced in 2001/02. This is regarded as essential for the success of the school's own provision and to guide LSC funding decisions in the future.

Esher College

Esher College is a sixth form college with accredited status. It recruits its students from 120 schools, some as far away as central London. Three-quarters of the college's 1250 students are on GCE A-level programmes, with one-fifth on vocational A-level programmes, although students are increasingly combining 'traditional' courses with vocational courses.

Building learning programmes

Each learning programme consists of three interrelated elements:

□ core studies
□ extension studies – including complementary studies, AS-level and PSVE
□ key skills.

For advanced courses, students are enrolled onto a planned learning programme in which they identify their two-year A-level subjects. They then select their 'broadening' AS-level that ends after the first year.

Students are timetabled for 4 hours and 40 minutes per week for each AS- or A-level. The same is true for the part award (completed in one year) and the single award (completed over two years). The double award attracts double the amount of teaching time. Extension studies AS-levels, offered in the second year of study, are delivered over two hours. Students are encouraged to plan a total learning programme that will offer coherence and breadth over the two-year period.

Core studies

Core studies are made up of three categories of courses:

□ GCE A-levels (six units over two-year AS and A2)
□ vocational A-levels (12 and six units)
□ broadening AS-levels (three units).

Students can take just GCE A-levels if they wish, or a combination of GCE and vocational A-levels. Some students may choose to take just vocational A-levels. Most students add a broadening AS-level to the core part of their programme, and some add a fourth A-level.

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The three most common patterns are:

☐ a core of three A-levels (AS and A2 for each or a six-unit award spread over two years) or a broadening AS-level with extension courses and key skills

☐ a core of three A-levels (AS and A2 for each) with extension courses and key skills

☐ a core of one vocational A-level (12 units) plus a full A-level or broadening AS-level with extension courses and key skills.

There are other possibilities. More able students may want to take four A-levels rather than three and a broadening AS-level. Weaker students with minimum qualifications might take just two A-levels and a broadening AS-level, maybe with a GCSE. Good double award students are likely to take a full A-level in addition, rather than a broadening AS-level. Certain students may wish to take two A-levels and two broadening AS-levels, perhaps with a view to doing another broadening AS-level in the second year.

Figure 4. Standard entry qualifications for learning programmes

Core courses	Entry qualifications
3 A-levels (including 2 A-levels and an AS-level)	Minimum of 5 grade Cs at GCSE
vocational A-level	Minimum of 5 grade Cs at GCSE

Figure 5. Entry qualifications for taking additional AS or A-level courses in addition to three A-levels

Core courses	Entry qualifications	Minimum ALIS score
Broadening AS-level or part award	Minimum of 8 grade Cs at GCSE (usually 5 at least at grade B)	5.2
Fourth full A-level or single award	Minimum of 9 GCSEs, at least 6 at grade A	6.6
Fourth full A-level and a broadening AS-level	Minimum of 9 GCSEs all at grade A	7.0

The ALIS score is the prime indicator here, particularly in relation to broadening AS-levels. On average 70% of new students have an ALIS score of 5.2 or more. Therefore, the great majority of students above 5.2 should be assigned a broadening AS-level and the great majority of students who fall below this score should not. There is obviously some room for discretion in advising the student.

The approaches taken to broadening AS-levels or a fourth A-level fall into two categories:

Contrasting– usually

The main principle determining what broadening AS-level a student should take (or fourth A-level) is that it should contrast with the main courses the student has selected for his or her core. As a rule of thumb if the main courses come from one faculty area (domain) the fourth course should come from a different faculty area – although some courses can be allocated to more than one domain, eg history. Finally, there will be constraints imposed by the blocking system and lack of spaces in sets.

Figure 6. The four domains

Design and Expressive Arts	Maths and Science
Art (bAS)	Biology (bAS)
Art and Design 12-unit	Chemistry
Design Technology	Environmental Science (bAS) – *also Social Science domain*
Performing Arts (bAS)	Geology – *also Social Science domain*
Theatre Studies	Further Maths
Music (bAS)	Mathematics (bAS)
Fashion	Physics
Health and Social Care (12, 6 and 3-unit) – *also Social Science domain*	Psychology (bAS) – *also Social Science domain*
PE – *also Social Science domain*	Public Understanding of Science (bAS)

Humanities	Social Science
Art History (bAS)	GNVQ Business
Classical Civilisation	Business Studies (bAS)
Critical Thinking (bAS)	Business (3-unit)
English Language – *also Social Science domain*	Economics
English Literature (bAS)	Geography (bAS)
History (bAS) – *also Social Science domain*	Government and Politics (bAS)
French (bAS), German (bAS), Spanish	Leisure and Recreation (12 and 6-unit)
Media Studies	IT (bAS) – *also Maths and Science domain*
Media (12 and 6-unit) – *also Media and Expressive Arts domain*	Sociology (bAS)
Philosophy (bAS)	Travel and Tourism (12 and 6-unit)
Film Studies (bAS)	Citizenship (bAS)

(bAS) denotes broadening AS-level available in the subject.

Complementary – occasionally

There are instances where during their interview the student demonstrates a clear commitment to a particular degree course and/or career, backed by the right GCSE results. In this situation, it may be more appropriate to assign a fourth course that is complementary rather than contrastive. The most obvious example is the student for whom the 'classic' combination of double maths, physics and chemistry is suitable. Or perhaps physics, chemistry, biology and AS-level Maths makes a lot of sense for a student determined to read sciences at university. Where a complementary rather than contrasting fourth course is assigned then it will be important that the student's extension courses provide some element of contrast. Usually AS/ES does just this in the second year.

Extension studies

Extension studies provide a further range of broadening and general educational experiences for students. This part of the learning programme ensures that the student experiences a genuinely diverse education at the college, preparing them not just for higher education but also for employment, citizenship and personal responsibilities.

Extension studies consist of the following types of courses, including a mixture of electives and prescriptives:

- complementary studies courses, eg sport, drama and current affairs
- IT key skills – for Year 13 students not taking specialist IT programmes
- PSVE – a formal tutorial programme delivered by tutors
- work experience – one full week in the summer term
- for second-year students a choice of AS/ES (AS extension studies) courses delivered in two periods a week from: AS-levels General Studies, Critical Thinking, Public Understanding of Science and Citizenship.

On average, a student will spend about four hours a week on extension studies courses.

Key skills

All students at Esher College are expected to achieve the key skills qualifications.

The tutorial system

The main elements of the tutorial system are as follows:

- There are 63 tutor groups organised into four faculty groups.
- Tutor groups are horizontal rather than vertical, ie based on year groups.
- There are separate tutor groups for students taking intermediate programmes.
- The director of faculty has final responsibility for both the core and extension curricula and student support within the faculty.
- Each faculty tutor grouping is led by a tutor team leader, who is an assistant to the director of faculty.

Tutors are responsible for the general welfare of their students in terms of both their academic progress and their personal wellbeing at the college. This involves many functions: advising students on the balance and coherence of their programme of study, explaining college procedures, checking absence and illness, monitoring the progress of students, keeping records, collating student profiles and writing references. Group tutors are responsible for the accredited PSVE programme and its administration and assessment.

Tutor team leaders are responsible for leading a team of tutors and guiding them in the task of looking after the interests of students in terms of their academic and personal progress at the college. They also have a key role to play in the college's 'discipline with guidance system'.

The PSVE programme has the following main aims:

- communication and social skills
- time and resource management
- social and moral awareness
- self-assessment
- cooperation and team work.

Incorporated into the general programme will be time for developing key skills and key skills portfolios with the students. It is worth noting that certain aspects of the PSVE programme overlap with the three wider key skills.

Counselling is available for any student seeking confidential help with a personal concern, whether emotional or academically related. The purpose of counselling is to enable the student to find a personal solution to a problem by gaining new perspectives and insight.

Figure 7. Strengths and weaknesses of a broadening curriculum

Strengths	Weaknesses
The course is planned over two years using the concept of a total learning programme. This allows the institution to forward plan.	Students are required to commit to a two-year course and plan out what they want to do in advance.
A-level students remain with the same peers and staff for the whole of their period of study thereby enhancing the learner experience.	Opportunities to change courses once on programme are limited to the places available.
Staff can forward plan as they know they will have a particular A2 set to follow on in the next year.	Students could be less committed to their broadening subject than the others and this may be reflected in retention, attendance and performance.
The student knows that the broadening course will finish immediately after they have taken the exam and can then concentrate on the subjects that they will take to A2.	
The notion of 'broadening' is embedded into the culture as the title of a student's extra subject differentiates it as such.	
The college can monitor key statistics for broadening courses separately from the main A-level statistics.	
Progression issues into year two relate only to students who need to re-think aspects of their course, rather than to a wholesale re-enrolment and reselection process.	
The AS/ES programme offers students additional broadening opportunities in year two.	
The complete planned programme is based on a notion of curriculum as a total package – akin to a baccalaureate – but tailored to individual needs. This uses Curriculum 2000 reform in a constructive way and avoids the fragmented pick-and-mix approach, which sacrifices coherence to the consumerist notion of students as customers who can reselect commodities at will.	

Key issues for Esher College

Progression into year two and course changes. There needs to be a procedure for students to make changes to their course within the constraints of what is offered. The college is currently putting in place procedures for students to do three things:

☐ keep their broadening AS-level on into year two as a full A-level if they so wish and where spaces are available

☐ rethink their original choices in the light of exam results at the end of year one, eg select an AS-level to replace a course where they have not been successful

☐ choose a further course because they wish to do something else in addition to their A2 courses.

Monitor attendance, completion and performance of broadening AS-levels as compared to A-level or double award courses.

Develop a student's ability to cope with broader programmes via study skills support and improvements in induction.

Monitor HEIs' reactions to broader based programmes, including the mixed GCE/vocational A-level programmes which students will be taking.

Develop a much more responsive system of guidance for transfer issues in the light of the complexities faced by students in matching their achievement to the diversity of university entry requirements.

Further develop the total skills strategy that places the funded key skills within a context that most benefits student learning.

Guildford College

Guildford College is the largest provider of 16–19 vocational and academic subjects in West Surrey. In 2000/01 it had 1960 full-time students and 1784 part-time students. The college is undergoing a period of 're-alignment', which will result in four distinct operational areas:

□ tertiary
□ vocational
□ community
□ learner support.

Much of the Curriculum 2000 work will be carried out through the tertiary centre, which will, for the first time, include a significant 14–16 curriculum offer. Within the tertiary centre the already established centre for sixth form studies will continue to develop a curriculum offer that will embrace GCSE, AS/A2, vocational A-level and key skills.

Guildford's new cross-college timetable will enable students to access a genuinely flexible curriculum, which permits combinations of vocational and academic courses.

A typical full-time student can expect to follow a programme which, when combined with tutorial sessions and key skills, will amount to a commitment of about 21 hours per week across five days. Every full-time student has a personal tutor and a cross-college tutorial policy exists along with guidelines as to the purpose, style and content of a tutorial. It is important to note the transformation of the tutorial role from something that was vaguely pastoral and administrative to what is now a central feature of the learner's experience.

In the 're-aligned' college the expectation is that FE pathways will permit students to follow courses from the cross-college portfolio, which will enable them to prepare for higher education and/or employment.

Development and innovation of Curriculum 2000

At a senior level, one of four directors is responsible for the curriculum as a whole. Beneath this person are four assistant principals, who are in charge of the four operational areas. The assistant principals are instrumental in facilitating the successful progress of Curriculum 2000. In terms of key skills, a cross-college coordinator at head of school level has been in post since May 1999. This person oversees key skills provision and monitoring. A key skills steering group meets regularly – its members are drawn from each relevant school/curriculum area. There is a cross-college key skills policy that sets out the purpose, scope, expectation and implementation strategy for this aspect of Curriculum 2000. However, the key skills coordinator, taxed with making a success of key skills, feels that the level of responsibility is not matched by an associated level of authority. In a recent study of colleges where key skills have been a success, the unstinting support of senior management (strategically and in terms of physical resource) was seen to be an important feature.

Key skills teaching is overseen by a curriculum leader (senior tutor). He or she is responsible for ensuring that personal tutors and key skills teachers are coordinated and consistent, and carries out internal verification – as does the key skills steering group. There is a need for someone to focus on curriculum standards within each of the four re-aligned areas. This role would link the curriculum offer with established quality assurance measures. Curriculum 2000 also requires a cross-college coordinator to clarify the internal curriculum offer and to explore links with local schools and sixth form providers.

This year some students were able to combine academic and vocational programmes. Students whose main course was a National Diploma in performing arts chose AS-level English Literature as enrichment. Some students mixed three AS-level subjects with a GNVQ IT Part Award. To some extent there is a lack of awareness of the Curriculum 2000 opportunity, internally and externally.
An awareness-raising campaign could help prospective students – and their parents – to see the value of Curriculum 2000. Internally, staff development will be the means to embed the new curriculum.

Over the years, Guildford College has entered into partnerships with a range of providers. However, the enforced competition for funding has meant that other schools and colleges have been wary of partnerships. There is an agreement between the four main FE colleges in Surrey (Guildford, Brooklands, NESCOT and East Surrey) with regard to planning the curriculum offer. Indications are that local schools do not want to expand their sixth form provision. The college already has a positive partnership with one school that sends its students to Guildford to do AS-level Media Studies. The college could reciprocate by sending its students to the school to do AS-level Design and RE. The local school has organised its sixth form timetable to fit with the college to better facilitate the exchange.

There is a need to manage a set of processes related to the successful implementation of Curriculum 2000. The college has identified the need for the following:

□ a cross-college curriculum coordinator
□ a cross-college key skills coordinator
□ a cross-college tutorial policy – backed by staff training
□ an effective and managed cross-college timetable
□ curricular clarity within 'centres' and 'schools'
□ formal and managed partnerships with other local providers
□ formal and positive relationships with LSDA and the local LSC
□ a sensible funding mechanism.

Key issues facing the college

□ Estelle Morris' expectations on key skills provision and achievement

□ the consolidation of existing AS/A2 provision

□ staff development to support both of the above

□ the need to prepare for the revised AS/A2 as necessary

□ Guildford will be a new 'centre of excellence' for vocational courses: what will this mean in terms of curriculum development?

□ the relationship between our curricula and other local providers

□ retention and achievement: currently bottom of the league table, what steps need to be taken to improve on the quality of delivery?

Strengths

- There is a readiness to take on new curricula underpinned by organisational 're-alignment' to assist the process.

- Senior tutors (curriculum leaders) are in post to manage detailed aspects of curriculum changes.

- New assistant principals are in place to liaise with staff and senior managers to assist change.

- Guildford College has formal links with other local providers.

- The college and its staff are keen to work with the LSC to manage FE/Curriculum 2000 provision locally.

- Guildford College is the largest provider of vocational and academic courses in West Surrey.

- There is effective management of 'brands', eg Centre for Sixth Form Studies.

Weaknesses

- Disparity of funding with mainstream schools and sixth forms severely encumbers our best efforts.

- The curriculum is insufficiently coordinated within the college to promote Curriculum 2000 more fully.

- Time, staffing and other resources are too limited. Staff feel as if curriculum development is firefighting without water.

- The ideology of competition between providers is wilfully destructive and inhibits proper partnership.

Hertford Regional College

Hertford Regional College is a general FE college. It has approximately 2500 full-time students and up to 8000 part-time day and evening users. The college has four faculties and each faculty has between three and six schools.

Curriculum 2000, including enrichment and key skills, was offered to all full-time 16–18-year-old students. The fact that all full-time students should be entitled to the diagnosis, delivery and assessment of their needs in relation to key skills was built into the college's policy and implemented alongside Curriculum 2000. The timetable was divided into five blocks so that learners could access the curriculum offering of their choice. In the sixth block, time was set aside for cross-college enrichment and students were asked to state their chosen activities during the induction period.

To support students in the delivery of the new curriculum and key skills, an extra hour's tutorial was added to each programme. The average student would have a programme that included 20 guided learning hours per week plus complementary studies in some areas The college offered AS-levels in 22 subjects and single awards in leisure and tourism, hospitality and catering, business studies, IT, health and social care, art and design, construction and engineering, media and science. Part awards were also offered in business and IT. National Diplomas were offered in 14 subject areas and First Diplomas and Foundation and Intermediate GNVQs were also included as part of the Curriculum 2000 offering.

A cross-college task group reviewed Curriculum 2000 choices. This group consisted of representatives from all the faculties, the director of curriculum and quality and the curriculum coordinator with operational responsibility for Curriculum 2000 and key skills. A review also took place with the heads of faculty. Most of the students who enrolled on single awards and AS-levels are progressing to full awards and A2.

Unitisation and Curriculum 2000

When the college reviewed its 2000/01 provision, the need emerged for some students to take parts of the set curriculum in order to offer them appropriate progression routes and employment relevance. The faculty manager and curriculum manager worked together to devise a pilot project with students in the faculty of communication, business and technology, who wished to work as personal administrators (PAs) or take up other administrative roles.

Some of these administration students wished to progress to HE business courses, such as HND Business. It was decided that a unitised programme of study, which also included key skills, was the best way forward. The package would be aimed at students taking a Level 3 qualification, although there would be provision for them to take the key skills qualifications at a level that was appropriate to their individual needs.

Previously, such students might have studied a Level 3 NVQ, however, this qualification is no longer regarded as appropriate for 16-year-old students who do not have much employment experience. Hertford Regional College had offered the Diploma in secretarial procedures. The qualification required students to sit lots of examinations, all of which had to be passed if certification was to be achieved. Consequently, the course had a high drop-out rate. Now the college is using Curriculum 2000 to full advantage. In its opinion, of all the new qualifications on offer, the best combinations seem to be the part award in business including:

□ Business at work – offers an in-depth study of how an organisation works
□ The competitive environment – looks at how the business fits into the macro/micro environment
□ Marketing – a large number of PAs work in this area.

In addition, the part award in ICT including:

□ units 1 and 2 – these are about business documents
□ unit 3 – spreadsheets.

The college then felt it was necessary to offer a pathway for students who wished to progress into employment. The qualification that seemed to offer the best way forward was OCR Text Processing at Levels 2 and 3. Finally, all students would have:

□ the opportunity to gain key skills qualifications – the part award could provide evidence for key skill IT
□ two hours' tutorial entitlement
□ access to cross-college enrichment.

Figure 8. Sample timetable

Text processing Level 2	3 hours a week
Text processing Level 3	3 hours a week
Part award in business	6 hours a week
Part award in ICT	6 hours a week
Key skills	2 hours a week
Tutorial	2 hours a week
Enrichment	1 hour a week
Total	**23 hours a week**

To enable the programme to be audited and to help with the planning of future unitised programmes, the curriculum manager has produced a pro forma and in-house guidance for programme managers who wish to put together unitised programmes.

The key issues for the college are to:

□ ensure that student feedback on the coherence and manageability of the qualifications is gathered and analysed

□ consult with awarding bodies about certification and funding bodies about funding

□ monitor the retention and achievement of students on the course

□ consult with HE providers to look at progression routes outside the college

□ consult with employers about the employability of students

□ give development time to the programme team to ensure coherence and management of student assessment and delivery.

Guidance for the unitisation of qualifications

Before unitisation of any qualification is undertaken it is important that it fits into the funding body's criteria for unitisation. At Hertford, a college pro forma needs to be completed to provide audit evidence for the funding of the qualification. This includes the following information:

□ programme title
□ constituent units and their levels
□ guided learning hours for each unit
□ title of the parent qualification and whether it falls within schedule 2 according to the Further and Higher Education Act 1992
□ name of the awarding body
□ programme rationale and focus, including the need for individual units
□ target group of learners and estimated number
□ intended progression and progression needs
□ details of guidance and counselling.

Additional advice from Hertford Regional College

☐ The minimum length of units eligible for funding is six guided learning hours.

☐ Unitised programmes should not include whole qualifications, with the exception of single unit qualifications.

☐ Units should be those recognised by awarding bodies – they cannot be devised by the centre unless the awarding body agrees.

☐ Units can be put together from different awarding bodies, but learners still need to be registered with the awarding bodies.

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Leicester College

Leicester College is a large general FE college with approximately 25,610 students – 4000 of these are full time. The college has below average attainment at Level 2, with only 33% of 16 year olds achieving five A*–C grades at GCSE, against a national benchmark of 43%. There is also a significant basic skills need in the city. This indicates that the key skills and enrichment elements of Curriculum 2000 are vital to the success and progression of many of the college's learners.

Curriculum 2000 programmes cover a range of GCE AS- and A-level, vocational A-level and BTEC National courses. GCSE subjects are included in the matrix and there are plans to bring Level 2 programmes into the framework. The college is working with the Leicester City Cluster, a collaborative group of city schools and colleges, to ensure a coherent provision in 2002/03.

Students wanting to mix general and vocational qualifications are as follows:

vocational students studying one AS/A2	89
vocational students studying two AS/A2	36
vocational students studying three AS/A2	7
AS students studying one GCSE	28

The most popular areas for mixing general and vocational qualifications are art and design (37 students) and the National Diploma in fashion (25 students). The timetable is arranged in six blocks. Students need to choose subjects from at least four blocks, including a block of key skills, tutorial and enrichment. Each block represents 4.5 hours. In the case of key skills, tutorial and enrichment, this is divided into two hours for key skills, two hours for tutorial and half an hour for enrichment. The half an hour set aside for enrichment can either be taken weekly or added together for a longer block of time that allows for visits, group activities or sporting activities.

The role of the personal tutor is central to the implementation of a whole-college strategy. It is the tutor who ensures that the input from the initial screening and diagnosis of learning styles and key skills is used to inform the individual learning plan. Key skills are delivered, wherever possible, within the main units of study, but developed, assessed and tracked in the timetabled key skills session.

At Level 1, the new framework being piloted next year contains a progression module, which will be completed in the final six weeks of the programme and develop the skills necessary for successful bridging of modules. The college course template identifies progression opportunities. As the college delivers at all levels from Entry to Level 4, progression routes from within the college are seen as vital.

The curriculum model which we are working towards for Curriculum 2000 is one that:

□ includes Levels 1–3

□ encourages breadth and vocational/academic mix

□ emphasises the centrality of tutorial, key skills and enrichment to the success and progression of the learner

□ allows time for the development of skills, while ensuring that they are placed in the context of the students' main subject/unit interests

□ can be delivered flexibly to provide community and employer-based access to the programmes.

Using ILT in teaching and learning

Leicester College has a plan to enhance the use of ILT in the curriculum. The timescales associated with the plan are given below.

August 2000 – publication of ILT strategy

October 2000 – curriculum model proposed to help ensure that a percentage of courses are taught online. Generic areas such as key skills, and some units common to many vocational A-level and BTEC National programmes, such as marketing, finance and human resource management, to be targeted

November 2000 – a 2-day curriculum conference for all staff involved with the curriculum, which focused on four major areas:

□ teaching strategies, including the use of managed or virtual learning environments
□ learning styles and how to use them
□ tutorial
□ assessment, especially formative assessment

January 2001 – pilot of 'bought in' online key skill development package

February 2001 – development of a template outlining course details and styles

March 2001 – evaluation of online package and presentation of a flexible ILT-based delivery method, developed in-house, for use with key skills programmes. The in-house tool included course outlines, notes with web links, online tutorial capability and a course-related chat room, where students could ask each other or their tutors for help. Monitoring of this showed very flexible use, including the site being accessed at 3am on a Sunday morning

May 2001 – staff asked to send materials for 2001/02 to be put into college template for the intranet

June 2001 – staff development for AS/A2 staff on mapping key skills into their subject area

July 2001 – start of college intranet.

Curriculum 2000 (2001/02)

The programme mix remains unchanged from last year, except for the addition of generic AS-levels Critical Thinking, Science for Public Understanding, Citizenship and European Studies.

Timetabling

There have been two main changes to the timetable to give a more coherent college-wide strategy.

☐ The matrix has been extended from five blocks to six to give wider choice, especially to vocational A-level students who, in some cases, are taught over three blocks.

☐ Key skills, tutorial and enrichment have been placed at the top of the grid. While this may seem insignificant, it was positioned last year below the Level 2 provision and labelled 'Key skills and additional support'. This was not helpful as it reinforced a remedial message, and made no mention of the areas of enrichment and tutorial.

Partnerships

Leicester City Cluster is a partnership that aims to provide a broader curriculum offer to 14–16 students. This partnership arrangement will grow due to Curriculum 2000 – particularly in terms of vocational GCSEs and provision for the talented students in vocational areas. If there are learners who are gifted in vocational areas such as design, engineering or hairdressing, they could be stretched and developed in these areas by infilling to the college's Level 3 courses.

Examples of other partnerships

☐ The college's tutorial coordinator is working with a Leicester City group to develop citizenship across the city. This will result in a city-wide implementation of Curriculum 2000.

☐ The college collaborates with Wyggeston Queen Elizabeth College to provide AS-level Music.

☐ The college works with the Leicester Islamic Academy to allow girls in a social and religious group whose opportunities in post-16 education have historically been limited, to access a range of AS-level provision.

Support mechanisms

Leicester College has an ILT technical support section. It also has a policy of appointing people with teaching qualifications or experience to work in the libraries as librarians and learning assistants. The college is also providing some typists to type lecturers' notes into a common framework this summer, so that material can be transferred to the intranet.

Management/coordination

Although the ILT project is related to Curriculum 2000 it forms part of a whole-college curriculum strategy. The head of curriculum development and the head of ILT are managing the whole-college strategy and use of flexible learning materials. They have regular meetings with the director of curriculum in order to ensure that the process is carried forward and supported at executive level.

Curriculum development

The key areas of curriculum development are:

□ a 3-year plan of staff development to spread flexible, learner-centred methodology throughout the college

□ the centrality of the tutorial and the individual learning plan to all students

□ staff development, supported through the Basic Skills Quality Initiative, so that all staff can provide basic skills to develop the underpinning knowledge for key skills

□ the use of the college intranet and a managed learning environment

□ the implementation of unitisation.

Other key features

The college is undergoing a period of restructuring and refurbishment.

□ The restructuring will place the 14–19 curriculum under one strategic assistant director. This will enable Curriculum 2000 to be considered holistically, as opposed to the current structure where the programme is delivered between six faculties.

□ The accommodation strategy has been developed to increase the amount of learning space available. This is in preparation for a significant increase in unitisation and flexible delivery to the community and employers, including delivery in the workplace and community centres. The resources currently being designed will include a large area, which will contain both ILT equipment and paper-based and group-based learning opportunities. This should maximise the ability to offer a teaching strategy that fits with a number of learning styles, thus increasing flexibility.

Strengths and weaknesses of current development/innovation

Strengths

- puts the learner and the individual learning plan at the centre of the curriculum experience

- creates a cross-college communication platform

- enables small group sizes in key skills

- offers a variety of ways to access learning, rather than seeing ILT as the only innovation.

Weaknesses

- online material being developed at the moment is in A4 format, so that staff can use it immediately. It needs to be developed in screen-size format, with appropriate web links

- involves complex communication strategies over four sites and through 24 schools

- it is more advanced in terms of course descriptions than teaching material

- involves considerable staff development. This is a strength in terms of creating a more capable workforce, but a weakness in terms of cost in the initial stages

- ILT material for those with basic skill needs is in need of further development to make it truly accessible.

Key issues

- creating coherence across the 14–19 curriculum, when the new structure is put in place in January 2002

- ensuring that the communication lines between the personal tutor, subject/unit teacher, key skills tutor and additional support tutor are clear and effective in terms of addressing the individual needs of the student

- staff development in developing the underpinning skills for learning

- bringing Level 1 and 2 courses into the framework

- encouraging the use of vocational qualifications as an addition to an AS/A2 programme as well as using AS/A2 as an enhancement to a vocational programme

- the development of a more specific college template for learning materials.

Wilmslow High School

Wilmslow High School is an 11–18 comprehensive school located on the southern outskirts of Greater Manchester. It has over 1600 students and the 300 students in the school's sixth form come from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school currently delivers vocational education in partnership with Macclesfield College for a small number of vocational A-level students. In 2002 it plans to work with Macclesfield College to expand vocational education in a limited number of curriculum areas.

Students are offered courses within option pools and are encouraged to take four AS-levels, but there are some students for whom three AS-levels might be more appropriate. Out of 137 students who started Year 12 in September 2000, 36 students reduced their AS courses from four to three during the year. Each AS course is allocated six 50-minute periods per week. Teachers are keen to retain this allocation, although flexibility within the timetable is lost if all students take four AS-levels.

All students participate in an enrichment programme ranging from sport to paired reading with students who need support, from working with the Community Voluntary Service (CVS) to taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh award and World Challenge expeditions. The aim is to develop students 'softer skills' in terms of working together and helping others less fortunate than themselves.

Tutor groups consist of 15–20 students and tutors provide advice and guidance on a range of issues including progression to further and higher education. Many students have the same tutor during their time at Wilmslow High School, so the links are well established and secure. A pilot group of students will be studying the IT key skills course from September 2001. All ICT students will also be encouraged to gain IT key skills accreditation.

Innovative approaches to teaching and learning in biology and ICT

An ICT development group was set up in April 2000. The group consisted of three teachers who were to consider how ICT could enhance their teaching and learning styles over and above any developments through New Opportunities Fund training. Two of the teachers decided to look at post-16 provision in the light of Curriculum 2000. One teacher was an experienced science teacher with responsibility for biology and the other was an experienced ICT teacher, who had helped to promote a range of whole-school initiatives and assisted with timetabling.

Both teachers were faced with new AS-level specifications in September 2000 and were worried about covering the content using traditional teaching methodologies – usually OHTs. They decided that all resources for biology and ICT should go on to CD-ROM, which students and staff could access. In both cases the specifications and the first unit had to be prepared by September and the remaining aspects of the courses were added throughout the year. By the end of the year the CD-ROM for each subject area included:

- specifications
- basic organisation
- 'have to know' notes for each unit (internal, external and from other schools)
- coursework advice and guidance
- resources, including specific links to the internet to save time searching
- 'discussion forum' links for students in ICT with other schools (particularly North Chadderton High School and King John's School)
- presentations from students within the first cohort.

Resources used to develop the CD-ROM

- time for the development group to pursue alternative approaches
- scanner, PC at school (and home), printer, CD-writer, modem and projector.

The timetable

- Each curriculum area has six 50-minute periods per AS course per week.
- The CD-ROM approach has not reduced allocation but it has influenced contact time. Students are now able to spend some time conducting research, making presentations etc. within timetabled time. In biology, many lessons now commence with a recap session based on learning relating to the CD – confirmation that the student has learnt the necessary information.

The ICT development group provided feedback to teaching staff and demonstrated how the CD-ROM could transform teaching and learning. Other curriculum areas are now interested and history has started to update its approach for September 2001. The biology teacher has provided INSET for the science team and increasingly other science teachers are using the projector.

Students are now expected to conduct research for themselves. For example, the University of Iowa website provides animation on gene theory. Having trawled the website, students are then tested on their knowledge and understanding through classroom discussion. Students have indicated that they find this interactive approach much more interesting than traditional note-taking. The combination of the CD-ROM notes, the internet, and the intranet is well received and there is now more time for discussions, presentations (which develop other key skills) and practical lessons.

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Both teachers think that the changes to teaching and learning styles brought about by Curriculum 2000 have enabled the role of the teacher as a facilitator to become a reality. Equally, students have turned into independent learners, which in the past, was rarely achieved with students dependent on their teachers for knowledge. Biology and ICT students are increasingly able to take responsibility for their own learning, understand the progress they have made and recognise the importance of personal organisation – all valuable skills in further and higher education.

Key issues for the forthcoming year

Vocational courses

The school retains approximately 54–56% of Year 11 students into the sixth form. The aim is to increase that to 65% while still attracting students from outside the area. Providing extra vocational courses in conjunction with Macclesfield College is to be part of the strategy. Current thinking revolves around courses in the arts, technology, health and social care and leisure and tourism. The school is also interested in providing accreditation for work-based learners. Discussions will take place in the autumn term 2001, with the aim to introduce the courses in September 2002.

Accommodation

The accommodation is inadequate for a growing sixth form. There are no specific study areas or seminar rooms for the sixth form students; they have to use the school's library resource centre, which in itself is less than half the size recommended by the DfES for a school of our size. Social facilities are poor. Accommodation is an issue for the whole school and a sixth form centre that is discrete, yet integral to the school, is one solution.

Resources

The interest in changing and developing teaching and learning styles creates an increased demand for technological resources. With New Opportunities Fund training alone the school has found that teachers want to use ICT across the curriculum, but the limited access to hardware delays the process. The school is piloting wireless laptops and wants to expand the scheme. The three ICT suites (with a total of 90 computers) and some curriculum clusters fall short of meeting the government's desired computer-to-student ratio. The school's leadership group finds it difficult to encourage teachers to be innovative when it is unable to provide them with the resources to fulfil their aims.

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Enrichment

Wilmslow High School is aiming to enhance its enrichment programme to bring breadth into the curriculum for post-16 students. For September 2002 the school is preparing a thorough core programme including key skills, which will offer a breadth of experience and recognise that for the individual student the number of AS/A2 courses will vary.

11–19 continuum

The school believes that the preparation for post-16 starts as soon as, if not before, the student joins in Year 7. The Key stage 3 strategy and increased flexibility at Key stage 4 place greater emphasis on students' gaining generic skills that can be applied across the curriculum. Wilmslow High School is aiming to implement a range of strategies at Key stages 3 and 4 that will enable students to feel that each year is different, engaging them and allowing them to make progress. Transforming teaching and learning styles will still remain the focus within the classroom.

Training

All developments require training for staff. Balancing training requirements with the need to be with students to enable them to learn can be difficult. Appropriate INSET is provided within school and teachers are supported on a range of external courses including standardisation meetings and visits to other schools. Within performance management, the requests for training have increased. National initiatives, for example the Key stage 3 strategy, have placed further demands on training.

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Worcestershire Local Education Authority

Worcestershire Local Education Authority is responsible for 30 high schools – 23 of these have sixth forms. Nine of the 13 special schools in the county also admit post-16 pupils. Worcestershire has a mix of two-tier and three-tier systems, with pupils transferring to secondary education at the ages of 11, 12 and 13. Consequently, there are high schools that cater for 11–16, 11–18, 12–18 and 13–18 year olds. A total of 3880 post-16 pupils attended the county's school sixth forms in 2000/01 – this number having remained relatively stable since 1997. The county's sixth forms are relatively modest in size. Six schools have sixth forms with less than 100 pupils, three have between 100 and 150 pupils, nine have between 150 and 200 pupils and five schools have sixth forms with more than 200 pupils. The largest sixth form has 335 pupils. Retention from Year 11 to Year 12 is on average 44% and from Year 12 to Year 13 it is 84%.

GCE A- and AS-levels have traditionally been the focus of sixth form provision in Worcestershire high schools, but increasingly intermediate and advanced post-16 vocational courses are being offered. Most, but not all schools offer key skills, and enrichment and tutorial activities also play an important part in the curriculum. Worcestershire LEA is also a pilot authority for the DfES Post-16 Citizenship Project.

The LEA appointed a post-16 policy officer in January 2001 to initiate, coordinate and provide guidance to the LEA and schools with sixth forms. Particular attention has been paid to Curriculum 2000 and curriculum planning, with emphasis placed on initiating projects that use innovative technologies to promote collaborative provision of sixth form learning opportunities. The work has been undertaken in conjunction with the county inspector for ICT in order to:

□ enhance access to minority subjects and maximise pupil choice, particularly in small sixth forms. For some schools, transferring Year 12 AS-level groups to A2 groups in Year 13 inevitably leads to some small and possibly non-viable groups in certain subjects. The use of collaborative arrangements between partner schools or consortia of schools can help to make small teaching groups more viable

□ promote the use of ICT and so enhance access to Curriculum 2000 through collaborative arrangements. This is especially important for schools situated in rural locations. In many areas of Worcestershire, the transportation of pupils and/or teachers between schools is not possible because of their remoteness and public transport is not always accessible or appropriate. Even if schools are in close proximity and transport is available there can be considerable difficulties in coordinating school timetables. Collaborative arrangements that use ICT can be used to overcome such problems.

Innovation in ICT

A high-speed broadband network development project – funded by the Worcestershire LEA Broadband Project under the auspices of the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) has involved the recent installation of a broadband network in all Worcestershire high schools and county libraries. This enables institution-to-institution contact to take place and provides internet access, effectively making the county council an internet service provider (ISP) for schools, the public via the county's libraries and other partner organisations.

The initiative includes the installation of a managed virtual learning environment (VLE). This provides a collaborative learning environment, including a virtual campus and virtual classrooms, where pupils and teachers can access resources and engage with audio- and video-conferencing. Web-based course content that is either custom written or purchased commercially can be delivered to pupils. Each pupil can be allocated personal workspace where teachers provide feedback on assignments and pupils can engage in online discussions. The system, called LearnWise, also provides facilities such as shared file storage and chat rooms. More information about the VLE can be found at www.LearnWise.net

The LearnWise VLE

Content delivery

Each student using LearnWise has their own customised portal which manages institution-wide information such as course notices, diaries and students' union notices together with a summary of the individual's courses and progress. The portal also gives students access to course content, diaries and 'to do' lists. Web-based courseware is delivered securely to each student. Courseware can be tailor-made using LearnWise publisher or bought in from commercial publishers.

Tracking and reporting

The system tracks data including pages accessed by pupils and their test scores, which are available to both students and tutors.

Collaboration tools and conferencing services

The system supports a wide range of collaborative tools including e-mail, frequently asked questions, chat rooms and a shared filestore. The searchable knowledge base provides a powerful aid to teaching and learning as more students use the system. Award-winning CUseeMe Conference Server software manages the creation of virtual conferences for the sharing of live voice and video communications and data over corporate intranets, as well as the internet. It encompasses applications such as video-conferencing, video-chat, high-performance Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and web collaboration – all within a managed environment. The ability to operate across the broadband infrastructure secures high-quality teacher/learner exchanges through a software-based interaction tool. The Internet connection gives learners access to the functions outside school session times and will allow the learning resources within the system to be used out of hours. The combination of these two elements provides an ideal environment to explore the potential of e-learning activities to a variety of client groups.

Several schools in Worcestershire have developed or are developing online materials and resources for delivering Curriculum 2000 as well as purchasing content from elsewhere. These materials are linked to an online tutoring system and are beginning to facilitate collaborative arrangements where schools with expertise in certain subjects can offer online content and tutoring to other schools. This can be an effective form of collaboration because the problems of a lack of transport and schools aligning their timetables no longer exist. Several such arrangements already exist in the county and these will be further developed.

In Worcestershire, access to a number of subjects such as modern languages, music, psychology and key skills could be improved through the use of ICT. ICT developments and collaborative arrangements also allow the curriculum and learning opportunities to be extended to meet the needs of pupils in rural communities, the most able pupils and those who may not usually progress into post-16 education, for example low achievers at GCSE and those with special educational needs. Several examples of good practice in the use of ICT in collaborative arrangements already exist in Worcestershire.

Stourport High School and Language College – video-conferencing of Japanese, Russian and Italian conversation classes

Stourport High School and Language College is an LEA-maintained, non-selective, state comprehensive school. Since it was designated a language college in December 1995, Stourport has undergone considerable change, both physically and in terms of the experience offered to pupils. The language college is based in a recently refurbished area of the school and has its own entrance and car park. This allows the local community to access the facilities after school hours. There are six teaching bases equipped with up-to-date audio-visual and ICT facilities. One room is a designated language laboratory, consisting of a 26-position, computer-operated laboratory and two adjacent rooms are linked to this system, expanding the capacity to 32 positions in all. This offers flexible use of the facility by up to three teaching groups at any one time. There is also a partitioned area to allow independent learning. All IT facilities are connected to a central network that provides access to language learning software. Furthermore, there are multimedia CD-ROM packages that allow interactive learning, both within the classroom situation and as a self-study revision aid.

The school has used extra funding as a language college to radically improve the quality and quantity of resources used to teach languages. There are active partnerships with schools in France, Germany, Hungary and Spain, and state-of-the-art ICT (such as a satellite link) is used to support these. Every year the school welcomes teachers from other countries including Japan, France, Germany, Hungary and Russia and students from Thailand, Russia, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan and America have come to the school to study. Stourport High School and Language College has bid for Phase 2 funding to develop further its initiatives in languages and cultural awareness.

The school is committed to language learning. It asks each pupil to study two foreign languages at Key stage 4 and to continue studying a language in the sixth form. The school's sixth form has approximately 177 pupils. A full range of courses is offered to post-16 students, from free-standing GNVQ units in German, French and Spanish to GCE A- and AS-levels in French and German. The AEB Certificate for Further Study of French/German for Business is also available to pupils. Post-16 students take part in a variety of curriculum-related visits to partner schools and all Year 12 students are offered the opportunity to complete a week's work experience in France.

South Bromsgrove Community High School and Technology College – video-conferencing link

This school has 236 pupils in its sixth form, which is open to all students who would benefit from the courses it runs. The courses are very wide ranging, with 23 A-level courses and vocational A-levels on offer. The majority of sixth form students follow GCE AS-level and A2 courses in three or four subjects, with additional elements such as key skills. A video-conferencing link with Stourport High School and Language College has been established, allowing South Bromsgrove students to access a wider curriculum in modern foreign languages. Language lessons in Italian and Japanese delivered at Stourport are recorded and transferred online to South Bromsgrove. Anyone in Years 12 and 13 at South Bromsgrove can take these 'extra courses' depending on their commitment and timetable. However, more flexible use of the school day enables wider access to these lessons (eg during lunch times). Students can also opt to take Spanish if they can access two lessons on a regular basis.

Haybridge High School – video-conferencing link

Haybridge High School is a 13–18 community school with 750 students, including 216 sixth formers. In January 2001 an audio-video conferencing link was set up to transfer Russian, Japanese and Italian lessons from Stourport High School to Haybridge High School. Japanese classes (three lunchtime sessions of 40 minutes) began at Haybridge in June 2001, while similar lessons in Russian and Italian began in February 2001. The lessons were offered mainly to Year 12 and were taken by around 30 pupils. The link has been successful and will be continued in the next academic year (2001/02). New funding from the Technology College Trust will be used to improve the equipment at the school and a more defined package of lessons will be developed in autumn 2001. The school has also identified opportunities for cross-curricular links into cultural, historical and geographical studies and raising student awareness of the international dimension.

Arrow Vale Community High School and Droitwich Spa High School – video-conferencing of PE lessons

Arrow Vale Community High School in Redditch and Droitwich Spa High School are specialist sports colleges that are investigating the feasibility of establishing video-conferencing links with University College Worcester. It is envisaged that PE lessons taking place in the schools will be video-recorded and transferred online so that those studying for a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education can analyse them as examples of good teaching and learning practice.

Assessment of ICT developments

An evaluation of the materials and learning methods associated with the broadband network and VLE is being undertaken by Dr Don Passey, Research Fellow, Lancaster University. The strengths and weaknesses of the approaches will be assessed and the effectiveness of each programme will be monitored in order to identify what additional elements should be in place to ensure that e-learning is an efficient post-16 tool.

Key issues

Worcestershire LEA now aims to disseminate information about e-learning and the use of new technologies in schools and encourage further uptake of the broadband network as a platform. Examples of good practice will be identified and disseminated throughout the county.

☐ With the Worcestershire broadband network in place, the LEA and schools need to explore further collaborative opportunities that use ICT to delivery Curriculum 2000.

☐ The LEA is undertaking an audit of the collaborative arrangements in schools, particularly those arrangements that involve the use of ICT. This will be used as a basis for identifying where future provision could take place and what subjects might be involved.

☐ The level of pastoral support for pupils in the 'receiving' schools needs to be addressed. Despite online feedback on their assignments and work completed, pupils need to have more frequent online or face-to-face contact with a tutor or adviser. The adequacy of resources and support materials (eg library resources and textbooks) for pupils at the 'receiving' schools is also an issue.

☐ A decision needs to be made on how to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the e-learning that is in place and whether it is an effective teaching and learning tool at post-16. The Worcestershire e-Learning Pilot Project will seek to establish strengths and weaknesses of the approach, identify best practice and determine the most effective use of VLE in extending learning opportunities. This will inform the development of future content.

☐ It is envisaged that schools will begin to collaborate with other post-16 providers. The LEA is beginning to initiate a countywide strategy for e-learning that will engage with all providers of post-16 education and training. Partners may include the county's FE and sixth form colleges, the local LSC, work-based learning providers, other businesses and employers in the county, and Ufi. The LEA and local LSC are currently reviewing the disparate ICT provision that already exists in Worcestershire, with the aim of instigating a partnership approach to the provision of education and training materials through this medium. This will enhance and diversify provision and allow wider access.

☐ Such developments are constrained by the funding and resource restrictions faced by schools and the LEA. It is this, rather than the willingness to participate, that will govern future provision and uptake by schools. The LEA will be seeking alternative funding to support its post-16 ICT developments.

Other consortia arrangements within Worcestershire

North Bromsgrove High School

North Bromsgrove High School is a 13–18 comprehensive with around 1000 pupils, approximately 200 of whom are in the sixth form.

□ There is a fortnightly timetable of 25 periods per week.

□ The current Curriculum 2000 provision allows students to study up to five AS/A2 subjects (excluding general studies and enrichment) but there is no opportunity for vocational A-levels or GNVQ.

□ Enrichment is delivered through a variety of opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's award, Sports Leadership, PE, community service and Young Enterprise.

□ Lessons are given between 1.5 and 2 hours each week.

□ Both enrichment and vocational education provide an opportunity for partnership between the school and college.

North East Worcestershire College

North East Worcestershire College (NEW College) is an FE college that offers a full range of AS/A2 courses, vocational A-levels, GNVQs, NVQs, HNCs and HNDs.

The Redditch site offers 16–18 education, with the Bromsgrove site focusing on adult education. However, specific subjects for 16–18 year olds such as media and music are delivered at Bromsgrove. Partnership with North Bromsgrove High School allows the opportunity for continuation from AS/A2 to HND courses.

Redditch Consortium

☐ The consortium consists of four 13–18 mixed comprehensive institutions.

☐ The four institutions are all within the same town – Redditch.

☐ Each institution offers a range of GCE and vocational qualifications, with progression from AS to A2 courses, plus intermediate options and GCSE resits.

☐ Each institution offers personal tutor time and has introduced key skills programmes.

☐ Each institution also offers enrichment programmes.

☐ There are variations in the organisation of the school day, subjects offered, popularity of subjects, combinations of subjects available and time allocated to lessons, which this project seeks to address via consortium proposals.

Consortium coordination

A post-16 consortium coordinator (on 12-month secondment) has been appointed. The coordinator will:

☐ look into the implications of the LSC funding formulae for the school sixth forms in Redditch

☐ examine the subjects on offer by each consortium member and decide whether under LSC funding they are viable courses that can continue to be delivered within the sixth form or if they should be placed under consortium provision

☐ look at the viability of setting up a consortium between the four sixth form centres and draw up proposals for its structure and timetabling within the context of the members' school day. The consortium structure will require a variety of issues to be addressed before it is established as a working programme. It is hoped that the basic structure will be in place by the end of the secondment.

The proposal will also cover alternative delivery mechanisms (eg video-conferencing). This is so that once the consortium is established alternative delivery methods can be introduced in order to reduce running costs (eg transporting students between consortium members) and timetabling constraints.

Aims

☐ To determine a suitable timetabling structure for the implementation of consortium subjects that is acceptable to all consortium members and is logistically possible without being detrimental to students

☐ To identify the subjects that should be placed within the consortium based on data analysis of each consortium member's sixth form

☐ To determine the potential number of students involved in any transportation arrangements between the consortium members

☐ To identify the appropriate consortium member to act as the consortium provider for the consortium subjects

☐ To determine the mechanism and level of fund transference between consortium members

☐ To identify potential alternative delivery mechanisms and the feasibility of implementation in the future.

The purpose of the consortium is to ensure that the breadth of subjects on offer to students entering the sixth forms is maintained and that new courses, which previously could not be offered due to lack of numbers, can be introduced. It is also to support weaker sixth forms within the system that may, under the LSC funding structure, be required to close and which would in the process reduce the options of its students with regard to continuing their education beyond GSCE. Therefore, its end goal is to ensure that student choice is not restricted, with regard to both the subjects post-16 pupils wish to study and where they want to study them.
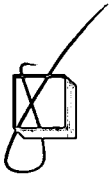
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