

14-19 Implementation Update

Spring Term 2006

Excellent progress in raising achievement

Figures released in February show a 3% increase in the attainment of young people at level 2 (5 GCSE A*-C or equivalent) by the age of 19. This highlights the excellent work that schools and colleges have been putting into progress towards the PSA target. This is a fantastic achievement by young people, providers and teachers.

More details can be found at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000637/index.shtml>

For more information ...

For the latest information and guidance, have a look at our website www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19

Over the next month the website will be updated to provide information on Learning Visits, and guidance on forming 14-19 partnerships and developing local prospectuses. Also look out for more detail on specialised Diplomas.

We are always keen to hear from you about what is going on, what is working for you, what barriers are getting in the way, and what support we can offer to help make 14-19 reforms a success.

If you have comments or questions, or would like to receive further information in the future, please email us at 14-19.communications@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Have you seen the 'Manual of Good Practice from 14-19 Pathfinders'? It gives guidance on such things as: how partnerships are best developed; why employers should get involved in 14-19 provision; and how providers have broadened the curriculum offer to 14-19 learners. www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19

Whilst working hard to introduce new qualifications and curricula, we have not forgotten the importance of high quality A levels and GCSEs and continuing to improve the existing exams system. For example, in September 2006 we are introducing a new, two-tier GCSE maths assessment model, and the new science GCSE will be available for first teaching.

On 8th March, Ruth Kelly announced a new maths GCSE - to be taken as an additional qualification by those students with an interest in extending their understanding of the subject - to be generally available from 2010. The QCA will be consulting with key stakeholders to develop the new qualification.

The QCA is conducting other consultations:

- on new qualification and subject criteria for A levels including the reduction to four assessment units and new parameters for coursework where it is used; and,
- on the draft criteria for an extended project to be used both within the specialised Diploma and A level programmes.

The QCA's review of coursework in GCSE and A level will be completed in the spring. It is likely that, in the future, coursework will only be used where it is the most valid way of assessing specific skills, and not where its main purpose is to assess knowledge and skills which can be assessed in other ways.

The QCA is also carrying out a review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The new curriculum will be rolled out from 2008, with new programmes of study available in schools from autumn 2007. Further information is available at <http://www.qca.org.uk/14931.html>

To help improve the current exam system, the National Assessment Agency has put a number of online tools for exams officers on its website. One of these is an exam fees' calculator, which calculates the costs of late exam entries. The results can be shared with colleagues to highlight the importance of getting entries to awarding bodies on time. www.naa.org.uk

The next edition of Implementation Update...

The next edition of this newsletter will be available in the summer term with more information on the next stages of 14-19 reform including details of the gateway process that schools, colleges and other providers will need to pass through to offer the specialised Diplomas from 2008.

The 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper heralded an exciting future for the 14-19 education system. It set out a system: where **all young people** will be able to access a new qualifications and curriculum entitlement in a programme of learning that interests them; where **employers** will work with government to design programmes of study that are relevant and focused on national skill demands; and **higher education** providers will be able to identify whether applicants are suited to courses of study; and **all schools and colleges** will collaborate with local employers under local leadership to deliver a world class system for 14-19 young people.

In the 14-19 Implementation Plan, published in December, we set out who needs to do what by when to achieve this system. So far, working with our partners, we have made good progress against the three priorities:

- **Improving the system immediately for today's young people.** We have seen some early success at reaching our target at Level 2 at 19 and will be offering £2m in 2006/07 to test innovative approaches to raising attainment in hotspot areas. We are developing plans to raise completion rates for apprenticeships.
- **Developing the qualifications and curricula entitlement.** Functional skills standards are out for consultation, including major consultations with employers, led by CBI and SSDA. The Gateway process for specialised Diplomas will be published in the spring, and will aim to deliver the first five lines in 2008. The QCA KS3 review began in January.
- **Supporting every area to deliver.** We have produced a 'Manual of Good Practice from 14-19 Pathfinders' and are putting Learning Visits in place to share progress across areas. Plans are developing to support workforce, facilities and funding models to aid local collaboration and delivery.

Together, these developments are important building blocks in creating a world class system for 14-19 year olds. This newsletter will keep you updated as we progress. It sets out when more information will be available and future editions will explain more about how you can get involved.

Questions to think about:

- How many of the new specialised Diploma lines will you want to offer in 2008 and how many students might take these qualifications?
- Who in the area is best placed to offer which Diploma line, what workforce and facility implications will this have and what links need to be made with employers?
- What do you need to do to prepare for other changes – including functional skills, Key Stage 3 and A Levels? What do you need to do to communicate with your students, teachers, parents and employers about what 14-19 offers for them?

Do you want to know how to implement and deliver aspects of the 14-19 reforms?

Then go on a Learning Visit. We've set up a programme of structured Learning Visits to 14-19 Pathfinder areas and Increased Flexibility Partnerships to enable strategic planners and practitioners to learn, from other's experiences, what has and has not worked.

What's on offer?

- **Introductory Learning Visit** giving an overview of all elements of the policy/practice;
- **Follow up service** to answer particular queries; and
- **Introduction to the specific policy/practice** together with **Action Planning** in and for another area.

Who should attend?

Senior local authority officials; Senior LSC officials; FE college principals; and representatives from schools' senior management teams.

Visit www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19 for information on what the Visits will cover, how to book and more.

