

LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS AND SCHOOLS-RELATED ACTIVITIES

Background

The last meeting of the Learning Partnerships Group asked for information about the types of activities that Learning Partnerships were engaging in with schools. The meeting was particularly keen to hear about action towards improving attainment and post 16 progression. The following have been taken from Learning Partnership plans and in one or two cases from contact with the Partnerships themselves. This represents a partial analysis at this stage as not all plans have been assessed and visits to target partnerships are not yet completed. Schools are directly represented on 75% of Learning Partnerships, although their involvement may be higher through membership of sub or thematic groups networked through the partnerships.

Activities

Generally speaking, actions being undertaken by Learning Partnerships can be grouped under a number of broad headings: **developing tracking systems for pupils/students; developing alternative curriculum at Key Stage 4 (KS4) [disapplication of the national curriculum]; motivational programmes/projects targeted at engaging the disengaged; work based curriculum or work related programmes; mentoring programmes; family based learning; and transitional projects.**

However there are some actions which appear less common across Partnerships. These would include activities such as: developing youth worker programmes to support young people entering the Learning Gateway [Derbyshire]; College appointed school link co-ordinator for construction and print trades [East Thames]; Kick Start for Care leavers and care users [Hertfordshire]; Looked After Children project [Kirklees]; develop five out of school learning centres [Isle of Wight]; develop and extend link programmes to all schools designed to improve KS3 / 4 performance and staying on rates [Somerset]; Childrens University Workshops at Year 6 [Telford & Wrekin]; Secondary School age Young People Charter [Walsall]; through EiC encourage improved attainment and long term achievement at KS4 and NVQ2 [Leeds].

The following represent some of the specific activities and projects described in the Learning Plans received, presented under the broad headings referred to above. The Learning Partnership involved is indicated for further reference if required. This hopefully gives some indication of the sorts of actions that Learning Partnerships are engaging with in order to have an impact on the school/pre 16 and transition phase. *It should however be seen as incomplete at this stage and certainly not as an exhaustive analysis of the situation.*

Tracking Pupils and Students

- tracking projects [North Notts]
- database developed for 14 - 19 [Cheshire]
- establish tracking system from KS4 to 19 years [Bury]
- setting targets for progression at post 16 [Derbyshire]

Alternative KS4 Curriculum

- 100 students targeted for alternative curriculum [Suffolk]
- alternative curriculum developed; maximise opportunities for most at risk [Derbyshire]
- pilot Morrisby Testing for Year 11 as alternative to GCSE assessments of skill [N. London]
- alternative KS4 broad curriculum [Oxford]
- review KS4 curriculum to provide GNVQ part one programmes [Devon & Torbay]
- introduce GNVQ Foundation and Intermediate in schools [Somerset]
- alternative KS4 activity [Coventry]
- mapping alternative KS4 curriculum [Herefordshire] [Worcestershire]
- pursue ASDAN framework [Sheffield]
- develop key skills across the curriculum [East Riding]
- alternative KS4 curriculum [Kirklees]

Motivational Programmes

- motivational and transitional programmes for Years 10 / 11 - M-Ploy Package [N. Notts]
- truancy, low achievement and social exclusion project [Swindon and Wiltshire]
- Year 10 pupil support programme [Telford & Wrekin]
- Podium Project re-engaging through sport [Kirklees]
- develop models of joint 14 -16 curriculum activity in areas of low participation [Gloucestershire]

Work Related Programmes

- increase vocational elements into KS4 [Cornwall]
- develop work based curriculum at KS4 [Lincs & Rutland]
- work preparation programme [Plymouth]
- Impact NT and MA workshops [Coventry]
- 500 pupils involved in Young Enterprise and 95% participation in work experience Year 10 / 11 [Suffolk]

Mentoring Programmes

- recruit, train and use peer mentors in schools [Cheshire]
- pilot Connexions [N. Lincs] [Leeds]
- mentoring for those on the margins of success [Bracknell]
- Personal Adviser pilot [Lincs & Rutland]
- pilot mentoring scheme for disengaged Year 9 pupils [Bury]

Family Based Approaches

- develop family based basic skills programmes [Liverpool]
- develop learning networks linked to primary schools and promote summer learning events for parents and children [Cheshire]

Transitional Programmes

- City Learning transition group to address progression at KS4 [Hull]
- Fast Forward careers education to improve progression [Telford & Wrekin]
- develop coherent pathways across 14 - 19 phase including ICT elements [Bury]
- Partnership agreed to SRB funding for projects which address the key issue of transition at 16 [Manchester]
- 4 pilot projects adopting a multi-agency approach to supporting young people in Year11 and first post-16 destination [Manchester]
- multi - agency approach to supporting transition at Year 11 [Leicestershire]

Annex

Case Study 1

Cheshire Learning Partnership

Cheshire have established a number of priorities for action under a theme of 'Widening Participation and Improving Achievements of Young People.' These are :

- improving strategic planning using the developing 14 - 19 database - the Partnership has made some funding available to fund collaborative projects and to implement the database;
- create and implement opportunities for learning outside formal settings, particularly for the Bridging the Gap cohort - the Student At Risk Groups [STAR] are being asked to take this forward and it will involve the exploration of the 'Progress File' and alternative accreditation;
- extend use of mentoring to support learners and raise aspirations particularly for the Bridging the gap cohort;
- put in place feedback mechanisms for the 14 - 19 age group using a 'Shadow CxS Group' to lead.

Case Study 2

Buckinghamshire Learning Partnership

Buckinghamshire has developed a 'Buckinghamshire Young People's University' which comprises a range of extra curricular activities provided through a Saturday Morning Club and more recently through a Summer School. This is proving to be enormously popular with the young people, parents and tutors alike with very positive feedback. The scheme has been supported through the Partnership and a New Opportunities Fund bid of £386k and is targeted at Years 5 - 8.

Case Study 3

Sefton Learning Partnership

Sefton have established a Social Inclusion (Youth Support) Task Group to develop a range of actions designed to tackle the issue of the need for linkage between preventative measures for 14 - 16 year olds and support for 16 - 18 year olds who have not entered learning.

Activities include :

- support provided to development of alternative curriculum strategies for 14 - 16 year olds - this involves 16 programmes working towards New Start quality kite mark;
- publication of guidelines and exemplar materials to spread good practice - resource pack published, disseminated and network meetings / workshops arranged;
- develop specialist provision for children in public care or excluded from all education.

Case Study 4

Halton Learning Partnership

The partnership has established a pupil support pilot project 'Route 14' which offers alternative choices to 14 year olds most at risk of disengaging. The project involves a partnership between the school, Cheshire Guidance Partnership, the Youth Service and the College. The project has a number of objectives including :

- reducing truancy and exclusion;
- motivating through vocational experience;
- offering one to one and small group counselling and support activities;
- widening participation of non traditional teachers;
- developing clear pathways into suitable education / vocational provision.

Case Study 5

Swindon and Wiltshire Learning Partnership

In both Wiltshire and Swindon increasing concern was being expressed by a range of partners about the relatively small, but still significant numbers of 14-16 year olds who were being excluded from school and rejecting learning and ultimately work. Schools, the LEAs and other major agencies like the TEC and Careers Company were keen to create change and make a difference for these young people. Whilst the indicators of social need were such that Swindon attracted additional national funding to support the development of the curriculum and alternative learning contexts, Wiltshire did not. Determined to ensure that the needs of young people were met the Learning Partnership facilitated a meeting of all the agencies and local partners to explore how new approaches could be developed to address this need. This project was included as part of the Partnerships delivery plan for 2000/2001

Over the last two years, money has been passed to schools from the LEAs, TEC and the Local Learning Partnerships, in order that schools can develop and make more appropriate provision. Local Colleges, consortium of schools and private training providers have worked together through the partnership to find innovative ways of making provision that meet the needs of these young people in both the urban and rural context. Local companies have created new opportunities for placement and learning, developing both programmes and opportunities for young people and their own work force, using both mentoring programmes and National Qualifications. The support agencies have developed multi agency working in support of the young people and are now relating to the local learning partnerships for support in a way which had not previously existed.

In Wiltshire the overall number of permanent exclusions has been halved to under 50 and this can be attributed to the secondary sector. In two years, as a result of schools developing and being supported in the development of the Key Stage 4 curriculum **the number of students experiencing an extended work placement or college based course on a regular basis has increased from an average of 35 to 300.** Schools now offer young people a wider range of qualifications, many of which young people see as more relevant, exiting and purposeful. Whilst there is more to do, the focusing of energy, enthusiasm, funding and a desire to make a difference for young people through the learning partnership is creating local

change which is owned by all, including the young people.

**Learning Partnerships Team
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