

Education Improvement Partnerships



local collaboration for school improvement
and better service delivery

department for

education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

Foreword

There has been a long history of schools and other agencies working together to improve outcomes for children and young people. Focused and good quality collaboration between schools, FE colleges and other educational providers, and with other statutory and voluntary sector organisations, has proved an effective way to improve the delivery of services and raise standards of education within communities.

The Government attaches great importance to learning from effective partnership working. High quality collaboration is a key complement to the working of strong autonomous institutions. Confident schools want to collaborate with others in their community to drive a shared agenda for improving standards, to share resources and good practice, to ensure high quality provision for all young people and to underpin community cohesion.

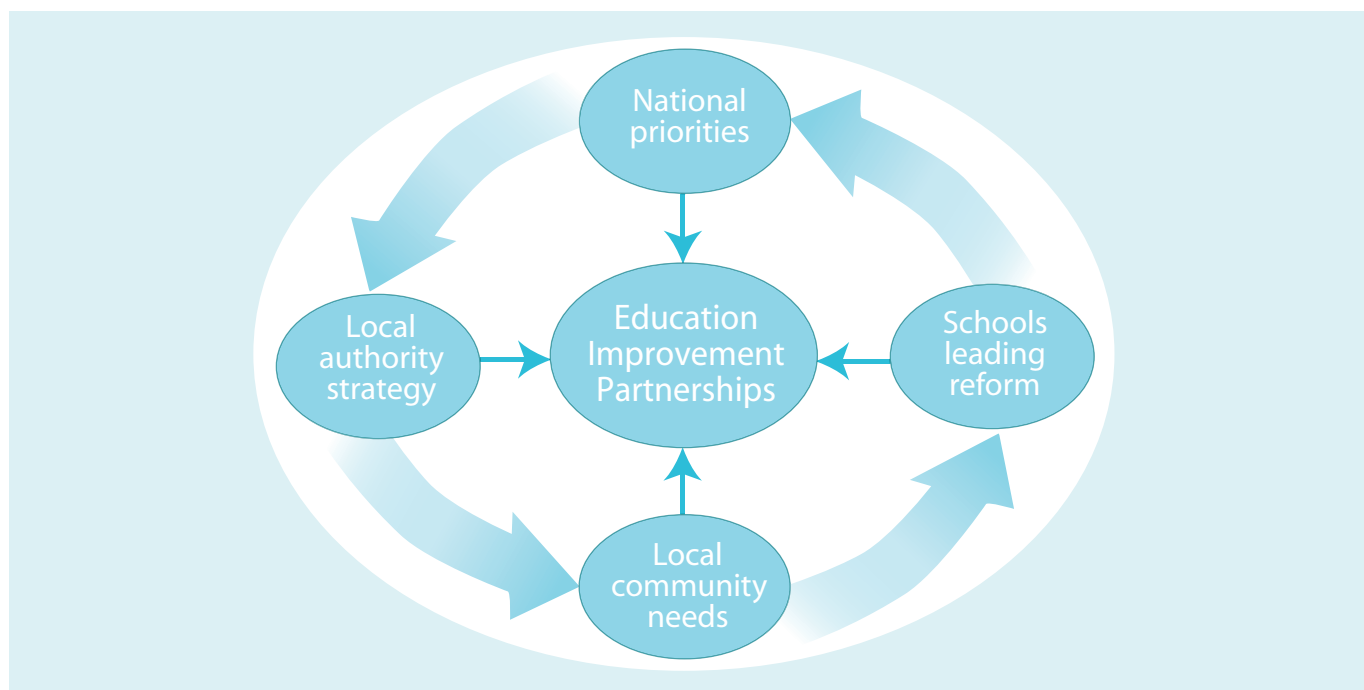
School networks can take many forms and serve many purposes. The concept of Education Improvement Partnerships introduced in this prospectus is designed to give some unity and sharper purpose to the idea of collaboration in the education service. We hope the idea of EIPs and this prospectus will stimulate:

- the expansion of high quality collaboration
- the rationalisation of partnership activity where appropriate
- the devolution of responsibilities and resources from local authorities to groups of schools and other partners

We see EIPs having potential in a variety of contexts, including:

- 14-19 provision
- behaviour improvement and alternative educational provision
- the development of childcare and extended services

Please tell us your plans for partnership and where these will add greatest benefit. Later in the year, we will host a special conference for learning providers and local authorities making real progress with collaborative working of this kind.



Purpose

An Education Improvement Partnership should set out its aims within the following framework of objectives:

- **school improvement:** raising attainment and improving behaviour and attendance in all schools within the partnership;
- **personalisation** of provision for children and young people;
- **delivering on the outcomes of *Every Child Matters*** in all schools and through childcare and extended services.



Principles

- The Education Improvement Partnership should define the **common purpose** underpinning its joint activities and how it intends to pursue its over-arching aims.
- The Education Improvement Partnership will often serve a defined **local community** of learners and should operate on an inclusive basis. Every school in the defined locality should be encouraged to participate.
- The members of an Education Improvement Partnership should be equally committed to **success for all children and young people**. This commitment could be demonstrated both through the partnership's inclusivity and through mutual accountability, and could be supported through the establishment of a shared partnership fund to which each member contributes a specified sum.
- Where functions are being delegated from a local authority, the Education Improvement Partnership should have a **joint agreement** (by way of a protocol or service level agreement) with that authority to deliver an agreed, specified set of functions. Appropriate funding would be devolved from the local authority to the partnership in accordance with those functions.
- In these cases, it must be clear how this **joint agreement fits into the wider Children's and Young People's Plan** for improving children's services across the area – and within the children's trust arrangements which will underpin it and deliver improved outcomes.
- The members of the partnership will be **mutually accountable** for shared functions and for the outcomes it delivers in connection with those functions. The partnership will want to develop a strategy which is broad-based, raising attainment amongst learners, promoting efficiency through workforce reform, and combating bureaucracy to maximise the benefits of collaborative working for teachers. It could benchmark itself against other partnerships through self-evaluation and peer review to measure the impact that partnership working is making on learning and teaching across the group of schools and other partners.



Partnership dividend

Successful partnership working can take time and effort on the part of schools, colleges, and other providers, particularly in the early stages as the partnership becomes established. However, evidence from existing partnership working shows powerful gains where learning providers collaborate effectively.

Collaboration strengthens leadership across a partnership. Teachers and their support staff are motivated and stimulated by opportunities to work with colleagues in other schools on common issues whether it is their subject specialism, issues around literacy or numeracy, or behaviour and attendance. Peer support is a powerful method of continuous professional development. Teachers also benefit from working with colleagues more widely on broader issues, such as transition into and beyond school or family support.

In the closest networks we are seeing a much wider curricular choice being made available to students, with a more co-ordinated and focused approach to learning and teaching. This is enhanced by shared expertise in the use of assessment for learning, to create a more personalised offer.



In some parts of the country issues around childcare, child protection, and extended services for children, young people and their families are already achieving better outcomes through strong collaboration between schools and children's services working in partnership with local authorities. Schools and other

The partnership dividend for schools – better outcomes for pupils

- schools lead the system and focus on what works
- higher rates of improvement
- sharing provision of a broader curriculum
- motivating all school staff through professional dialogue with partner schools
- sharing provision for disruptive and excluded pupils
- trusted headteacher colleagues understanding the context
- sharing resources
- wider range of out of school activities

The partnership dividend for local authorities – better outcomes for pupils

- focus on strategic role
- champions of school standards
- capitalising on expertise in schools
- fewer delivery partners
- more funding at the front line
- holistic children's services
- ownership by community
- adapted to local needs

children's services are being encouraged to look at the wider needs of the child and to collaborate in providing multi-agency support in order to deliver on the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being in life.

Existing programmes such as Excellence in Cities (EiC), the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG), the Leading Edge Partnership Programme (LEPP), Network Learning Communities, Federations and the Specialist Schools Programme have established strong and effective partnerships. Rates of improvement in EiC schools, for example, are twice the national average. It is clear that improvements have occurred both where extra funding has been in place and where it has not. The experience of many partnerships tells us that it is by establishing different, more collaborative ways of working that real and sustainable improvement is achieved.

Education Improvement Partnerships are not intended to replace or marginalise existing partnerships. Instead, they offer a way to streamline, and build upon these arrangements within the context of a New Relationship with Schools. There will be greater freedom to fashion what works locally rather than a requirement to collaborate on a range of separately defined models of national partnership. Schools already experienced in working together can further develop using the creation of an Education Improvement Partnership to extend into new areas and to involve other partners such as colleges and work-based training providers. Other groups of schools seeking to work together for the first time will have a single model of good practice to help them.

Existing models of partnership working...

Learning Partnerships promote a culture of provider collaboration across sectors (schools, FE, work-based learning and adult and community learning) covering post-16 learning. They are non-statutory, voluntary groupings of local learning providers and others such as local government, Connexions/Careers Service, trade unions, employers and faith groups. The core roles for Learning Partnerships are promoting provider collaboration in support of lifelong learning and maximising the contribution of learning to local regeneration.

Learning Partnerships are also involved in follow-up to Area Inspections, 14-19 proposals and a range of initiatives around Basic Skills, workforce development, ICT and progression into Higher Education. Learning Partnerships are administered and funded through the LSC, and they are contributing increasingly to local strategies for regeneration and many have become the 'learning arm' of the Local Strategic Partnerships.



Partnership dividend

Existing models of partnership working...

Federations are groups of schools that come together and set up joint governance arrangements, either through establishing a joint governing body or an executive committee which could include headteachers, representatives of local FE colleges, employers and service providers. Joint governance arrangements enable groups of schools to work together more effectively, to take a coordinated and strategic approach to raising standards of teaching and learning across the federation and to develop strong mechanisms for joint accountability. Federations will be well placed to develop into Education Improvement Partnerships, and a number of them already have contracts with their local authorities to deliver services.

We do not want partnerships to be caught up with unnecessarily bureaucratic support structures – the benefits of partnership might be lost if too much resource is spent on facilitation of the partnership. We want to work with colleagues in the field to develop model SLAs which will ensure effective delivery of service without burdensome monitoring regimes.

In due course, the School Improvement Partner (SIP) – an integral part of the New Relationship with Schools – will challenge each school about the effectiveness of its work. SIPs will consider the support a school draws from the partnerships of which it is a member, and what contribution the school makes to the local learning community.

Existing models of partnership working...

The **Networked Learning Communities (NLC)** programme, brings together groups of schools, local authorities, Higher Education Institutions and the wider community to enable them to work collaboratively to raise standards and improve opportunities for their pupils. Using ICT and other means, NLCs develop access to leadership learning, information and communication, and provide greater opportunities for school leaders to exchange good practice. One initiative developed through NLCs is the Collaborative Leadership Learning Programme designed for facilitator headteachers or local authority officers establishing new 'learning for leadership' groups or transforming existing headteacher meetings into 'learning for leadership' groups. There are currently 109 networks across the country, engaging with more than 1,200 schools, 30,000 staff and 555,000 pupils.

Practicalities



Membership of Education Improvement Partnerships should be flexible to suit the needs of the partner institutions and their learners. However, in order to meet a wide range of demands, especially those around 14-19 reforms, behaviour improvement, and provision of extended services, partnerships will need to include, for example, FE colleges, work-based training providers, early years settings, such as nursery schools or accredited childminder networks, and other private and voluntary sector providers, business partners and sports clubs as well as primary and secondary schools, special schools, City Technology Colleges, academies, PRUs and independent schools. Cross-phase models would be particularly advantageous, providing for the community of pupils throughout their school lives, from 0 – 19.

Diversity of membership within a partnership will be a powerful way of meeting the needs of all the children within it, unlocking resources and approaches. It will also be a way of widening access to the specialist expertise of, for example, schools in Leading Edge partnerships and Specialist schools.

Most Education Improvement Partnerships will have a geographical basis in order to deliver local benefits. They may of course extend across local authority boundaries, and schools may be members of more than one

partnership or network. None of these arrangements however are designed to preclude schools from being members of other partnerships which are national or international.

Not all providers within one Education Improvement Partnership will be affected by the same issues at the same time. The best response to local need might be for smaller groups of schools within one Education Improvement Partnership to work together on issues which affect them more than their

Existing models of partnership working...

Schools in Leading Edge Partnerships are already working effectively in collaboration with other schools. Over time, existing Leading Edge partnerships may evolve into Education Improvement Partnerships by adding in new, or extra partners, or by developing the core focus of the Leading Edge partnership. Leading Edge partnership lead schools would be well placed to take a central role within an Education Improvement Partnership, using their expertise to work with other schools in their locality to raise standards and to tackle school, subject and pupil underperformance. They might do this through work with partners on a second specialism curriculum subject, by providing CPD and ITT for all member schools, or by working with other schools in their family of specialists, together with an FE college or work-based training provider, to take on delivery of vocational qualifications.

neighbours at a particular time. Whilst all members of the partnership should work, ultimately, towards improvement across the board, there is no obligation on all those in the partnership to be working on exactly the same areas all the time – local need should be the guide here.

Practicalities

It is important that Education Improvement Partnerships are founded upon inclusive principles: that is, that no schools are left out in a given locality. Size will depend on local factors, context, and the functions which it is proposed should be collaboratively assumed. In LIG collaboratives and Excellence Clusters between 5 and 30 schools has been shown to be a good workable size, and all specialist schools are used to working with 5 or more partner schools. However, there is no rule on this and the size of your EIP should be for local decision. Local authorities will have a role to play as brokers here. A diverse mix of schools, colleges, and other providers, in terms of specialism, resources and strengths is likely to provide a strong basis for raising standards across the partnership as a whole.

Accountability

Partnerships and local authorities will need to agree protocols or service level agreements to cover the 'rules' of Education Improvement Partnerships that take on functions devolved from the authority, and how groups of schools in that partnership will be collectively accountable for delivering particular services and meeting defined targets.

These agreements should specify:

- Expected inputs, outcomes, monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as procedures which could be taken to rectify any problems;
- The resources available;
- Internal lines of accountability. Partnership members will want clarity among themselves on leadership, management and governance;
- External lines of accountability – where groups of schools take on responsibility for delivery of named functions from a local authority, and how the delivery duties of

the Education Improvement Partnership fit with the local authority's wider Children's and Young People's Plan;

- What action will be taken if individual members fail to contribute as envisaged by the Education Improvement Partnership;
- How performance will be managed. Eg
 - i. benchmarking against other partnerships through self-evaluation and peer review – a development of the model in EiC
 - ii. an inspection so that themes of common interest can be highlighted. This could be requested by the partnership or initiated by OFSTED, and OFSTED has agreed to this approach
 - iii. group performance measures perhaps to quantify overall improvement and the narrowing of the attainment gap between high and low performing schools within the partnership. These would usefully complement individual school performance measures.
- How to minimise bureaucracy to ensure that the benefits from working in this way outweigh the costs.

These arrangements do not detract from the continued responsibility of local authorities to secure the quality of school education in their areas. In particular, local authorities will still have a duty to support and challenge schools causing concern, and will retain their powers of intervention – for example, when a school is placed in special measures – even where an Education Improvement Partnership is supporting that school. However, if arrangements are clearly expressed, there is scope for groups of schools to take on significantly enhanced roles and funding from the local authority.

Funding

There are a number of possibilities for effective resourcing of Education Improvement Partnerships which members will want to consider:

- Where an Education Improvement Partnership is commissioned to take on functions previously delivered by a local authority, that local authority will devolve appropriate funding to partnerships, to enable them to deliver those functions. This, too, would be set out in the joint agreement.
- Schools already have significant control over their budgets and can choose to pool a certain amount of funding for shared functions. Collegiate partnerships in both London and Birmingham are committing 0.5% of each institution's budget to a dedicated partnership fund. Under the New Relationship with Schools, there will be greater opportunity for schools to address local priority challenges in this way.
- Education Improvement Partnerships could draw on coordinated use of specialist schools' community funding – around £40,000 for a typical school of 1000 pupils.
- We will encourage and expect Leading or Training schools to be members of Education Improvement Partnerships, working with partner schools to tackle underperformance or using their second specialisms to drive improvement. Leading schools receive up to £60,000 per year and Training schools up to £55,000: this is funding which Education Improvement Partnerships could draw on to support their activities.
- School Sports Partnerships receive up to £270,000 per partnership to develop sports opportunities for children and young people. This funding is used to provide partnership co-ordinators in the form of a Partnership Development Manager, secondary school sports co-ordinators and primary link teachers. The time of these staff could be used to facilitate collaborative working on sports across all schools in an Education Improvement Partnership.
- Schools participating in Primary Strategy Learning Networks (PSLN) receive up to £19,000 to help them establish these networks. These networks could underpin the establishment of the Education Improvement Partnership.
- Shared governance structures, such as those adopted by federations, can streamline financial decision-making across institutions.
- Forming a federation or a joint school company would further enable schools to pool funds.

However, although there will be no new money explicitly earmarked for facilitating Education Improvement Partnerships, in future schools will have a greater say over the allocation of the Single Standards Grant than over the existing Standards Fund. A consultation on



Practicalities

school funding was launched on 17 February: this is available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/>. This document proposes that schools could agree, through the Schools Forum, to their local authorities increasing the level of holdback for partnership work by top-slicing a proportion of the new Single Standards Grant. (See Chap. 5, para 162 of the consultation document). This would ensure that partnership co-ordination could be supported. It would then be up to the Education Improvement Partnership to decide how resources for partnership facilitation were best employed. It is proposed that authorities with Excellence in Cities will be able to retain as much of the new grant as in previous years – so if they currently hold back a proportion of the grant for coordinating and facilitating a

partnership programme then they can continue to do so. However, they should work with their schools to consider how this central pot of funding can best support partnership activity which meets EIP characteristics and principles.

In terms of capital funding, groups of schools can already pool part or all of their devolved formula capital for buildings or ICT infrastructure. If the partnership wished to develop new joint facilities, it could work with its local authority to inform the local asset management plan. Depending on local priorities, these developments could then be prioritised for investment from the authority's capital resources or, in due course, from its local plans under Building Schools for the Future.



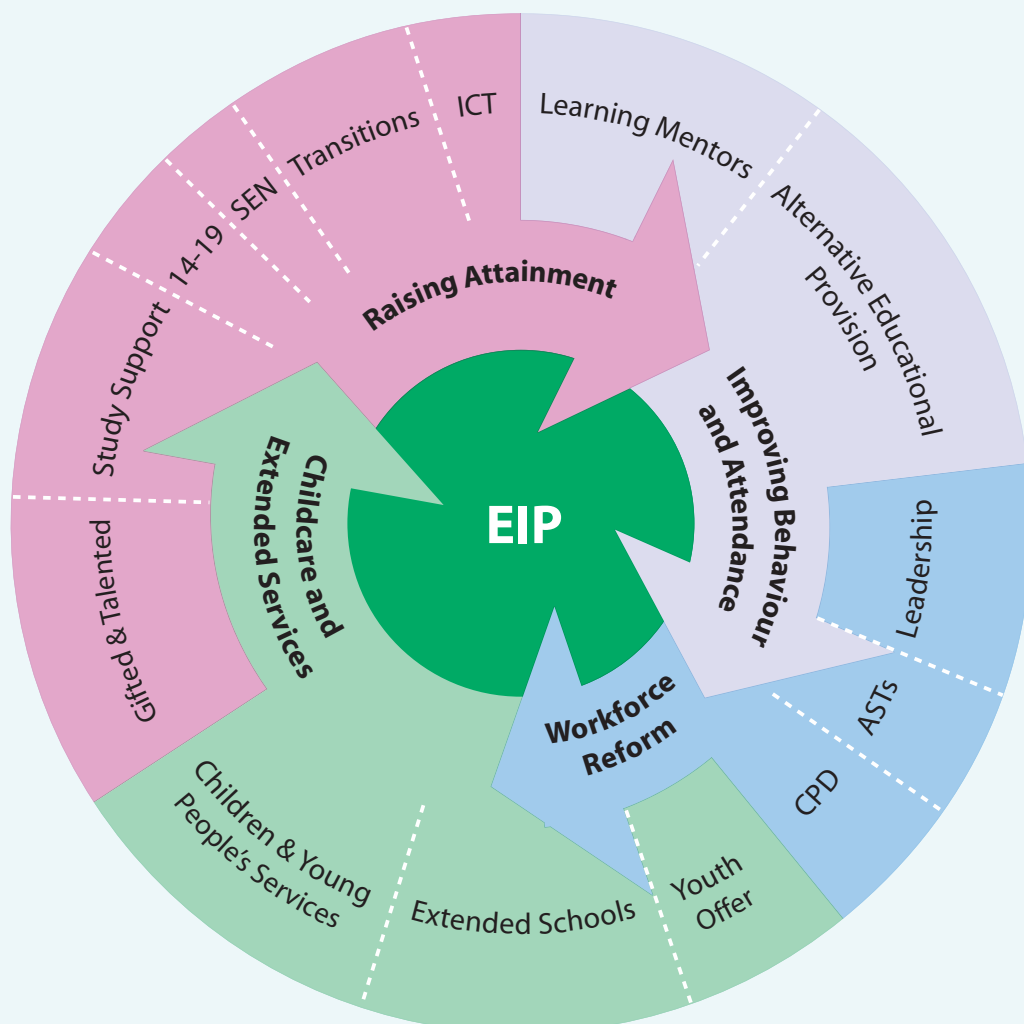
Functions

Improving services and opportunities for learners should be at the heart of everything an Education Improvement Partnership does. Sustaining improvement depends on making progress across the board: raising attainment, improving standards of behaviour and levels of attendance, and ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people both in and out of school.

Partnerships will also set out from different starting points and with different capacity, depending on previous experience. They may start by identifying a function on which they have already begun to work together, and

once the partnership has become more established, it could then go on to take on other functions in order to improve provision around all the priority areas set out above.

The following section describes how working in an Education Improvement Partnership could help schools meet priority demands and make a fuller offer to learners and their families across the board. More examples, and specific case studies, will be available on the Education Improvement Partnerships website: this will be a living site, updated as we receive case studies from you.



Functions

Raising attainment

Raising pupil attainment means improving children's life-chances by opening up new opportunities, emphasising the enjoyment and engagement of all pupils in the learning process, and personalising education to meet the individual needs of all children and young people.

Promoting participation and engaging learners between the ages of 14-19 demands that schools and other providers offer greater, more comprehensive and more genuine choice of what, where and how to study. It is unlikely that any one institution alone will be able to provide the full range of opportunities that the 14-19 reforms require. So collaboration between schools, sixth form colleges, FE colleges, Centres of Vocational Excellence, work-based training providers and employers will be essential in creating coherent networks for learning that enable genuine choice and flexibility, allow real intellectual stretch, and that tailor provision to individual need. They will also help build clear progression routes for young people so that work-related learning at entry level leads right through to both the workplace and to higher education.

Education Improvement Partnerships will bring together providers from across all sectors. We have already seen the achievements of 14-19 pathfinder partnerships which have delivered much greater curriculum choice and flexibility. EIPs will build on the best examples of these pathfinder partnerships to offer, for example, a range of work-based learning opportunities integrated into the curriculum, co-ordinated timetables to allow ease of movement for students across all partner institutions, or common KS4 prospectuses to show all the options available in a local area.

Partnership working in Gateshead

The *Central Gateshead 6th Form (cg6)* is a collaborative venture between three schools and Gateshead College. It provides a complete package for sixth formers in the City. The outflow of young people from the central area at age 16 partly prompted the development of cg6. This outflow impoverished the curriculum available to those young people unable or unwilling to travel out of the area, thereby deterring some from staying on in learning.

By building on the strengths of each partner, cg6 has offered students a broader range of subjects, including twenty new AS and A level courses, and a greater variety of opportunities for work-related learning. By sharing staff and resources, the consortium has also provided opportunities for post-16 learning in a wider range of locations, including some at the two 11-16 schools which has encouraged reluctant students to stay on at 16 by making available a base in a familiar environment. It has also provided Key Stage 4 students at the schools with post-16 role models to raise aspirations and increase confidence. In 2003/04, 23 cg6 students accessed post-16 provision at Thomas Hepburn (11-16) School, a specialist science school, and about half of these young people indicated that without such local provision they may not have continued in education.

Some partnerships are already working with local and national employers such as John Lewis, Dixons, Boots and Tesco, to offer extended work placements which provide young people with retail sector skills, qualifications and experience. Other partnerships are sharing specialist staff and facilities such as Centres of Vocational Excellence, and providing wider access to university 'taster' sessions in partnership with their local Higher Education Institution.

Working in this way has enabled these partnerships to engage learners and foster their aspirations by offering opportunities wide and rich enough to meet the individual needs, interests and aptitudes of each young person.

The **National Strategies** support schools in raising attainment of pupils at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16; and support local authorities in raising standards across the Foundation Stage. Schools in Education Improvement Partnerships could work together supported by National Strategies consultants or other specialist staff, for example, to set up inter-school classroom observation and follow-up support to improve classroom practice. Local authorities and partnerships could also shape the way in which consultants and other support are used in order to target local priorities. A consultant could be allocated to a partnership which would then negotiate the best use of their time and skills.

Increased provision of **study support** activities as part of extended schools services will make an important contribution to raising attainment. A more strategic approach to study support and extended learning can make better use of available resources. Several schools have collaborated in applications for additional funding for specific projects and have drawn up joint development plans. Working together has enabled these schools to extend the pool of expertise available to them for study support sessions and gain easier access to different learning environments.

Education Improvement Partnerships would help to promote inclusion and raise attainment amongst children and young people with **Special Educational Needs** – whether they are in special or mainstream schools – and improve access to learning for disabled pupils. Local authorities could delegate provision (but not responsibility) for

Partnership working in Sheffield

Learning for Life, in its first year, has been a dramatic success. Schools, the Sheffield College and other providers have worked closely with the LfL team to create a programme which will allow 14 year olds across the city a choice of eight applied GCSEs and 16 additional qualifications widely respected by employers and universities including GNVQs, BTECs and NVQs. The range of courses is extensive, stretching from vendor qualifications required for careers as software and network engineers through to NVQs in construction, retail, care and business languages.

In the new academic year there will be almost 4,000 enrolments to the new learning pathways by 14 year olds from every Sheffield school with many young people mixing study in the classroom with experience in the workplace and training at college or with another provider. The new provision is shaped jointly by teachers and by employers, who have taken part in a series of high profile business breakfasts to show their endorsement of the programme. In addition, teachers with particular specialisms and interests have been brought together with lecturers and employers' organisations in curriculum networks where the practical implications of introducing a new course can be worked through and where best practice can be shared.

delivery of SEN advice and support services, and other provision such as family liaison and welfare officers to groups of schools. For example, in Coventry, they have devolved all autism support services to one special school which has particular expertise in that area. Partnerships also offer an opportunity for schools to pool their expertise in teaching SEN pupils across special and mainstream schools, and to jointly commission training and specialist SEN support services.

Functions

Existing models of partnership working ...

Excellence and Enjoyment: A strategy for primary schools places a strong emphasis on the importance of networking and collaboration in raising standards in primary schools. **Primary Strategy Learning Networks** (PSLNs) are being developed, through which schools can support each other to focus on a particular area of learning with the aim of raising standards in literacy and maths, increasing schools' capacity to deliver a broad, rich curriculum and improving performance. Some PSLNs could, in time, develop into Education Improvement Partnerships.

Education Improvement Partnerships with strong collaborative links with universities and colleges could pool their **Aimhigher** funding to widen participation in further and higher education, as well as to improve gifted and talented education for students aged 14-19. This would offer more frequent contact between secondary pupils and universities, for example through more regular university 'taster' sessions. Teaching staff from Higher Education Institutions could also be involved in teaching specialist A Level courses, and pupils from schools and FE colleges could

access specialist resources, such as science laboratories, only available at universities. DfES will shortly be producing guidance for all HEIs which will help to streamline the relationship they have with schools and which will actively encourage them to engage even further in working directly with schools.

Education Improvement Partnerships would allow schools to improve through collaboration the quality of their teaching and support for **gifted and talented** pupils. As well as working together to meet the new quality standards now under development, they could share co-ordinators, pool the expertise of their teaching staff or create more sustainable teaching groups by drawing together pupils from several schools. Those partnerships that include independent schools, further or higher education institutions could take advantage of their specialist facilities and teaching. Partnerships will also be able to support transfer between sectors, particularly where primary-age pupils are already working at secondary level, for example by allowing them access to secondary teachers or classes. Partnership-wide professional development might also be undertaken, or groups of teachers and their support staff could work together to design and evaluate innovative teaching practices.



Partnership working in Leeds

The Temple Newsam/Halton Family of Schools successfully bid for New Opportunities Fund funding and developed a regular programme of after school activity in partnership with the local YMCA.

A carousel of after school activities was developed ranging from gymnastics and sport to pottery and steel pan bands. Although NOF funding came to an end in 2003 the family has worked in partnership with Education Leeds to extend and develop study support and secure funding for additional work. The family is committed to collaborative working and grants from the local Community Involvement Team and SRB5 supported an inter-school sports festival in the 2004 summer term. The family is seeking further funding to support collaborative, creative and performing arts projects.

Education Improvement Partnerships could collaborate on **minority ethnic** issues and on raising awareness of racial and religious harassment. Joint inset sessions on diversity could be provided by the partnership for teachers from all schools; teachers and their support staff with expertise in EAL or dealing with newly arrived pupils could work across the group; and expertise in collecting and analysing data on attainment amongst minority ethnic pupils could be spread to improve pupil tracking of those pupils across all schools. Education Improvement Partnerships would also offer ways to better engage parents of minority ethnic pupils: partnerships could include Supplementary Schools and provision on family literacy programmes could be shared across the group.

Education Improvement Partnerships will offer the opportunity for all partners to share **ICT** resources, for example innovative City Learning Centre facilities and teacher expertise in order to transform teaching and learning across the partnership. Schools could also

share ICT support services, materials and guidance, and have specialist ICT teachers or HLTAs working across the partnership to ensure other staff can make effective use of ICT in their subject teaching

Learning mentors work with teaching and pastoral staff to identify, assess and work with pupils who need help to overcome barriers to learning. The evaluation of Excellence in Cities shows that Learning Mentors are widely welcomed in schools and staff reported improvements in pupils' self esteem, behaviour and motivation as well as their relationships with teachers and peers. Learning mentors could work across schools within a group, sharing expertise and increasing the reach of their services to benefit pupils in all the Education Improvement Partnership schools.

Collaborative and cross-phase working between schools helps prepare pupils for **transition** between early years settings and primary, primary to secondary, and secondary to tertiary stages. Some existing partnerships make joint curriculum provision across KS2 to KS3, and KS4 to post-16, allow information to be shared between schools more easily, provide 'taster' days for primary pupils entering secondary schools and greater opportunities for primary staff to shadow their secondary counterparts and vice versa.

Functions

Improving behaviour and attendance

Sharing good practice on encouraging better attendance, early intervention with pupil behaviour to prevent exclusions, enabling schools to manage excluded pupils outside the classroom, and ensuring that excluded pupils get a full time education are key elements in the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy.

In practice, this means effective support for teachers in the classroom, quality on-site provision in Learning Support Units, schools able to exclude where they need to, quality off-site alternative provision and sound arrangements to get excluded pupils back in class when it is appropriate for them to return. A collaborative approach where schools work together, supported by local authorities, to manage challenging pupils and to take responsibility for provision and funding, will be the best way to ensure a range of support for schools, and of provision for learners.

Education Improvement Partnerships provide an opportunity for schools to develop a multi-agency approach, involving schools, local authorities, Educational Welfare Services, and social services. Wider children's services working in partnership with schools will allow early intervention to identify and help those whose behaviour is a sign of more complex needs and problems, and to provide a range of support to children in order to foster the good behaviour that is essential to learning and good citizenship.

Working together, schools in EIPs will be able to share expertise and facilities such as Learning Support Units and be more closely involved in managing Pupil Referral Units. With funding for behaviour support and alternative provision for pupils in mainstream

Partnership working in Manchester

Behaviour & Education Support Teams (BESTs) are multi-agency teams bringing together a complementary mix of professionals from the fields of health, social care and education. The aim of a BEST is to promote emotional well-being, positive behaviour and school attendance, by identifying and supporting those with, or at risk of developing, emotional and behavioural problems.

Each BEST works across a cluster of schools consisting of a target secondary school and its main associated primaries, and in the community, alongside a range of other support structures and services. They work with children aged 5-18, their families and schools to intervene early and prevent problems developing further. The Manchester BESTs' workload consists of referrals of individual pupils and their families, issue-led group work, supporting schools in carrying out behaviour audits, holding surgeries for school staff and working with the Adult Education Service on parenting support.

The Manchester BESTs bring together the skills, perspectives and experience of a range of practitioners forming an effective multi-disciplinary team. These offer earlier and more individualised support to children and their families, as well as support to schools to bring about systemic change in the way those emotional and behavioural issues are addressed.

schools increasingly devolved to – and controlled by – Education Improvement Partnerships rather than by local authorities, EIPs will be able to act as commissioners for preventative alternative provision. Pooling resources, a partnership will be able to buy in provision from local authorities or from the voluntary sector, and to pay for extra support tailored specifically to their needs in order

Existing models of partnership working ...

Excellence in Cities (EiC) is a targeted programme to raise standards in schools in deprived areas. The programme is delivered locally by schools working in partnership with their local authorities. It both increases diversity of provision for pupils and encourages schools to work together to raise standards, improve behaviour and reduce exclusions by working collaboratively. Originally aimed at secondary schools, the programme now includes primary schools.

EiC secondary schools, and other schools facing challenging circumstances now also receive **Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG)**, to ensure that their leadership teams are able to transform the delivery of education. LIG focuses on collaboration between schools in order to significantly strengthen leadership, enhance learning and teaching, accelerate improvement in standards and establish a culture of high expectations. In many areas, wider, collaborative approaches have developed from LIG work, and have now become established in their own right. In EiC areas, LIG work is delivered under the overall management of the EiC partnership, along with Behaviour Improvement Plans (BIPs) which are delivered through small groups of schools – primary and secondary – within EiC partnerships.

both to get the support they need, and to make a wider range of quality provision available to pupils.

A partnership could buy in additional support in the form of, for example, Learning Mentors, family liaison workers, counsellors, behaviour teacher hours, the time of police and social workers or of professionals who could provide specialist advice on dealing with children whose challenging behaviour is linked to special educational needs. Once they had



‘purchased’ this time, it would then be up to the partnership to decide how best to utilise it in order to meet the needs of all the member schools.

Alternative provision could be provided in a Pupil Referral Unit where headteachers from across the group of schools are members of the management board. Equally, alternative provision programmes could be offered by schools in partnership with a range of private,

Existing models of partnership working ...

The **Specialist Schools Programme** helps schools, in partnership with private sector sponsors, to establish distinctive identities through their chosen specialisms, and to raise standards. Specialist schools work with a minimum of 5 partner schools, of which at least one must be a secondary school, as well as with local businesses and voluntary groups. Education Improvement Partnerships could build on these partnerships to enhance learning opportunities, and offer a wider range of services to parents and the community.

Functions

voluntary and community sector organisations such as FE colleges, the Prince's Trust and Skill Force. Schools could also agree to move pupils with lower level behaviour difficulties between schools within the partnership, when this is appropriate, through supported managed moves. Education Improvement Partnerships will also support the development of local protocols around re-integrating excluded pupils into schools on an equitable basis. All secondary schools should have a protocol for admitting most "hard to place" pupils by September 2005 and these should be extended where necessary to include previously excluded pupils, for whom reintegration to school is appropriate, by September 2007.

Over 50 local authorities are already committed to working in partnership on behaviour and attendance, and every secondary school should be part of a partnership working together to manage behaviour provision by September 2007.



Partnership working in Derbyshire

Peak 11 is a federation of 11 secondary schools (including 2 Roman Catholic schools and one foundation school) in the rural west of Derbyshire with a scattered pupil population. It has developed from a general meeting of head teachers into a formal federation with a wide remit, including re-engaging disaffected pupils. A panel made up of head teachers and LEA representatives identifies disaffected pupils and recommends preventative work whilst problems are at an early stage. The LEA has delegated funding for provision of services for hard to place pupils to the individual schools within the Peak 11, and last year the schools decided to pool some resources which gave them greater flexibility and enabled the panel to seek more imaginative approaches to address pupils' needs.

Collaboration through the federation has enabled schools to make better provision for more pupils. For example, each school in the group has purchased five one day a week places at a local college for pupils having difficulties at school, to do a pre-NVQ course. The project began with one FE provider but now schools have branched out and are using other providers, including work-based training providers and packages of work placement with FE and/or training. The LEA is also setting up a KS4 PRU with a single point of referral via the head teacher panel.

Partnership working in Nottingham

The transition programme in the Nottingham Keys To Success EiC Action Zone provides a forum for staff and pupils from all the schools, including primary schools, to work together on a curriculum which will raise pupils' basic and key skills, whilst building trust and developing confidence and self-esteem amongst pupils, to ensure they can continue to learn effectively throughout their transition from primary to secondary school.

The work is supported by a team of Transition Learning Mentors who work with pupils and their teachers from early in year 6 through to year 7, ensuring a seamless transition in terms of individual pupil's personal and social needs.

By creating opportunities to work and meet together to share pedagogical practices for learning and teaching, there is now a greater understanding amongst primary and secondary teachers of the benefits of a cross-phase curriculum. Pupils now settle into the secondary school environment more easily and are able to focus on their learning more confidently – significant success in pupils' attendance and behaviour has been recorded as a result.



Functions

Childcare and extended services

Many existing partnerships are now working to provide a much more comprehensive service to children, young people and parents. An integrated approach to children's services means that social care, education and childcare services must be brought together in a seamless way to ensure children's safety and well-being. And by drawing together a diverse range of providers – some from the private, voluntary or community sector, as well as public health and social care agencies – partnerships can also offer greater choice and flexibility of services around childcare and support for parents, as well as wider opportunities for outside school activities, advice and guidance for young people.

Education Improvement Partnerships will provide a way to bring together local providers from all sectors around a defined community of children and young people, joining up services in a way which more effectively addresses the specific needs of each individual and their family.

Working together in Education Improvement Partnerships, schools and colleges will build on the services and activities already offered by some extended schools. They might collaborate with local partners from health and social care services in setting up 'one-stop shops' offering advisory and support services. Some partnerships are already working on this and have set up teenage information and advice centres (TICTACS) on school sites, where a range of professionals including teachers, counsellors and health professionals, offer guidance and support on issues ranging from sexual health and relationships to finance and careers. EIPs could also co-ordinate provision of after school sport, music or art activities with local community organisations,



or join up with local branches of organisations such as Community Service Volunteers to offer community volunteering opportunities.

EIPs will act as a local hub for family learning and community partnership activities, and for social and healthcare services. They will also be vital in ensuring comprehensive provision of **extended services**. Not all schools will be able to take on the full extended services model straight away, and where this is the case, an EIP will mean that services provided by one or two schools could be shared across all those participating in the partnership. And where there are a number of full extended schools within the partnership they could work together to offer pupils, families and communities access to an even wider range of more flexible provision across several sites.

By 2010 every parent with children aged 5-11 will be offered the guarantee of affordable and flexible childcare from 8am to 6pm all year round. Collaborative working through an EIP

Partnership working in Stoke on Trent

MAC's Place at Mitchell High School, Stoke on Trent, opened to pupils in November 2002 from existing accommodation within the school grounds. MAC's Place is a multi-agency centre where pupils are able to get information, advice and support, make an appointment to have a private consultation with a member of staff, take part in activities and events and pick up leaflets and brochures. It is open at lunchtimes throughout the school term. Since it opened, over 500 young people have visited MAC's Place during their lunchtime to access services like the School Nurse Drop In, Clinic in a Box, and the Connexions Drop In. A range of specialist services have also been provided, from support for young people who have caring responsibilities (in association with Young Carers) to programmes to assist young people to stop smoking.

As well as providing services for pupils, a number of organisations provide services for the wider communities from MAC's Place at Mitchell High School. The Citizens Advice Bureau, Work Start and GroundWork, use the centre at regular times throughout the week.

will mean that this childcare offer could be based in one or two schools in the partnership – and these needn't necessarily be primary schools. Secondary schools could be used as the central point for childcare provision if this was the best way to meet parents' needs. Education Improvement Partnerships will provide networks to deliver a wider choice of activities and locations for after-school clubs, with the best facilities and the time of staff being used more efficiently as pupils from across groups of schools are brought together. Some schools are already working with private and voluntary providers to offer holiday clubs and childcare/childminding services.

By 2010, all children aged 11-16 will be able to engage in a full range of study support activities, from 8am and 6pm all year round. Education Improvement Partnerships will bring groups of secondary schools together with providers from the private and voluntary sector to offer a wider range of attractive opportunities for young people. Some schools are already working with local volunteer bureaux, Millennium Volunteers and the Prince's Trust, to bring volunteers from these organisations into schools, and to offer volunteering opportunities to their pupils as an option for after-school activities.

EIPs will also take a lead role in helping to deliver **children and young people's services**, with local authorities working together with providers of children's services, and commissioning services from partnerships. Schools working together, as well as with health professionals and social workers, will mean more effective identification, assessment and provision for vulnerable children, for example through joint assessments or coordinated action for children identified as being at risk. Sharing information across schools in a partnership will also be important in helping identify and support vulnerable children as they move from one phase to the next.

Partnerships will also be well placed to contribute to the children's trust arrangements the local authority and other key partners develop to drive forward improvements in outcomes for children and young people across the piece. Partnership representatives would have an important part to play – as members of the children's trust board, for instance, or on operational groups reporting to it – in helping to shape and inform the trust's planning and commissioning strategies, and in developing arrangements for involving children, young people and parents.

Functions

Local authorities might commission an EIP to propose a solution on how a specific number of childcare places could be delivered across the partnership, or to form a multi-disciplinary working group around a specific local problem - for instance drug use – involving GPs, teachers, social workers, school nurses, and family liaison officers.

Education Improvement Partnerships could also work as a delivery agent for **community regeneration** activity funded through Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and European Funds.

Partnership working in Stoke Newington

Stoke Newington secondary school is working to develop extended services within The Learning Trust cluster of schools which also includes 5 nearby primary schools. An extended schools cluster co-ordinator, based at the school, has been employed to work across all the schools in the cluster to support them in developing extended services. Other non-teaching staff are also employed across the cluster such as counsellors who provide support and advice around emotional and behavioural issues. Links are also being made with the Primary care Trust to provide preventive health programmes.



Workforce reform and professional development

Education Improvement Partnerships would facilitate workforce reform, giving teachers more time through more effective working. Specialist staff, teaching resources and good practice can be shared amongst schools and other providers, providing greater opportunities for professional and leadership development, and increasing job satisfaction.

We know from the work of Leadership Incentive grant collaboratives that partnerships provide opportunities for headteachers and other leaders to develop their **leadership** skills. Joint heads of departments can be appointed across the group; experienced headteachers can work with new or developing heads; and subject specialist staff can be shared. In an existing partnership in North East Manchester for example, an assistant headteacher was appointed to work with heads of departments across all schools on leadership and professional development.

Schools in Education Improvement Partnerships, including Training Schools and HEI/Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers, could work together to build capacity to deliver high quality **ITT** and training for the whole school workforce within the partnership and beyond. Such partnerships enable schools to develop and deliver **CPD**, with the possibility of becoming accredited providers in their own right.

Partnership working in Devon

The HOSTA primary consortium is a Devon/Plymouth based partnership of three schools led by Oreston Primary school. The consortium is working with 15 schools across two local authorities – Devon and Plymouth – to deliver CPD. It has developed a research based learning approach, engaging every teacher in research as part of their performance management process. Marjon College, their local teacher training institution, has worked with the consortium to develop a 3 year BEd course which they will deliver across the partnership.

The consortium has also developed its own training models for Teaching Assistants and for Mentors where Mentors take increased responsibility for initial teacher training in terms of both trainee supervision and course delivery, always involving a cross section of staff from across the 3 schools. HOSTA also runs a research project in association with the Teacher Training College and Plymouth LEA, and has developed a new Newly Qualified Teacher quality kite mark.

Functions

We already have groups of specialist schools working together to deliver co-ordinated **subject specialist advice**, guidance and CPD – at primary and/or secondary level, including cross-cutting aspects such as use of ICT or assessment for learning models. This expertise can be shared more widely through Education Improvement Partnerships, for example through inset sessions led by subject specialist teachers for fellow subject teachers.

Some existing partnerships of schools, such as the Chesil Partnership in Dorset share **Advanced Skilled Teachers** across all schools. This allows both the subject expertise of ASTs and their leadership in relation to overall improvement and innovation in teaching to be available to all schools in the group. In Hammersmith and Fulham for example, the City Learning Centre coordinates the deployment of ASTs and ensures that they are targeted where they can have greatest impact on raising standards. Education Improvement Partnerships would also allow ASTs and other specialist teachers to have greater contact with colleagues in Further and Higher Education Institutions in the partnership, and to take advantage of specialist facilities to carry out research in their subject area.

What next?

We expect Education Improvement Partnerships to evolve: some well-established partnerships can become them very quickly. There is no application process – it is for groups of schools and their local authorities to make this happen in a manner that suits local circumstances.

However, we have been struck by the widespread enthusiasm and support among schools keen to work together on a broader range of issues and among local authorities as they re-shape their role. We want Education Improvement Partnerships to get underway quickly and to hear from you about where they can best be utilised in your area. We will include case studies and model protocols/service level agreements as we hear about them on our website. We will gather together those people who are setting the pace on this agenda later this year and regularly update the website with material as you send it to us.

In the meantime, we would particularly like to hear about:

- Where you are going to start your work in forming Education Improvement Partnerships?
- Whether there are core or minimum functions that a Education Improvement Partnership should provide?
- What further guidance or support is needed to enable schools to work together to deliver the functions described?
- Whether there are other functions or responsibilities that you would like to see Education Improvement Partnerships take on?

We hope you will be motivated to act on the basis of this prospectus. Please let us know how you get on – where the opportunities are greatest as well as anything that is getting in the way by the end of May 2005.

To find out more, or to send us models of partnership working that you have developed, you can email us at:

educationimprovement.partnerships@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

This prospectus is also on-line at:

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/sie/si/educationimprovementpartnerships

The on-line prospectus contains links to further information on each of the functions and existing models of partnership working listed here.

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