

Diplomas: the second year

An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Diplomas for 14- to 19-year-olds

This report focuses on the introduction of the Diplomas in their second year of operation. The quality of Diploma provision was mixed in the 21 consortia visited. The main strengths were in the 'principal learning', the main subject content of the Diplomas, where learners were often well-motivated and made good progress in lessons. However, there were weaknesses in the links between 'principal learning' and the other components of the qualification, particularly functional skills, and additional and specialist learning.

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Executive summary

This survey focused on how well 14–19 consortia were introducing the Diplomas, which were in their second year of operation. It evaluated the success of key components of the Diploma and the coherence of the programme as a whole. Between September 2009 and March 2010, inspectors visited classes, scrutinised learners' work and discussed progress with learners, teachers, trainers and managers in 21 of the 14–19 consortia involved in the first and second phases of the introduction of the Diplomas.

Inspectors found a number of strengths in the 'principal learning' component of the Diploma. This was delivered effectively in around two thirds of the consortia visited and more variably in the remaining third. However, there were further important weaknesses in other aspects of the Diploma. The findings of this survey echo some of those published in Ofsted's 2009 report.¹

In the most effective lessons of 'principal learning' seen, learners were motivated by practical and active learning and the opportunities to apply their learning to work-related contexts. As a result, they made good progress in these lessons. Typically, the 'principal learning' was taught by well-qualified teachers and trainers who had experience in the relevant vocational areas. High-quality resources, often in well-equipped venues, provided opportunities for learning in work-related environments. Teachers, lecturers and trainers involved with the 'principal learning' valued the opportunities they had received for professional development and to work together. The quality of the teaching and the curriculum in the 'principal learning' was enhanced considerably by good links with local employers. However, in around a third of the consortia visited, learners' understanding of key aspects of the content of the 'principal learning' was limited when the teachers did not enable the learners to apply their learning sufficiently to work-related contexts.

The multiple component structure of the Diploma posed a number of challenges. Many of the learners seen did not fully appreciate that all the different components combined to form the full Diploma and tended to think of the Diploma as comprising the 'principal learning' only. The separation of the teaching of functional skills from the 'principal learning' was an important weakness as the functional skills taught were not related to the vocational context of the 'principal learning'. Consequently, learners were unclear about the role of functional skills within the Diploma. The quality of functional skills teaching was variable.

Most learners had access to only a limited range of additional and specialised learning options. The additional and specialist learning was often uncoordinated across consortia so that learners from different institutions on the same Diploma line had markedly different choices and experiences.

¹ *Implementation of 14 – 19 reforms, including the introduction of Diplomas* (080267), Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080267.

Web-based prospectuses were available in all the consortia visited, but they had limited impact on learners' choices and did not enable them to identify progression routes easily. The choice of Diploma subjects reflected traditional gender stereotypes and little was done to challenge this. The number of Diploma lines offered at level 1 was limited and the take-up of Diplomas by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was low.

All the consortia visited were committed to supporting schools, colleges and other providers to work together and had developed well-considered strategic plans for the introduction of the Diploma lines. The consortia made good use of the institutions' specialisms in planning Diploma programmes of study. The day-to-day organisation and administration of the Diplomas were effective. Strengths in the induction for learners starting Diploma courses helped them to work well with their peers from other institutions.

A major challenge for consortia was to implement their protocols for quality assurance and the monitoring of learners' progress across several institutions' different Diploma lines. The resulting weaknesses in these areas, together with weaknesses in assessment, limited the ability of the consortia to improve the quality of teaching and learning further and to track learners' progress in all components of the Diploma.

Key findings

- Learners made good progress in most of the lessons of 'principal learning' seen and worked at the standard expected of their particular level. They showed high levels of motivation and good behaviour in this aspect of the Diploma and worked well with their peers from other institutions.
- In two thirds of the consortia visited, the 'principal learning' was taught in well-equipped venues that ensured a work-related environment. Staff were appropriately experienced and used high-quality, specialist equipment effectively. In a third of the consortia, learning was not always applied sufficiently to work-related contexts.
- Recruitment to the Diplomas reflected long-established, gender-stereotypical choices and there was little evidence of concerted or effective work to challenge such choices. The take-up of Diplomas by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was low. Participation and retention varied in the 21 consortia visited.
- Learners benefited from a wide range of good links with employers who enhanced the activities provided.
- Early assessment of learners' standards of attainment in the 'principal learning' was limited and the quality of teachers' assessment of learning was variable.
- The quality of the work seen in functional skills was variable and the work was often unrelated to the vocational context of the 'principal learning'.

- Only a limited range of additional and specialised learning options was available to most learners. Additional and specialist learning was often uncoordinated across consortia.
- Use of the local web-based prospectuses was patchy and references within them to the Diploma were inconsistent. Identification and development of progression routes at the local level were insufficient, particularly in relation to work-based learning. The web-based prospectuses did not enable learners to identify progression routes easily.
- Procedures set out by consortia for supporting institutions to work together were effective. These were characterised by clear roles and responsibilities, written protocols, and procedures for managing finances, transport and routine functions.
- Monitoring of learners' progress and well-being by consortia was underdeveloped and providers did not always share information about learners' educational achievements, backgrounds and support needs.
- The consortia used institutional specialisms and expertise well to aid development planning, locate provision and assign lead responsibilities.
- The quality assurance of teaching and learning across the consortia was insufficiently evaluative and the use of the national quality standards to improve the provision of information, advice and guidance was patchy.

Recommendations

The Department for Education should review the multiple component structure of the Diploma:

- to enable consortia and individual providers to develop and build on the strengths of the 'principal learning'
- incorporate functional skills requirements within the 'principal learning'.

14 – 19 partnerships, Diploma consortia and individual providers should:

- improve the teaching and coordination of functional skills by ensuring closer links between the functional skills and the 'principal learning' components, establishing common approaches to functional skills within consortia
- improve the arrangements for additional and specialist learning, so that all learners have sufficient choices that are relevant to each Diploma line
- improve the monitoring of the take-up of Diplomas by different groups of learners and develop more concerted approaches to challenging stereotypical choices by learners
- increase the opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to benefit from Diplomas
- make more effective use of the local web-based prospectus

- ensure good communication and coordination between the different professionals supporting learners in public care and those leaving care
- improve the arrangements for transferring data and information about learners' needs and progress between providers and professionals providing support
- ensure quality assurance arrangements work effectively and lead to the identification and tackling of areas for improvement, particularly those related to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Introduction: the national picture

1. Major reforms to education and training for 14- to 19-year-olds were set out first in *14–19 education and skills*, published in 2005.² This publication was followed by a number of developments, leading to the publication in 2008 of *Delivering 14–19 reform: next steps*.³ The new Diplomas formed the most substantial single element of the then 14 to 19 reforms. In addition, the functional skills components of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) were introduced. These form an integral part of the 14–19 Diplomas, but can also be studied and assessed independently.
2. The 14–19 Diploma is made up of different elements, combining theoretical study with practical learning. The largest element is known as the 'principal learning'. This covers the specialist subject content, also referred to as a 'line' of learning. The other elements required to achieve the Diploma qualification comprise:
 - functional skills
 - a unit of additional or specialist learning intended to complement or extend the 'principal learning'
 - a project
 - 10 days' work experience.

To be awarded the Diploma, learners are required to meet the necessary standards in each of these elements.

3. The 14–19 Diploma can be studied at three levels:
 - foundation (equivalent to GCSE grades D to G)

² *14–19 education and skills*, DCSF, 2005;

<http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publicatio ns&ProductId=DFES-2037-2005&>

³ *Delivering 14 – 19 reform: next steps*, DCSF, 2008;

<http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publicatio ns&ProductId=DCSF-00805-2008>

- higher (equivalent to GCSE grades A* to C)
- advanced (equivalent to AS and A levels).

4. The first five lines of learning introduced in September 2008 were:

- construction and the built environment
- creative and media studies
- engineering
- information technology (IT)
- society, health and development.

The following were introduced in September 2009:

- business, administration and finance
- environmental and land-based studies
- hair and beauty studies
- hospitality
- manufacturing and product design.

Delivering 14–19 reform: next steps set out plans to introduce a further seven lines of learning between September 2010 and September 2012.

5. Nationally, the number of learners enrolled on Diploma courses has increased from just over 11,000 in 2008/09 to just over 36,000 in 2009/10. This was around 4,000 fewer learners than expected from local authorities' original plans. Diplomas are usually planned to take two years but some learners can choose to take a Diploma in one year. Of the learners beginning Diploma courses in 2008, just over 4000 gained a Diploma by the end of the academic year 2009/10. Of these, 633 gained a foundation Diploma, 3069 gained a higher Diploma and 594 gained an advanced Diploma.
6. Ofsted published reports on the then 14 to 19 reforms in September 2008 and August 2009.⁴ The latter also evaluated the first year of the Diplomas. Following the 2009 report, further visits to gather evidence on the second year of the implementation of the Diplomas took place between September 2009 and March 2010.

⁴ *Implementation of the 14–19 reforms; an evaluation of progress* (070258), Ofsted, 2008; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070258; and *Implementation of 14–19 reforms, including the introduction of Diplomas* (080267), Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080267.

Access and participation

7. The extent to which learners accessed a range of Diploma lines at the different levels in the consortia visited was patchy and provision at level 1 was limited. Learners' access to Diploma courses was limited by the number of providers offering the qualification within a consortium, the small range of Diploma lines of learning that were available and the restricted range of levels at which the lines were offered. One consortium, for example, did not offer Diploma lines at levels 1 and 3 to provide for learners of all abilities; another offered no Diplomas at level 1. Often, the consortia regarded the level 1 Diploma as unsuitable for some learners. Teachers considered that the level 1 functional skills tests were too hard for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who might otherwise gain a level 1 in the 'principal learning'. In addition, individual learners chose a particular Diploma because a preferred alternative was not available.
8. Participation and retention varied in the 21 consortia visited. There was a trend of increasing numbers of Diploma students. However, increases were not recorded with respect to every Diploma line. The following examples illustrate the variations found. In five consortia there was a notable increase in the number of learners starting in the second year, as more Diploma lines were offered and more providers became involved. However, in the case of engineering in one consortium, the number of learners recruited in 2009 had decreased compared to the previous year. This poor retention was the result of an emphasis on more traditional styles of teaching that led to low attendance rates and completion of work, low attainment and a loss of motivation among learners. Class sizes in the 'principal learning' lessons seen ranged from 17 on a creative and media Diploma to three on an IT Diploma, with class sizes often smaller than 10.
9. The take-up of Diplomas by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was good in only three of the consortia visited. One consortium had developed an innovative approach to enable learners with moderate learning difficulties to undertake a foundation level creative and media Diploma.
10. In 15 of the 21 consortia visited, recruitment to Diplomas reflected gender-stereotypical choices. As a result, there were marked disparities in the numbers of boys and girls studying particular Diploma lines. The previous survey noted similar patterns. For example, in all the consortia where engineering was seen, few girls opted for this subject and the recruitment levels for girls were often below the industry average for employees overall. Similar patterns were noted for IT, and construction and the built environment. Conversely, in hair and beauty studies and society, health and development, most of the learners were girls.
11. The uptake of Diplomas by different groups of learners varied. For example, one consortium visited did not recruit any learners with high levels of prior attainment to the construction and the built environment Diploma. In another,

the participation of learners with high levels of prior attainment, learners from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was low.

12. In seven of the consortia, progression routes for Diploma learners were not fully developed or identified sufficiently clearly. This was particularly the case with progression from the Diploma to work-based learning, especially from the higher levels.

Principal learning

13. In the 'principal learning', the standards of work seen were generally at expected levels. Learners made good progress in 20 of the 27 lessons seen and outstanding progress in two, with none inadequate. For example, in one consortium, learners studying construction and the built environment had stimulating and challenging lessons and opportunities for learning. They interviewed design and planning professionals, carried out a survey of a proposed development site, researched and evaluated different building materials and drew up a proposal for a building on the development site. As a result, they made excellent progress and exceeded the expected level. However, in another consortium, learners studying for the advanced creative and media Diploma were not challenged sufficiently by the work and did not make good progress.
14. Learners showed the highest levels of motivation in relation to the 'principal learning' element of the Diploma. Their enthusiasm was reflected in their high levels of attendance. Their enthusiasm was greater in the lessons where they were given the opportunity to use and show their competence with industry-standard resources. In two of the consortia, learners' self-esteem and confidence improved greatly and, on an engineering course, learners improved their behaviour and achievement considerably. These improvements were evident from comments made both by members of staff and by the learners themselves.
15. Many of the learners seen developed the skills of independent learning well in their 'principal learning'. For example, learners on an IT Diploma enjoyed taking responsibility for their own learning. Learners on a creative and media Diploma thought critically and solved problems, both individually and in groups.
16. Learners' personal development was good. In addition to the lessons seen, inspectors' discussions with learners and staff in all the consortia visited indicated that there were good relationships between learners from different institutions working together in the same 'principal learning' lessons. Learners were confident about travel, learning away from their 'home centre' and working together with learners from different schools and colleges, as long as they were taught well and the learning was interesting. In addition, in 15 consortia, learners' behaviour was good and sometimes outstanding; none of it was inadequate.

17. The quality of teaching and learning in the 'principal learning' component was good in 16 of the consortia visited and satisfactory in the remaining five.

Features of good teaching and learning included:

- a good match between the content of lessons and the principles of and learning objectives for the Diploma
- the clear application of learning to commercial, industrial, professional and work-related contexts
- a wide range of teaching styles which balanced theoretical and practical learning and included off-site visits, fieldwork and direct contact with employers
- well-planned lessons with dynamic and demanding activities that promoted active and independent learning
- planned opportunities for learners to practise and apply functional skills
- regular checking of learners' progress by the teacher, followed by feedback to the learners
- regular opportunities for individuals and the whole class to review and reflect on learning and progress.

18. The learners seen responded well to opportunities for active and practical learning in the 'principal learning' element of the Diploma. In 13 of the consortia visited, inspectors' observations of lessons, their discussions with teachers and scrutiny of their planning showed that the learning was consistently applied to work-related contexts but this was more variable in the other eight consortia. The following example illustrates well-planned, independent learning that took place in a high-technology environment.

Schools in the consortium used the 'F1 in schools challenge' and a well-equipped city learning centre to support the teaching of how to apply manufacturing techniques.⁵ High-quality training materials simulated a complete manufacturing process using the latest computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing technology. Individual timetables representing a production plan ensured that each learner had the opportunity to supervise and operate the equipment.

19. In another consortium, learners on a foundation-level Diploma in manufacturing and product design were enthused by making commercial products, for example, designing office furniture and mugs for a local football club with the club's logo. Learners on a hair and beauty Diploma responded well to

⁵ 'F1 in schools' challenges teams of students from the ages of nine to 19 to use computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing to collaborate on designing, making and testing gas-powered Formula 1 cars made of balsa wood and then racing them in miniature. For further information, see: www.f1inschools.co.uk/page--the-f1-in-schools-challenge.html

demonstrations of plaiting and braiding techniques by a professional hairdresser, which they practised afterwards.

20. In 13 of the 21 consortia, the 'principal learning' on a range of Diploma lines was staffed well by teachers with good subject knowledge and appropriate experience of the vocational area. In the remaining eight consortia, teachers' subject knowledge and experience were more variable. Consortia generally provided high-quality specialist equipment and facilities and, in the lessons observed, these were used effectively to ensure that the learning was applied to relevant contexts. In the best practice seen, these resources were supplemented by fieldwork and effective off-site visits to employers' premises. For example, learners on an engineering Diploma benefited from regular and frequent visits to a workshop at a local airport where they worked with professional engineers on a jet engine that had been bought for the course. The learners talked confidently about what they had learnt and used technical language well. However, although most of the teachers in the consortia visited had relevant industrial or commercial experience, it was not always up-to-date. Occasionally, this meant that learners were given inappropriate topics and materials.
21. In eight of the 21 consortia, the extent to which learning was applied to work-related settings varied, sometimes between Diploma lines within the same consortium. For example, in one consortium, learners studying an IT Diploma responded well to the applied nature of the tasks they were given. However, those studying for the creative and media, and manufacturing and product design Diplomas were disappointed that the work was less practical than they had expected it to be.
22. Where learning was not applied to work-related contexts, teachers were not making sufficient use of physical resources and practical activities. These lessons were also characterised by a narrow range of teaching strategies, dominated by teachers talking and learners writing. As a result, learners on those courses expressed their disappointment with the Diploma, had low levels of motivation and failed to understand how their learning related to the world of work. In two of the consortia visited, learners were demotivated by styles of teaching that had not lived up to their initial expectations. In one case, learners studying for a hair and beauty Diploma complained of being bored by too much theory, too much reliance on completing work-books and too many individual computer-based research tasks. In a construction and the built environment Diploma, there was too much emphasis on the theoretical aspects of the subject rather than practical activity. As a result, the learners were not clear about, for example, what a damp-proof membrane actually looked like. Approaches such as these limited learners' understanding of key aspects of the content of their 'principal learning'.

Curriculum planning

23. The curriculum range, access and development were good in 10 of the 21 consortia visited and satisfactory in 11. The quality of curriculum planning was variable, including variations in the quality of planning between different levels of the same Diploma line. For example, in one consortium, planning was good for the level 3 IT Diploma but only satisfactory for the level 2 course. In another consortium, good practice evident in the planning for one Diploma line, including detailed and creative approaches to meeting the criteria of the awarding body that did not rely on 'off the shelf' schemes of work, was not replicated in other Diploma lines.
24. There were no common strengths in curriculum planning, although individual examples of good practice were seen. For instance, in a consortium that was making good progress in implementing the Diplomas, highly effective planning for the IT Diploma 'principal learning' took place as a result of good teamwork between different providers. This ensured all providers followed a common scheme of work planned for a full year and that approaches to assessment were also common. In all the consortia visited, much of the emphasis in planning was on preparing for the teaching of the 'principal learning', to the extent that this element alone was increasingly seen by learners as constituting the Diploma qualification.
25. In an example of good curriculum planning, providers worked with a city learning centre⁶ and developed an engineering Diploma in which a comprehensive series of activities took learners through a manufacturing process and the associated industrial techniques. Specific operating instructions and procedures were written for each stage of the process so that each learner worked with particular pieces of equipment and machinery. In contrast, a poorly planned sequence of units on a course on construction and the built environment made it difficult for learners to understand or meet the requirements of the assessment tasks. This was because they had not covered the necessary content in a logical and progressive way. In examples from other consortia, learners were unclear about how their skills were supposed to develop and how much progress they had made because there had been insufficient attention to planning for the personal learning and thinking skills. The following example, however, illustrates how the personal learning and thinking skills were successfully developed and applied through the Diploma.

A consortium worked successfully to integrate the personal learning and thinking skills into the Diploma's 'principal learning'. This was done through effective liaison between teams of teachers and trainers and by taking a broader view of the curriculum. The consortium built the personal learning and thinking skills into all areas of the curriculum as well as the

⁶ City learning centres are part of a national network of centres which promote excellence in the use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning.

Diploma. Schemes of work were planned thoroughly, ensuring good links between functional skills and the personal learning and thinking skills. All lesson plans referred to the personal learning and thinking skills and teachers and trainers highlighted opportunities for learners to develop the skills. For example, learners studying for a level 2 hair and beauty Diploma explored issues of cultural and racial diversity as they learned techniques for braiding hair. The teacher questioned the learners directly about the different characteristics of African, Asian and European hair-types. Students identified the purposes of plaiting and braiding hair by people from different races and cultures, for instance to achieve a fashionable look and for practical purposes. Through carefully planned discussion, learners explored why European hair varied from straight to curly. The popularity of hair braiding among Europeans was discussed and students identified some of the potential problems, such as having a sunburnt scalp if it was done on holiday in a hot climate without adequate protection. As a result, learners were able to point to evidence of their development of the skills and were at ease in discussing the concepts and using the terminology associated with the subject matter.

26. There were weaknesses in the additional and specialist learning. Only two of the 21 consortia visited had well-developed arrangements for this component of the Diploma. This was a similar situation to that reported by Ofsted in 2009. In the consortia where the provision of additional and specialist learning was a weakness, there were insufficient options for learners and the provision was not coordinated across the consortium. Consequently, learners who were, ostensibly, following the same Diploma did not have access to the same range of options. Typically, the range of additional and specialist learning offered to learners was left to the 'home' institutions to determine; this was characterised by the standard curriculum offer in those institutions. It resulted in a very restricted offer to some learners, particularly those pre-16, with little thought given to how the offer related to the Diplomas.
27. The arrangements for work experience varied between Diploma lines and consortia, but typically learners were offered relevant placements. In seven of the consortia visited, as a result of effective planning, the learners had already undertaken work experience relevant to their Diploma studies. The following example demonstrates how learning on the Diploma was integrated effectively with the programme for work experience.

Learners on a business administration and finance Diploma were split into groups of three. Each group made one visit to each of five businesses that supported the course and deliberately recruited from a range of commercial sectors. Each visit lasted one day and resulted in work that was completed at school and for homework. The homework required learners to complete worksheets that were designed to ensure that the learners applied the 'principal learning' being studied to the context of each particular business. Subsequently, learners undertook five more days of work experience in one of the five businesses with which they had

worked, whenever possible. The choice of work placement for this second phase was based upon the particular interests of the learner in relation to the Diploma course. Employers commented positively on the learners. One employer said, 'The approach from these young people was very mature and the investigations they carried out were of a high standard.'

The involvement of employers

28. Links with employers were good. Employers enhanced the 'principal learning' through contributing to curriculum planning and providing specific learning activities, as well as hosting visits to their premises, offering work experience and visiting providers to meet learners. All the consortia provided examples of good links with employers in all the Diploma lines, although not necessarily for each Diploma line within a consortium. In one example, very effective work by an industrial liaison officer linked to an engineering Diploma resulted in good links with local employers. In two consortia, employers were involved in assessing learners' work. In the best examples of employers' engagement with the Diplomas, learners worked on challenging, industry-led tasks and projects.
29. In the following example, learners on a creative and media Diploma course worked with professionals and used industry-standard equipment in major, national media companies.

Learners at both Key Stage 4 and post-16 were given a brief by the local police force to produce materials for the force to use as part of the national Stop Hate campaign. Learners were asked to prepare advertisements, short films and other promotional materials for the campaign. The work produced was presented to a panel including police officers, professional film-makers and university lecturers. The learners' work was used in football grounds, public houses and other venues across the local authority area.

30. In the example below, learners on an engineering Diploma worked on practical tasks planned jointly by technical staff and Diploma trainers.

An engineering Diploma unit on applying maintenance techniques was taught through six one-day visits to the training centre of a large local employer. Experienced technical staff provided learners with real maintenance tasks on bicycles, along with a range of other, carefully prepared activities. The activities and training materials were prepared by the technical staff and trainers working together. This joint work ensured that the materials and activities were appropriate to the ages of the learners and their levels of study. As an added incentive, the learner producing the best work was allowed to keep the bicycle on which she or he had worked.

31. In the example below, advanced-level learners made good use of a university's virtual learning environment to work on an industry-led project.

Learners had access to a local university's online portal, with a wide range of audio and video materials and presentations which supported learning for advanced-level Diploma units. The Diploma curriculum was designed to incorporate and make best use of this specialist facility. The university contributed to the teaching of three of the advanced-level engineering Diploma units. The university's high-quality training materials and expertise in computer-aided design were used very effectively in teaching the units. The teaching and training were based around an actual example of the way a local company used computer-aided design. Once the learners understood the basics of computer-aided design and had conducted research, they visited the company. Subsequently, the learners redesigned a machine component and produced a 3-D prototype for a new component. Learners used materials from the company on the virtual learning environment, along with presentations and video material of training sessions.

32. The learners seen also had access to commercial and industrial expertise through visits to schools and colleges by employers and other practitioners. For example, learners studying for a creative and media Diploma met local professional artists and arts companies regularly. These professionals made a considerable contribution to the good quality of the work produced by the learners. Such highly motivating, realistic experiences developed learners' vocational knowledge, skills and understanding. In a good example of learners' involvement with employers, learners on an IT Diploma made a good contribution to the work of the organisation they visited.

Learners spent one day a week at the visitor centre of a local country park. They helped to install and configure a new computer system, which they used subsequently to help staff at the centre with various projects. These included developing promotional materials for the park, creating digital signs, creating maps and compiling databases so that the staff could monitor visitor patterns and study the park's flora and fauna. The learners helped to install wireless equipment, including cameras, to monitor wildlife at the park. The park staff said that it would not have been possible to undertake the work without the learners, because the staff lacked the expertise needed.

33. The following example shows how joint curriculum planning between providers and employers extended the range of learning experiences.

In an innovative approach that extended the range of learning opportunities available to creative and media Diploma learners, work with employers resulted in these learners having the opportunity to be involved in voluntary work with which the employers were associated. The programme provided opportunities for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 to gain employment skills and collect evidence of what they had achieved. The young people took part in a film-making project as part of the programme. Projects included making promotional films supporting

local charity shops and small businesses, and other organisations which helped young people to get into the creative and media industries, including training young actors. This provided information to young people in a more accessible form. One learner involved with the programme commented, 'It's been good to do something creative outside school but you actually feel that you are learning something that will be of benefit to your career.'

34. All the consortia visited were successful in using the experience and expertise, both of providers and employers, to plan suitable activities. In an example of particularly strong practice, the local education business partnership in one consortium supplied 40 days each year to support the Diploma lines. The involvement of employers was coordinated well and ensured no individual was overloaded by the demand. 'Employer champions' from major companies then took responsibility for launching assignments for learners.
35. On the infrequent occasions where links with employers were not sufficiently developed, learners were not involved with employers or did not make off-site visits. As a result, the teaching was less stimulating and less enjoyable. Consequently, learners lacked motivation and their learning and progress were limited. Sometimes, off-site visits and meetings with employers lacked carefully planned learning objectives. For example, learners on an engineering course were unclear about what they were intended to achieve from their off-site visits and the subsequent projects in which they were involved. In the follow-up lessons, learners spent too much time writing up plans and reviewing progress in preparation for their presentations and not enough on the engineering content and the practice they had seen in the visits. As result, their understanding of the subject was underdeveloped.

Functional skills

36. The teaching and coordination of functional skills were highly problematic. This was also highlighted in Ofsted's previous report. In 16 of the consortia visited, links between the functional skills taught in stand-alone lessons and the Diploma's 'principal learning' were insufficient. This separation of the teaching of functional skills from the 'principal learning' was an important weakness which led to the following problems.
- Learners were unclear about the application of the functional skills and the role of these skills within the Diploma.
 - Learners were taught functional skills in isolation: they were not related to the vocational context of the 'principal learning' in the Diploma, but focused on preparing learners for generic tests in functional skills.
37. The separation of the functional skills from the 'principal learning' also meant that functional skills were often taught in the learners' home institution. The teaching of functional skills in several different institutions was not coordinated within consortia. Consequently, learners from different institutions who studied

the same Diploma and were taught together for the 'principal learning' in one institution received noticeably different experiences for the functional skills in their home institutions.⁷ The learners surveyed remarked on the differences in the quality of the teaching of functional skills. These differences in approach were usually the result of:

- insufficient focus in schemes of work for functional skills on providing opportunities for learners to acquire and practise the skills
- insufficient opportunities for the teachers responsible for the different elements of the Diplomas to share their planning.

38. Only three of the 21 consortia showed good integration between the 'principal learning' and functional skills. This occurred where 'principal learning' had a strong functional element or where planning for the 'principal learning' emphasised opportunities for learners to practise and develop functional skills and personal learning and thinking skills (as in the example at paragraph 40). This ensured that the functional skills in these consortia were applied in the vocational context of the specific Diploma line.
39. There were examples within the individual schools and colleges visited of close working between the teachers of functional skills and those responsible for the 'principal learning', but this was not usually the case and to find it across all the providers in a consortium was rare. The extent to which 'principal learning' and functional skills were integrated varied between Diploma lines within consortia. For example, effective planning for the creative and media Diploma in one consortium resulted in a good level of integration of the two components, but this was not the case for the hair and beauty Diploma.
40. In the following example of high-quality teaching of functional skills, the functional skills lesson was focused on only one Diploma line. However, it was very challenging for teachers to teach discrete lessons in functional skills which incorporated tasks that were relevant to several Diploma lines. Where only one Diploma line was linked with the functional skills programme, achieving relevance was much more feasible. The example illustrates how learners developed a range of communication skills effectively in an English lesson in support of the creative and media Diploma.

The learners worked enthusiastically on tasks linked closely to the creative and media Diploma. The learners had previously made a sales pitch in the style of a popular television programme, preparing promotional T-shirts and publicity materials to advertise their plans for an event. The English teacher responsible for the functional skills was part of a panel of judges that evaluated the learners' proposals. The learners also analysed their own performance and agreed actions for improvements in discussion with

⁷ The home institution is the school on whose roll the learner was registered or college where the learner had enrolled.

the teachers/trainers. In the English lesson, the learners worked to improve their presentational skills and learned about selling techniques. The learners practised making a pitch to sell their T-shirts, worked in pairs to rehearse it and commented on each other's performance. The learners reflected on their skills, coached each other and identified areas for improvement, using ideas cards provided by the teacher which helped their assessment. The learners improved their skills and knowledge and the teacher continually drew links with the type of work that learners would undertake in the future.

41. In the 12 stand-alone functional skills lessons seen, the teachers used real-life contexts, materials and examples effectively, but rarely with an obvious relevance to the Diplomas. In the best of these lessons, learners engaged in problem-solving activities on a range of topics. However, the absence of clear links to the 'principal learning' meant that the learners struggled to relate the functional skills to their 'principal learning' in anything other than the most general ways. It was not clear how the functional skills teaching could be linked effectively with the 'principal learning' once all Diploma lines are operating at each level. In addition, little evidence was seen of careful planning to help learners to rely less on the teacher and to develop progressively more independent ways of working and learning.

Assessment of learning

42. The quality of assessment on Diplomas varied within all the consortia visited. Good practice included ensuring learners knew how to improve their work as a result of accurate assessment by teachers who also enabled learners to develop their own assessment skills. For example, as a result of good assessment, learners studying an engineering Diploma understood clearly what they had to do to achieve high grades. In another case, learners on a creative and media Diploma made good progress partly as a result of developing their coaching, self- and peer-assessment skills. Other common features of good assessment seen included:
- well-established processes for setting targets for learners
 - highly effective tracking of learners' progress, including details of grades achieved
 - well-structured processes for assessment and moderation of learners' work.
43. Where assessment was weaker, comments to learners were insufficiently detailed, specific or developmental. Consequently, learners were unable to identify where and how they needed to improve their work. For example, a group of learners studying the hair and beauty Diploma did not have the information they needed to develop their personal action plans. In another case, learners studying the foundation-level engineering Diploma were not helped to understand how they could catch up with work, having fallen behind. In these cases, learners did not understand fully their targets for improvement

or the particular skills they needed to develop. In 14 of the consortia visited, there were weaknesses in transferring information about learners between providers. As a result, the monitoring of learners' progress and well-being was insufficiently rigorous.

44. As noted in the 2009 report, in all the consortia visited, there was again, generally, little evidence of the early assessment of learners' attainment in the 'principal learning'. In one example, the planning for a construction and the built environment Diploma exacerbated the situation by scheduling all the formal assessment towards the end of the course. This meant that both the teachers and the learners struggled to understand in detail how well the learners were doing.

The quality of information, advice, guidance and support

45. The quality of information, advice, guidance and support was good in seven of the 21 consortia visited and satisfactory in the other 14. In the best examples, clear, detailed protocols and plans enabled all the institutions in a consortium to provide Diploma-related information, advice and guidance which was coordinated and consistent across the consortium. As a result, learners received effective and informative advice and guidance in choosing their courses. This was often through an extensive and coordinated programme of events in which Diplomas were well-represented. Successful activities included 'taster days' for Year 9 students that allowed them to sample learning activities before making their choices. The example below illustrates another successful approach.

A trade show was organised to help learners gain a good understanding of and appreciation for the progression opportunities available to them in engineering. Several local employers were represented at the event, together with the Connexions service and representatives from the Aim Higher initiative. All learners interested in the level 2 Diploma attended the event. Employers and the representatives from the other support organisations discussed a range of topics relating to engineering with small groups of learners.

46. Four of the consortia had developed good-quality information and promotional materials about the Diplomas; these supplemented materials available nationally. One consortium held specific events in attractive venues, such as sports and entertainment centres, for learners considering Diplomas. Learners attended, with their parents and carers, and the activities were tailored to meet individual interests. Generally, however, in the consortia visited, there was not enough effective information, advice and guidance for parents and carers to enable them to support their children in understanding the Diplomas.
47. Nine of the consortia did not use the web-based local prospectus sufficiently. Comments from the learners to whom inspectors spoke during the survey made it clear that the use of web-based prospectuses varied considerably between

providers. In one consortium, learners said that they had used the prospectus, but it did not contain any information about Diplomas. In another case, learners did not find the web-based prospectus easy to read. Generally, there was little evidence that learners were either particularly aware of the web-based prospectus or that it had influenced or helped them to make their choices.

48. In six consortia, there were weaknesses in the quality and consistency of the advice and guidance because there were variations both between what was done by individual providers and also between different members of staff within the same institution. In too many instances, the information and advice that teachers gave to learners were not sufficiently comprehensive or well-understood. For example, in one consortium, the programme of information, advice and guidance left learners with unrealistic expectations about the content of the courses. This led to disappointment and a loss of motivation once the course had started. In another case, learners were not aware that, if they failed one component of the Diploma, they would not get the full award. In yet another example, learners were unable to make fully informed decisions about courses because the consortium's initial advice and guidance were not sufficiently comprehensive and accurate.
49. Selection procedures were undertaken conscientiously and learners in all the consortia visited were placed on Diploma courses at the correct level. Seven of the 21 consortia used common, coordinated processes for Diploma applications. The most effective selection processes used clear, common entry criteria that were applied rigorously and consistently. This ensured that learners' abilities were matched well to the demands of the course, especially in relation to the functional skills needed. In one consortium, however, learners said they had received little information about the functional skills requirements before they started the course.
50. Good induction processes, which the previous report identified as being strong, were seen in 10 of the 21 consortia. These programmes boosted learners' confidence; they also gave them a sense of shared identity and purpose, particularly when groups were made up of learners from different providers. The induction also gave them a good grasp of the structure of the Diploma and made them fully aware of the requirements of the course. This is an example of a particularly well-thought out induction activity.

Learners starting a society, health and development Diploma attended an induction day centred on a drama developed by the learners on a creative and media Diploma and based upon a scenario connected with the society, health and development Diploma. Learners watched a performance of the drama and were given a limited amount of information about the characters. The creative and media learners stayed 'in character' throughout the day while the society, health and development learners questioned them, built a picture of events and linked these to parts of the Diploma programme connected with the occupational sectors of health care, social care, community justice and the children's workforce.

Professionals from each sector attended the day and helped the learners to understand how particular jobs related to the lives of the characters in the drama. Learners returned to the theme of the day later on their Diploma courses and worked again with professionals from the National Health Service and social services. One learner commented on the experience: 'It was brilliant that we were able to work with the professionals from the sectors and build up these case studies around the characters.'

51. Occasionally, induction processes did not provide learners with a good understanding of the Diploma. For example, learners on a hair and beauty course were not fully aware of the different components of the Diploma and so did not have a clear sense of the Diploma as a coherent curriculum.
52. There was little concerted or effective work to challenge learners' gender-stereotypical choices. In all the consortia visited, recruitment to the Diplomas reflected long-established, gender-stereotypical patterns. One consortium had checked all promotional materials and ensured they contained no stereotyping. Only one consortium had set targets for recruitment in respect of gender. One consortium devised recruitment events to challenge stereotypical thinking by learners, but these did not result in many atypical choices and the actual recruitment still reflected long-established patterns. Learners in the consortium reported, however, that the events had caused them to consider the options more carefully.
53. In the very few examples seen where relatively high proportions of learners were recruited from groups that were usually under-represented, for example females on engineering Diplomas, group sizes were small, inflating the proportion of the under-represented group. In these cases, the apparently successful recruitment was often the result of other factors, such as a limited range of options available to learners. There were also relatively small proportions of learners who were young people in public care or who were from minority ethnic groups. This was often lower than the proportion in the general population of learners.

Learners in public care

54. Visits to nine consortia looked specifically at the extent to which Diplomas were benefiting young people in public care. There were few 14- to 19-year olds in care in these consortia. Consequently, the number of young people in care taking Diplomas was small and two consortia had none at all. Similarly, the number of young people in care taking Diplomas, although increasing, was still small when compared to other courses. In two of the local authorities, young people in care were taking Diplomas in consortia outside the local area.
55. In all of the nine consortia where provision for young people in public care was inspected, there was a strong commitment to ensuring that the young people had access to appropriate educational placements. A number of the care

professionals interviewed during the survey pointed out that a range of courses was available already for 14- to 19-year-olds. These included BTECs, GCSEs, ASDAN and other individually tailored programmes.⁸ They also pointed out that young people in care often had lower levels of prior attainment than their peers and were not always at a suitable academic level to gain entry into level 2 Diplomas. Seven of the nine consortia offered only a limited range of Diplomas at level 1, some of which had not recruited sufficient learners to be viable. Opportunities for the young people were restricted further because not all institutions in the area were providing the Diploma. As a result, young people in care attending those institutions, particularly those learners with lower attainment, were not offered Diplomas as an option.

56. Providers carefully considered the needs of young people in public care and provided a range of additional support, including equipment such as laptop computers, to enable them to benefit from the education opportunities provided. However, where there were weaknesses in communication between education staff and leaving-care workers, this resulted in difficulties for young people, either in terms of access to courses or in maintaining their existing placements.
57. The staff in all nine of the consortia said that many young people in residential and foster placements experienced instability with care placements and consequent disruption to their education. This occurred for many of them when they moved from foster care to semi-independent living between the ages of 16 and 18. In two of the consortia, good support for learners in public care provided by designated teachers, learning mentors and social workers helped to remove these barriers and enabled them to join Diploma courses. The consortia were committed to providing the young people with stable educational placements.
58. In the consortia visited, social workers and foster carers had a limited understanding of Diplomas. In addition, the information about Diplomas was not made available routinely to all the young people who were not in mainstream placements, such as those in young offenders' institutions or to those in residential placements outside the local authority area. Although all the consortia provided information about the Diplomas, it did not always reach key decision-makers, such as social workers and foster carers. In one of the nine consortia where the information did reach key decision-makers, the quality, consistency and impartiality of information, advice and guidance provided to the young people by social workers were not sufficient to enable the young people to make well-informed choices.
59. The learners in public care seen during the survey had access to effective counselling services in schools and colleges and made good use of these.

⁸ ASDAN is an awarding body that accredits and oversees awards and qualifications, mainly for the 11–25 age-group. For further information, see: www.asdan.org.uk.

However, these learners were often not prepared well enough to make their choices. Coordination of the information, advice and guidance process was not sufficient to ensure that young people in care received advice and guidance in a coherent way. For example, in one consortium, meetings to draw up young people's personal education plans were not timed to coincide with Year 9 options choices and so took no account of the decisions to be made.

60. Some of the professional staff working with young people in public care to whom inspectors spoke viewed the modular form of learning provided by the Diplomas as suitable for the young people. However, staff in three of the consortia indicated that requiring learners to pass all five elements of the Diploma was perceived by some of the young people as a barrier to their success.
61. In all nine consortia, staff indicated that the young people expressed uncertainty about progression to higher education using the Diploma and that many academically able young people in care were choosing to follow more established routes. These views were confirmed in discussions with young people in care who were aspiring to university. Those interviewed by inspectors had considered Diplomas but opted for alternative routes.

Leadership and management

62. The effectiveness of the strategic direction, leadership and management in relation to the Diplomas was judged to be good in 13 of the 21 consortia. It was judged outstanding in another one and satisfactory in the remainder. All the consortia visited made effective use of a range of support from their local authorities, national support agencies and training programmes.
63. The multiple component structure of the Diploma posed a number of challenges to consortia. All the consortia visited had begun to tackle these problems by clearly identifying roles and responsibilities across the consortium and by developing written protocols and operating procedures, including financial arrangements, common timetabling, transport and, in one example, joint governance. These arrangements were often set out in detailed and comprehensive manuals and handbooks. In addition, detailed and well-thought out strategic plans set out the development of Diplomas in the context of the wider 14–19 reforms, local needs and identified gaps in the range and type of courses available.
64. The example below shows how one consortium with good leadership and management dealt effectively with the complex administration of assessing different components of the Diploma. This enabled the consortium to monitor learners' achievement effectively across these.

The consortium appointed a lead assessor who coordinated all the performance information relating to Diplomas very effectively. A series of spreadsheets recorded assessment and examination dates for each unit of

the Diplomas, including dates for re-sits, as well as functional skills, the personal learning and thinking skills, the dates and details of learners' work experience, and projects. The results of assessments were recorded, showing the marks given by the teachers or trainers, the marks given by the Diploma awarding body and the grades achieved for each unit or part of a unit. The record also included the results of the functional skills tests.

65. Understandably, the consortia made up of institutions that had worked together over longer periods of time took advantage of their well-established partnerships. For example, their early attention to resolving logistical problems such as transporting learners between institutions and financial arrangements resulted in smooth day-to-day running of the Diplomas. These consortia also had well-established programmes of meetings for teachers to coordinate planning, teaching and assessment. In contrast, in a consortium that was less well-established, the providers had not agreed the days and times of the week for timetabling Diplomas. The following case study shows how a school used its experience of previous successful partnership work effectively to support the development of the Diplomas.

A large, comprehensive secondary school planned its curriculum carefully so that it reflected the wide range of abilities of its learners. It had long experience of working productively with other providers to expand its curriculum. Learners were able to choose subjects and combinations that they found interesting and that matched their abilities and aspirations. Success rates for National Vocational Qualifications and Young Apprenticeship programmes provided jointly with these partners were high. The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training when they left the school had declined and was much lower than the average for the area. As a result, the school was chosen to provide a lead for the consortium for construction and the built environment and hair and beauty.

66. Twelve of the 21 consortia used institutional specialisms effectively to aid development planning, locate provision and assign lead responsibilities. For example, the lead responsibility for Diploma lines was commonly allocated on the basis of schools' specialist status, the existence of centres of vocational excellence in colleges, or locally acknowledged experience and expertise. Decisions reflected a number of local considerations, including changes to schools' estates as a result of new-build and refurbishment programmes and the need to ensure a suitable geographical spread of provision. These features are exemplified below.

The consortium had carefully located specialist training centres close to relevant employers' premises. For example, an engineering centre was near to a large steel-making and manufacturing company in a unit on an industrial estate. The centre was equipped with industry-standard equipment which the employer also used for training and demonstration. All the trainers at the centre had recent experience of the industry and up-

to-date knowledge. Similarly, a construction design centre was located with a major construction company, a retail training centre was located close to a large shopping mall and a creative and media centre was placed within a part of the city where creative industries were concentrated.

67. Consortia were slow in implementing sufficiently rigorous quality assurance procedures. This finding echoes that in the 2009 report. All the consortia visited had developed a range of quality assurance activities and programmes, often specified within the manuals and handbooks of protocols for collaborative courses. The range of activities included was increasing and, occasionally, included joint lesson observations. For example, in one consortium, the providers showed a high level of commitment to working in partnership as they shared and held open discussions about performance data on individual and collaborative provision. One consortium commissioned external reports on the quality of provision and used these effectively to develop plans for improvements. In four consortia, arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the progress of learners were enhanced by the use of area-wide information systems developed by the local authority. These approaches were the exceptions. Generally, in the consortia visited, the analysis and monitoring of the performance of different groups of learners were insufficiently rigorous.
68. Protocols for sharing information about learners' educational backgrounds, prior attainment, safeguarding and support needs, and for tracking and reporting learners' progress were less well developed than those for attendance and behaviour. In 14 of the 21 consortia, there were weaknesses in transferring information about learners between providers. Information about learners' educational achievements and support needs were not always communicated fully between providers. In one consortium, liaison between teachers at the different locations concerning learners studying away from their home base was insufficient. As a result, the providers were unclear about some of the learning needs of individuals and could not monitor learners' progress against their targets effectively. For example, on a level 1 engineering Diploma, learners' needs relating to literacy and numeracy were not identified clearly before the course began and so learners' progress was inhibited.
69. Aspects of the implementation or application of quality assurance procedures were weaknesses in 16 of the consortia. In too many examples, monitoring was too slow and did not enable consortia to respond rapidly to emerging trends in learners' progress and motivation. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the curriculum had not been identified. For example, in a hair and beauty Diploma, learners had not taken part in any off-site learning or heard from visiting speakers. One consortium had undertaken little early analysis of learners' participation, attendance, retention or progress. In other examples, monitoring and evaluation had not considered evidence about functional skills so that the quality of teaching by different providers was not assessed and the consortium had not ensured that learners' experiences were of comparable quality. Two of the consortia made insufficient use of learners' views of their experience on the Diplomas.

70. In the consortia visited that had established central coordination of key elements, arrangements for staff development were better. For example, established central coordination led to greater standardisation of procedures and better, more accurate assessment. In six of the consortia, common programmes for staff development were extensive; they were satisfactory in nine. In six consortia, however, there was not enough joint work between staff on Diploma programmes. As a result, teaching plans, materials and good practice were not shared.

Notes

The report is based on visits to 21 14–19 consortia between September 2009 and March 2010 where aspects of the Diploma provision were evaluated. One further consortium was visited where it was not possible to observe any teaching and learning during the course of the visit.

The consortia varied in size from those made up of several schools and a local college of further education to others that included all the schools and colleges within a local authority area. The consortia were in a variety of urban, suburban, rural and semi-rural areas.

In each consortium, teams of Her Majesty's Inspectors and additional inspectors visited a small sample of schools and colleges and, where they were involved, work-based learning providers and local authority skills centres. In total, 42 schools, 21 colleges of further education and sixth form colleges, and three work-based learning providers were visited. Visits were also made to four local authority skills centres.

During the visits, inspectors saw teaching and learning in the 'principal learning' and functional skills. They met managers, staff and groups of learners to discuss the progress of the new courses. In most of the areas, they met local authority officers, as well as employers and representatives from the Learning and Skills Council.

In each consortium visited, inspectors made one overarching judgement about the progress made in implementing the Diplomas, including functional skills. They collected evidence about eight of the lines of learning, namely: construction and the built environment; creative and media studies; engineering; IT; society, health and development; business, administration and finance; hair and beauty studies, and manufacturing and product design. In 13 of the visits, they looked at two or more lines of learning. In eight visits, inspectors looked at one line of learning and sampled work on functional skills as well. In nine of the visits, inspectors also looked at how the 14–19 Diplomas were meeting the needs of children and young people in public care.

Inspectors visited the consortia at different stages of development and so the amount of evidence available varied considerably, particularly in relation to learners' achievement. For example, two of the consortia visited had had no experience of Diplomas before September 2009. More evidence was collected about construction and the built environment, creative and media studies, engineering, IT, and hair and

beauty studies than other Diploma lines. The numbers of learners taking each Diploma line often varied considerably from the projected numbers in the plans drawn up by the consortia. Inspectors saw work at each of the three levels of the 14–19 Diplomas, but most of the work was at level 2 and mainly at Key Stage 4.

Further information

Publications by Ofsted

Implementation of the 14 – 19 reforms: an evaluation of progress (070258), Ofsted, 2008; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070258.

Implementation of the 14 – 19 reforms, including the introduction of Diplomas (080267), Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080267.

Moving through the system – information, advice and guidance (080273), Ofsted, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080273.

Reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training: what works and why (090236), Ofsted, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090236.

Other publications

Criteria for accreditation of foundation, higher and advanced Diploma qualifications (Ofqual/10/4733), Ofqual, 2010; www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualification-and-assessment-framework/89-articles/248-criteria-for-accreditation-of-foundation-higher-and-advanced-diploma-qualifications

National evaluation of Diplomas: the first year of delivery (DCSF Research report 220), DCSF, 2010; www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/IID02/

Websites

Department for Education
www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19

Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency
www.qcda.org.uk/14-19

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)
www.lsis.org.uk

Annex: Consortia and providers visited for this survey

14 – 19 consortia

Abingdon, Oxfordshire
 Barnsley
 Bassetlaw Partnership, Nottinghamshire
 Bath and North East Somerset
 Bolton
 Derby City
 Erewash Learning Community, Derbyshire
 Kingston-upon-Thames
 Middlesbrough
 Milton Keynes
 North Cornwall and Atlantic Consortia, Cornwall
 North Lincolnshire
 Open Opportunity Partnership, Norwich
 Portsmouth
 Sheffield
 St Helens
 Stockport
 Stoke-on-Trent
 Thanet, Kent
 Torbay
 Wakefield
 The Wirral

Schools, including academies

Berry Hill High School and Sports College
 Bradfield School
 Brixham College
 Chew Valley School

Local authority area⁹

Stoke-on-Trent
 Sheffield
 Torbay
 Bath and North East Somerset

⁹ Academies are not under the control of a local authority.

City of Portsmouth Girls' School	Portsmouth
Coombe Boys' School	Kingston upon Thames
FTC Performing Arts College	North Lincolnshire
George Tomlinson School	Bolton
Hartsdown Technology College	Kent
Haywood Engineering College	Stoke-on-Trent
Hemsworth Arts and Community College	Wakefield
Ilkeston School: Specialist Arts College	Derbyshire
John Mason School	Oxfordshire
King Ethelbert School	Kent
Kirk Balk School	Barnsley
Larkmead School	Oxfordshire
Lees Brook Community Sports College	Derby
The Long Eaton High School	Derbyshire
Milton Keynes Academy	Milton Keynes
Mitchell High School Business and Enterprise College	Stoke-on-Trent
Mounts Bay School	Cornwall
Notre Dame High School, Norwich	Norfolk
Pencalenick School	Cornwall
Ralph Allen School	Bath and North East Somerset
Richard Lander School	Cornwall
Sinfin Community School	Derby
Sir James Smith's Community School	Cornwall
South Wirral High School	Wirral
Southborough High School	Kingston upon Thames
St Cuthbert Mayne School	Torbay
St Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business and Enterprise	St Helens
Saint Gregory's Catholic College	Bath and North East Somerset
St Wilfrid's Catholic High School and Sixth Form College	Wakefield
Stantonbury Campus	Milton Keynes

Stockport School	Stockport
The Mosslands School	Wirral
Torquay Boys' Grammar School	Torbay
Treviglas Community College	Cornwall
Tuxford School	Nottinghamshire
Unity City Academy	Middlesbrough
Valley Comprehensive School	Nottinghamshire
Westhoughton High School	Bolton

Further education colleges

Abingdon and Witney College	Abingdon
Barnsley College	Barnsley
Bolton Community College	Bolton
City of Bath College	Bath
City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College	Fenton
Derby College	Derby
Highbury College	Portsmouth
Kingston College	Kingston upon Thames
Middlesbrough College	Middlesbrough
Milton Keynes College	Milton Keynes
New College, Pontefract	Pontefract
North Lindsey College	Scunthorpe
North Nottinghamshire College	Worksop
Norton Radstock College	Radstock
Portsmouth College	Portsmouth
St Helens College	St Helens
Stockport College	Stockport
Thanet College	Broadstairs
Truro and Penwith College	Truro
Wakefield College	Wakefield
Wirral Metropolitan College	Eastham

Employers and work-based learning providers

Broadway Cinema and Media Centre	Nottingham
Goodwin International Limited	Stoke-on-Trent
PETA Limited	Portsmouth

Local authority skills and learning centres

The Collaborative Skills Centre, St Helens
St Helens Haydock Collaborative Learning Centre
Sheffield Engineering and Manufacturing Centre
Thanet Skills Studio, Thanet, Kent