



Nurturing Autonomous and Creative Learners - The Kent Secondary Strategy phase 2

In Kent's successful learning communities, achievement will exceed expectations and no child or school will fail

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In Kent we must develop autonomous and creative learners who have the right to the best learning opportunities irrespective of background. We aim to provide personal fulfilment and to ensure that young people can compete in the knowledge and creative economy of the 21st Century. Together with sustainable economic development, education can be the catalyst to lift children from poverty. It should provide them with the skills, knowledge and understanding to become confident, healthy, collaborative and responsible citizens who are economically active and able to participate fully in a democratic and inclusive society.

Nurturing Autonomous and Creative Learners - The Kent Secondary Strategy (phase 2) (2005) builds upon and supersedes previous policies.

*It does not stand in isolation. It follows on from, and complements similar strategy documents: **The Future of SEN Provision in Kent** and the **Special Schools Review (1999, 2001 and 2002)** and **The Kent Primary Strategy (2005)**.*



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"The winners will be those most adept at marshalling the creativity and skills of workers around the world." Business Week, March 21, 2005

Three years ago the LEA, in partnership with schools, initiated a review of secondary provision. There was a clear model of excellence but not equity; many students were reaching high levels of achievement as manifested for example in their key stage 3 national tests and GCSE results. However, at the same time, too many pupils were failing. The curriculum was inappropriate for a significant minority of pupils, good practice was not disseminated for the benefit of the larger community and excellent leadership in schools remained patchy. Alongside this, intervention by the LEA was inconsistent and often indecisive. The education community was resolute that failure on any scale should not be tolerated. Analysis of this historical position led to phase 1 of the secondary strategy. This first phase of initiatives included the creation of 23 collaborative clusters of schools with devolved resources, the piloting of academies and federated structures, investment in a leading - edge community schools agenda, a strategic approach to specialist status and a partnership with Microsoft leading to 'proof of concept' projects to transform teaching and learning. These developments are detailed in **Appendix 3**.

Kent schools have built on the high levels of academic achievement of a large number of Kent's young people. In Kent, key stage 3 national tests results for example were above the national average between 2003 and 2005, as were the 'value added' scores, measuring the progress between ages 11 and 14. At the same time, it remains the case that some 40% of 16 year olds in Kent are not reaching the recognised standard of 5 A*- Cs at GCSE or its equivalent. We still have a long way to go towards realising the potential of all our young people.

To significantly raise achievement levels in Kent we need to develop highly motivated autonomous, collaborative and creative learners who are equipped for life and work in the 21st Century. This will require us to personalise the education offer so that we fully understand how to stimulate, nurture and stretch every young person in accordance with his or her abilities, interests and needs. Major reform is required in the following four areas as core elements for our Building Schools for the Future programme (see **Appendix 7**).



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1. **A transformation of learning in schools** through a redesigned and tailored curriculum and ICT-rich learning environment. A wide-ranging academic and vocational curriculum offer will sit alongside a diversity of learning methods to be employed, including coaching, project-based learning, small group work, large master classes, mentoring, advisories, presentations and internships.
2. **A re-structuring of our schools** to drive and support collaboration and distributed leadership and enable us to create the human scale environments that are necessary to properly support personalised learning. Clusters, Education Improvement Partnerships, Federations and the school within a school will form the essential building blocks.
3. **Placing schools at the heart of their communities** to stimulate and support economic and community regeneration whilst meeting the educational, health, social and emotional needs of young people. We will build on the Children Act and on our successful Community Schools Development programme to achieve this.
4. **The creation of an appropriately resourced infrastructure** to drive and support this strategy, in partnership with schools, will be necessary to deliver our ambitious agenda. We will recruit and develop our workforce, in particular our current and future generations of school leaders, to deliver the step change in achievement we desire. Direction, challenge and support for school improvement will be led by a Secondary Transformation Team of credible, experienced practitioners. At the same time we will work up plans to create learning spaces with cutting edge ICT resources to inspire high levels of engagement and attainment. All aspects of this leadership and support will be enhanced by a variety of partnerships with the public, voluntary and commercial sectors.

We will build on the richness, diversity and excellence of our secondary education system in Kent. For all the elements of this strategy, action plans will be developed, taking account of existing plans and progress against those plans. In particular, we will seek to take account of, build on and disseminate existing good practice in Kent and from elsewhere.



Chapter 1

SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE



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Vision

In Kent's successful learning communities, achievement will exceed aspiration and no child or school will fail

Context and Purpose

This document maps the journey that Kent LEA has taken in appraising the effectiveness of secondary provision in the County, referencing actions that have already been taken to provide sustained improvement. It also recognises that the pace of remediation has to accelerate and provides an analysis of strategies that will now be deployed to ensure that all Kent secondary schools become models of excellence and equity, providing the very best outcomes for every pupil whatever their circumstance.

Three years ago, the LEA initiated a secondary review, in partnership with schools, developing a strategy that sought to reshape the educational landscape within which provision took place. It recognised that, nationally, too many pupils were failed by the system due to an inadequate or inappropriate curriculum. Although many of Kent's young people reached high levels of academic achievement and otherwise benefited from the leadership, professionalism and dedication of staff in our schools, for a significant number of young people the curriculum offer did not reflect modern day society. Uniformity of the curriculum as a means of addressing equity has been unsuccessful for a large cohort of pupils.

Kent has consistently performed well at secondary level compared to other authorities, but intervention in failing schools has not been sufficiently speedy or decisive. Radical options are needed. There was unanimous agreement across the education community of LEA and schools that all schools should benefit from the strengths and expertise available across the county. The secondary strategy grew from this analysis of past performance. A summary of phase one strategy development is provided in Appendix 3.

The central strand of the first phase was based on the need to move beyond single institution providers operating within a competitive framework, towards a collaborative model that would help to bring about improvement within the whole system. We recognised the imperative of schools being at the heart of local communities, demonstrating their role in community leadership and the impact this has on pupils' attainment and economic regeneration. Timely data



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on schools' and pupils' attainment and interpretation of the data needed improving to allow swift and effective management action. Another critical element of the strategy included the need to embrace modern learning technologies to better enable our secondary students to learn effectively. Alongside this, the development of a more varied curriculum was required to meet different aptitudes and abilities.

Elements of change are on-going and improvements are already evident. Collaboration has been enhanced and there is a perceptible change in the cultural climate where mutual trust and recognition across the education community is growing. But time is of the essence. In education the lead-in time from strategy implementation to measurable outcomes is protracted. The pace of remediation must quicken.

In partnership with our schools, and building on their successes, we need to rethink secondary education over the next quarter of a century. This strategy accelerates developments in collaborative school structures. However, structures alone will not ensure that schools are fit to educate students for the 21st Century. Critically, the LEA intends to work with schools to model strategy for school processes and pedagogies to illustrate how dynamic change can be implemented. To this end, the LEA has undertaken extensive research and engaged in debates nationally and internationally to inform strategy on the basis of a much clearer understanding of the need for change. Over 25 years this strategy itself will change out of all recognition.

Rationale for Change

"The system we work in today was invented nearly 100 years ago for another time and another mission – the processing of large numbers of students for rote skills and the education of only a few for knowledge work. It was never designed to teach all children to high levels."

Linda Darling-Hammond, School Redesign Network Stanford University

The current ways of working in education often reflect the past. Three and a half thousand secondary schools in England largely operate as isolated units with consequent wide variability of output, costs and sustainability. In the mainstream public sector we now recognise that the stand-alone school concept is diminishing and needs to become part of a larger grouping.



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Within English secondary schools the prevalent mode of learning is within a context of one teacher and 30 pupils, often unsupported by modern technologies. Traditional teaching methods often focus on the teacher as the imparter of knowledge and students as passive recipients. Such institutions essentially remain producer-oriented and face an increasing difficulty in appealing to students whose dominant identity constructs are drawn from the world of consumption and individual rights.

We need to work with our schools to transform this modus operandum into one that better accords with the realities of today, where teenagers from diverse backgrounds regularly use modern technology in personal computers, games and mobile phones as part of their routine experience of life. Young people are all different and are stimulated to learn through a variety of learning styles according to individual aptitudes, needs, personality traits and preferences. Personalising learning to make it relevant to the learner can transform a negative experience into one that is rewarding. It can raise self-esteem and provide a sense of achievement that in turn creates a virtuous cycle of motivation for learning.

Currently, some 40% of our young people are not reaching the recognised standard of 5 A*- Cs at GCSE by age 16, and an increasing number are disengaged and do not find school relevant to their lives or interests. Personalisation lies at the heart of what we wish to achieve. Producer dominated models - telling pupils what to do en masse - are increasingly failing against the backdrop of a society that is now able to customise choice in terms of goods and services. We need to become more effective at engaging with students and teaching them how to learn for themselves and utilise technology for this purpose. And we need to do this quickly.

The policy context and background information on Kent to inform this strategy is provided in **Appendices 1 and 2**, respectively.



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Strategy for Transformation

This strategy aims to provide the vision and rationale for new ways of delivering secondary education in Kent, providing core elements of the Building Schools for the Future programme. It details in-school reform that promotes personalised learning in curriculum content and assessment, learning style and different forms of learning. There is a move away from schools as the sole learning centre or unit of integration. As a consequence, new relationships will form between learners and educators, schools in a locality, schools and the community and schools and the LEA. Learners become independent thinkers and teachers become coaches and mentors. In the shifting dynamics of the new paradigm, the learner becomes central.

Research nationally and internationally informs a unique model of personalised learning which we are further developing in partnership with our schools, and which builds on a new model for delivering education. By definition, the new landscape of secondary education also requires the LEA to reshape itself and provide a different form of support for schools and to adopt a new advocacy role for children.

As well as learning from and building on models and practices in Kent, we will draw on lessons from round the world including the US education system, which, despite problems, is a global leader in developing creativity in its young people. The breaking up of large schools into 'schools within schools', Project Based Learning, where teachers coach more than teach, and the assessment of a wider set of key skills for life and work have facilitated highly personalised approaches to learning and improved student engagement. This is described more fully, and the implications for Kent considered, in **Appendix 4 'Ideas from the USA'**. It also provides a more detailed outline of particular aspects of the approach to personalised learning.

This new strategy provides the basis for the vision for building and restructuring Kent's schools for the future to enable us to develop learning communities that are fit for the 21st Century. In partnership with our schools, we aim to reform every secondary school by 2022. This second phase of transforming secondary education in Kent will build on developments from phase 1. The main elements of phase 2 are as follows:



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1. **Transforming the organisation of learning in schools** by redesigning the curriculum and learning environment to provide a pedagogy that is personalised and relevant to learners in the 21st century. We will work with our schools to engage every young person to achieve through a variety of routes, both academic and vocational, in preparation for life in society and the workplace, according to his or her individual needs, aspirations and interests. There will be an emphasis on developing independent autonomous learners. A fuller description is provided in chapter 2.
2. **Developing capacity and structures** by extending collaborative partnerships between schools by developing clusters and transforming them into Education Improvement Partnerships to deliver a range of educational services to local schools. To provide maximum choice and diversity, schools will be organised in small groupings, with a distinct ethos and specialisms. We will also further develop federated systems to enhance collaboration and make the best use of the expertise and the resources invested in our schools. A fuller description is provided in chapter 3.
3. **Placing schools firmly at the heart of their local community**, supporting economic and community regeneration and ensuring the educational, health, social and emotional needs of young people are met. Schools will offer a range of services, in partnership with each other, the local authority and other providers, that extends beyond the classroom, to provide an infrastructure for young people to motivate, develop aspiration and actively engage the family and community. A fuller description is provided in chapter 4.
4. **Designing and developing the learning infrastructure**, to ensure we have the key elements to drive and support our strategy, in collaboration with our schools. These elements include dynamic leadership in schools and an informed and innovative workforce and strategic leadership with focused support from the Local Authority. We also need ubiquitous and appropriate deployment of ICT both for learning and for pupil and school management and modern physical and virtual learning environments in the right locations. A fuller description of these key elements is provided in chapter 5.



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Key Principles

The following key principles have informed the development of this strategy:

- No child and no school should be left to fail;
- All children and young people should be supported to reach their full potential;
- Every child and young person in a cluster community is the responsibility of all schools, not just one;
- A more strategic central local authority and more operational accountability at local level; and,
- Head teachers as joint managers of the whole education service.

Inclusion

Our vision for the education of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is an integral part of our overall strategy. Intrinsicly, it is to enable all children and young people to attain the best possible learning outcomes to equip them for life in a safe and healthy environment. This will enable them to make an effective economic and social contribution in adult life.

Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004 have provided a new impetus for change. The principles embedded in our approach to the wider development of children's services will generate a more integrated approach to meeting the needs of the whole child and their family, through improved co-ordination of health and social care, and with the work of other key partners such as the voluntary sector.

This strategy continues our commitment to support the integration of children with SEN and AEN into mainstream provision with appropriate support, where parents wish this, and where such placements are consistent with meeting individual needs and not to the detriment of the needs of other learners in the school. Special schools will exist as complementary provision within a



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comprehensive and diverse system of secondary schools to maximise the achievements and participation of all learners.

Further details of this element of the overall strategy, together with a description of its genesis in the earlier “All Together Better” programme, are set out in **Appendix 6**.

Diversity

In line with its statutory responsibilities, Kent County Council is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment through its roles as a community leader and as a service provider. We will endeavour to put these principles into practice through the development of our secondary provision.

Chapter 2

TRANSFORMING LEARNING



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In partnership with schools, Kent LEA aims to develop a school system that enables students to become autonomous learners by designing a curriculum that is relevant, both in content and teaching method, for individual young people in modern day society.

It is clear that a model founded in the nineteenth century, rooted in knowledge transmission, highly labour-intensive and low on use of technology, is not one that can be sustained in the longer term. The shifting demographics of teacher employment reveal that half our teacher workforce is over the age of 45 and that replacement recruitment is unlikely to match potential needs. We also know that many young people across the globe feel estranged by traditional secondary learning environments in which pupil autonomy is limited, technology scarce, and outcomes often seen as lacking relevance. Of the young people who are physically present, many are mentally absent. A significant minority has made a choice not to be physically present either.

We need to find ways of challenging and engaging the disengaged and inculcating a lifelong enjoyment of learning. We must pay close attention to how children learn, particularly using new technology, and what this tells about how we conduct assessment for learning. We need an overhaul of pedagogy and the curriculum and its organisation and, a renewed emphasis on the development of skills, attitudes, moral values and improved self-esteem, in secondary students.

But in re-designing the curriculum and transforming the learning environment to provide a pedagogy that is personalised, we will not abandon traditional teaching – good schools of the future should do both very well.

Key among the attributes identified by employers as critical for the economy in the 21st Century are:

- communication skills;
- a strong work ethic and understanding of the world of work;
- the abilities to work independently and in groups;
- analytical skills; and,
- a recognised value base.

All of these form a coherent superstructure which must be based on secure foundations of effective skills in numeracy and literacy.



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These changes represent moves towards a more engaging curriculum and pedagogy, where greater numbers of young people are actively involved in their learning and experience greater empowerment over the process. The success of this new system will be demonstrated by improved results at 16.

Features of Innovative Schools

"We now have a school curriculum that teaches ten subjects but only limited ways of thinking. We need an education that values different modes of intelligence and sees relationships between disciplines.....They should be taught in ways that reflect their intimate connections in the world beyond education."

Ken Robinson 'Out of Our Minds – Learning to be Creative' 2004

In summary, most innovative schools will evolve the following features:

Organisation of learning:

- Re-designed school management limiting the engagement by teachers to a smaller number of pupils so they can personalise the support they offer, and focus on particular sub-groups which are under-achieving.
- Modifications to group sizes, including large 'master classes' as well as small groups and more one-to-one support, to reflect these new modes of learning and to enable greater teacher support for those pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities or other needs.
- Systematic seeking out of the student voice.

Learning methods, including for example:

- Structured project-based learning, where appropriate, that emphasises skill acquisition such as independence, critical thinking and analysis, group and social skills and work ethic.
- A prominent pedagogy of coaching to encourage students to learn how to learn and teach themselves, rather than casting the teacher merely as instructor and deliverer of knowledge.
- Emphasis on independent learning with the provision of digital portfolios, evidence of group based learning and high level ICT skills.



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- Emphasis on stimulating creativity.
- Involving learners in understanding how they best learn.

Curriculum:

- A remodelled curriculum designed to match the aptitudes, abilities and motivation of students. This involves using curriculum design to relate learning to young people's lives, giving them choice and meaning in the context of their environment and genuine engagement and skills to deal with change. The curriculum would typically provide the option for the student to develop a particular focus such as the arts, humanities or sport and more vocational options and options developing practical skills.
- Modular courses with offers of choice and systematic reporting.
- Internships for some older students that replace traditional work experience, allowing enhanced engagement in the workplace and real life learning opportunities.

Assessment:

- Plan with students how they will meet target assessment criteria, in stages as appropriate through so-called called 'backward planning methodologies'.
- Exhibitions or presentations of mastery by students to display skills and understanding and promote confidence in communicating with others.
- Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment strategies and techniques.

Personal support:

- Advisory and internship models of student learning and personalised pastoral support characteristic of many successful American small schools. **Appendix 4** provides a summary of research conducted in New York and Boston.



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- Enhanced engagement of the family in students' learning and drawing in individuals from the wider community to utilise their talents and skills in mentoring schemes and to provide positive real-world role models to students.
- Provide or arrange out of school activities and care to supplement the main core of educational provision.

Moral and spiritual development:

- Encourage moral development and spiritual awareness as part of an ethos which promotes high standards of pupil conduct, personal responsibility, self-discipline and respect for others.

The education community in Kent will mutually support, further develop and disseminate existing models of good practice in the County, and the LEA will work closely with its schools, or groups of schools, wishing to act as pilots to model curriculum reform. In addition to targeted support for specific initiatives, the Local Authority will also offer comprehensive evaluation and will share the results and the 'lessons learned' with other schools. The intention is that, with support from LEA services, all schools will themselves drive aspects of innovation, in accordance with identified needs.

Development of Vocational Centres

The UK performs relatively poorly compared to other developed nations in training young people in the technical skills needed for today's economy. Consequently, one of the main elements of the 14-19 and secondary strategies is the development of 14 plus Vocational Centres, offering pre-vocational opportunities in construction, motor vehicle maintenance, business skills, land-based disciplines, travel and tourism, catering and health and social care. KCC is planning to provide up to 23 Vocational Centres, attached to school clusters and located on or close to school sites. Each centre will be newly built or refurbished and will provide practical, hands-on vocational training for 14 to 16 year olds, 16 to 19 year olds and adult students in a variety of subjects.



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Although Vocational Centres may provide progression into vocational skills training post-16, they are emphatically not intended to provide a limited vocational pathway at 14. Rather, they will enrich the curriculum with new learning methodologies accompanied by independent and timely careers advice. They will raise aspirations and motivation for a significant number of students.

We will use our vocational strategy to support our objectives of broadening the skills base of secondary students and modernising the curriculum. The vocational centres will provide additional choice and new methods of learning that relate to the world we live in, making the vocational experience as real as possible and more relevant for many of our students. The use of practical skills and learning will also provide enhanced opportunities for project-based learning.

The Centres, to be developed in partnership with FE Colleges, Work Based Learning providers, and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), will be furnished and equipped to specified standards and staffed initially largely by specialist FE lecturers. All Centres will operate on a partnership basis and be a resource accessible to **all** 14+ students (and some pupils below 14, where appropriate) in the area.

Vocational Centres will:

- ensure collaboration between schools;
- involve Further Education and/or Work Based Learning or other partners;
- serve an area of high deprivation/build on existing good partnerships;
- enrich the curriculum with innovative learning techniques;
- encompass access to a partial or whole 'alternative curriculum' for some students;
- be mindful of labour market needs;
- offer a wide curriculum offer;



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- offer credible and appropriate qualifications; and,
- be well sited across the County to minimise transport difficulties.

A pilot development phase of this project is focussed on five areas, mainly in East Kent. Schools in this part of Kent have high numbers of looked after children and low progression rates to post-16 education.

This curriculum may appeal to those students who would otherwise become disaffected and disengaged from the traditional academic offer by offering a new learning dimension that is more relevant to their lives. However, it is not aimed solely at this group and will provide sound progression routes to higher qualifications of choice leading to technician, supervisory and management positions.

14 to 19 Learner Strategy

In-school reform and development and Vocational Centres are integral to the delivery of our published 14 to 19 Learner Strategy. This Strategy aims to:

- raise achievement levels in schools and FE;
- broaden the key stage 4 curriculum offer at levels 1 and 2, and improve participation and motivation levels;
- develop innovative teaching and learning methodologies;
- ensure a coherent approach to funding and quality assurance;
- increase collaboration between schools and FE colleges;
- ensure active engagement from employers;
- provide comprehensive and impartial information, advice, guidance and support on options for young people and their parents, to maximise personal development;
- improve professional development for teachers, managers and guidance and advice workers;



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- meet the needs of learners who are disaffected or disengaged from education, vulnerable students and those with additional educational needs;
- provide clearer progression routes to sixth forms, FE and HE or to work experience/placements to ease the pathway to apprenticeships and other government-sponsored training routes and to employment; and,
- respond to what young learners say about provision and how their needs can be met.

A detailed work programme is already being implemented, in partnership with the LSC and Connexions, to realise these aims. The 14 to 19 Learner Strategy and action plan is available from andrew.nicklin@kent.gov.uk

By giving young people the chance to mix different types of learning in terms of location of delivery, style of teaching and content, we will help all young people in Kent make informed, realistic choices from a wider range of options from age 14 and plan their future learning.

We will ensure that all Kent's secondary students:

- will be challenged;
- will be expected to achieve higher standards;
- will be stimulated by the business of learning;
- will have a wide choice of high quality curriculum provision at 14-19; and,
- will have high aspirations beyond 16.



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Creative Learning

In order to meet the challenges of a knowledge economy we also need to provide young people with an education that enables them to think and work creatively and to transfer and apply knowledge in different contexts. Creative learning involving the arts, technology and other disciplines can support this by providing new and imaginative learning contexts for young people within which they can take risks and develop new skills.

For example, the LEA, through its Arts Development Unit, works with Creative Partnerships to establish programmes of creative learning throughout Kent's schools. These programmes involve schools working directly with professionals from the arts and creative industries on projects which:

- raise standards of academic achievement;
- build self-esteem and confidence among students and teachers;
- support different learning styles;
- support new teaching practice;
- provide potential new career paths; and,
- provide a platform for community engagement.

Sandwich Technology School for example has worked with Creative Partnerships to explore the use of cinema as an innovative approach to teaching and learning combining subjects across the curriculum. The project will result in the first in-school cinema in the UK and will focus on film as a medium for real-life learning involving the school and the wider community. The school will also develop significant technical expertise so that it could become a centre of knowledge and training, not just for students, but for the wider community in film and cinema as a creative industry.

These programmes of creative learning will form a core aspect of Kent's approach to Building Schools for the Future. We will work with Creative Partners and other professionals from the creative industries to design and deliver a new and engaging curriculum as well as to develop and deliver our plans for creative learning environments.



Chapter 3

DEVELOPING CAPACITY AND STRUCTURES



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The LEA Redefined

One of the strategic roles of the LEA is to identify those areas of necessary development that it may be impossible for schools to undertake on their own. The outcomes of what has loosely been termed the New Public Management model of government with its heavy audit base, has operated as a constraining mechanism on innovative development of the school system. Additionally, with its policy of clusters and federations, the LEA recognises the combined strength of schools working together compared with stand-alone units. We need to go further and to consider how these new processes can best be provided within a modern institutional matrix.

The LEA is strengthening its position as a strategic authority. It will further develop its leadership role to support schools and services better, but service delivery will be transferred to clusters of schools and Education Improvement Partnerships¹. The LEA will ensure that its statutory functions are delivered through commissioning arrangements and will further develop its monitoring brief as the 'critical friend', employing elements of challenge and intervention when appropriate. Failure is no longer tolerated in any Kent school and LEA intervention in failing schools will be swift and decisive, after consultation with the local community of schools on the analysis of the impact of cluster support mechanisms. Every school in this category will have a plan based on the options of radical reform.

¹ Education Improvement Partnerships, one of the eight key reforms contained in the Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, will enable groups of schools to work together to take collective responsibility for raising standards and realising the full potential of all children and young people in their area. Education Improvement Partnerships are an opportunity for schools to take the lead in fashioning what works best locally, taking on new functions and applying their local knowledge of the needs of the young people and communities they serve. They will also enable local authorities to take the lead in brokering imaginative, collaborative and effective solutions to local problems as commissioners rather than deliverers of services, who increasingly delegate functions and funding to schools.



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School Structures

To ensure effective and efficient **school structures** we are proposing the following changes. These are described below:

- Education Improvement Partnerships and further development of Clusters;
- Federations; and,
- Schools within schools.

Education Improvement Partnerships and further development of Clusters

School cluster arrangements will be enhanced with further services being devolved to local management. Clusters will be supported to become Education Improvement Partnerships under the new government terms whereby, in formal agreement with the LEA, schools may set up arrangements to deliver a range of services, including joint curriculum provision, delivery of support services, agreed admissions arrangements, support to excluded children and the most vulnerable children who currently struggle to be supported in mainstream schools and those with special or additional educational needs.

Federations - why federate?

Over the past two to three years Kent has piloted, in partnership with central government, a number of different types of Federation. One of the main drivers for Kent was to resolve the problem of recruiting good headteachers into secondary schools.

The quality of school leadership is probably the strongest determinant of the success of a school in raising pupil attainment and ensuring floor targets are achieved. Good leadership motivates the workforce, develops a positive ethos and raises pupil attainment levels. At the same time we are contending with the fact that, nationally, vacancies have risen by 50% compared to 2000 and most posts are re-advertised several times before an appointment is made.

Kent has plans to train and 'grow our own' future headteachers. We will identify the leadership potential within Kent and relate it to the capacity required to transform secondary education through individual institutions,



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federations, clusters and Education Improvement Partnerships. At the same time, we know that training alone will not be sufficient and we need a more strategic way of managing our schools.

Professor Howson (TES 24 March 2005) highlighted the problem of recruiting from a diminishing pool:

“Up to half of all secondary heads are due to retire over the next 10 years, but low recruitment in the 1980s - prompted by shrinking school rollshas meant there is no follow on. We are missing people in their late 30s and early 40s – that’s where you draw your new heads from.”

School demographics, along with the reluctance of many deputies to take the challenge of Headship, point to a worrying deficit of leaders for the next decade and beyond. In addition, schools in the most challenging circumstances find it hardest to recruit. The Kent strategy of harnessing the strengths of all schools in a geographical area for the benefit of every student in a location therefore makes federations an essential option.

In providing a personalised programme, students need access to extensive curriculum opportunities and a range of teaching methodologies and necessary support. Such diversity, through appropriate timetabling and deployment of staff and resources, is more viable within a large federated system.

With the size and diversity of Kent, there is considerable opportunity to benefit from an expanded federated system, and we will build on the Kent national pilots to encourage more schools to federate. We will develop a road map with every school, identifying how students could benefit from a federated system within an identified network. This will link into opportunities as they arise such as those arising from the Building Schools for the Future programme, the Learning and Skills Council Strategic Area Review (LSC STAR Review) and the need to federate 6th forms to increase curriculum opportunity.

In doing so, we recognise the need to go beyond the initial deficit model of federations, where federations have tended to involve support from strong schools to weak or failing schools. We need to encourage federations between stronger schools, between grammar schools and high schools and more cross-phase federations to truly explore and tap into the potential we believe federations can unleash to drive up standards and realise the step change in performance we seek.



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What will Kent Federations look like?

Kent believes that there are distinct benefits from having a 'hard federation' of a single governing body serving a group of schools, with a strategic headship covering more than one school to overcome cultural and parochial barriers. However, formal agreements on areas of co-operation such as shared curriculum offers and integrated back-office functions have also proved effective.

Optimum school size is a much-debated subject and evidence can be found to support a wide range of views. Having considered all arguments, we have settled on the view that we should seek to develop larger structures. Within these, students can benefit from a wider choice of provision deriving from the shared resources of a larger institution, such as vocational and other specialised spaces. However, we wish to develop this under a federated system and within the context of a 'school within a school', so that all learners can also benefit from the personalised effect of belonging to a smaller unit. That way everyone can enjoy the benefits of the better use of limited resources through economies of scale.

The ideal size for a secondary school managed in a traditional context should be eight forms of entry. Schools of this size are able to attract strong leadership teams, provide wide curricula and support services, sustain robust management structures, invest in the infrastructure and reduce the costs of back-office functions. If successful in other respects, they are usually able to recruit in a competitive market, which can be a problem for smaller schools where staff development and promotion opportunities can be perceived to be limited.

The minimum size for a 6th form is argued to be between 120 and 250 students. Although we recognise that modern technology can add significant opportunities to enhance learning, we believe a 6th form below 120 students is unable to provide for the wider support and high quality educational experience that young people need to develop a broad range of generic and social skills. Any smaller than 120 students and the school should demonstrate its effectiveness against best practice in terms of costs, educational practice and, in particular, outcomes for students, including staying-on rates, the positive destinations of students and examination results.



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A review of small 6th forms will follow on the back of the recent LSC STAR Review process and federation, as an option, will feature in development plans.

Federations in Kent will have many of the following features:

- A curriculum that is broader and richer than any single institution could provide, enhancing the impact of a personalised agenda and common timetable.
- Strong co-operation with other providers e.g. FE College/HE Institution.
- League tables, based on the index of achievement², which recognise achievement of the full cohort of pupils in the federation.
- Each school in the federation thriving through its distinct ethos and different qualities, including its specialist status.
- Students identifying strongly with their federation as well as their school.

² The Index of Achievement provides a school with a rich source of material on which to draw in completing the DfES School Self Evaluation Profile, Self Evaluation Form and helps schools meet the requirements of *Every Child Matters*. It is designed for use by school leadership teams and can provide a useful overview for governing bodies.

In particular it provides a model to:

- reflect the developing aspirations of schools in relation to their wider responsibilities for students welfare, development and learning;
- promote improvement and progression in children's learning in the broadest sense;
- support the internal self evaluation process; and,
- celebrate success through providing a broader portfolio of evidence of school achievements and the all round development of children and young people.

It supports schools to provide evidence related to the 5 outcomes of Every Child Matters, and in developing breadth in their work with young children, on their own and in collaboration with other partners:

- Community
- Creativity and Culture
- Enterprise and Work Related Learning
- PE and Sport
- Wellbeing of Pupils and Staff

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- Leadership and governance being determined by the needs of the school with strategic leadership across the federation.

Using a 'road map' for collaborative groups of schools based on the potential within the county, a 'hard' federated system will be considered where:

- there is a programme of rebuild intended for the area e.g. during phases of Building Schools for the Future (described in **Appendix 7**);
- the size of a school is incompatible with the needs of the school population and/or where a schools re-organisation would improve the quality of education offered and make better use of resources;
- governing bodies indicate an interest in federating with other schools in the community;
- there is a change in Headship;
- succession leadership is of poor quality; and/or,
- a school is causing concern.

Federations will be secured by negotiation with schools and governing bodies.

A school within a school

Evidence from the USA shows that it is desirable, particularly where young people need to build constructive relationships that take account of the 'whole person', to have smaller schools in which the management of the school is able to adopt a close family approach to the students, to achieve a more equitable outcome. These small schools have clear coaching and mentoring processes, both for staff and students, and participate in a support network of similar schools working collaboratively together within an agreed framework.

Kent is keen to adapt these 'personalised' models as a way of improving results, pushing up standards and providing more options for parents. We believe they can improve standards in all schools but specifically those in challenged areas. The intention is to develop a Kent model of mini or small schools within a school but reducing overheads in a structured way by federating systems at a strategic or organisational level. We believe both



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systems can operate in tandem. Schools will be supported to develop in-school management via a 'house system', providing for each student a small unit of learning within which s/he can fulfil his/her potential through a small number of relationships with adults. We wish to ensure that the benefits of a small school reform movement can be secured systematically to provide outstanding results.

Each small school, including those in a larger school matrix, will have a strong individual ethos and specialism that makes it unique. Indeed, we recognise the need to preserve and protect the distinct ethos and identities of smaller schools, particularly church schools, where we are committed to working in partnership with diocesan authorities to preserve and nurture the huge benefits and strengths which such schools already offer to their pupils, families and wider communities.

Small schools within a school will benefit from a strong level of autonomy whilst having clearly defined collaborative arrangements within the wider federated structure. Special schools are well placed to join with the school within a school approach.

Radical Options

Kent's secondary strategy is intended to transform good schools into excellent schools by a process of continual renewal. To quote Charles Handy in 'Elephants and Fleas: Is Your Organization Prepared for Change?':

"We must avoid the tendency of the sigmoid curve whereby there is a period of learning or investment, in which inputs exceed outputs followed by steady growth that inevitably one day peaks and turns into decline."

The only way to avoid decline is to start a second curve of innovation and renewal before the first one peaks, and to repeat this cycle perpetually. All our plans will be mindful of this necessary impetus for continual improvement.

The Local Authority will enhance its menu of radical options to secure school improvement by developing innovative approaches to turn schools around, in consultation with the Cluster boards and Education Improvement Partnerships as they develop. These options are not necessarily standalone and two or more may be combined depending on the needs of the school and community it serves.



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Where appropriate, our collaborative structures will be used to replicate good teaching/pedagogical and management practice from one school to another. Schools may wish to buy into this type of challenge and support as a means of improving performance. Geographical proximity will not necessarily be a pre-requisite.

In identifying success, the Local Authority is mindful of the socio-economic circumstances in which the school operates. At the same time, despite support from the local cluster and Local Authority, some schools are unable to sustain real improvement.

Any necessary Local Authority intervention will be swift and decisive, but it will always be proportionate and fair. In order to challenge the prevailing orthodoxy a number of solutions may be employed. These may involve:

- Hard federation.
- A model whereby the LEA will provide a strategic 'similar school' partner for a weak school to enable improved curriculum and management practices to be developed.
- Academy – a semi-independent school, led by the private sector in co-operation with the LEA, as part of the pattern of secondary provision in Kent and through which the skills and strengths of single institutions are shared across a wider area.
- Amalgamation.
- Closure.

The Kent Academies Network

Kent is in the forefront of local authorities developing Academies and the first to act as a sponsor. We plan to have a network of Academies throughout Kent, starting in areas of deprivation, linked to the family of schools in the area. Three submissions have progressed to either feasibility or implementation stages. Others are currently being shaped with sponsors and discussed with the DfES. In partnership with the business and independent school sector, we will work to ensure that the Academies transform the school



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experience, increase student access, motivation and performance and act as catalysts for social and economic regeneration in deprived areas.

We are drawing on the skills of sponsors and other supporters, including those from business and the independent education sector, each bringing a different perspective to the curriculum to help us to raise expectations of students and their communities. We intend to develop the Academies as models of innovation in teaching and personalised learning, providing stimulating and fit-for-purpose learning environments, making appropriate use of ICT and positioned at the centre of their communities to facilitate social and economic regeneration for their areas, in partnership with other agencies. We will facilitate a Kent Academies Network and mesh Academies into our cluster-based collaborative and Education Improvement Partnerships arrangements. Our intention is that all Kent schools will benefit from the fresh ideas and the alternative ways of working we expect to flow from the Academies programme, including a programme of mentor support from the independent sector.



Chapter 4

PLACING SCHOOLS AT THE HEART OF THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES



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"Schools are left with the task of making up for under-education in the family and laying the psychic foundations for character and moral conduct"

Etzione (1993)

All Headteachers, teachers, and the overwhelming majority of parents, understand the crucial importance of parental support in the collective endeavour to educate our young people. Everyone understands that there is a very positive correlation between parental support for education and levels of children's attainment.

At the same time, fundamental to the development of community or extended schools is the debate about the purpose of education and our aspirations for the schooling system. Increasingly, this has become expressed in terms of league tables, grades and other outputs rather than value statements or analyses of wider outcomes. We believe that schooling should be about developing the skills and knowledge for the global economy, achieving personal fulfilment and developing citizens that are healthy, responsible, active, collaborative, self-reliant and autonomous lifelong learners who participate in a democratic society. As Demos has identified, this is in a context where obesity, anti-social behaviour and political disengagement are contemporary challenges with a strong learning dimension.

The benefits of community schools have been well rehearsed nationally. There is no one definition or model of a community school, and indeed, most schools engage with their community in ways that are consistent with the extended school concept. Standards for Headteachers now contain clear criteria on the role they play as leaders within their communities. Some argue that it is more difficult for certain types of school to assume community leadership, particularly when the geographical catchment area of the school is extensive. However, this objection can be overcome by defining community differently. Others, whilst supporting the policy in principle, believe that it can divert attention away from the core business of learning. In fact, building community and family engagement is key to raising aspirations and the confidence that underpin quality learning outcomes. This is reflected in the new OFSTED framework that requires schools to engage pro-actively with their communities in the interests of their children. Extended Schools will make an increasingly valuable contribution to meeting the requirements of the *Every Child Matters* framework.



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Kent has invested heavily in developing Community Schools and, in its second year of operation, will implement its Community School Development Strategy, promoting pathfinder schools and disseminating best practice. Activity has focused on:

- co-locating services on school sites to improve access;
- developing a range of services at school to provide for a continuum of need, such as health and social care, which frees teachers for the business of education;
- expanding study and homework support and breakfast and after-school clubs to increase motivation;
- sign-posting to key services such as housing, debt advice, adult guidance, life skills coaching, early years provision and Job Centre Plus;
- extending the use of sports and specialist facilities for the local community;
- increasing the number of adult volunteers working with young people e.g. sports coaches, reading volunteers, arts and business professionals;
- providing lifelong learning opportunities e.g. adult education;
- improving the range of positive role models to support young people by way of mentors;
- engaging parents and carers in their child's education; and,
- developing links to business e.g. building business incubators on school sites.

The evidence is overwhelming in demonstrating the positive impact of this type of activity on:

- improving educational attainment;
- improving attendance and behaviour;



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- reducing criminal activity in an area;
- reducing teenage pregnancy;
- improving staying on rates, post-16; and, crucially,
- raising aspirations.

The intention now, in the next phase of work, is to consolidate the role of community schools to facilitate the development of personalisation, the main thrust of this strategy. In so doing, it is necessary to capture understanding of the relevance of Headteachers and schools as community leaders, to secure community regeneration working closely with economic regeneration and, to capitalise on the benefits of parental engagement.

“Extended schools cannot simply deliver more; they must work to support and protect their pupils as individuals and to act as vehicles for the varied interests and aspirations. Extending schooling also has the potential to transform the experiences of professionals”

Demos (2004)

Demos also argue for the need to develop open institutions which foster good relationships between professionals and the people they serve. This cannot be legislated for by national policy but has to be worked out in practice. There is a concern that the educational empire is growing. However, if the school projects an open ambience and reflects trust and integrity, the school can become the natural heart of the local community and better serve students and their families in meeting their self-defined needs.

We should remember that parents are the first and perhaps the most influential of educators. The key findings from a DfES research project “The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement: A Review of Literature” Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) concluded that parental involvement:

- takes many forms including participation in school events, exchange of information and participation in work of the school;
- is strongly influenced by social class, maternal level of education and issues of poverty and single parent status;
- diminishes as the child gets older;



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- increases if the child's level of attainment improves;
- in the form of 'at home good parenting', is the strongest determinant on achievement, even above the quality of schooling or families social class;
and,
- strongly influences the child's self-concept as a learner and in setting high aspirations.

It is also known that some parents find it very difficult to engage with schools, particularly if they have had a poor educational experience themselves. Some parents find schools, particularly secondary schools, are unwelcoming and if they do make an effort to engage, schools may not be prepared to develop an ad hoc contact into a meaningful on-going relationship. Parents from disadvantaged backgrounds may well feel they have nothing to contribute to their child's education and feel it is best left to the 'experts' or, indeed, may not value education in the first place. Other parents, accustomed to an independent school ethos, may find it unnecessary to liaise closely with the school which their older child attends.

We are conscious that in supporting parents we are working with the whole family. There are numerous ways to encourage engagement beyond the traditional annual report, if that is what parents want. These include:

- treating the family as expert, engaging them in observations about students' learning styles and effective teaching strategies;
- inviting families to attend students' presentations and exhibitions of work as routine curriculum practice;
- setting up teacher-family conferences by e-mail and other forums, formalising 1:1 meetings and Family Liaison Officer/student mentor visits to parents at home;
- establishing parent-school contracts. In the USA there are schools requesting that parents provide 10 days of voluntary work for the school each year;
- adopting innovative and engaging celebration events;



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- family learning programmes e.g. 'help your child with their homework' or 'understanding the school curriculum'. Many adults can also be helped with their own skills during such events, which in turn impacts on a child's own learning; and,
- providing parental advice and support e.g. 'how to cope with teenagers' and debt counselling.

The Community Schools team will re-emphasise their support in developing strategy to engage parents, helping pilot models and providing advice.

Training provided by KLIC and the Community Schools Development Team will support Headteachers in these new and challenging roles as community leaders. Particularly crucial will be supporting Headteachers and senior staff in moving away from traditional control models of management to leadership and influence with the school and its community (the distributive model).

Good practice in community school development, and experience of what works, will be shared within clusters and the Educational Improvement Partnerships as they develop.

Details of related activity around Healthy Schools, Parenting Support, Attendance and Behaviour, Sport etc. and how this complements and strengthens our vision for community schools are set out in **Appendix 5**.

The Community Schools Development Strategy is available from:
marisa.white@kent.gov.uk



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Chapter 5

DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING THE LEARNING INFRASTRUCTURE



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Kent County Council has a crucial responsibility to lead and underpin this strategy with dynamic plans to implement the following key elements:

- Recruitment and development of inspirational, innovative and collaborative headteachers.
- Recruitment and development of an informed, innovative and collaborative workforce.
- Development of a highly focused approach to school improvement, including co-ordinated partnership arrangements to support in-school reform.
- Development of effective partnerships with public, voluntary and commercial sector partners to enhance services to children.
- Appropriate deployment of ubiquitous ICT for learning and for pupil and school management.
- The design and build of modern learning environments in the right locations.

Leadership

Our schools need to embrace new ways of learning. The government's new policy framework for education confirms the intention to develop a new relationship with schools, and for secondary provision, this provides an alternative approach to LEA leadership, inspection and support.

If we were to continue with the same secondary school structures, the current age profile of secondary Headteachers in Kent would mean we would need to recruit 50 new Headteachers during the next 5 years, and 70 in the next 10 years. This profile presents an opportunity for innovation, as we take on the challenge of moving from the traditional autonomous schools of the 1990s to more collaborative structures and ways of working. The quality of leadership will be a crucial factor in the transformation required. The development of Federations and Education Improvement Partnerships will need a new distributed style of leadership that embraces a wide range of services on the school site. We will link leadership with the collaborative structures outlined in chapter 3, and we will develop new skills for leadership,



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as Headteachers and their schools provide integrated services for children and their communities.

Kent is building a new modern training establishment to promote leadership skills and succession planning for Headteachers. The Kent Leadership and Innovation Centre (KLIC) will devise fast-track leadership programmes for potential Headteachers. In partnership with the National College for School Leadership, it will develop training programmes to support the secondary strategy requirements.

Developing our workforce

High quality teaching staff are education's greatest asset. The quality of teaching in Kent schools is the factor that will continue to have the greatest impact on the quality of learning and attainment levels. At the same time, not surprisingly, teaching and other staff are by far our greatest financial cost in education.

Adaptation of teaching and learning methods are crucial to the success of a more flexible and personalised curriculum. Looking at the impact of smaller class sizes for example, Sharpson et al, Galton and Simon and Hargreaves et al, all found that many teachers did not fully develop the potential of their learners because they did not change their methods from those they used in larger classes.

To deliver the personalised learning agenda, with new curriculum models and flexible learning opportunities, supported by the appropriate use of ICT, we need to recruit and develop our staff in line with our aims.

The government's workforce reform agenda for teaching and children's services, and the developing role of classroom assistants, the difficulty in recruiting teachers to the secondary sector in some areas of Kent, together with the Building Schools for the Future programme and the possibilities provided by ICT, all add to the need for a radical re-think about how we recruit and develop our staff.

Some Kent schools are already raising achievement levels using more flexible methods, using flexible teaching areas, with some teaching of groups of 60 to 100 students, whilst at the same time giving 1 to 1 access to a tablet PC for each student, combined with the deployment of student mentors. We will encourage, support and develop a variety of learning solutions within all our schools.



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Making more use of group work could have benefits for pupil learning and can also help the teacher, especially those with large numbers of pupils, in terms of maximising their time with other pupils and encouraging independence in learning -

Blatchford, Bassett, Brown, Martin and Russell (Institute of Education, London)

In summary, we will concentrate on developing the following elements of our recruitment and training strategies:

Recruiting the right balance of staff according to changing needs:

This will require the right balance of teachers to classroom assistants and other staff, to implement newly adapted curriculum models, learning methods and learning environments.

Creating stimulating personalised learning environments: This will require the creation of personalised learning environments through good integration of technology and resources, with students becoming more responsible for their own learning and achievement. It will include the development skills to provide pastoral and other additional support for study. This will also include the training of our staff to provide learning opportunities that integrate reading, writing and speaking and support personal skill development in students.

Extending the repertoire of planning, teaching and assessment skills: Teaching and support staff need a wide variety of skills at their disposal including didactic methods in large groups, skills in coaching, group work, individual pastoral study support and one-to-one and group feedback, supported by ICT - based programmed learning. There will also be a need for development opportunities in planning for teachers and training in the appropriate use of software to support learning.

Developing the personal attributes of our staff: More personalised learning environments should enable us to develop the personal attributes of our staff that impact on student achievements. This is the so-called affective behaviour in teachers and support staff, including such attributes as communicating high expectations, giving appropriate praise, engaging and encouraging students' creativity, in-depth teaching and giving personal attention and support to children and young people, allowing flexibility to capitalise on spontaneous learning opportunities and encouraging students to support each other.



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The Secondary Transformation Team – new ways of working with schools

Kent LEA has recruited a team of full and part-time Headteachers known for their innovative, successful and collaborative approach to school management.

The prime functions of the team will be to be advocates of change and to assist reform within our secondary schools. In carrying out these functions, they will work with the LEA's Senior Management Team, KLIC and with the secondary advisers. Their experience and expertise means that they will be critical to developing the implementation plan for the secondary strategy, as well as guiding and supporting schools through the often difficult process of curriculum and structural reform.

This team will be deployed, according to expertise, to manage the following:

- Supporting plans and implementing elements of the secondary strategy;
- Providing the 'single conversation' with schools and acting as coach and mentor as the school improvement partner. This includes moderating the school's self-evaluation, agreeing priorities for improvement, agreeing targets, identifying any external support needed and signing-off school improvement grant;
- Supporting the development of ICT and the learning environment;
- Providing strategic management to federations/clusters of schools to disseminate good practice;
- Developing new curriculum and delivery models that support personalised learning and the autonomous learner;
- Developing the 'chain model' for replication with low achieving schools;
- Advising on developing strategy to secure school improvement and on developing plans for radical options and early intervention;
- Working with KLIC to provide leadership training; and,
- Implementing local priorities and projects.



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Partnership arrangements to support in-school reform

For schools wishing to pilot models of small organisation within a larger structure, we are developing partnership arrangements with institutions in the United States who have been pioneering and developing new school systems, including school mentoring, over some 20 years. These include, working with Stanford University, the New Technology Foundation and the Coalition of Essential Schools, all of which have been sponsored by the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation to revolutionise education.

The support structures offered by these organisations, and links to affiliated leading-edge, established schools in the US, will provide a basis for leadership training and for establishing mentoring arrangements for individual Kent schools. We will also support schools in Kent to become mentor schools.

We will facilitate programmes to enable Kent schools to be part of established and new networks of schools and institutions that share common principles and similar philosophies, and demonstrate the aspects of learning organisation, learning methods, curriculum, assessment and student support set down in 'Features of Innovative Schools' in chapter 2.

Creating New Learning Environments

Compared with other social industries, there has been very little change in the teaching and learning environments in our schools during the last century. It is, therefore, to be welcomed that the Government is now investing in the physical infrastructure of secondary schools at an unprecedented level through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme (described in Appendix 7). This is a unique opportunity to fast-track implementation of education reform in all its elements of curriculum, management, collaborative structures, community involvement and placing the learner firmly at the centre, without the constraints of an outdated environment. This opportunity presents a unique challenge to traditional views of education.

It is unlikely that a single school in a traditional context can provide all the requirements of a personalised offer. We need to recognise less formal kinds of learning, and cater for the whole child in terms of their health, social and emotional well-being, as well as their more formal learning needs. ICT may provide a solution, but it is not a panacea, and we need to consider the flexible learning spaces that support autonomous learning, workforce reform



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and interaction with a range of professionals in this new mixed economy of schooling. By comparison with the conventional classroom, larger, smaller and more flexible spaces, capable of rapid transformation in size and use, will be needed for new models of teaching and learning, including lesson preparation and staff training, as well as community use. The availability of wireless technology will also present opportunities for greater flexibility in the use of learning spaces.

The new learning environments must be fit for the 21st Century, and chime with modern society, and not just renew the 19th and 20th Century buildings they replace. The essential elements of this strategy, including small schools within schools, vocational centres and extended school provision, will be built into each learning campus.

In developing a blueprint for a modern learning environment, we will reflect elements of a modern curriculum as identified by Prakash Nair, President Elect of Urban Educational Facilities for the 21st Century. These include:

- technology-intensive teaching and learning;
- emphasis on informal learning;
- de-emphasis on traditional classroom;
- food court v.s. cafeteria;
- imaginative furniture design;
- team teaching and inter-disciplinary curriculums;
- emphasis on servicing learning;
- students creating products for business;
- computer labs replaced by distance learning electronic studios;
- hi-tech production facilities;
- parent and community education programmes in schools; and,



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- new learning partnerships with other schools, FE colleges and universities.

Developing more effective use of ICT

The invention of the microchip has transformed our society and, as far as we can look into the future, it appears that this will continue. The increasing use of computers in schools now challenges our traditional notions of how children learn and what resources are needed for this to be successful. Just as we have left the writing slate behind, we now need to consider how to integrate these new technologies to enable more pupils to learn more successfully.

Many Kent secondary schools are centres of excellence when it comes to using ICT, although this is not true of them all. We want to change this and ensure the following:

ICT becomes ubiquitous as a platform for pupil learning: This means ensuring that every pupil has access to a personal, preferably portable, computer. This device will be both an organising tool for children and young people and a means of accessing the curriculum and communicating with teachers, children and the world beyond school.

Connectivity: We will ensure that schools are connected to the internet with a 10 mgb connection. Within schools we expect wireless networks to be both powerful and pervasive, enabling electronic learning to take place anywhere on site.

Software: We will work with external providers to enable schools to have integrated software packages that connect children and young people to their teachers as well as to each other. We expect Learning Gateway or some similar proprietary brand to provide these sophisticated capabilities.

Digital curriculum: We expect schools to work together to create on-line materials and to take advantage of these materials as they become available. This will involve schools, agencies and other institutions from within Kent, across the country and worldwide.

Electronic communication: We expect all teachers will have their own portable personal computer to enable them to work in this increasingly



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electronic medium. We anticipate the use of whiteboards will become pervasive in classrooms.

Electronic administration: This is well advanced within secondary schools, including systems for data tracking, reporting and pupil management information, and we expect it to go further with the ability of parents to gather meaningful information about their children from the home or workplace.

Personalisation: The infrastructure provision will enable greater personalisation of the curriculum for individual children.

The seamless integration of ICT into the learning experience underpins this strategy and is also a core element of the Building Schools for the Future Programme. We will seek to forge strategic partnerships with ICT providers, both as part of our BSF programme and beyond to ensure that Kent schools achieve the above and become leading-edge in terms of ICT usage and provision. Kent's approach to developing the more effective use of ICT is set out more fully in its "ICT Strategic Plan 2005 - 2008".

Partnership with the public, voluntary and commercial sectors

All our schools are experienced in working with a variety of support services, local and central government agencies and commercial organisations, too numerous to list here. The new Vision for Kent, the Children Act, Building Schools for the Future and developments in the 14-19 agenda, as well as a wide range of other programmes, will further drive the need to seek out and develop partnerships with the aim of better meeting the needs of all young people in Kent. Together with schools and other services, we will need to ensure that plans are 'joined up' to ensure that the quality and efficiency of services is enhanced in the context of an increasingly complex set of working relationships between agencies.



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Resourcing

The School Organisation Plan

This plan concludes that the decline in the size of age cohorts in primary schools is now reaching secondary schools. From 2006, the number of secondary students overall will begin to fall in most areas of Kent. Detailed projections will be available later this year.

Elements of Resourcing

Major developments have to be sensitive to the future availability of resources, both human and financial. We are mindful that research undertaken by the Audit Commission showed no correlation between funding per pupil and educational outcomes. We also know that, in the longer term, education will need to operate within a leaner financial environment and challenging teacher recruitment scenarios, with over half of our existing teachers due to retire in the next ten years. Part of the new strategy must, therefore, include planning for more efficient ways of delivering services and ways of working in the future. However, to bring about the change envisaged in this document, our resourcing strategies will pump prime and incentivise schools to embrace new ways of working.

Specifically, KCC is looking to prioritise development of:

- the Kent vision for the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme (see **Appendix 7** for a description of BSF);
- the role of the LEA as a strategic provider;
- Clusters into Education Improvement Partnerships;
- hard Federations between schools;
- the replication of models of quality schools as a way of addressing serious weaknesses;
- in-school reform (schools within a school);
- school curriculum modernisation, particularly Project Based Learning and advisories;



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- Community or Extended Schools as part of community re-generation;
- Academies;
- the roll-out of vocational centres - with business incubator units on school sites - providing an alternative teaching methodology, including business awareness raising and counselling, with business support services on site to develop entrepreneurship;
- the role and sharp focus of the Secondary Transformation Team; and,
- ubiquitous ICT supporting all these developments.

Funding opportunities will be detailed in the action plan.



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POSTSCRIPT: ON-GOING REFORM

The future must enable more secondary students to become equipped with the skills to learn for themselves within learning environments that reflect 21st century society. This requires the LEA to set a clear strategy for what is needed and to provide the capacity to implement it. The strategy must be organic and will be reshaped as we proceed.

We are not alone in considering future institutional shapes and pedagogical processes for our secondary schools. Other countries are beginning to identify key drivers for curriculum change and learning outcomes. These will be researched further to inform and influence Kent's secondary strategy as it develops and is implemented. We will encourage all of those employed in the business of education to develop a dialogue with other practitioners and policy makers, in the county, nationally and internationally in order that we constantly reflect upon and review our policies and practices.

Effective strategies must develop with new understanding as well as be responsive to local need. An implementation plan will be developed for each element of the strategy, giving clear milestones, accountable officers and timescales that will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are achievable and up- to-date.



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APPENDIX 1

The Kent Context

Kent is made up of a rich mix of economic and social factors including the second most affluent ward in England as well as 48 wards that fall within the lowest 15% of socio-economic deprivation. UK-wide socio-economic factors that affect Kent include economic migration and the breakdown of the nuclear family. Against the national trend, we also have more children growing up in areas requiring economic regeneration. For years the areas of greatest deprivation in Kent have gravitated to the east of the County, particularly around the coastal towns. Adults have a lower qualification base than the rest of the South East and Kent suffers from a drifting of graduates away from the County despite its advantageous position between London and mainland Europe. Kent has a disproportionately high number of small and medium sized enterprises. In this context educational attainment and quality of schooling are critical both for attracting large company investment and retaining higher qualified residents.

An OECD report in 2000 (Knowledge and Skills for Life–Programme for International Student Assessment) shows that the UK performs well compared with other developed nations but that the UK has greater variance of outcome depending on socio-economic factors compared with most other countries in the survey. In Kent we have a high excellence - low equity model of education that must be addressed through new policy that ensures we can compete in the knowledge economy.

In Kent there are 104 secondary schools including three middle schools, 28 special schools and 10 Pupil Referral Units with secondary aged pupils. This includes a wide range of different type of secondary schools, many of which are relatively small. There is unequal access to good schools depending on geography. Projected demographic changes in Kent over the next 20 years require the creation of a new more flexible model of secondary education and the government Building Schools for the Future programme (described in Appendix 7) is a unique opportunity to rationalise and modernise the schooling system in the county.

There has been a continuous improvement in GCSE standards in Kent over the last decade and in 2005 Kent ranked higher than the national average and compared favourably with statistical neighbours. However, overall good



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performance masks poor value-added scores for some schools and unreasonable obstacles for others who cannot reach floor targets because of acute challenging circumstances. Kent's position is an outcome of the high quality-low equity model along with an historical lack of knowledge of schools' performance.

Too many schools have inadequate sixth forms in terms of curriculum choice and pupil numbers, 24 sixth forms have fewer than 100 students, although recently, this has been improved through enhanced collaborative structures and improved working with FE colleges. With a significant minority of 16 to 19 year olds not participating in education or training, there is, at the same time, an ambivalence towards swift intervention practices and a lack of systemised policies for recovery. This position will no longer be tolerated. Improving the performance of the lowest achieving schools is Kent's top priority. Developing leadership and the quality of teaching will be crucial if we are to improve staying-on rates and create a competent workforce to develop enterprise skills to enable our businesses to compete in global markets.



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APPENDIX 2

Policy Framework

Kent policy

The local policy framework for the secondary strategy was set by KCC in 2002 with publication of **The Next Four Years**, which for education, is underpinned by a belief that schools have to work together. Of the 68 targets, the most pertinent to the secondary strategy include:

- Further develop the good rate of progress for GCSE attainment but focus further on attainment in English and mathematics.
- Agree a strategy for secondary education that provides choice, preserves excellence and resolves anomalies in admissions.
- Establish an alternative curriculum for 14-19 year olds.
- Increase the percentage of students taking higher-level qualifications.
- Work with schools to make them centres for community learning.
- Determine a new design brief for schools that ensures value for money and creates a learning environment that is flexible, supports curriculum innovation and change and meets community needs.

The **Kent 14 to 19 Learner Strategy** and the **development of vocational centres** are described in chapter 3 of the main text of this document. Similarly details of the **Kent Community School Development Strategy** are set down in chapter 4.

Our Local Strategic Partnership plan, the **Vision for Kent**, provides nine key themes to guide long term planning and prioritisation in the county. These themes include 'Learning for everyone', 'Kent communities', 'Economic success that is shared by all' and 'Enjoying life in Kent'. The Vision for Kent is currently the subject of review and consultation before a revised vision is published in April 2006.



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Kent has negotiated a **second Public Service Agreement (PSA2)** with central government. In return for hitting certain targets it will receive additional grant aid. These include targets for academic and vocational qualifications for 14 to 19 year olds.

Kent is also in the process of negotiating a **Local Area Agreement** with central government (through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister). This again is a target-driven exercise in which the activities of public bodies, including Kent County Council, the local Councils in Kent and central government agencies, are brought together to consider ways in which they could work together to meet agreed targets. The idea is to develop joint working to prevent the 'humpty dumpty effect' whereby various central government departments provide resources to a variety of Kent public bodies, sometimes in related areas of activity and sometimes in the same geographical areas, and then expect Kent service providers to join them back up. There is a substantial children and young people stream to this exercise.

Kent County Council is also in the very early stages of working with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on **the future of local government in the next 10 years**.

National policy

The government's strategy ***Every Child Matters*** will require new ways of working within education. The needs of the 'whole child' will have to be considered within consortia arrangements that help all children and young people to:

- be healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle;
- stay safe: being protected from harm and neglect and growing up able to look after themselves;
- enjoy and achieve: getting the most out of life and developing broad skills for adulthood;
- make a positive contribution: to the community and to society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour; and,
- achieve economic well-being.



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New policy and legislation will follow publication of the government's **Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners** in July 2004, (subject to any change in the political climate). It predicts:

- Education Improvement Partnerships which promote schools working collaboratively;
- a new relationship with schools using local authority link advisers and school improvement partners;
- more Academies;
- universal and better specialist schools;
- increased autonomy for some secondary schools in relation to assets, staffing and governing bodies, with three year budgets guaranteed;
- more places in popular schools including allowing successful schools to manage new and federated schools; and,
- every school being refurbished or rebuilt.

The government's **Building Schools for the Future** programme is described in Appendix 7.

The Kent strategy has pre-empted much of the new policy proposals. Indeed Kent was cited in the document as an example of good practice. However, in order that the Kent vision is realised, to ensure that no school or child fails, new structures and support mechanisms will be needed to secure success for some of our most challenged institutions.

The government is also introducing changes through **A New Relationship with Schools**, the key elements of which are:

- school self-evaluation of its own performance as the starting point for planning, inspection and relations with the LEA, with the school setting its own targets;
- the school development plan as the key planning document, keeping supplementary paper work to a minimum;



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- shorter, sharper school inspections;
- a **School Improvement Partner**, accredited to national standards, through which the school will have a "single conversation", a focused dialogue about how well the school is performing and its future priorities;
- fewer funding streams alongside 3 year budgets;
- alignment of national data and more streamlined data collection;
- electronic communications from the DfES which allows the school to choose the information it wants; and,
- a new school Profile combining centrally-generated data with the school's own narrative.

The government responded to the consultative 2002 green paper with its report **14-19: opportunity and excellence** against a backdrop of overwhelming evidence that young people were not getting suitable learning experiences and that employers were not able to recruit young people with the skills they needed. The report aimed to transform the learning experience, develop more choice in terms of subjects offered and learning settings, strengthen vocational education and develop assessment methods which are 'fit for purpose'. It established a national working group led by Mike Tomlinson to progress 14-19 reform. The interim report of the working group informed the Kent Secondary Strategy to complement our unique approach to the development of a Kent 14 to 19 Learner Strategy.

On 23 February 2005, the Department for Education and Skills published the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper in response to the Tomlinson Working Group on 14-19 Reform. The White Paper does not propose to implement the Tomlinson Report in full but it does aims to:

- ensure that every young person masters functional English and maths before they leave education;
- improve vocational education including introducing new vocational diplomas and provide alternative pathways to higher education and employment;



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- reduce the 'qualifications jungle' of 3,500 separate qualifications;
- stretch all young people and help universities to differentiate between the best candidates by reforming the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 and allowing students to take qualifications early where appropriate. It also aims to secure 'stretch' at advanced level by setting more demanding optional A level questions, extended projects and the availability of Higher Education modules; and,
- re-motivate disengaged learners by providing a new programme for 14 to 16 year olds based on Entry to Employment.

The White Paper sets out a national entitlement of a full range of GCSEs, A levels and 14 specialised Diplomas. In each area of the country a prospectus will set out the courses available locally.



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APPENDIX 3

Where we are now: Secondary Strategy phase 1

The first phase of the secondary strategy started in 2002, managed by a steering group of LEA officers and secondary Headteacher representatives. The first phase was complete by March 2003. Membership and terms of reference of the steering group was revised for stage 2.

The main elements of phase 1 are:

Communities of schools/Clusters of schools

All schools in Kent are included in the 23 cluster arrangements where LEA staff and resources are devolved to local management. These new collaborative structures focus on school improvement for the whole area on a basis of shared responsibility. Other Local Education Authorities are piloting and implementing structures similar to the Kent model.

An external evaluation of the new ways of working through Clusters was undertaken by the Improvement and Development Agency in Autumn 2004. A Steering Group of Headteachers and officers supported the evaluation. The evaluation concluded that the approach was leading-edge in establishing collaborative structures that demonstrated success, but that it was too early, one year after implementation, to detail extensive outcomes.

Community Schools

Kent County Council has invested £1m piloting concepts of community/extended schools. Staff are deployed to clusters to support schools in rolling out best practice. By placing schools at the heart of local communities and building capacity in community leadership, education is demonstrating models for community and economic regeneration with outcomes in terms of education attainment and the development of 'social capital'.



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Sittingbourne Community College

The college maintains an open policy to students, their families and members of the local Community. It works hard to foster links with parents and the local Community alike – particularly in providing greater educational opportunities and in areas that help parents support their children and enhance student attendance, aspiration and performance.

The College is one of a number of schools in Kent to sign up to a mini public service agreement and has a very wide range of services, facilities and projects in place for the benefit of students, families and the wider community.

These include Further and Adult Education opportunities including Vocational NVQ provision, neighbourhood learning champions and a Learn Direct Centre. Family learning takes place including alternative therapies and courses related to healthy living. The College works proactively with local Primary Schools and wide range of after school clubs and has run a Circus School and drama and dance festivals. The newly formed Sittingbourne Music Society will be using S.E.C. as a venue for classical concerts and the first is planned for November 2004.

The College has implemented a multi-agency programme – WHISP (well being, Health, Inclusion and Safety Programme) to support targeted groups of students and their families. It is funded by a combination of college, government office and other agency contributions and involves college staff in particular, the SENCO and staff of the college Student Support Centre, the Behaviour Service, Canterbury College, Key Training Services, local businesses, Connexions and “Threshold” (a private company), in a wide ranging alternative curriculum programme.

To support this programme the college has its own Family Liaison Officer, a Community Safety Officer, a Speech and Language therapist, a Youth Arts Worker and is involved in a restorative justice project – working with YOT, Youth Justice, Police, Social Services and the Swale Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Students have been trained as anti-bullying Counsellors and the College works with “Relate” to train students in Years 10 to 12 to support their students who are facing traumatic situations.

A specialist coach on ADHD is working with students and their families, Music



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Therapy programmes are provided and there is a new nutrition project, which provides advice on nutrition, subsidised foodstuffs and vitamin supplements for selected students and their families.

The College is also developing a volunteering service working with Amicus (the housing group) to develop a gardening and home decorating service for the elderly. Students will be working with gardening and decorating experts on some local homes and gardens. It is hoped that this will expand to organising lunch and tea clubs for local elderly and an errand running service.

Overall, these programmes have had a positive impact on the standing of the school within its local Community and have made a strong contribution to improving pupil engagement, attendance and attainment levels.

Specialist Schools/Kent Badging and the Secondary Network

Secondary schools are grouped into six areas and the LEA has negotiated with schools a strategic approach to specialist categorisation, ensuring wide coverage of all specialisms. We have developed a Kent badging scheme and a number of schools are working towards full accreditation.

Widening the curriculum choice and vocational expansion (14 - 19 Learner Strategy)

Kent County Council is not the only authority with responsibility for securing 14-19 provision and a related but separate strategy has been developed with key partners including the Learning and Skills Council and Kent and Medway Connexions. The 14-19 Learner Strategy and this Secondary Strategy are entirely complementary and inter-related.

Attendance and Exclusions

A number of innovative approaches to reducing exclusion and improving attendance have been implemented resulting in decreased absence rates and a reduction in the number of schools with absence rates greater than 10% from 27 to 20.



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Admissions

Kent has a scheme to co-ordinate admission to all secondary schools that is based on the DfES - imposed scheme for 2005.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Many initiatives have been undertaken to improve teacher recruitment and they have been recognised nationally as best practice.

Radical Options for schools in challenging circumstances

- Academies

Kent fully supports the Academy programme and was the first LEA to act as a sponsor. There are four all-ability independent Academies being developed, the Kent proposals having been recognised for their innovative approaches, including extended schools and business start-up units on site. Further Academy proposals will be worked up in the coming year and a Kent Network of Academies will be formed to develop and disseminate effective and innovative teaching and management practices to be shared with all schools in the County.



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The Marlowe Academy

Partnership and collaboration underpin the approach to secondary transformation in Ramsgate, an area of Thanet identified in Kent's previous public service agreement as a district in particular need of regeneration. The Ramsgate School is one facing exceptionally challenging circumstances, struggling since 1997 with low attainment levels, under-subscription and significant challenging pupil behaviour. At the heart of the school's difficulties is a lack of learning ethos with pupils' attitudes being exhibited in low self-esteem, poor attendance and poor behaviour. GCSE A*- C grades fell to 4%.

It was evident to KCC that something radical and innovative was required to transform the Ramsgate School. To that end, KCC and the Kent Partnership solicited the support of SAGA plc to sponsor the creation of the Marlowe Academy to replace the Ramsgate School. As a measure of KCC's absolute commitment, SAGA plc's sponsorship and active partnership were matched by KCC delivering £2 Million which in turn has generated a further £25 Million from Government. This capital investment will establish a new state-of-the-art, all-ability secondary school providing a built learning environment fit for the 'knowledge age' of the 21st Century.

In order to transform teaching and learning and deliver a step change in student performance, the Academy will focus on business and performing arts, drawing on the skills and expertise of the sponsors and other supporters who are bringing a unique perspective to the curriculum. An enterprise culture will be nurtured to facilitate and drive improved pupil performance and enhanced employability. By promoting this change in culture and attitude required in the Ramsgate community, we are confident that we will break the cycle of underachievement and low expectations that this school has historically faced.

This Academy is part of Kent's wider secondary strategy that sees diversity and collaboration (including Kent's emerging network of Academies) as the two principal vehicles that will nurture the development of new teaching and learning styles to deliver improved standards.



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- Federations

Kent secured over 12% of national funding to evaluate models of Federation. There is no single definition of a Federation. In Kent five different pilots have been implemented, involving between two and sixteen secondary schools and a full range of types of school e.g. High School with a Grammar, as well as primary and secondary partnerships. Some of the pilots are now formalising arrangements into a hard-federated system.

The South Maidstone Federation

With many of Kent's schools specialising, transforming and improving their curriculum offer and leadership, KCC saw it as essential to ensure that the benefits arising were shared with other schools.

In order to do this KCC explored the federation of three secondary schools in South Maidstone to provide a formal, structured framework to enable the three schools to share expertise and good practice and provide support for developing leadership. This in turn would narrow the achievement gap between the federated schools.

The Federation comprises three mixed all-ability schools including Cornwallis, a successful Foundation school, Oldborough Manor, a weaker Foundation school and Senacre Technology College, a community school in special measures.

Leadership is provided by an Executive Head Teacher and two Heads of School currently reporting to a joint management committee and in turn their respective governing bodies. The process of moving the Federation from collaborative to 'hard' was only enabled by engendering trust between the schools through staff working together on collaborative projects.

Early evidence of success has manifested itself in Senacre coming out of special measures and improving its KS4 performance from 25% to 38% 5 A* - C at GCSE, in 2004. In partnership with Mid Kent College, foundations have been laid to re-focus Oldborough Manor's curriculum to offer more vocationally orientated subjects to engage and motivate students.

The Federation began as a formal collaboration and, in March 2005, transformed itself into a 'hard' federation with one joint governing body.




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Leadership

In order to provide the best professional development for leaders of Kent schools, the LEA has developed a new training centre - the Kent Leadership and Innovation Centre (KLIC) to work with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL).

Development of ICT

The initial phase of the Broadband "Connecting Kent" programme has concentrated on new and emerging technologies that have the potential to transform teaching and learning, allowing schools to do more for less. Through partnership with major technology companies such as Microsoft and leading Kent schools, a number of 'proof of concept' projects have been established to explore the impact of technology on educational outcomes. They will inform best practice as it is rolled out.



Hugh Christie is an 11-18 mixed non-selective school with 1200 students. It has around 210 pupils in the sixth form and also accepts up to 15 international students. The school has been a specialist technology college since 1994 and currently has over 800 curriculum workstations.

Hugh Christie has an innovative ICT based curriculum. Year 8 students undertake GCSE in ICT, and Year 9 students are able to commence full GCSE courses. A fully integrated competency based curriculum was introduced in September 2003. The school is a Cisco regional academy and a Microsoft Academy. Many classes are taught in groups of 60, with ICT as an integral part of the lesson.

The school has three objectives: improving performance; developing technology across the curriculum; and developing the school's national and international dimension.



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As part of the Putting Learners First project at Hugh Christie:

- 220 students were equipped with wireless enabled Tablet PCs, and this has been doubled with the 2004/5 intake.
- Virtual learning has been introduced using Microsoft Class Server and Ramesys Assimilate.
- All teachers have laptops, most of which are wireless.

All Year 7 students have Tablet PCs they can use at school and at home. These students are taught in an open-plan learning area, and the new teaching model is underpinned by social and emotional testing, with the aim of assisting pupils with poor social skills.

There are many other examples of technology use throughout the school, including swipe card registration, radio stations, recording studio, cashless catering, information display systems and interactive whiteboards.

The use of data

Enhanced analysis and benchmarking data has been made available at school level including pupil prediction reports to aid target setting and informed management.

We have taken the development and use of pupil achievement data well beyond DfES requirements, both at individual school-level data and also cluster-level. Developments include:

- Fischer Family Trust and Making Figures Speak for Themselves data systems;
- pupil-tracking software (with training) for SENCOs;
- a DVD on the use of performance data for school governors; and,
- an enhanced database for use within the clusters to facilitate the evaluation of leadership and management and the quality of education and teaching.



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APPENDIX 4

Ideas from the USA & Advisories, internships and exhibitions - a description of practice in some schools

Across the world people are beginning to rethink the structure, shape and content of secondary education. This strategy is designed to help accelerate this process for Kent. To this end the LEA has looked across the globe for ideas to inform our approach. We do not believe that other countries have resolved these issues but we do believe that it is possible to learn from their experiences and where appropriate to adapt ideas from beyond our shores.

The US education system is both vast and varied. Individual states are responsible for their own education system and national standards remain elusive. Curriculum and assessment procedures throughout the country are diverse and reflect local state policy. Secondary schools, catering for 14 to 18 year olds, have been typically organised into large units of up to 5000 students each. Infrastructure investment in the earlier decades of the twentieth century has not been sustained and the more affluent middle classes have abandoned the state system for private education. The students remaining have often been from low socio-economic backgrounds and have posed problems associated social deprivation, namely crime, gangs and drugs. As a consequence, over the last two decades, secondary education has been seen as problematic, and often failing. A heavily unionised teacher workforce across the States together with a highly bureaucratised administrative superstructure has contributed to a feeling of professional vacuum.

Against this backdrop both federal and state government has sought to influence local education by using the market place to find solutions. Quasi-independent 'Charter' schools have offered a short circuit route to school reform outside established union and bureaucratic control. Equally, there has been a number of experiments with private sector companies offering to provide education at a price and to a standard. Results have been mixed.

Latterly the federal government has implemented 'No Child Left Behind' legislation that offers states funding if schools submit students to a federally approved testing regime. This policy has a chequered history and some states are now refusing to become involved because of the paucity of available federal funds.



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Outside these official orbits, school reform has spawned numerous self-help ventures where bands of teachers have come together to look at new design. Amongst the more well-known of these groups are the Coalition of Essential Schools, the Hi Tech Hi schools movement, and the Big Picture Company.

Despite problems within the US education system, it remains the global leader in developing a creative society (*Europe in the Creative Age – Demos Feb 2004*). We can learn from the best of these US experiments in reform both in terms of broad structures and curriculum design.

Outcomes

Some US school reform has focused on the size of schools. Large schools have been broken up into smaller 'schools within schools.' Here small is defined as up to 400, although some secondary schools can be as small as 100. Within such organisations it is felt that students come to better know each other and their teachers. Such schools offer highly personalised approaches and better forms of student engagement. Coeval with these structural changes is a curriculum that is focused around Project Based Learning where teachers coach more than teach. Assessment patterns within such schools take note of the wider skill set that students need – work ethic, ability to work in groups, social skills, ICT skills, honesty and integrity, and so forth. Whilst conceptual understanding and content are assessed the wider skill set allows extant linkages between school and the work place to be made.

"We know what high quality schools look like.....However with all the evidence and experience we have yet to create a district that dares to take the knowledgeto the level of full-system reform. Small schools could easily be the leading edge of a systemic strategy if districts decided to learn [from them]."

Michelle Fine and Linda Powell

The School Redesign Network at Stanford University has established itself as a clearing house of research and information on small schools. A faculty has been formed to progress research and to develop understanding about performance assessment practices that support learning. They have concluded that bigger is not necessarily better when it comes to successful schools. Many students of smaller schools achieve at higher levels, graduate in greater numbers, develop deeper attachment and participate more in the curricular and extra-curricular activities that prepare them for productive lives. However, they also acknowledge that size alone does not guarantee success



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and have identified design features of effective schools that engage all students.

Implications

Compared to elsewhere the drivers for change in Kent are different. We do not have the problem of negative youth culture ruling our schools as is the case in some large US schools and the pastoral system in the UK is relatively well advanced. However, our teachers are finding that disruptive behaviour, especially in disadvantaged areas, where learning may be less valued, is a growing concern, and does have an adverse effect on classroom practice. More worrying is that a substantial number of our students are not actively engaged in the process of learning and the traditional curriculum and teaching methods are failing to motivate students. With some 40% of students failing to reach the recognised standard of 5 A*- C at GCSE we have to reconsider our approach.

Successful American schools are demonstrating how to engage effectively with students in models of personalised learning. To learn from their success we will need to review in-school structures, curriculum reforms which motivate and prepare students for modern day society as creative independent thinkers, and secure new processes of relationships between young people and staff that are not mainstream in the British system. It is also acknowledged that the curriculum design and delivery used in many successful US schools can appear patchy to English practitioners. There are significant implications for the roles of leaders and teachers in the UK that will require commitment to ensure an appropriate culture change. However, the potential to improve learning is vast and there is considerable scope for a model of personalised learning and structure that is 'mid Atlantic' in orientation and transformational in what it could achieve.

Advisories, internships and exhibitions - a description

The Advisory System

The five schools visited were all using the advisory system to:

- help students adjust to school, particularly on admission;



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- support pupil progress on an individual basis through advising and coaching, helping students succeed by giving them support in a proactive, organised way;
- improve behaviour and attendance;
- develop effective study skills;
- improve students' communication skills;
- close the achievement gap of students from different socio economic backgrounds;
- build community among students and encourage a sense of belonging; and,
- help students plan for careers and college.

There is not a single model of advisory. Varied amounts of time are spent in advisory sessions from 10 minutes each day to programmes that include frequent and significant blocks of time, providing the cornerstone of students' personalised learning. The elements of the system are as follows:

- Advisory groups are composed of students with mixed abilities. Pupils stay within the same advisory for the whole of their time in the school.
- Students are frequently taught all subjects in these groupings.
- There is a reduction in the number of curriculum subject teachers working with an advisory group – in one school it was stated as a maximum of 6, ideally for more than one year.
- Advisory staff are responsible for contact with students' homes, undertaking regular home visits and telephoning parents to praise students' progress and discuss any problems. Through this process parents become allies.
- The ratio between adviser and students is normally one to between 8 and 18 students. In one school, in order to reduce the ratio between students and advisors, support staff also run advisories.



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- Advisors are usually available to support students for a defined period outside school hours e.g. from 6 – 7 p.m. on a mobile phone. Advisors become advocates for students within the system.
- Advisors take on the role of coach rather than teacher and are involved in the intellectual as well as the emotional lives of their students.

Fenway High School, Boston

“If even one person in a school knows him/her well enough to care, a student’s chances of success go up.”

At Fenway, the advisory groups are from one grade level and are larger than in many schools, ranging from 18 – 25 students per group. The 9th and 10th grade Advisories each have two advisors, one male and one female. The groups focus on the skills and habits that support students’ readiness for learning, mental health and stress reduction, fitness and exercise, time management and organisational skills, presentation skills, health/wellness and diet/nutrition, sexuality and its risks/choices and options for college/career opportunities. All students undertake 40 hours of community service that are arranged by the Advisor.

The Advisory in grades 11 and 12 is concerned with planning for the future. Students take interest inventories, identify potential careers, interview people in those careers and undergo an extensive process preparing for a major exhibition of their work. In the 12th grade students get support for writing college essays, planning for their futures and developing their portfolios

The students at Fenway spend 3.5 hours per week in advisory sessions.

Internships – project based learning

The internship experience gives students an insider’s view of professions and serves to solidify their desire to work in specific fields or results in the re-examination of career paths. This experience tests academic and interpersonal skills and levels of maturity in a real work situation.

At the Met School, students work with the advisor, a parent/guardian and workplace mentor to design a personalised curriculum based on the student’s work. Students work at internships in community businesses and organisations two days each week, learning academic skills through “real-



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world" problem solving. There are five learning goals that must be present in students' work:

- Empirical Reasoning.
- Quantitative Reasoning.
- Communication.
- Social Reasoning.
- Personal Qualities.

The philosophy underlying this approach is that students learn when they are engaged, when they are personally investing in the topic, when they are actually doing and problem solving and understand the relevance of what they are learning. By starting with the student's personal interest, they are taught how to learn and how to develop skills. Content is a natural outgrowth of the learning process.

This personalised teaching and learning process:

- involves each student in a variety of relationships with people who have expertise;
- is in the context of the workplace and relevant to that particular student;
and,
- is rigorous in meeting the standards of the real world setting.

The mentor is the student's role model, resource and guide and connects the learning to the real world.

The project management process includes setting goals, dividing them into large chunks, then breaking down the chunks into achievable tasks. The resources for each task are identified, a timetable is set, revisions are made while in progress, and so on. This process allows the teacher/advisor to keep track of individual student progress. A computer system containing students' work supports the monitoring process.



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Exhibitions

Every student presents work at a quarterly exhibition. Students make this presentation before a panel including the mentor, adviser, parent and other students. The panel listens, questions and provides feedback. The Learning Team (student, parent, advisor and mentor) meets after the exhibition to review the student's plan and discuss his progress with learning goals. Based on the success of the project and the development of skills and knowledge, the learning plan is updated and prepared for the next stage of this or another internship project.



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APPENDIX 5

Related activities: Healthy Schools, Parenting Support, Attendance and Behaviour, and Sport.

The Kent Community Schools Development Strategy is complemented by a range of other strategies that reinforce and support the focus on developing citizens that are healthy, responsible, active, collaborative, self-reliant and autonomous lifelong learners who participate in a democratic society.

The Healthy School

The National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS) is an important delivery vehicle for cross-Government policy for children and young people, as set out in *Every Child Matters*, the National Service Framework for Children and the Public Health White Paper, *Choosing Health*. A healthy school understands the importance of investing in health related activity within the context of a whole school approach to assist in the process of raising levels of pupil achievement and improving standards.

A healthy school is one that is successful in helping pupils to do their best and build on their achievements. It is committed to ongoing improvement and development. It promotes physical and emotional health by providing accessible and relevant information and equipping pupils with the skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their health. A healthy school understands the importance of investing in health to assist in the process of raising levels of pupil achievement and improving standards. It also recognises the need to provide both a physical and social environment that is conducive to learning. There is an extensive evidence base that underpins the link between health improvement and educational attainment.

From September 2005 there is now a more rigorous approach to Healthy Schools set out in the revised national guidance **National Healthy School Status – A Guide for Schools**. The whole school approach remains at the heart of Healthy Schools but the revised guidance now sets out national criteria developed around four core themes: PSHE, Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Emotional Health and Wellbeing. The themes should not be seen in isolation, as many of the criteria are inter related and interdependent. Additionally, the criteria extend beyond the taught curriculum and encompass the emotional, physical and learning environment the school provides.



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Four Core Themes	Examples of National Criteria. A Healthy School:
<p>PSHE: provides pupils with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a named member of staff responsible for PSHE provision with status, training and appropriate senior management support within the school • has up-to-date policies in place – developed through wide consultation, implemented and monitored and evaluated for impact - covering Sex and Relationship Education, Drug Education and Incidents, Child Protection, and Confidentiality.
<p>Healthy Eating: Pupils have the confidence, skills and understanding to make healthy food choices. Healthy and nutritious food and drink is available across the school day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a whole school food policy – developed through wide consultation, implemented, monitored and evaluated for impact • ensures healthier food and drink options are available and promoted in breakfast clubs, at break (if established or planned), and at lunchtimes - as outlined by Food in Schools guidance
<p>Physical Activity: Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to be physically active. They understand how physical activity can help them to be more healthy, and how physical activity can improve and be a part of their every day life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures a minimum 2 hours of structured physical activity each week to all of its pupils in or outside the school curriculum • provides opportunities for all pupils to participate in a broad range of extra curricular activities that promote physical activity
<p>Emotional Health & Well-Being: Promoting positive emotional health and well-being to help pupils to understand and express their feelings, and build their confidence and emotional resilience and therefore their capacity to learn.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a clear policy on bullying, which is owned, understood and implemented by the whole school community. • provides opportunities for pupils to participate in school activities and responsibilities to build their confidence and self-esteem



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The challenging national target that half of all schools in England will be healthy schools by 2006, with the rest working towards healthy school status by 2009 is embedded in Kent's Local Area Agreement with a number of targets dedicated to supporting the Healthy Schools process. Additionally, an important local target will be to work with and ensure all schools with 20%+ Free School Meal Eligibility (FSME) are engaged in the local programme by March 2006.

Healthy Schools work in Kent is jointly funded and delivered by both health and education and draws on the expertise of a wide range of partners including Health Promotion, Social Services, Community Development Managers, Local Education Officers and the Drugs Action Team. Using the school cluster network, the programme will work with schools not yet engaged in Healthy Schools with the aim of bringing them on board and also with schools who already hold the standard to support their transition to meet the new national criteria.

Many schools will already be meeting many of the Healthy Schools criteria or be in the process of developing work to address gaps in provision. The Healthy Schools model reinforces a process for continuous assessment and action planning against measurable criteria and enables schools to recognise and celebrate good practice. Healthy schools should not be seen as a tick box exercise or in isolation from other initiatives such as the Extended Schools Programme or the School Sport Co-ordinator Programme. The process should be used to strengthen on-going work. It will support self-evaluation for the OfSTED inspection and provide clear evidence of how schools are achieving the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters*.

Parenting Support

Parents have the biggest single influence on their children's lives and we know from research that parents who are able to support their children's learning and development make an enormous difference to children's outcomes.

We also know that schools which work in partnership with parents and are supported by an active parental community who value and contribute to the work that schools do, can expect significant, consistent and lasting benefits for their pupils. These include:

- improved levels of achievement;



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- more positive pupil attitudes and behaviour; and,
- greater willingness to share information and tackle misunderstandings and problems at an early stage

Extended schools can play a key role in providing additional support and advice for parents and carers by providing:

- information sessions for all parents at key transition points in their children's lives;

In Kent we are introducing "Parent Information Point". Universal one-off meetings for parents of children aged five, eleven and fourteen – to provide information and parenting tips, link up parents and local services with other parents for mutual support and exchange of information. These will be delivered in schools, taking the opportunity of meetings or open days where parents have already been invited to the school.

- more specialised support for parents who might need it, such as parents whose children have problems with attendance or behaviour at school; and,

In Kent the Family Liaison Officer role is key at a school level in providing support and guidance to parents and in linking parents or signposting them to additional or more specialised support. The Family Liaison Officer programme originally started only in Kent Children's Fund wards, but further work is taking place to enable schools outside of this programme area to introduce this role within their schools.

- information, advice and support to parents – through national helplines and websites and through local family support services.

We will be developing close links between our schools and Children's Centres, Health Centres and Family Centres, as well as the wide range of voluntary and community bodies in Kent which can offer support to children and their families, and provide greater opportunities to expand the range of services on offer.

In developing their work with parents, schools will want to adopt a whole new school approach in involving and supporting parents. A wide range of approaches can be adapted from increasing engagement through family



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learning events and programmes, through to targeted specialist support or referral to specialist services for vulnerable children and families or those experiencing temporary difficulties.

Attendance and Behaviour

Pupils who present behaviour difficulties in school can bring real challenges to individual teachers, fellow pupils, parents and carers and the wider school and local community. The most effective strategies for addressing behavioural issues often involve parents, social services, health, police, local community partners, district councils and private and voluntary organisations working together to create a community in which children can thrive, enjoy learning and behave in a positive and constructive way.

Kent has achieved demonstrable success in working with these stakeholders to address challenging behaviour and, equally as important, to support and promote positive behaviour. Permanent exclusion rates are falling in Kent, at a time when they are rising in many other authorities and less than 2.5% of pupils are now temporarily excluded from schools in Kent.

The Kent Behaviour Support Plan details the approach Kent is taking to addressing challenging behaviour and supporting and promoting positive behaviour in Kent Schools. The Behaviour Support Plan underpins the focus in this strategy on developing:

- a strong school ethos;
- providing access for all learners to a curriculum which is flexible and relevant;
- a process of teaching and learning which meets children and young peoples' learning needs and preferred learning styles whilst strengthening weaknesses; and,
- relationships which foster motivation and active participation.

Sport

Sport has a key role to play in enhancing the school experience, community safety, developing community cohesion and in encouraging self-reliance rather than dependency. The lessons of fair play, competition, co-operation and team spirit learnt through sport and physical education have long been recognised as being of educational value, but there is now an increasing body



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of evidence demonstrating a strong link between sports participation by young people and enhanced academic achievement.

The Kent Sports Development Unit works with schools, the Community Schools Development team and a range of partners both locally and nationally, including Sport England, to promote and develop sport in schools and in the community throughout Kent.

The Kent Sports Development has achieved notable success in assisting a number of schools in Kent to become Specialist Sports Colleges, as well as in helping more than 60% of our secondary schools to achieve the Sport England /Youth Sport Trust "Sportsmark" award in recognition of the commitment a school makes to physical education and school sport.

The recent success of the Olympic bid provides opportunities for engaging young people in sport and for raising their aspirations.

Kent's approach to the promotion of sport in schools and the community is presented in its "Strategic Framework for Sport in Kent: 2003 – 2008".



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APPENDIX 6

The Education of Children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities and the Special Schools Review

Our vision for the education of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is an integral part of our overall strategy. Intrinsicly, it is to enable all children and young people to attain the best possible learning outcomes in a safe healthy environment to enable them to make an effective economic and social contribution in adult life. The vision has evolved over the last five years and has at its base a radical overhaul of special schools and the development of more systematic and consistent processes for assessing and meeting children's needs. The aim is to ensure that there is a fair and equitable distribution of provision to meet the range of special needs (*figures, showing children in SEN schools, pre and post review to be inserted here*). The original basis for this was a programme called "All Together Better". Its 5 key strands are given towards the end of the appendix. The substantial devolution of staff resource to clusters and of funds to individual schools has enabled local decisions to be taken about meeting local needs. This work includes building the capacity of staff in schools to support individual children, providing choice for parents, and engaging in multi-agency working with a range of partners and the community. KCC remains strongly committed to the excellent reputation of its special schools and the additional choices that these schools afford to parents.

Every Child Matters and the Children Act have provided a new impetus for change. The principles embedded in our approach to the wider development of children's services will generate a more integrated approach to meeting the needs of the whole child and their family through coordination of health and social care and the work of other key partners such as the voluntary sector. We will also develop joined up systems that will enable the children's workforce across all sectors to have access to data and information to plan and coordinate their work without recourse to multiple assessments. This progress will provide a critical element of improving safeguards for children as identified in *Every Child Matters* and is especially important in respect of vulnerable children.

Increasing partnership work with the private and voluntary sector, especially in respect of Early Years, has created potential for good foundations for children's education and welfare to be laid in the Early Years, supported by the Kent-wide Preventative Strategy, promoted by Consortia. The rapid



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increase required in the number of Children's Centres nationally combined with the extended schools agenda has a strong and obvious link with provision for children of all ages with learning difficulties or disabilities.

In the Early Years, provision for under-5s is currently dispersed to some extent between agencies and directorates and represents a less than optimum use of premises as well as geographically and socially inequitable access for children and families to a consistent service offer. The picture is further complicated by different approaches across the County to provision for older children e.g. where post-16 "SEN" provision is readily available for young people in colleges it is less likely that these young people will encounter a "gap" between school and services for adults (should they need them). All this can have a detrimental impact on families if siblings are widely dispersed at different educational settings outside their immediate location. Lengthy travel for children with severe and complex needs has been reduced by the reorganisation of special schools but potential remains for further improvement.

The review of Special Schools is now being implemented with the benefit of a substantial capital programme. The review of other resourced mainstream provision for children and young people with special and additional needs has included significant work programmes for improving access to education including alternative curriculum for excluded young people and those at risk of exclusion. It extends to a review of SEN unit provision in mainstream schools in the autumn. But since these developments were set in train, the ground has shifted.

In Round 2 our special schools and settings will need to engage closely with the Children's Centre (and extended schools) agenda and act swiftly to develop both extended early years education and new childcare provision, so desperately needed by many parents and carers of disabled children. This need is also felt by parents of children with special or additional needs attending units and other resourced provision attached to mainstream schools. The childcare requirement relates to children up to 14 or 16 if the child is disabled. It is generally considered inappropriate for childcare activities to take place in school classrooms and schools will need to consider carefully which spaces in their existing buildings are most appropriate for the purpose.

Unlike other mainstream provision in Kent, where surplus capacity exists (in both the primary and secondary sectors), special schools and unit provision



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capacity has been planned on the basis of predicted need. There is little, if any, surplus accommodation envisaged in the current special school building programme with the arguable exception of space designated as SMILE (outreach) Centres. Children's Centre funding (capital) is extremely restricted and means that as a rule existing accommodation will need to be adapted rather than be replaced or built from scratch. In these circumstances it will be essential to bring together for consideration the whole KCC estate's provision for disabled children to ensure its optimum use. For example, respite (residential) provision for children with a disability needs to be considered in the light of residential spaces unused by special schools during holiday periods. Similarly, through central issuing of equipment for supporting children's mobility and communication etc., storage could be rationalised to release space across a range of buildings currently partly dedicated as stores (for example corridors in special schools).

It is important to note that childcare arrangements in schools should not be automatically assumed to include only those children at that school. To fulfil two primary purposes (the needs of working parents and family coherence) most successful childcare arrangements transport siblings from one setting to another and consequently arrange activity suitable for a wide and mixed ability and age range. This may also be necessary because of (un)suitability of some school buildings for after school use and in order to secure an appropriate number of children for efficient operation of the childcare business, whether undertaken by the school or a third party.

When creating new buildings primarily for education purposes of any kind, obviously it will be essential to "design in" flexibility for different uses at different times of the day or year, for different age groups, for different purposes ranging from medical consultations to lecture theatres.

For new schools this could suggest that combined premises are made available which will meet education and childcare needs together with providing clinics or surgeries and community facilities as well. Consequently, the school could encompass what are currently seen as separate primary and secondary functions, or mainstream and special functions through separate names and identities could be preserved, so long as they had a positive benefit in outcomes for children. It would also be possible and indeed desirable if some newly-built or refurbished schools had specific design features to encourage wider use by those with physical or sensory impairment, communication difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural needs.



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The implication of these suggestions for buildings planning would be to potentially reduce the number of small specialist establishments by incorporating their facilities in larger buildings. While reducing the high fixed costs of small establishments through economies of scale, a secondary benefit would be the potential for accessible larger buildings to be used by a wider range of adults and children from the local community. This is increasingly important for community use given both the rising average age of the population and the greater survival through infancy of children with more severe and complex needs than in the past. It is also important that vulnerable groups such as Looked After Children can access local education which meets their needs within easy reach of their new home if their foster placement changes. A third essential benefit would be a reduction of transport costs for pupils, both to and from school and out of hours extended provision and childcare. These costs are high at the moment given the relatively remote location of some special schools and are likely to rise in future if disabled children have to be transported elsewhere for out of hours activity. Finally, the development of "outreach" (regarded by the Council as essential to inclusive practice) which incorporates the co-education of children in both mainstream and special settings if no transport was involved.

There is no need to question the wisdom of past practice in this work, and it is very encouraging (for example) that alternative curriculum developments are now being undertaken jointly between directorates and involve special schools. However, new strategic plans e.g. the CYPP encompassing the work of a range of agencies are being developed to identify gaps in provision to meet key targets and deliver priorities within the LAA. This will include significant development of outreach work to "fill the gap" until new buildings can be developed.

End note

"All Together Better" in 1999, following extensive consultation, interpreted inclusion as having five key objectives. These were:

- *School improvement.* Raising standards for all pupils by supporting classroom teachers to plan lessons that include pupils with a diverse range of educational needs.
- *Neighbourhood.* Increasing the proportion of pupils taught within their neighbourhood school or group of schools, ensuring contact with their local community.



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- *Locus of responsibility.* Enabling schools to develop competencies by delegating a greater proportion of the resources held by the local authority.
- *Peer group development.* Recognising that children learn from each other and that adult structure and intervention are only part of the picture.
- *Parent expectations.* Enabling parents to have the confidence to choose a mainstream setting for their child's education, no matter what their needs.

Special Schools Review

The review of special schools in Kent was initiated in December 2001. It reflected the commitment of the County Council to continue to provide parents with the potential to choose special school education for their child as closed as possible to the family home. It was driven by eight factors:

1. A projected increase in the number of children with profound and complex disability requiring specialist provision, both in the primary and secondary phase of their education. This increase is the result of children surviving treatment following serious injury, or immediately after (and in some cases, before) birth.
2. A recognition of the need for the special school estate to be as flexible as possible, in order to respond to further medical advances. For example, the development of cochlea implants, means fewer children will be profoundly deaf.
3. A change in the profile of special educational need across the county. For example, an increase in the number of children with behavioural difficulties.
4. An insufficiency in the number of places within Kent special schools for pupils with more complex needs, resulting in such pupils being provided for in non-maintained and independent provision, and an additional cost to the Authority.
5. A shortfall in the number of special school places for groups of pupils experiencing: autistic spectrum disorders, behavioural difficulties, severe emotional needs and complex medical conditions, which if not met, would lead to an increase in the number of pupils requiring provision in non-maintained and independent provision.
6. A need to develop a more consistent pattern of provision across the county, which will iron out historical and geographical anomalies,



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and will place the special school estate in a position to meet present and future needs.

7. A recognition of the fact that pupils with moderate learning difficulties, whom historically would have been placed in a Special school, would not now achieve statements of special educational need (under the new Code of Practice introduced in January 2002).
8. An acknowledgement, given the above, that the future of special schools needs to be carefully planned, or, as more pupils are likely to be educated in their local mainstream school, the special schools would 'whither on the vine'.

From the perspective of the special school estate, the outcome of the review led to a rationalisation of current provision. After the required public consultation processes, the county's special schools have been re-designated, to reflect a more equitable provision, robust enough to meet current and future patterns of need.

In order to meet the needs of pupils with profound, severe or complex learning difficulties (the number of whom is expected to increase, along with an increase in the levels of complexity of need), "District Special Schools", or "PSC (profound, severe and complex) Schools were established. Each school will provide for such pupils, between the ages of 5 and 19, within their locality.

The need to provide for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties led to the formation of five "B&L (behaviour & learning) Schools" and three "BESD (behavioural, emotional and social difficulty) Schools". The former are for pupils with an associated learning difficulty, and the latter for pupils who are academically more capable.

A further three schools were designated to meet the needs of those with autistic spectrum disorders. The "C&I (communication & interaction) Schools" provide for the increase in numbers of pupils with such difficulties (Kent has a higher than the national average proportion of children with autistic spectrum disorder)

One school in the county has been designated to meet the needs of those pupils with physical, sensory and medical needs.

All of the special schools in the county are benefiting from an extensive capital programme, through a mixture of new build and refurbishment, to



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allow for them to be both fit for current purpose, and fit to face the challenges of the changing face of special educational needs provision.

Within Kent, there is recognition that the balance between inclusion and specialist provision needs to be managed carefully. The review of special schools saw both an increase in the opportunities for special and mainstream schools to work more closely together and a maintenance of the level of specialist provision within special schools themselves.

Opportunities for special schools to work with mainstream schools have always existed. The reorganisation of special schools, along with the development of Cluster working, and the working towards the outcomes of Kent's policy on special educational needs and Inclusion, "All Together Better"³ has given fresh vigour to the ways in which special schools and mainstream schools work together. Special school Headteachers work more closely with mainstream school colleagues on Cluster Boards. Through Cluster working, their engagement with retained and devolved services is greater.

District Special Schools have been particularly charged with the task of providing advice to mainstream colleagues on matters of inclusion. The provision of accommodation within the building schemes will allow them to take pursue opportunities for expanding these services. The need for special schools to look at how they will meet the extended schools agenda is very real, and the redesignation of special schools, and the reorganisation of the estate, puts them in an ideal place to do this successfully. District Special Schools are also developing their capacity to provide, or co-ordinate, outreach services to local mainstream schools.

All of the County's Special schools, though working with Cluster staff, are being encouraged to develop new ways of working collaboratively with mainstream schools. A particular emphasis is placed on those initiatives which will address current issues, whilst at the same time increase the capacity of mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

In some cases, parts of the special school provision are co-located within a mainstream school. Such proximity allows for opportunities for inclusion and outreach to be developed to a very high level. Developments that allow for increasing levels of co-location are being pursued. An example of this is the

³ School Improvement, Neighbourhood, Locus of Responsibility, Peer Group Development and Parent Expectations



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plan to allow for special school post-16 accommodation to be provided on the site of mainstream schools and colleges.

The transition period between the “old estate” and the “new estate”, and the developing role of special schools is being co-ordinated across the county in different ways. The build programme is project managed, on Kent County Council’s behalf, by Faithful&Gould who work with KCC’s Property Group and with KCC Education & Libraries to ensure the smooth running of the programme.

The Special School Implementation Group, which acts as a “clearing house” for issues relating to Special schools, oversees this and all development issues. It is this body which is responsible for the policy: “Developing the Role of the Special school”. The SSIG has representation from other services, which increases its capacity to address overarching issues, as well as to respond to challenges faced in the implementation of the Special Schools Review.



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APPENDIX 7

Building Schools for the Future – a brief summary

Following a successful application to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2004, Kent was selected to participate in the next wave (wave 3) of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

BSF is a national programme to rebuild or renew secondary schools over the next 15 – 20 years. It devolves significant capital funding to local education authorities to invest in state-of-the-art school buildings and ICT facilities for secondary schools. In Kent, the aim of BSF is to combine these investments with the vision for teaching and learning set out in this strategy document to bring about a step change in the quality of secondary education in the county.

An opportunity to invest and innovate

BSF provides a unique opportunity to invest in innovative solutions for future secondary school provision, challenging perceptions of what schools should offer and where they should be located. The first step in generating these solutions has been the development of the educational vision set out in this strategy. The second step will be in using this vision to develop radical design proposals for investment in school facilities.

We see school design as an opportunity to project learning into the heart of the community. The design of a school can promote its aspirations and specialism, even before parents, visitors and young people have entered the building. Many observers are convinced that a generation of schools is being built replicating the past, with out-of-date, low-tech, cellular designs. As schools become more innovative organisations and more confident with the use of technology, it is critical to re-examine the future use of spaces, rather than repeating existing school patterns and slavishly adhering to existing assumptions.

Our vision of autonomous and creative learners, supported by technology, calls for the development of high-tech, flexible environments that enable small group work, better opportunities for collaboration within the school community, enhanced presentational positions for the teacher and more space for individual learner's work. We have already begun exploratory work with a range of partners including architects, designers and ICT service providers to consider what virtual and physical learning environments of the



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future will need to include to realise this vision. One notable outcome from this work has been the development of the Kent Template for Schools of the Future, which was jointly developed with the Sustainable Communities programme at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and leading edge architects.

Similarly, our vision of locating schools at the heart of their community raises fundamental design questions over how can we accommodate and encourage relationships between schools and other community organisations more efficiently.

We believe the answer is likely to involve blending different uses and types of accommodation on school sites. Whilst parts of school facilities would remain private and secure for school use only, others will be open to the public on a daily basis, after school hours. This approach not only delivers spatial and economic capital and recurrent use, but is also a philosophical statement, expressing how a community can best work, as an integrated and mutually supportive network in which there are active learners of all ages. A blending of uses will result in **more for less**, more space, services and staff for less recurrent and capital investment.

Rather than acquiring and equipping separate facilities, the accumulation of resources allows efficient use of land, buildings and professionals, resulting in shared expertise and quality that might otherwise be unaffordable. Furthermore, blended use encourages collaboration between partners, generating even greater collective community commitment and success.

BSF will also support our vision of a 21st century education workforce. Teachers need to have high quality, flexible teaching spaces as well as access to other shared areas where they and other members of staff can collaborate. Some schools may require a central staff area providing a social space where all adults can gather together. There will also need to be more formal meeting rooms for staff, including rooms where parents/children/young people and visitors can meet professionals.

We also see schools increasingly working together in a federated or school cluster arrangement; therefore, a space where small groups of teachers, learners or visiting consultants are able to work together should be available.

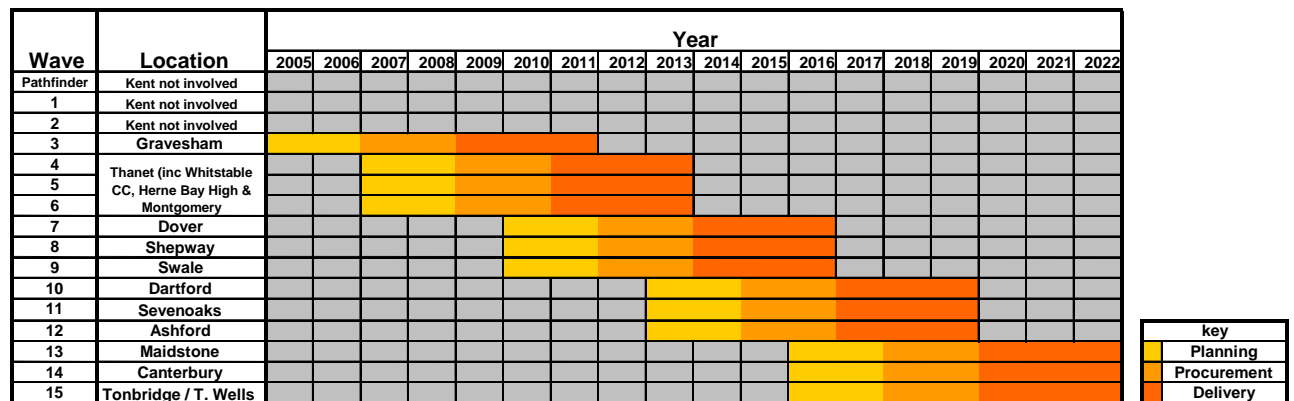


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Programme development

Kent's BSF programme will begin in Gravesham and progress throughout the County in successive waves over the next fifteen to twenty years. During that period the programme has the potential to deliver well in excess of £1billion in capital funding to the County's secondary school buildings and ICT infrastructure.

The Gantt chart below shows the indicative timeline for projects in Kent's BSF programme.



It is important to note that Kent's BSF programme is planned in line with current government spending plans and assumptions. We expect that these plans and assumptions will also hold for future waves, but are aware that over fifteen years circumstances may change, including government priorities, legislative requirements, and our own local requirements. Some assumptions may therefore change as the programme moves forward, but only in the light of substantial and sustainable evidence that they are blocking either the achievement of the government's or Kent County Council's aims.

Kent LEA is responsible for developing and delivering BSF projects involving schools in Kent. The LEA has a good record of working with stakeholders to develop and consult on its plans – the development of this strategy being a good example. Kent is also committed to working closely with service users to develop and deliver services. Kent has developed a methodology, with the support of Demos, for engaging students in the development of education plans and policies. A notable outcome from this was the staging of a one-day



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workshop from 100 pupils from wave 3 schools to inform the development of this strategy.

Kent's BSF programme will be owned at a corporate level by the Managing Director for Children, Families and Education and will be closely aligned with current and emerging county and national strategies. Corporate-level ownership of the programme will facilitate close and regular strategic consultation with Cabinet Members of the County Council as well as with other services and key stakeholders via the Children's Trust and Local Strategic Partnership. On a day to day level, the programme will be directed by the Director of Resources for Children, Families and Education, supported by one full-time project manager and a 'virtual BSF project team' which convenes regularly to manage the programme's work streams. A member of the Kent Secondary Transformation Team (see chapter 5) is also permanently attached to the BSF programme to facilitate a direct and on-going dialogue with the schools involved in BSF projects.