

| Priorities Comparison Chart 2004-05 | | | | |
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| CSF PRIORITIES 2003/04 | | CSF PRIORITIES 2004/05 | | EXPLANATION |
| 1.1 | To raise achievement in the early years of education | 1.1 | To raise achievement and improve assessment in the early years of education | Priority 1.1 continues from 2003/4. This is because although baseline measures of attainment on entry to school are generally above the national average there is a need to ensure high quality provision and improving standards in all early years settings both maintained and non-maintained. There are also challenging DFES targets to meet in relation to the quality of early years settings and the training of staff |
| 1.2 | To promote and strengthen strategies for improving achievement at Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in literacy and numeracy | 1.2 | To promote and strengthen strategies for improving achievement and assessment at Key Stages 1 and 2 | Priority 1.2 continues from 2003/4. This is because although there is a picture of overall improvement in the standards achieved by 7 and 11 year olds there is still significant work to do in order to achieve the challenging targets that Hertfordshire has set for the forthcoming years. As part of this drive for improvement, we are required to implement the national primary strategy |
| 1.3 | To implement and promote strategies for improving achievement at Key Stage 3 | 1.3 | To implement and promote strategies for improving achievement and assessment at Key Stage 3 | Priority 1.3 continues from 2003/4 because the national key stage 3 strategy will be broadening in order to drive up standards still further. There have been encouraging results from our 14 year-olds but more work needs to be undertaken in order to reach the challenging targets that Hertfordshire has for the end of key stage 3 |

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| 1.4 | To implement a 14-19 strategy with schools and colleges for improving achievement based upon collaboration between institutions and the dissemination of good practice | 1.4 | To promote and strengthen the Hertfordshire 14-19 strategy, within the context of 11-19 learning | Priority 1.4 continues from 2003/4 as the development of 14-19 provision is high profile both locally and nationally with significant changes to the curriculum predicted. Although there has been a steady increase in the percentage of 16 year olds attaining 5A* - C at GCSE and in average point scores at A level, and our performance is above the national average, we are still falling short of our targets |
| 1.5 | To implement and promote strategies for improving achievement in the broader curriculum particularly in the arts and citizenship | 1.5 | To implement strategies for promoting creativity and improving achievement, involvement and enjoyment across the curriculum | Priority 1.5 has been developed from 2003/4 to bring a more significant focus to the wider curriculum and creativity. Inspection evidence clearly indicates an improvement in the core subjects but a narrowing of the wider and more creative aspects of the curriculum. Development in this area include important national strategies such as the healthy schools programme, the sports programme and drug education |
| 1.6 | To develop the capability of schools to raise the achievement of every child | 1.6 | To develop the capability of schools to raise the achievement of every child | Priority 1.6 continues from 2003/4 as this is a central plank in the development of CSF. While all Hertfordshire schools have implemented school self evaluation, a significant proportion are not yet self-improving and have not developed the capacity to meet the needs of all children. Work needs to be undertaken to support a diversity of provision and to support schools in developing strategies to improve the performance of all groups of children, in working collaboratively and in developing community links and provision |

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| 1.7 | To intervene early in schools which may cause concern because of poor performance | 1.7 | To make timely interventions in schools which may cause concern because of poor performance | Priority 1.7 continues from last year as there is still a need to support rapid improvement in our schools which cause concern because of poor performance. While there is an improving picture, with less schools in Ofsted categories and fewer schools on the schools causing concern register, there are still too many schools needing intensive support |
| 2.1 | To recruit high quality staff and governors in sufficient numbers to CSF, including schools | 2.1 | To recruit high quality staff and governors in sufficient numbers | Priority 2.1 continues from 2003/04. This is because there are increasing marketplace pressures which inhibit our ability to attract suitable numbers of staff against vacant posts, especially in hard to fill areas |
| 2.2 | To secure equal opportunities in appraisal, promotion and professional development of staff | 2.2 | To secure equal opportunities in appraisal, promotion and professional development of staff | Priority 2.2 continues from 2003/04. This is because we have not made sufficient progress in the development and recruitment of staff in ways which enable the staff profile to reflect the Hertfordshire community |
| 2.3 | To improve the retention rates of staff in the department and in schools | 2.3 | To improve the retention rates of staff in the department and in Hertfordshire schools | Priority 2.3 continues from 2003/04. This is because there is a need to review and develop not only retention packages, but also the way people are employed through different types of contracts |
| 2.4 | To support the development of managers so they are well equipped to lead, manage and coach their staff | 2.4 | To support the development of managers and school leaders so they are well equipped to lead, manage and coach their staff | Priority 2.4 continues from the 2003/04 Plan because our monitoring of the roll-out of performance management and development shows that greater consistency of practice is needed |

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| 2.5 | To provide programmes for the continuing professional development of staff and governors in order to develop and improve practice | 2.5 | To provide programmes for the continuing professional development of staff and governors in order to develop and improve practice | Priority 2.5 continues from 2003/04. The actions here are aimed at professional development in the department to tackle some of the most serious vacancy problems |
| | | 2.6 | To support and provide leadership in relation to the schools workforce reform agenda | Priorities 2.6 and 2.7 are new for 2004/05. These are new developments for which work began in 2003 and for which there will be an important HR commitment in 2004/05 and beyond |
| | | 2.7 | To support and deliver the HR components of the corporate integrated information system | |
| 3.1 | To develop integrated early education, childcare and family support and health services to give every child the best possible start in life | 3.1 | To develop early years services which integrate education, childcare, family support and health services to give every child the best possible start in life | Priority 3.1 continues from 2003/04 because we are still committed to increasing both the number and the quality of early years and childcare places. We have undertaken that by April 2004 there will be a free, part-time early education place for all three-year olds whose parents want one, and we are also committed to increasing childcare places for 0-2 year olds. At the moment we are falling short of the targets we have set ourselves for expansion and so this area of work continues to be a priority for action. We have identified workforce issues as a key constraint, which needs to be addressed |

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| 3.2 | To develop services for all parents/carers that help them to promote the success of their children | 3.2 | To develop services for all parents/carers that help them to promote the success of their children | Priority 3.2 continues from 2002/03 because we know that children learn best when schools and parents/carers have a strong common purpose and when their home life is settled and happy. We are currently developing the role of the Under 10's Family Support Service within CSF and in the year ahead we will need to progress the implementation of this and its integration with support services for older children |
| 3.3 | To extend professional links between health services and the service to increase joint approaches to promoting the educational and social development of children | 3.3 | To develop joint work between health services and other partner agencies to promote the educational and social development of children | Priority 3.3 continues to underline the importance of strong professional links with the health services and other partners. We are seeking to build on work in 2003/04, both in relation to integrated preventative work, and more co-ordinated planning through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Much remains to be done in order to better align our services for the benefit of all children and improve outcomes by continuing to identify shared priorities and develop joint approaches |
| 3.4 | To expand the range of out of school opportunities for children and young people to develop their knowledge, skills and self-esteem | 3.4 | To expand the range of out of school opportunities for children and young people to develop their knowledge, skills and self-esteem | Priority 3.4 retains its focus on the opportunities available to children and young people before and after school hours, at weekends and during school holidays. We have made good progress in creating new provision but we now need to take targeted action to address the gaps in provision for children with special needs and in areas of disadvantage. We also need to focus effort on the out of school learning of older young people, building on the multi-agency Youth Charter work currently underway to identify what's needed to make Hertfordshire more youth friendly, by implementing the CSF Youth Strategy |

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| 3.5 | To motivate children to prevent them failing at school due to problems with their behaviour | 3.5 | To develop the preventative capacity of universal services and the effectiveness of targeted early intervention | The work on behaviour under the previous Priority 3.5 is now covered under Strategic Area 4. This is a new Priority 3.5 which focuses on the further development of our preventative work. There is a particular focus on developing the preventative capacity of schools and school-based work |
| 4.1 | To work in collaboration with specialist schools to develop further provision for gifted and talented pupils inside and outside school | 4.1 | To develop further provision for gifted and talented pupils in specialist and non-specialist schools and other settings | Priority 4.1 builds on work in the 2003/04 Plan and takes account of the growing number of Hertfordshire schools with specialist status. These have an important role, through collaborative partnerships, in enhancing the skills of teachers and the resources available to them in providing a challenging and differentiated curriculum for all learners including the gifted and talented |
| 4.2 | To ensure that children whose family circumstances put them at risk of underachievement have full access to universal provision and targeted services | 4.2 | To ensure that children at risk of under-achievement have full access to universal provision and targeted services | Priority 4.2 reflects the fact that unauthorised absence levels in primary and secondary schools are still not meeting our targets. We need to continue to focus our work with the particular schools and Education Support Centres (ESCs) who face the greatest challenges and with families whose children are at greatest risk of poor attendance. The newly established Children's Trust pilot project in North Hertfordshire will provide a means of providing more co-ordinated support to families in need |
| 4.3 | To target support for children with disability or additional needs to ensure they develop educationally and socially to their full potential | 4.3 | To target support for children with disability or additional needs to ensure they develop educationally and socially to their full potential | Priority 4.3 reflects the need for schools and CSF to develop more inclusive approaches to maximise the achievement of children with learning, behaviour and physical difficulties. It also responds to the guidance from the government to continue developing collaborative approaches with health service providers and other agencies such as Connexions |
| 4.4 | To develop further equal opportunities policies and practices | 4.4 | To develop further equal opportunities policies and practices | Priority 4.4 builds on earlier work to implement the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 across CSF services |

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| 4.5 | To secure a wide range of learning opportunities for adults | 4.5 | To secure a wide range of learning opportunities for adults | Priority 4.5 reflects our need to work in collaboration at both operational and strategic levels with the Learning and Skills Council and Adult Education providers. Only if we have a successful continuing education service for young people and adults can we expect a prosperous and successful community with children who are motivated to learn and develop their full potential |
| | | 4.6 | To provide services which actively support access to education | Priority 4.6 is an addition to the previous year's Plan which reflects the range of services that are in place and are being further developed to improve access to education in schools and other settings |
| 5.1 | To secure a safe environment for every child, including those who are vulnerable | 5.1 | To secure a safe environment for every child, particularly those who are vulnerable | Priority 5.1 - The Government has recently publishing the Green Paper "Every Child Matters". This follows the Laming Inquiry into the case of Victoria Climbié and will have far reaching implications for all agencies working together to safeguard children. We will need to develop appropriate actions in line with anticipated legislation and guidance |
| 5.2 | To work with schools and other agencies, on national and local initiatives designed to tackle issues facing children and young people, including the provision of support to specific vulnerable groups | 5.2 | To work with schools and other agencies on national and local initiatives designed to tackle issues facing children and young people, including the provision of support to specific vulnerable groups | Priority 5.2 continues from 2003/04 because a number of national initiatives continue in 2004/05. They are supported by grant funding and tackle issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drug and alcohol abuse - teenage pregnancy - intentionally homeless families - unaccompanied minors and refugee children and families |

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| 5.3 | To recruit, retain and provide support to foster carers and adopters, in order to enhance the service they offer to children | 5.3 | To recruit, retain and support foster carers and adopters, in order to enhance the service they offer to children | Priority 5.3 continues to be a priority as there is an increasing demand for fostering and adoption placements. Further development of services is required to meet Adoption Guidance and Regulations, Fostering standards and requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000 |
| 5.4 | To ensure children in public care have their health, education, social and emotional development needs met | 5.4 | To ensure Looked After Children (LAC) have their health, education, social and emotional development needs met | Priority 5.4 and 5.5 are priorities as the Local Authority has a special responsibility as “Corporate Parent” to children and young people in Public Care and those leaving Public Care. Looked After Children (LAC) do not do as well as their peers and CSF has a commitment to improving the life chances of those children |
| 5.5 | To enable children who leave public care to be supported in their settings and to assist them in their transition to adulthood | 5.5 | To enable children who leave public care to be supported in their settings and to assist them in their transition to adulthood | |

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| 6.1 | To raise the level of ICT skills and awareness | 6.1 | To ensure that ICT raises the achievement of children and adults in schools and elsewhere | <p>The priorities in the Strategic Area have been re-aligned from 2003/4 to reflect the core services provided by the Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To support the use and development of ICT in the curriculum - To develop the use of ICT to deliver services to adults, children and schools particularly in the application of e government - To support the development of MI systems and data exchange within schools - To use information to support the monitoring, planning and development of services <p>The priorities continue to reflect the decision by CSF to use ICT to improve service delivery and communications for schools, parents and children and to use ICT as an integral part of teaching and learning in order to raise standards of achievement</p> |
| 6.2 | To ensure that ICT systems support the raising of achievement by helping children and adults to learn in school and elsewhere | 6.2 | To use ICT to improve the delivery of the department's services to adults, children and schools | |
| 6.3 | To use ICT to integrate the management of knowledge and communications to benefit the work of CSF and partner agencies | 6.3 | To provide advice, support and training in the use and enhancement of ICT in Hertfordshire schools and the IT interfaces between schools and CSF | |
| 6.4 | To use ICT to improve the delivery of CSF department services to adults, children and schools | 6.4 | To provide effective and relevant information services for the CSF Department and schools | |

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| 7.1 | To increase the active participation of users, children, parents/carers and stakeholders in the design and delivery of information about services | 7.1 | To enable more effective participation and learning through improved information to and feedback from children, parents, stakeholders and partnership groups | Although we have made good progress in building our basic systems and mechanisms for information, participation and consultation, we still have more to do to ensure that these systems work as effectively as possible and that we learn lessons. Last year's priorities 7.1 to 7.3 have been developed into one priority area 7.1 this year |
| 7.2 | To increase and improve our ways of listening, responding and feeding back to the users of our services | 7.2 | To integrate the work of the Conciliation and Appeals Unit into the service improvement of CSF | Priority 7.2 is new this year in recognition of the need to learn lessons more systematically from the engagement of the Conciliation and Appeals Unit with service users |
| 7.3. | To increase and improve the participation of service users in the planning and development of services | | | |
| 7.4. | To increase and improve participation of voluntary and community groups, schools and other stakeholders in the planning and development of services | | | Work with voluntary and community groups in last year's priority 7.4 is now included in priority 3.3 on joint work with partner agencies |

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| 8.1 | To use government initiatives, funding and public/private partnership to improve services | 8.1 | To use government initiatives, funding and public/private partnership to improve services | Priority 8.1 continues from the 2003/04 Plan as it is important to secure the continuous improvement of services. It includes the further work which has to be done to secure PFI credits |
| 8.2 | To secure continuous improvement through a rolling programme of Best Value Reviews and other reviews, identify efficiency savings and re-invest them giving priority to preventative work | 8.2 | To review performance to identify areas for improvement and undertake specific reviews to identify efficiency savings | Priority 8.2 is a new one which reflects the replacement of a formal best value review programme with a locally devised one |
| 8.3 | To procure and maintain sufficient suitable buildings and equipment that represent value for money and are fit for purpose | 8.3 | To procure, upgrade and maintain sufficient, suitable buildings and equipment that represent value for money and are fit for purpose | Priority 8.3 continues with minor amendment from 2002/03. We have developed the process to ensure that the capital strategy reflects all the elements of the Asset Management Planning process. In 2004/05, we will need to build on this to create an investment programme which aligns the available resources with the strategic priorities. This will need to take account of developments in 2003/04 which have implications for the use of our property, in particular the corporate capital programme review process |
| 8.4 | To ensure that the planning of school places and admission arrangements support parents/carers, operate cost-effectively and support the raising of school standards | 8.4 | To optimise the supply of, and demand for, school places informed by parental preferences, forecasts of pupil numbers and information about pupil and school achievement | Priority 8.4 also continues with minor amendment from 2003/04. This is because reducing the percentage of unfilled places remains a challenging target, especially in primary schools, and ongoing attention to the planning of school places is needed to respond to changing demography, information about buildings, and pupil and school performance |

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| | | 8.5 | To secure best value from externally provided services by effective commissioning, procurement, monitoring and evaluation | Priority 8.5 is a new one which reflects the increasing importance of obtaining the best possible value from those services which we purchase from external suppliers, and ensuring that those services reflect both the priority which we place on equalities issues and the development of partnership working |
| | | 8.6 | To ensure efficient and effective resource allocation and financial management throughout CSF | Priority 8.6 is also new and responds to the need to make the best possible use of the limited financial resources which will be available to the service in 2004/05 |
| | | 8.7 | To ensure that there are comprehensive processes to identify and manage risk | Priority 8.7 is a response to the need to develop our capacity to identify and manage risk relating to health and safety and other key issues which could cause interruptions to service delivery |