

**PROGRESS REPORT ON POST-16 ACHIEVEMENT AND
COLLABORATIVE WORKING**

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide members with an update on the 16-19 Strategy following the publication and subsequent analysis of the 2003 achievement data for Hertfordshire secondary schools.
- 1.2. To share with members the analysis of a range of data and other evidence relating to 16-19 provision, including value-added data, together with information about efficiency, curriculum provision, participation and transport.

2. Summary

- 2.1. The evidence from the data highlights the fact that the impact of collaborative working generally has the effect of producing a large and viable cohort across a collaborative group. These arrangements enable schools in an area to offer a wider range of opportunities and learning pathways for students, resulting in higher staying-on rates and better achievement outcomes.
- 2.2. Schools with small cohorts – a Year 13 cohort of fewer than 75 students is considered to be small – do not usually offer good value for money and generally offer a narrower range of options for students when they operate independently. The larger cohorts, facilitated by collaborative working, offer more secure viability of courses and better value for money.
- 2.3. It is important to note that the presentation of collaborative v. non-collaborative data can mask significant variation at individual school level which will need to be considered within the current review of the Schools Standards and Curriculum Division.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. Collaborative arrangements, particularly where they produce large cohorts of students, offer significant benefits to students and to the schools and colleges they attend.
- 3.2. On all measures, the size of the cohort is a major factor. Large cohorts offer much better opportunities and outcomes for students and provide better value for money.
- 3.3. Children, Schools and Families should work with the Hertfordshire Learning and Skills Council to develop detailed plans, as part of the LSC's Strategic Area Review, to review the arrangements for post-16 provision in those communities where the needs of students are not well served by the current arrangements.

4. Background

- 4.1. The earlier report to the Scrutiny Committee on 15 October 2003 set out a range of data relating to post-16 provision, comparing outcomes between 2000 and 2002, together with details of collaborative working between institutions. At that time, a detailed analysis of the outcomes for the 2001-2003 cohort – the first cohort to participate in the 16-19 Strategy – was not available, and a further report was requested for the March 2004 meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.2. This report brings together a range of additional data and evidence drawn from:
 - achievement data relating to examination results for Summer 2003 for the county's schools
 - achievement data relating to collaborative groups and to size of cohorts
 - value added data
 - curriculum analysis data from those schools which have completed returns
 - review visits made to several collaborative groups in recent months
 - background documentation provided by a number of collaborative groups
 - the Hertfordshire Learning and Skills Council's review of 16-19 learning in Hertfordshire
- 4.3. Further evidence will be provided to the Committee on 17 March by witnesses, comprising students, a headteacher and a 14-19 Project Leader.

5. Collaboration: The Evidence Base

- 5.1. For the purpose of this report, collaboration groups are defined as those groups of schools which had collaborative timetables in place in September 2001, enabling post-16 students to access courses in another school or college. In some cases, students had access to the full range of opportunities across the collaborative group. In other cases, access was limited to a single option block or to minority subjects.
- 5.2. In September 2001 there were 36 schools in 13 groups which met this definition. They represent a wide cross-section of schools including community, voluntary-aided, foundation and single-sex schools. It is the evidence of the outcomes for these schools in July 2003 which is used for comparative purposes. Details of these groups are set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.3. The number of schools working collaboratively continues to grow. Using the definition above, 46 schools in 16 groups had collaborative timetables in place in September 2003. Six further schools, in two

groups, have indicated that they plan to introduce some limited opportunities for students to access minority courses across their group from September 2004, though to date details have not been confirmed.

6. Outcomes: Evidence From The Data

6.1. Achievement – All Schools

- 6.1.1. On the basis of the average points score per student and average points per entry, the outcomes for Hertfordshire schools continued to improve in 2003. The average points score per student improved slightly from 266.5 (2002) to 268.6, whilst the average points per entry improved from 78.3 to 78.9.
- 6.1.2. The number of students achieving A/AS/AVCE as a percentage of the Year 13 September pupil number improved in 2003 to 93.1% compared with 90.6 % for 2002. Over a five-year period, the figure has improved steadily from a baseline of 85.6%, with the greatest year-on-year improvement in July 2003. Details are set out in Appendix 2.

6.2. Achievement – Collaborative Groups v. Non-collaborative Groups

- 6.2.1. The comparative achievement data for collaborating and non-collaborating schools is set out in Appendix 3. Collaborating schools taken together have a markedly higher average points score per student than non-collaborating schools. They scored 279.5 points per student compared with 259.4 in non-collaborating schools. Similarly the average points per entry in collaborating schools is higher at 80.1 points compared with 77.9 points for non-collaborating schools.
- 6.2.2. It is important to note, however, that these figures mask marked variations in outcomes at individual school level for both groups. The size of the cohort appears to be of much greater significance.

6.3. Achievement – By Size of Cohort

- 6.3.1. The data set out in Appendix 4 show a very strong correlation between larger cohort size and achievement levels by either achievement measure as follows:

| | | Individual School Cohort Size | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|-------|
| | | 0 - 25 | 26 - 50 | 51 - 75 | 76 - 100 | 100+ |
| Collaborating Schools | Av. Points per student | 139.3 | 226.1 | 282.8 | 263.5 | 302.4 |
| | Av. points per entry | 48.9 | 65.8 | 75.9 | 78.0 | 87.0 |
| Non-collaborating schools | Av. points per student | 152.1 | 176.8 | 218.0 | 255.2 | 287.9 |
| | Av. points per entry | 62.6 | 59.9 | 74.4 | 76.8 | 82.8 |

6.3.2. The above table clearly indicates the extent to which collaboration mitigates and offsets the risks associated with small sixth forms. Schools with small Year 13 cohorts of 26 – 75 students achieve much better outcomes for students through collaborative working than similar sized schools which operate independently.

6.3.3. Even in larger sixth forms, collaborating schools out-perform schools operating independently.

6.4. Achievement: GNVQ intermediate

6.4.1. 227 students in 24 schools were entered for GNVQ Intermediate examinations, an average of 9.5 students per school. Numbers ranged from 2 to 17 students, and the pass rate was 75%. Schools in the main offer just one or two subjects at GNVQ Intermediate level, though opportunities can be broadened through collaborative arrangements.

6.5. Value-added Data

6.5.1. The data set out at Appendix 5 shows that there is not much difference between collaborating and non-collaborating schools in relation to adding value. Using matched data, it is clear that Hertfordshire schools do relatively well, with 52.6% of students achieving above the median, and 27.9% achieving above the upper quartile.

6.5.2. Of much greater significance, illustrated in Appendix 6, is the impact of cohort size on adding value. There is strong and clear evidence that the larger the cohort, the greater the ability of schools to add value. In collaborating schools, the largest cohorts achieve 59.2% above the median. In non-collaborating schools, the largest cohorts achieve 57.7% above the median. Collaborating schools with large cohorts do somewhat better than similar sized non-collaborating schools.

6.6. Achievement: Statistical Neighbours

The comparison of achievement with our statistical neighbours is set out in Appendix 7. It is difficult to draw any hard and fast conclusions from this kind of headline data, other than that Hertfordshire continues to remain in the lower half of the table.

7. **Curriculum Provision**

- 7.1. Schools are asked each year to provide details of their curriculum provision to Children Schools and Families' Management Information Unit. Whilst schools are urged to complete the return (and are offered assistance where necessary) not all do so. At the time of writing, 62 schools out of 75 with post-16 provision have provided the information requested. The pattern was similar in 2002-2003 though it is not always the same schools each year which do not complete the return.
- 7.2. Details of curriculum provision from the schools which completed the return are set out in Appendix 8.
- 7.3. Notwithstanding the above caveats, it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions from the information provided, namely that:
 - Of the 13 collaborative groups, 11 increased the range of provision by 2003-04
 - Of the 28 non-collaborating schools for which data is available, 16 increased their range of provision by 2003-04
 - The largest increase in provision is in vocational subjects offered by schools in collaboration groups, where they almost doubled from 66 to 121, offering a better range of progression pathways for students.
 - There is some evidence that collaboration has led to widening of access and opportunity for those schools participating in joint working.
 - There is a strong relationship between the size of the cohort and the range of opportunities.
- 7.4. Additional evidence provided by several collaborative groups, particularly larger groups, shows that well-developed collaborative curriculum arrangements offer students far greater opportunities to follow the courses that they want to study. Most academic subjects are offered in each of the institutions in the group, in different option blocks, enabling students to make informed choices from a wide-ranging menu of subjects.
- 7.5. These groups also report that collaboration has also facilitated both the viability of traditional minority subjects and the development of new

courses, such as philosophy, psychology and law. In addition, large collaborative groups can also offer variations within subjects such as more than one history syllabus, music technology in addition to music, and a range of design technology courses.

8. Staying-on Rate - Participation

- 8.1. There is a strong relationship both for collaborating and non-collaborating schools between the staying-on rate and cohort size. Details are set out in Appendix 9. For the most part, the rate is higher in collaborating schools.
- 8.2. It is worth noting that the staying-on rate in the larger cohorts was some 5% higher in collaborating schools compared with non-collaborating schools (93.4% compared to 88.3%).
- 8.3. It is reasonable to conclude that wider curriculum choice offered by schools in such arrangements encourage students to stay in education post-16.

9. Efficiency – Value For Money

- 9.1. Using the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) as the measure for efficiency and value for money, collaborating schools are more efficient, with a PTR of 13.4, than non-collaborating schools with a PTR of 11.5.
- 9.2. As with other data considered earlier, there is a strong link between efficiency and the size of the cohort, illustrated in Appendix 10. The pattern is, however, clearer and stronger in collaborating schools. The highest levels of efficiency are generally achieved in schools with large cohorts that are working collaboratively.

10. Transport

- 10.1. The cost of providing transport to facilitate student movement during the day is funded by CSF and is managed at Quadrant level. Schools are asked to manage their curriculum and timetabling planning to keep student movement at manageable levels. Inevitably, with the numbers of students accessing provision through collaboration increasing each year to 2000+ in 2002-03, costs have risen steadily. It is estimated that for 2003-04 the costs will be £235,000. Transport is by taxi, minibus or Universitybus.

11. Access to Service Implications

- 11.1. A key objective for the 16-19 Strategy when it was introduced was to improve access to the provision of post-16 opportunities through collaborative working. The evidence and data presented in this report indicate that, where schools have committed themselves fully to

collaborative working, and where this results in a cohort of significant size, access and opportunity have been greatly enhanced.

- 11.2. Conversely, where schools with limited post-16 provision have not embarked on collaborative working, or where collaborative groups remain relatively small, access and opportunity are more limited.

12. Financial Implications

- 12.1. There are no financial implications associated with the report. However, the Hertfordshire LSC's Strategic Area Review, and a future Area Inspection, are likely to present a range of options for change in relation to post-16 provision in some areas of the county. At that stage, it is probable that there will be significant capital funding issues to consider.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1. Collaborative arrangements offer students a much wider range of opportunities than would otherwise be the case. They also afford a range of opportunities for staff development through joint working and shared in-service training provision.
- 13.2. There is a range of evidence which indicates that collaborative working, where it generates a large cohort of students, supports better outcomes in terms of achievement, participation, added value and value for money.
- 13.3. Conversely small cohorts – usually, but not exclusively, associated with non-collaborating schools – offer a narrower range of opportunities for students. For these students, achievement is often poor, participation and retention are lower than for larger cohorts, and the provision offers poor value for money.
- 13.4. The Hertfordshire Learning and Skills Council has recently published a review of 16-19 learning in Hertfordshire which reaches similar conclusions. It is important that CSF officers work closely with the LSC to tackle the lack of opportunity and underachievement of what is a significant proportion of 16-19 year-olds in the county. The Hertfordshire 14-19 Strategy, developed jointly by CSF and the LSC, provides an important framework within which to take this work forward.

Background papers used by the author in writing the report

Strategic Area Reviews, Circular 03/06. LSC. June 2003.

Area Inspection Framework. OfSTED. September 2003.

*16-19 Learning in Hertfordshire: Discussion Document. Hertfordshire LSC.
February 2004.*

*Principles Underpinning the Organisation of 16-19 Provision. DfES.
September 2003.*