

LEA Strategy
for **Developing the**
14-19 Phase in
Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire
County Council



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1. Foreword and Progress to Date

Since the Government published its intentions for a discrete 14-19¹ phase Cambridgeshire schools, in collaboration with FE colleges, the LEA, the LSC, the Connexions service and other partners, have made substantial progress in addressing the 14-19 agenda. Links between FE providers and schools have strengthened, new partnerships have been formed, vocational course provision has grown² and students have benefited from increased flexibility programmes.

Initially, the LEA's principal vehicle for promoting 14-19 developments in the County was the Education Development Plan (EDP) and the Plan contained a range of activities designed to support 14-19 developments.³

In addition to these specific activities, the EDP supported 14-19 developments more broadly: first by implementing activities to enhance students' personal and academic development at Key Stage 4 and secondly by providing a structural interface with Key Stage 3 (and, in particular, the Key Stage 3 Strategy).

Through EDP and other activities much else has been achieved and developments have included:

Advisory Service **partnership working** with:

- The Learning Skills Council (LSC)
- Cambridgeshire Education Business Links Organisation (CEBLO)
- The Construction Industry Training Board
- The Cambridgeshire Connexions Service.
- The Government Office for the Eastern Region.
- The Learning Skills Development Agency.

The publication of 14-19 newsletters to all schools in secondary phase.

Support for the implementation of new GCSEs by:

- Initiating and supporting networks for Applied Business, Health and Social Care, Leisure and Tourism, Engineering, Manufacturing, Construction, Applied ICT, Applied Art and Design and Applied Science.
- Liaison and/or representation at steering groups and planning meetings in the three **Increased Flexibility Programmes** in Cambridgeshire

Briefings and Conferences for Work Related Learning for:

- Senior managers
- Curriculum co-ordinators
- Key Skills co-ordinators
- With focused workshops on a range of 14-19 curricular issues.

Support for the DfES Teacher Professional Development scheme by:

- Advising schools of opportunities available through the CEBLO.
- Securing financial support for staff cover (to enable attendance at network meetings)
- Working with the Connexions Service to **promote careers education and guidance** within the 14-19 phase.

¹ Opportunity and Excellence cf. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19/main.shtml>

² Since 2001-02 the total number of vocational courses offered in schools has risen from 31 to 85.

³ These include: support for curriculum development and partnership amongst providers; tracking the uptake of vocational courses in schools, projects for working in partnership with FE providers, the LSC and Cambridgeshire Connexions service; support for the DfES Increased Flexibility programme; and provision of curriculum advice to teachers.

2. Need for a Strategy

Although the EDP provided a useful basis for developing the 14-19 phase the growth of developments, the scale of 14-19 activities and the pace of change inevitably limited its effectiveness as a strategic tool for managing developments over time. There is a need for a broader framework to ensure that structures are in place to respond to developments as they arise, to co-ordinate actions and to make the best use of limited resources. There is a need too to describe the principles that guide developments and the key priorities that actions are intended to achieve.

The realisation of these ambitions is beyond the scope of the EDP and, although the EDP and its successor, the Single Education Plan (SEP) will continue to provide the LEA's principal means for developing the 14-19 phase, EDP/SEP activities will now be incorporated into a broader Strategic Framework.

3. Principles for the LEA Strategy

The LEA's strategy for developing the 14-19 phase is based upon the following principles.

- **Choice and flexibility** *so that all students can follow courses that best meet their abilities, needs and career ambitions;*
- **Parity of esteem** *between vocational and academic courses for students and the qualifications they obtain;*
- **Pace and progression** *to enable students to move through the phase⁴ by the best connected routes and at a pace suited to their needs;*
- **Coherence of provision** *by making the link between previous learning, the 14-19 phase and learning for life, including work-related learning;*
- **Collaboration and partnership** *between providers, and between providers and other partners;*
- **Equality of Opportunity** *so that all young people in Cambridgeshire have access to opportunities that best reflect their individual learning and career aspirations.*

⁴ Government 14-19 proposals suggest shortening the time taken obtaining qualifications by some students and lengthening it for others. The issue of pace is also considered in the context of 11-14 education where the possibility of reducing Key Stage 3 from three to two years is discussed. Cottenham Village College is currently part of a national pilot to explore the implications of reducing Key Stage 3 by one year.

4. Implementing the Strategy

To ensure that the County Strategy is implemented effectively the LEA will work closely with secondary headteachers, principals of post 16 colleges, officers of the Learning and Skills Council and the Connexions service, and other partners.

The LEA will work collaboratively with headteachers through the Cambridgeshire Secondary Headteachers' Association (CSH), the CSH Curriculum Committee and the key 14-19 partnership groups within the County.

It will maintain regular and on-going contact with the principals of post 16 colleges both individually and through the local partnership groups.

The LEA will also meet regularly with officers from the Learning and Skills Council and the Connexions service in order to ensure maximum coherence between the County's support for 14-19 education and that of the broader area⁵.

In collaboration with Cambridgeshire headteachers and other partners it will seek to:

- monitor the implementation of the Strategy to ensure that it is proceeding to plan;
- identify future needs so that the Cambridgeshire Strategy keeps abreast of national and local developments;
- ensure that plans are in place to realise stated intentions;
- assist in overcoming problems by seeking solutions.

Three key officers will manage the Strategy within the LEA:

- The Head of School Effectiveness (key stages 3, 4 and 5) *who will lead on the development of the Strategy;*
- The General Adviser for 14-19 education *who will lead on the operational management of the Strategy;*
- The Officer for Secondary Phase *who will contribute to strategic development and strategy implementation.*

⁵ The Learning and Skills Council area of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

5. Elements to the Strategy

The Strategy will comprise ten key elements. They are based in the main on best practice nationally and on information obtained through the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) 14-19 monitoring programme. As they stand they form a secure basis from which to proceed. They are not intended to be exclusive and will be amended as the 14-19 phase further unfolds.

The elements are:

- Securing high levels of achievement;
- Promotion of the 14-19 phase;
- Support for collaboration and partnership;
- Pursuance of additional funding;
- Exemplification of good practice;
- Support for the development of e-learning;
- Provision of curriculum support and advice;
- Co-ordination of LEA services in support of the 14-19 agenda;
- Ensuring quality;
- Informing LEA development of policy and provision in the 14-19 phase.

a) Securing high levels of achievement

The LEA has well established systems to support school improvement and to raise achievement but as the 14-19 phase develops and unfolds, there will be a need for the realignment of some and the strengthening of others. With no additional resources, support for raising or sustaining high standards of achievement will need to reside within the overarching school improvement framework in the County which currently comprises:

- A programme of LEA annual review for all schools – to evaluate performance and to determine the extent of intervention and support;
- A systematic programme of inspectorate monitoring visits to all schools with note of visit follow up;
- A rigorous approach to statutory target setting with challenging indicative targets based upon pupil level prior attainment data;
- Annual and on-going analyses of pupil performance data;
- The provision of an on-line programme for collection and manipulation of performance data;
- A programme for intervention in schools causing concern;
- Targeted deployment of national strategy consultants and effective County-wide implementation of the strategies;
- Support for school self-evaluation;
- Provision of training and advice on the curriculum;
- Targeted activities through EDP.

Adjusting this framework to best meet schools' needs will be determined in partnership with the schools themselves but the table below gives a reasonable picture of what might change and how.

LEA annual review	<i>Stronger emphasis on 14-19 curriculum More detailed analysis of performance post 16</i>
Inspectorate monitoring visits with note of visit follow up	<i>On-going training of assigned inspectors on 14-19 courses and curriculum provision</i>
Target setting based upon pupil level prior attainment data	<i>Assigned inspectors to support schools on applying methodologies currently used for target setting in Key Stages 3 and 4 to vocational, AS and A2 courses</i>
Annual and on-going analyses of performance data	<i>Further develop programmes for analysing and benchmarking data and for determining value added (Performance and Planning School Effectiveness Team)</i>
The provision of an on-line programme for collection and manipulation of performance data	<i>Performance and Planning School Effectiveness Team to work with schools on identifying any amendments to the IMPULSE on line system</i>
A programme for intervention in schools causing concern	<i>Intervention plans to address 14-19 issues e.g. support for the development of vocational courses and key skills</i>
Targeted deployment of national strategy consultants and effective County-wide implementation of the strategies	<i>Some re-deployment of Key Stage 3 consultants to Key Stage 4. Support schools in using Key Stage 3 Intervention Strategy in Key Stage 4. Support schools in raising standards of underperforming and low attaining pupils in Key Stage 4</i>
Support for school self-evaluation	<i>Develop 14-19 self- evaluation instruments and provide training in evaluating 14-19 provision</i>
Provision of training and advice on the curriculum	<i>Continue to offer training on vocational course provision in collaboration with partners and provide curriculum advice to partnerships and networks. Provide support for the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in Key Stages 4 and 5</i>
Targeted activities through EDP	<i>Continue to include targeted 14-19 activities in EDP. Adjust activities in light of performance and local and national priorities</i>

b) Promotion of the 14-19 phase

For the 14-19 agenda to succeed it needs to be widely promoted. With its partners, the LEA will actively promote the 14-19 agenda within the County.

Providers alone cannot be expected to ensure success without support and understanding from the broader community. Parents, employers, elected members,

governors and those within the education service not directly concerned with curriculum issues need to know how 14-19 education is changing. Some will need to be assured that change will not lead to a fall in standards. For others, new and unfamiliar ways of learning will need to be described and parity of esteem between vocational and academic courses explained.

To promote the 14-19 agenda more widely within the County the first steps to be taken will involve:

- Discussion with the LSC the Connexions service and other partners to review what they are doing already to promote the phase and how the LEA may assist by bringing added value to the process;
- Ensuring that 14-19 briefings are included in the LEA's governor training programme and that elected members receive regular updates on 14-19 developments;
- Establishing a series of on-going briefings to LEA officers within existing meeting structures.

c) Support for collaboration and partnership

Partnership in the 14-19 phase falls broadly into two types: those between schools and colleges, *the providers*, and those between providers and other interested partners such as, key agencies and the business community. Through the Strategy the LEA will strengthen its commitment to both.

Partnerships of Providers

Between 2001 and 2003 the number of new partnerships in Cambridgeshire grew and established ones thrived. A particular feature of these partnerships, and a notable strength, is that they vary in type ranging from long established collaborations between schools in clearly defined geographic areas to partnerships across distance often networking electronically. The variety of partnerships and the collective experience accrued provide a strong base for further developing the 14-19 phase in the County.

An additional strength of Cambridgeshire partnerships is that they are autonomous and have grown from a genuine desire to extend provision and make the best use of available resources. In pursuit of these ambitions, headteachers and principals have fashioned their own programmes and determined their own priorities. The LEA is respectful of this autonomy but it also has a

legitimate interest in the success of partnerships and some role to play in supporting their development.

Defining LEA support for partnerships is complex because each is different and needs vary according to circumstances. However, there are some needs that are common to all and some functions that the LEA is particularly well placed to support. Key amongst these are:

- Providing a structural framework for strategic planning and support for drawing up plans
- Assistance in overcoming problems such as transport issues;
- Provision of curriculum advice and support;
- Assistance with the pursuance of additional funding;
- Assistance with quality assurance;
- Co-ordination of LEA services in support of partnerships and 14-19 developments;
- Working with other partners in the review of provision.

d) Pursuance of additional funding

One aspect of the 14-19 Adviser's role will be to identify and secure additional funding to support initiatives locally and County-wide. Working in collaboration with key partners and other officers of the LEA he will assist in bidding for funding from central government and government for the regions and identify funding sources from local businesses and national companies. He will also maintain links with 14-19 advisers in other parts of the Country and bring examples of successful bidding practice to Cambridgeshire.

Enlisting the support of businesses and other employers.

The LEA sees businesses, companies and other employers as more than a potential source of additional funding.

Each has expertise to lend, material resources to share and a legitimate interest in developing the future workforce. Working in collaboration with provider partnerships and the CEBLO, the LEA will develop its links with businesses locally and nationally in order to maximise the benefit for learners in the County.

e) Exemplification of good practice

There is an emerging framework for the sharing of good practice in Cambridgeshire. Publications setting out best practice in schools are in progress and the LEA annual review process captures best practice for sharing within and beyond the County

The LEA will use these exiting means to publicise best practice in the 14-19 phase and will in addition:

- Provide best practice examples through Schools' Portal;
- Provide opportunities for on-line sharing and discussion of practice through the Schools' Portal;
- Review the format and content of the existing 14-19 newsletter to schools to ensure it better meets schools' needs;
- Promote and support activities to share best practice.

f) Support for the development of e-learning

The development of e-learning is integral to achieving the principles upon which the Cambridgeshire 14-19 Strategy is based and supporting the development of e-learning will form a key element of the County's Strategy.

The development of on-line learning sets some very significant challenges but the rewards are clear. Not only does it offer increased choice and flexibility but it can also bring the additional advantages of cost effective delivery and support for collaboration and partnership.

The demography of Cambridgeshire varies significantly. With relatively few urban centres, a significant proportion of students live in rural communities, some at a

considerable distance from schools and colleges. The close neighbourhood collaborations of providers, characteristic of the Education Action Zones and Excellence in Cities initiatives, are hard to replicate outside of the City of Cambridge.

Despite the fact that many are at some distance from one another, schools and colleges have responded well to the need for collaboration. As a result, curriculum choice has been extended and more students are now able to access more courses locally. Nevertheless, many live at some distance from their nearest provider and have to undertake time-consuming journeys in order to follow the courses of their choice. For these students in particular, the opportunity to pursue part of their courses from home or locally on line would provide an added incentive for continuing post 16 education and would go some way to solving the problems associated with living at a distance from school or college.

The LEA has recently developed its ICT Strategy and through 'Prospects for Learning', has stated its commitment to lifelong learning and efficient use of technology. Together with the growth in partnership in the County, they provide a firm basis upon which to build.

Early steps to the development of an e-learning strategy will include:

- identification of a coordinating officer to work collaboratively with schools, colleges and other partners;
- scrutiny of practice nationally to identify effective models and best practice;
- mapping practice locally for current models upon which to build;
- identification of current capacity (the extent of home working, for example and the availability of community ICT provision in villages and rural neighbourhoods);
- engaging with partners to develop an e-learning strategy
- supporting networks and organising conferences on a range of 14-19 issues for all providers.

g) Provision of curriculum support and advice

The LEA will develop and extend the support it provides on the 14-19 curriculum.

The Cambridgeshire Advisory Service (CAS) provides a comprehensive range of professional development activities and publications designed to support schools in implementing the statutory and non-statutory curricula. Overall responsibility for curriculum support for the 14-19 phase has, until recently, resided with the General Adviser (Secondary). With the appointment of an adviser for the 14-19 phase the LEA will build upon current provision by:

- Auditing curriculum development needs across the County;
- Ensuring Cambridgeshire inclusion on the QCA 14-19 monitoring programme;
- Building on current provision (networking, providing curriculum briefings, newsletters, etc);
- Maintaining established links with training fund providers and developing new ones;
- Offering 'bespoke' curriculum advice to partnerships and other collaboratives;
- Providing regular briefings to LEA advisers and inspectors on the work-related curriculum and other 14-19 developments.

h) Co-ordination of LEA services in support of the 14-19 agenda

In addition to briefings of advisers and inspectors, the Strategy will provide opportunities for staff in other ELH services to develop their awareness of 14-19 issues. It will also ensure that, when required, LEA services are brought together in a co-ordinated way to support partnerships effectively.

The Strategy will establish a co-ordination team of service providers who will meet regularly to:

- Determine action in support of requests from individual partnerships;
- Receive briefings on developments 14-19;
- Develop the strategy for co-ordination of services in support of partnerships;

The co-ordination team will include representatives from CAS, the School Effectiveness Team (Key Stages 3-5), the School Organisation and Planning Team, the Performance and Planning School Effectiveness Team and the Pupil Support Service. Other services will participate as required.

i) Ensuring quality

The LEA will continue to monitor and evaluate 14-19 provision through assigned inspector visits and occasional targeted reviews. It will also endeavour to work in collaboration with partners and providers to assist with quality assurance in schools and colleges.

The LEA is well placed to assess the quality of 14-19 provision. There is a well-established programme of monitoring visits to schools and a comprehensive annual review process. Headteachers' evaluations of assigned inspectors' performance indicate that their work is highly regarded.

Assigned inspectors monitor and evaluate Key Stage 4 and post 16 education as part of their on-going work in schools and, through the EDP, additional evaluations are conducted. County inspectors are experienced in OfSTED inspection and accredited to conduct OfSTED post 16 inspections.

The deployment of inspectors in Cambridgeshire is informed by the principle of 'intervention in inverse proportion to success'. As a result, some schools are visited more frequently than others. As much of inspectors' time in schools is taken up with statutory responsibilities such as target setting there is only

limited scope in some schools for them to sample 14-19 provision in any depth.

Through the 14-19 Strategy the LEA will strengthen its 14-19 quality assurance procedures. Building on existing practices it will⁶:

- provide additional activities for monitoring aspects of 14-19 provision through the Single Education Plan;
- offer schools the opportunity to purchase additional inspectorate time for monitoring and evaluating their 14-19 provision.
- and continue to support school self-evaluation through training, the publication of self-evaluation criteria and the inclusion of a self-evaluation element in the annual review process.

The LEA's remit does not extend to further education colleges or sixth form colleges. However, schools and colleges share a common interest in ensuring quality and many share the same students. Much could be gained from collaboration on quality assurance and the sharing of expertise.

The LEA could support the overall quality assurance of provision in a variety of ways and although the precise nature of support will need to be determined with partners, the basis for collaboration might be:

- Sharing evaluation practice with FE colleges, schools and the LSC;
- Working with FE colleges, schools and the LSC on formulating an area-wide approach to monitoring and evaluation;
- Exploring the potential for conducting joint monitoring and evaluation activities between LEA inspectors and 14-19 partners;
- Extending the opportunity for training on self-evaluation to the local FE sector.

j) Informing the LEA's development of policy and provision in the 14-19 area

Through the 14-19 Strategy the LEA will ensure that decisions falling within its remit take full account of the views of practitioners and partners.

To achieve this the LEA will:

- Recognise that each partnership has a distinct contribution to make to the decision making processes;
- Take full account of current practice when developing policy and provision over time;
- Consult fully on policy and provision when decisions have to be made.

Action Planning

The Strategy will be supported by action plans to ensure that each partnership in Cambridgeshire is able to realise its ambitions for coherent and wide-ranging 14-19 provision. The plans will comprise priorities identified by partnerships locally, augmented by a core framework designed to address national expectations. The core planning framework will include:

- A clear map of provision;
- Mechanisms for determining learners' need
- Mechanisms for enabling learners to access programmes across the partnership;
- Plans for the development and maintenance of a broad and diverse partnership curricula encompassing vocational programmes, academic courses and work related learning

⁶ OfSTED has published a 14-19 inspection framework for the inspection of area provision (Area inspection framework September 2003 ref: HMI 1779. Copies available from OfSTED Publications Plans for the development and maintenance of a broad and diverse curriculum encompassing vocational programmes, academic courses and work related learning Centre Tel: 07002 637833 and e-mail freepublications@ofsted.gov.uk). Together with the existing school inspection and post 16 inspection frameworks it provides a useful basis for both LEA and school self evaluation activities.

- A means for demonstrating value added across the partnerships;
- A mechanism for demonstrating the cost effectiveness of provision;
- A means to ensure effective transfer of data between providers;
- A clear articulation of how partners ensure inclusion particularly for vulnerable groups outside of mainstream;
- A mechanism to evidence the impartiality of advice;
- Robust quality assurance procedures;
- Timelines for implementation.

The LEA will provide support to partnerships for drawing up action plans and ensure that each partnership is appraised of progress in other groups and kept informed of national developments that may require further planning.

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