



Leading learning and skills

Learning and Skills Council Greater Manchester Strategic Area Review Rochdale Local Area Review

Summary

This is the report of the local area review conducted in Rochdale in October 2004. This review forms part of the Learning and Skills Council Greater Manchester Strategic Area Review. The recommendations of this review should be considered by the local Stakeholder Advisory Group, the Greater Manchester Stakeholder Advisory Group and the local Council.

March 2005

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1) INTRODUCTION

The Learning and Skills Council Greater Manchester (LSCGM) is in the process of implementing the national *Success for All* strategy. This report is part of that implementation. The key aims of *Success for All* are:

- Meet the needs of learners, employers and communities;
- Improve the choice and quality of provision.

Background

Success for All is the joint Government and LSC strategy for reform of education and training. The strategy aims to build a more responsive and effective learning and skills sector and is set out in four themes:

- *Theme 1: Meeting needs and improving choice* by improving the responsiveness and quality of provision to meet learner, employer and community needs.
- *Theme 2: Putting teaching, training and learning at the heart of what we do* by establishing a new standards unit to identify and disseminate best practice, which will guide learning and training programmes
- *Theme 3: Developing the leaders, teachers, lecturers, trainers and support staff of the future* including setting targets for full and part time college teachers to be qualified, and developing strong leadership and management through a new leadership college
- *Theme 4: Developing a framework for quality and success* by establishing a new planning, funding and accountability system, based on greater partnership and trust, including three year funding agreements

The strategy contains measures to raise standards, improve outcomes and increase participation in learning and skills provision and will support the achievement of the LSC's remit to:

- Extend participation in education, learning and training
- Increase the engagement of employers in workforce development
- Raise the achievement of young people
- Raise the achievement of adults
- Raise quality and learner satisfaction

Theme 1: Meeting Needs, Improving Choice

The aim of Theme 1 is to ensure learner, employer and community needs are met, and to improve the choice and quality of post-16 learning and skills provision. This will be based on an assessment of provision across Greater Manchester – a Strategic Area Review (StAR).

The purpose of StAR is to make a fundamental examination of learning provision, both that is currently offered and is required, in each local LSC area of England against:

- the priorities and needs of learners, employers and local communities;
- the need to drive up quality and increase success rates in many areas of provision and to improve its cost effectiveness;
- the volume and type of education and training needed to meet the LSC's targets.

The StAR will need to take account of the key priority areas outlined in:

- the DfES 14–19 Strategy, *Success for All* Strategy, Higher Education Strategy and the Skills Strategy;
- the LSC Basic Skills Strategy, Widening Adult Participation Strategy
- the LSC Equality and Diversity Strategy.

Circular 03/06 contains the Arrangements and Guidance for Strategic Area Reviews, and sets out five broad objectives for the StAR:

1. Ensure that the pattern and mix of provision, including e-learning, meets the current needs and future priorities of learners and communities while enhancing quality and improving choice
2. Create a more responsive infrastructure that directly engages employers and that meets both current and future sectoral skill needs
3. Strengthen links and increase collaboration between 14–19 providers to enable greater choice, progression and the development of distinct 16-19 provision
4. Improve the pathways, choice and progression to HE by strengthening and improving the links and collaboration with higher education providers
5. Develop a coherent post-16 learning and skills sector by the local integration and application of learning and skill strategies

The StAR will also include arrangements for provider mission review, the consideration of the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence, e-learning and future capital funding.

Outcomes of the StAR process

The outcome of the StAR process will ultimately be to:

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- provide the right mix of learning provision that meets learner, employer and community needs raising standards and success rates
 - develop an integrated local learning infrastructure that consists of high quality, confident providers, each clear about its own unique contribution and able to work collaboratively to achieve educational, social and economic success.

The StAR will also identify a forward programme of further reviews to tackle areas that need to be strengthened in different parts of the local LSC area or in meeting the future needs of different types of learner, employer or community more effectively.

The Strategic Area Review in Greater Manchester

In Greater Manchester we have already undertaken a significant amount of work reviewing provision in preparation for the StAR. This work has proved to be valuable in identifying issues around the timeliness and accuracy of administrative data and has also highlighted the inherent dangers in making value judgements without a comprehensive understanding of what the data means or local circumstances. These experiences have helped shape our approach to the StAR.

The approach we intend to take to the StAR in Greater Manchester is built around the seven activities set out in the guidance for StARs in Circular 03/06. These activities will be undertaken consecutively or concurrently during the process:

1. *Preparatory planning work;*
2. *Information gathering and analysis;*
3. *Developing and appraising strategic options;*
4. *Appropriate local consultation;*
5. *Publishing outcomes;*
6. *Implementing outcomes; and*
7. *Evaluating the process and outcomes.*

The Learning and Skills Council Greater Manchester is reviewing provision by means of ten local reviews of Local Education Authority areas across Greater Manchester. This report is the full review of Rochdale Local Authority area.

Structure

The report is divided into four sections. The Context section supplies a context for the review by reviewing information about the socio-economic make-up of the area. This section also examines the issues facing the learning and skills sector in Rochdale and gives an overview of projects currently operating there. The Provision Profile analyses data relating to the schools, colleges and workbased learning providers in the area to generate a picture of the type and quality of provision and the learners who are accessing it. The Stakeholder Review section of the report details the key themes which emerged

from a series of interviews undertaken with key stakeholders in the area in 2004. The Evaluation and Options Appraisal section examines the overall outcome of all the work and identifies means of dealing with issues which have been examined in the body of the report.

2) The Rochdale Context

This section of the report draws on studies and reports such as Census information, recent surveys and current plans to provide a context for the area. This section also examines current strategies and projects operating in the area which are helping to implement those strategies.

Census Data

The 2001 census provides key information about the population of Rochdale which can be used to create a picture of learner and employer needs in the area.

The resident population of Rochdale, as measured in the 2001 Census, was 205,357, of which 49 per cent were male and 51 per cent were female. 88.6% of the population were white, compared to 90.9% across England as a whole. 7.7% of the population were Indian and 1.3% Bangladeshi, compared to 1.4% and 0.6% in England overall. The predominant religion was Christianity, with 72.1% of residents identifying themselves as Christian. This is on a par with the England and Wales average. 9.4% of the population were Muslim.

3.9% of the population was unemployed in 2001, compared to an England and Wales average of 3.4%. 15% of those unemployed were aged 50 or over, 9% had never worked and 29% were the long term unemployed. The National Office for Statistics also notes that in August 2000, there were 3,270 Jobseeker Allowance claimants in Rochdale, of which around 37% had child dependents.

In 2001, 36.1% of Rochdale residents had no qualifications, a figure significantly higher than the England and Wales average of 29.1%. 13.7% of Rochdale residents were qualified to degree level or higher, compared to 19.8% in England and Wales. The wards with the highest numbers of people without qualifications were Smallbridge and Wardleworth, Newbold, Central and Falinge, Middleton West, Middleton Central, and Brimrod and Deeplish, all of which had over 40% of residents with no qualifications. These wards also had some of the highest levels of unemployment in the area.

Indices of Deprivation

New Indices of Deprivation (ID 2004) were published on 28 April 2004, based on data from 2001. These were subsequently revised on 18 June 2004 when errors were found in the data published. At district level there are six summary measures which measure deprivation and Rochdale is in the 50 most deprived districts in England in each of the measures.

District level measure	ID 2004 Rank
Local concentration	12
Extent	29
Income Scale	46
Employment Scale	41
Average of small area ranks	37
Average of small area scores	25

The ID 2004 is published at a new small area level – Super Output Areas – of which there are 135 in Rochdale borough.

- 2 are in the 100 most deprived SOAs in England
- 35 are in the 10% most deprived SOAs in England
- 58 are in the 20% most deprived SOAs in England

Area Profile

Rochdale is situated to the north of Greater Manchester and consists of around 62 square miles of mixed urban and rural areas. The area has four distinct townships; Heywood, Middleton, Rochdale and the Pennines, of which Rochdale is the largest, with around 45% of the borough's population living in that area. The M62 motorway runs through the borough, as does a trans Pennine rail link, providing good travel links.

Community Profile

As has been seen in census information, Rochdale has a mixed population, though it has not suffered from civil unrest, as seen in Oldham and Burnley. It is a relatively poor borough, and like many of the boroughs close to Manchester, a significant number of its population commute into the city centre to work. It was planned that the area would shortly be connected to the Manchester area via the Metrolink service, but plans for the expansion of the line are currently on hold.

The Local Strategic Partnership has developed a Community Strategy for Rochdale Borough (Pride of Place) for 2003-2007. Pride of Place articulates a vision for the area: "Our vision is of a thriving place where people want to live, work, visit and do business – a place in which we can all take pride." Pride of Place sets out a number of key aims around regeneration of housing stock, environmental and educational improvement and tackling crime and disorder. The borough is in receipt of a significant amount of Neighbourhood Renewal funds to make changes to the housing stock in the borough, and to initiate and develop social regeneration.

Economic Profile

Rochdale, like a number of the Greater Manchester towns, was formerly a manufacturing base with a local economy strongly based around the textile industry. The decline of this industry has left Rochdale with a weakened economy. The Rochdale Borough Economic Partnership commissioned an Economic Development Strategy which was published in June 2003. The strategy looks forward to 2013 and plans to establish 800 more firms, ensure creation of 7,000 more jobs and improve the skills of 10,000 local people.

The Economic Development Strategy notes that some of the key weaknesses in the Rochdale economy include a lack of skills amongst the local workforce and a limited number of market opportunities in the area. The majority of firms in the Rochdale area are medium sized, and there are fewer new start ups than across England as a whole. The majority of employment in Rochdale is in the health and social work and retailing sectors, with the education and construction sectors also forming a key part of the workforce. Sizeable employers in the area include Airtours and PC World, who have a business centre in the borough. Swiss company Keuhe and Nagle also have a logistics centre in

the borough. A new development is planned for the Kingsway Business Park. This development will be supported by around £35million of public funding. The Kingsway Business Park will be situated on the M62 and will provide residents with further employment opportunities.

Profile of the Rochdale Learning and Skills Sector.

There are fourteen 11-16 schools in the Rochdale area which are maintained by the LEA. There are two independent schools which cater for pupils aged up to 16. Three of the fourteen LEA maintained schools are also voluntary aided by the Catholic Diocese of Salford. Four of the schools have sixth forms. There is a tertiary college, Hopwood Hall, which offers a wide range of post-16 education and training. There are a number of work based training providers. Post-19 education and training is offered by both Hopwood Hall College and Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Special Needs Provision within Rochdale

The needs of the majority of learners with special needs are met within mainstream provision. In addition, Rochdale currently has six special schools, which cater for pupils with a wide range of needs including severe and moderate learning difficulties, and emotional and behavioural needs. Following a review of SEN provision in the Borough and a successful PFI bid, five of the current six special schools will close in August 2007. In September 2007 three new special schools will be opened, co-located on the sites of mainstream schools. These will be primarily new build projects though one site will involve refurbishment of a secondary school.

Rochdale LEA

Rochdale LEA was inspected in July 2002. A previous inspection, in May 2000, had been highly critical of the LEA and had found a number of fundamental weaknesses. The inspection in July 2002, however, found that “the picture is much improved and a radical transformation is taking place”. The inspectors highlighted a number of strengths and weakness in the area, but commented that the LEA was actively working to improve its performance and that of its schools. Inspectors found that the LEA exercised the majority of its functions satisfactorily. Functions which the inspectors found to be good, or very good were;

- Procedures for monitoring, challenge and intervention
- Support for numeracy
- Support for early years

Some functions were found to either be unsatisfactory or not yet positively affected by significant change. These were;

- Use of performance data to inform strategic planning, monitoring of schools and target setting
- Value for money in SEN provision
- Support for gifted and talented pupils in primary schools
- Property services

Schools with Sixth Forms

There are four schools with sixth forms in the Rochdale area. These are Cardinal Langley Roman Catholic High School, Oulder Hill Community School and Language College, St. Cuthbert's Roman Catholic High School and Wardle High School.

Cardinal Langley Roman Catholic High School is a mixed comprehensive school located in the Middleton area of Rochdale. In January 2003, there were 142 students in the school's sixth form.

The school was last inspected in 2001. Although some findings of that inspection are quoted here to give some indication of the quality of the school, it must be considered that there could have been significant changes in the three years since the report was published.

In 2001, Inspectors judged that Cardinal Langley High School was a good school which was very effective in providing a strong catholic ethos and supporting the overall development of all its pupils. Teaching was found to be good and standards of attainment were average.

In 2001, Ofsted identified the school's strengths and weaknesses as:

Strengths:

- Teaching is good and relationships with pupils are strong
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and behave well
- The school takes good care of pupils, and support for pupils with special educational needs is good
- The headteacher's very effective leadership is taking the school forward successfully
- There are strong links with the community
- There is a good range of extra curricular activities

Weaknesses

- Results in GCSE examinations have not risen quickly enough
- The sixth form is not effective enough
- The school's management system is cumbersome and roles overlap

In January 2005, the Department for Education and Skills published figures relating to performance at A Level by pupils at the school in 2004. In 2004 there were 41 entrants for A and AS Level qualifications at the school. The average points score for pupils at the school was 221.4, compared to the Rochdale LEA average of 224.3 and an England average of 269.2. These figures include AVCE achievement, which reduces the average point score per student, as it fails to take account of students who achieve a single award AVCE as a step toward a double award AVCE. The average points score per examination entry at the school was 80.0.

Oulder Hill Community School and Language College is a community comprehensive school located in the Rochdale township. In January 2003, there were 245 students in the sixth form. The school has achieved specialist language college status and offers provision in eight languages in daylight and twilight courses. Oulder Hill school has a number of facilities which are also used by the local community, including a swimming pool and a theatre. Around one third of the pupils at the Oulder Hill School are from a Pakistani background.

Pupil numbers in Oulder Hill sixth form have contracted by 315% over the last four years, dropping by over 100 learners between 2001 and 2002. This significant drop was attributable to internal restructuring and a refocusing of the curriculum away from GCSE resits. In 2004 numbers in the sixth form increased by 6%.

Oulder Hill school was last inspected in February 2003. Inspectors commented that the school was very effective and provided a good education for its pupils. Standards in Year 13 were considered to be average. The school was considered to be well led and managed and to provide good value for money.

Inspectors identified a number of strengths and weaknesses at the school.

Strengths

- Results in GCSE examinations are above average because the overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The school is very effective as a language college. It extends its good practise to other institutions.
- The school provides very well for the personal development of pupils of all abilities. Relationships are very good; pupils and staff work with a common purpose to raise achievement. The school works well in partnership with parents, staff, pupils and the local community
- The leadership and management are very good. They work in harmony with the governing body and the local education authority
- The provision for pupils with special needs is good. Learning support assistants are very effective.
- Provision for extra curricular activities, including sport, music and the performing arts is very good.

Weaknesses

- Standards could be raised further in Years 7-9
- More use could be made of information and technology skills (ICT) across all subjects of the curriculum
- Pupils' independent learning skills could be developed further, especially in years 7-11
- More opportunities could be provided for sixth form students to participate in enrichment activities.

In January 2005, the Department for Education and Skills published figures relating to performance at A Level by pupils at the school in 2004. In 2004 there were 112 entrants for A and AS Level qualifications at the school. The average points score for pupils at the school was 232.1, compared to the Rochdale LEA average of 224.3 and an England average of 269.2. These figures include AVCE achievement, which reduces the average

point score per student, as it fails to take account of students who achieve a single award AVCE as a step toward a double award AVCE. The average points score per exam entry was 70.7.

St. Cuthbert's Roman Catholic High School is voluntary aided by the Catholic Diocese of Salford and is located in the Rochdale township area. In January 2003, there were 107 students in the sixth form. St Cuthbert's sixth form numbers have reduced by 16% in the past four years. The schools intake is from parishes across the Rochdale borough. The school annually offers 25 sixth form places to pupils in the Rochdale area who have completed their 11-16 education at other schools. The school also offers a wide variety of extra curricular activities to all ages of pupils. Pupils in the sixth form can study from a range of 25 AS Levels and 22 A2 Levels. St Cuthbert's High School also has an Arts Council Silver Artsmark.

St Cuthbert's school was last inspected in November 2002. Inspectors commented that the school was improving, with many good features and that pupils received a good education. The quality of teaching was considered to be good overall, with a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching.

Inspectors identified a number of strengths and weaknesses at the school.

Strengths

- Good teaching, especially at Key Stage 3, enables pupils to achieve well
- Promotion of positive attitudes to learning
- Leadership by the headteacher is good
- The school cares well for the pastoral needs and welfare of the pupils
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The school works well with parents
- Careers guidance and support

Weaknesses

- The strategic management of the long term development of the school
- The use of ICT in all subjects and the need to meet statutory requirements for the provision of ICT in both key stages
- The attainment of boys, especially at GCSE
- The use of assessment and target setting to guide curriculum planning
- Attendance

In January 2005, the Department for Education and Skills published figures relating to performance at A Level by pupils at the school in 2004. In 2004 there were 45 entrants for A and AS Level qualifications at the school. The average points score for pupils at the school was 220.4, compared to the Rochdale LEA average of 224.3 and an England average of 269.2. The average points score per entry was 58.9.

Wardle High School is a foundation comprehensive school in the Wardle ward of the Rochdale area. The school is a specialist arts college. In January 2003, it had 175 pupils in its sixth form. The last published inspection report for the school dates back to November 1998. The information contained within that report has been deemed to be too out of date to warrant inclusion in this review.

In January 2005, the Department for Education and Skills published figures relating to performance at A Level by pupils at the school in 2004. In 2004 there were 71 entrants for A and AS Level qualifications at the school. The average points score for pupils at the school was 221.4, compared to the Rochdale LEA average of 275.6 and an England average of 269.2. These figures include AVCE achievement, which reduces the average point score per student, as it fails to take account of students who achieve a single award AVCE as a step toward a double award AVCE. The average points score per entry was 67.7.

The following tables show that there has been improvement in both average points score per pupil and average points score per examination rate over the years 2002-2004.

Average points score per pupil 2002-2004

Year	2002	2003	2004
Rochdale LEA Score	173.5	183.1	224.3
National Average	254.7	258.9	269.2
Differential	-81.2	-75.8	-44.9

Average points score per examination entry 2002-2004

Year	2002	2003	2004
Average Points Score per Entry - Rochdale	59.9	61.6	66.7
Average Points Score per Entry - National	76.0	77.4	78.7
Differential	-16.1	-15.8	-12.0

Hopwood Hall College

Hopwood Hall College is a large, tertiary college situated primarily on two sites in the Rochdale area. It was opened in September 1990. The Rochdale campus is sited in the town centre of the borough and delivers mainly vocational programmes. The Middleton campus stands in a 45-acre rural site and has academic and vocational provision and provision for sports related training. The college also offers provision in over 30 community venues throughout the Rochdale borough. The college offers provision in all

the areas of learning and offers a large variety of courses including GCSEs, A Levels, vocational training, modern apprenticeships, access to higher education and higher education courses. The college also works with employers on employee training courses. The college's mission is:

"Hopwood Hall College provides the widest range of quality education and training to learners in the borough of Rochdale and beyond to ensure they achieve their individual, educational and employment goals, whilst meeting the skills needs of the region."

Hopwood Hall College is a Centre for Vocational Excellence in training for the sport and leisure industry. The college also has a joint Centre for Vocational Excellence in early years and childcare with Bury College. The college has the investors in people award.

The college was inspected in November and December 2003. Inspectors judged provision to be good in seven of the curriculum areas and satisfactory in five. The inspectors identified a number of strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

- good leadership
- much good teaching and learning
- high pass and retention rates for many courses
- effective strategies to widen participation
- good provision for English for speakers of other languages
- good support for students
- extensive community links
- wide range of provision for young people aged 14 to 16
- broad and responsive range of courses
- good resources for sport.

What should be improved

- some inaccuracies in management information
- low achievements for work-based learning
- unsatisfactory teaching in hospitality
- insufficient analysis of weaknesses in the self-assessment report
- low pass rates for level 1 courses for adults
- insufficient literacy and numeracy provision
- weak management of key skills.

The college provides A, AVCE and AS levels in a variety of subjects. In January 2005, the Department for Education and Skills published figures relating to performance at A Level by pupils at the college in 2003. In 2004 there were 199 entrants for A, AVCE and AS Level qualifications at the school. The average points score for pupils at the school was 203, compared to the Rochdale LEA average of 224.3 and an England average of 269.2. These figures include AVCE achievement, which reduces the average point score per student, as it fails to take account of students who achieve a single award AVCE as a step toward a double award AVCE.

The college provides LSC funded post-19 learning for around 6,500 adults. More information on the adult learning offer in the Rochdale area can be seen in the post-19 section of this report. The college also provides workbased learning and this aspect of

their work is covered in the section of this report which looks at workbased learning providers operating in the Rochdale area and serving Rochdale learners.

The Work Based and Community Learning Service

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council offers work based learning and adult and community provision as the Work Based and Community Learning Service. The WBCLS is the new name for the body which was formed by the merger of Rochdale Adult and Community Learning Service and Rochdale Borough Training Services in February 2004. WBCLS comprises Rochdale Borough Training Services, LearnLocal, The Social Inclusion Business Unit, and The Partnership Education Service. Rochdale Borough Youth Service, working in partnership with Rochdale Borough Training Service contributes to E2E provision. WBCLS operates from around 80 venues across the area. The mission of WBCLS is:

“In line with the principles of Aiming High, the Work Based and Community Learning Service is committed to the development of the Borough as a learning community in which families, communities, adults, young people and the business community participate in learning throughout life. Our aim is to help equip our adults, young people and businesses to succeed in a changing world and to contribute to the prosperity of the Borough.”

The service also offers skills for life training in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages. Family learning literacy and numeracy is delivered through the WBCLS.

Workbased Learning Providers

This section of the report looks at Workbased Learning providers who operate in the Rochdale area or who train a significant number of Rochdale borough residents.

WBCLS

WBCLS offers workbased learning courses for young people in

- Business Information
- Accountancy
- Caretaking
- Construction Trades
- Childcare
- Customer Service
- Elderly Care
- Hairdressing
- Information Technology
- Motor Vehicle
- Retailing
- Warehousing

Rochdale Borough Training Service was inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate in 2000 and reinspected in April 2001. Although some findings of that inspection are quoted here to give some indication of the quality of the provision, it must be considered that there could have been significant changes in the three years since the report was published. The reinspection graded provision in all areas of learning at Grade 3 satisfactory. Inspectors identified a number of strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

- Good progression in the workplace by retailing and customer services trainees.
 - Effective one-to-one support in the workplace for hair and beauty trainees.
 - High standard of training in construction and care programmes.
 - Good links between on and off the job training in engineering.
 - Flexible approach to training in business administration.
 - Well planned training for adult trainees in foundation for work.
 - Strong team emphasis on providing high levels of individual support to foundation for work trainees
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- Extensive programme of additional qualifications available.
 - Good access to facilities in both centres for those with disabilities.
 - Well structured and thorough staff reviews

Weaknesses

- Poor assessment practice in foundation level accountancy.
- Poorly organised assessment of key skills in some programmes.
- No staff qualified to teach basic skills.
- Poor management of subcontractors.
- No systematic initial assessment.
- No systematic identification of good practice or sharing of good practice.
- No formal staff development in equal opportunities.
- Poor achievement of targets set in individual training plans in reinspected areas.

Hopwood Hall College

Hopwood Hall College provides workbased learning in the Rochdale area. The college offers apprenticeships at NVQ Level 2 and advanced apprenticeships at NVQ Level 3. Key skills qualification are also offered as part of the workbased learning route.

Workbased learning opportunities at Hopwood Hall are available in;

- Accountancy
- Amenity Horticulture
- Beauty Therapy
- Bricklaying
- Business Administration
- Carpentry & Joinery
- Catering

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- Child Care
 - Elderly Care
 - Electrical Installation
 - Hairdressing
 - Motor Vehicle Engineering

The Hopwood Hall Ofsted and ALI inspection report identified a number of strengths and weaknesses across the college as a whole. There was no specific information given about worked based learning at the college, though each curriculum area was examined. Inspectors noted, however, that there were low achievements on work based learning courses.

Rochdale Borough Chamber

Rochdale Borough Chamber provides training primarily in motor vehicle, business administration, pharmacy, laboratory operation, accountancy, customer service and health and social care. Rochdale Borough Chamber is an employer-led Training Provider who works directly with employers not only within the Rochdale area but across Greater Manchester and Derbyshire areas. They offer work based learning apprenticeship programmes and training opportunities for older employees through the Employer Training Pilot programme and ESF Co-Financing Programme, offering both Level 2 and Level 3 NVQs. Rochdale Borough Chamber are looking to expand their current activity by becoming a LearnDirect centre and offering employers and their employees more varied qualifications.

Rochdale Borough Chamber was reinspected in July 2003. The inspectors found all areas of training to be satisfactory or better. The inspection team identified key strengths as good use of management data, supportive work placements and good training. Some weaknesses were identified and these were insufficient timely action to deal with weaknesses at some subcontractors, slow progress towards framework completion and insufficient support for basic skills. Following a monitoring visit from ALI in October 2004, RBC were considered to have shown considerable progress against all the weaknesses.

Kashmir Youth Project

Kashmir Youth Project is a charity based in Rochdale. It provides training in business administration, information and communications technology, retailing, health and social care and foundation programmes. It also offers a range of services including a nursery, an elders club, a community centre and sports hall, business development and welfare advice and training. They are funded through LSC Greater Manchester, ESF funds and have a JobCentre Plus contract for New Deal 18-24 and New Deal 25+. Kashmir Youth Project was inspected in October 2003 and the overall judgement of the inspectors was that provision was not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Inspectors did, however, consider leadership and management to be satisfactory and equality of opportunity to be good. Workbased learning health and social care was satisfactory, but ICT provision was unsatisfactory.

Rochdale Training Association

Rochdale Training Association is a group training association. Its provision is primarily modern apprenticeships in production, maintenance, electrical and design engineering, fabrication and welding. RTA also offers business administration, management and professional training and customer service. RTA are also involved in the employer training pilot and have employees from the Rochdale area working on team leader and information technology qualifications. RTA has its own purpose designed training centres for engineering and business. Rochdale Training Association were reinspected in March 2005 and their confirmed grades are Administration Grade 2, Engineering Grade 3 and Leadership and Management Grade 2. All areas were graded satisfactory or better.

Rathbone Community Industry

Rathbone Community Industry supplies training in business administration, management and professional, retailing, customer service and transportation and hospitality, sports, leisure and travel. Rathbone Community Industry were last inspected in January 2003. Provision in all the areas which Rathbone provide in Rochdale was judged to be satisfactory. The inspection identified the following strengths and weaknesses;
Key strengths

- Excellent pastoral support and guidance
- Good development of learners occupational and personal skills
- Clear strategic direction
- Extensive and effective partnerships and initiatives
- Public recognition and celebration of learners achievements
- Well integrated quality assurance with all elements of business

Key Weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory retention rates and NVQ achievements
- High staff turnover
- Inadequate literacy, language and numeracy teaching
- **Insufficiently challenging learning targets.**

Strategies, Projects and Initiatives

14-19 Opportunities and Excellence

The National Context

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) launched the 14-19 Extending Opportunities and Raising Standards Green Paper in 2002. The strategy aims to reduce the number of young people who are disengaged from learning by the age of 16 by widening the curriculum and combine breadth of study with more flexibility for schools and colleges to tailor programmes to individual needs and aptitudes. A Working Group on 14-19 Reform has been established and reported in October 2004.

The key findings of the Tomlinson were that "If we are to avoid wasting the talents of so many young people, and to meet the challenges and aspirations of a new generation, we must:

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- Tackle the reasons why young people underachieve and leave education early, by providing lessons and courses that stretch and engage all learners, including the most able.
 - Equip all young people with the basic skills and attributes they need to succeed in life, and which our economy and society need for the future. This means ensuring that they can think creatively for themselves, as well as being competent in mathematics, English and computing and other generic skills.
 - Raise the quality and status of vocational education and training, with employers playing a key role in the process.
 - Reduce the amount of assessment faced by young people, their teachers, schools and colleges.
 - Simplify the system, so that young people can progress more easily and flexibly from one course to the next, with their achievements properly valued and recognised.
 - Do more to reflect students' achievements at advanced level, so that they are well prepared for university."

The development of the 14-19 strategy is supported by funding for Pathfinder Projects in 25 areas and the Increased Flexibility programme which aims to give young people in schools increased access to vocational training.

The Department for Education and Skills Five Year Strategy

The DfES Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners was published in July 2004. It details eight key reforms for secondary education;

- Guaranteed three-year budgets for every school from 2006, geared to pupil numbers, with every school also guaranteed a minimum per pupil increase each year.
- Universal specialist schools – and better specialist schools.
- Freedom for all secondary schools to own their land and buildings, manage their assets, employ their staff, improve their governing bodies, and forge partnerships with outside sponsors and educational foundations.
- More places in popular schools.
- A 'new relationship with schools' to cut the red tape involved in accountability, without cutting schools adrift.
- 200 academies by 2010 – and more new schools.
- Every secondary school to be refurbished or rebuilt to a modern standard over the next 10 to 15 years.
- 'Foundation partnerships' to enable schools to group together to raise standards and to work together to take on wider responsibilities – in areas such as provision for special educational needs or hard-to-place pupils.

There is also an entitlement for each secondary schools pupil, with all all schools expected to provide;

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- Excellent teaching based on real knowledge of individual pupils, helping all achieve their potential
 - A broad and rich curriculum with more choice and a wider set of out-of-hours opportunities – including much higher levels of sporting activity, as well as clubs, societies and residential activities
 - Innovative use of leading-edge technology, with state-of-the art facilities for every pupil and teacher
 - Good discipline, with heads having powers to deal with trouble-makers, and a commitment to traditional values of respect and authority
 - A culture of regular attendance in every school, supporting learning but also cutting down crime and anti-social behaviour
 - Schools at the heart of their communities, working closely with parents to support children

Importantly for the 14-19 phase, the DfES 5 year plan articulates an offer for pupils at age 14 which should include the following;

- A much wider choice of what and where to study, with high standards in every subject and new sixth forms and sixth form colleges where they are needed
- Demanding courses for the most able pupils, whether they take academic or vocational options, and Young Apprenticeships that start at 14
- Closer link between schools and employers, so vocational learning means something in the world of work
- Extra support for young people leaving care
- High-quality advice and guidance to help young people make good decisions, and a wide range of things to do and places to go for young people outside school or college

The 14-19 White Paper 23 February 2005

The following excerpt is from the 14-19 White Paper published on 23 February 2005. The white paper sets out the government's vision for the 14-19 phase in the coming years and is therefore one of the policies most important to the work of schools, colleges, LEAs and LSCs in the coming years. The excerpt below is taken from the executive summary of the 14-19 White Paper and outlines what the paper shows as upcoming change and priorities in the 14-19 phase.

Achieving functional skills in English and maths must be at the heart of the 14-19 phase. These skills are essential to support learning in other subjects and they are essential for employment. Achieving level 2 (GCSE level) in functional English and maths is a vital part of a good education. In order to ensure more young people achieve that grounding:

- we have already reduced the amount of prescription in the Key Stage 4 curriculum, providing more scope for schools to support catch-up in English and maths;
- we are extending the Key Stage 3 Strategy to improve classroom practice, so that it provides support across secondary schools;

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- we will expect more teenagers to achieve 5 A*-C grade GCSEs including English and maths and we will introduce a general (GCSE) Diploma to recognise those who achieve this standard;
 - we will toughen the GCSE Achievement and Attainment Tables, showing what percentage of young people have achieved the Diploma standard ie 5 A*-C grade GCSEs including English and maths. We expect to phase out the existing 5 A*-C measure by 2008;
 - we will ensure that no-one can get a C or better in English and maths without mastering the functional elements. Where a teenager achieves the functional element only, we will recognise that separately; and
 - we will provide more opportunities and incentives for teenagers who have not achieved level 2 by 16 to do so post-16 and support them in achieving level 1 or entry level qualifications as steps on the way.

Building on that core, we will create a system better tailored to the needs of the individual pupil, in which teenagers are stretched to achieve. We will:

- introduce greater choice of what and where to study and make it easier to combine academic and vocational learning;
- retain GCSEs and A levels as cornerstones of the new system;
- introduce new specialised Diplomas, including academic and vocational material, covering each occupational sector of the economy. The Diplomas will be available at levels 1 (foundation), 2 (GCSE) and 3 (advanced);
- require that anyone achieving a Diploma at level 2 must have functional English and maths at level 2;
- put employers in the lead through Sector Skills Councils, in designing specialised Diplomas which provide the right grounding for work and further study, supported by higher education and the QCA; and
- challenge and support schools and colleges to ensure that young people take qualifications when they are ready, not at a fixed age, encouraging acceleration to level 2 and ensuring early achievement at advanced level is recognised in performance tables and elsewhere.

We understand and appreciate the argument that we should challenge our A level students further, by demanding more breadth. But there is no clear consensus amongst pupils, parents, employers or universities on whether and how it should be done. We also believe that so soon after the introduction of Curriculum 2000, stability is important. We will therefore work with employers and universities to see if we can identify what, if anything, would add value to existing courses and we will review progress in 2008. By this time we will also have the evidence from the pilots of the extended project and other measures to draw on.

The Diplomas we are proposing will work as follows:

- To achieve a Diploma, young people will need to achieve appropriate standards in English and maths, specialised material, relevant GCSEs and A levels and have work experience.
- We will introduce the Diplomas in 14 lines and make these a national entitlement by 2015. The first four Diplomas in information and communication technology,

engineering, health and social care and creative and media will be available in 2008. Eight will be available by 2010.

- We will work with employers to offer more opportunities to young people to learn at work and outside school.
- We will continue to improve the quality and number of employment-based training places through Apprenticeships, bringing them within the Diploma framework.

We will keep both GCSEs and A levels, but improve both in those areas where there is a strong case for change. At GCSE we will:

- restructure English and maths GCSEs to make sure it is impossible to get a grade C or above without the ability to use functional English and maths;
- review coursework to reduce the assessment burden;
- continue work to reform maths as proposed by Professor Adrian Smith, improving motivation and progression to advanced level. This is likely to include a new double maths GCSE; and
- continue to promote science including implementing the new science GCSEs restating our firm expectation that young people should do two science GCSEs.

At A level we will:

- increase stretch for the most able by introducing optional harder questions into separate sections at the end of A level papers;
- introduce an 'extended project' to stretch all young people and test a wider range of higher-level skills;
- enable the most able teenagers to take HE modules while in the sixth form;
- ensure that universities have more information on which to make judgements about candidates by ensuring that they have access to the grades achieved by young people in individual modules by 2006. We will also support those universities who wish to have marks as well as grades; and
- we will reduce the assessment burden at A level by reducing the numbers of assessments in an A level from 6 to 4 but without reducing the standard or changing the overall content of A levels.

We will ensure that there are natural progression routes both through the levels of the Diploma and between GCSEs and A levels and the different levels of the Diploma. By doing so, we will secure for all teenagers routes that avoid early narrowing down, but provide real choice of what to learn and in what setting.

We believe that the current balance between internal and external assessment is essentially the right one to secure public confidence in the examinations system. We therefore do not propose major change here.

Our reforms will create opportunities for all young people. For many, the curriculum choices introduced in this White Paper will provide the opportunities they need to develop their talents and so succeed. The vocational opportunities, including different styles and places of learning, will motivate many. Foundation and entry level qualifications will help put more young people onto a pathway that will lead to further opportunities and qualifications.

For young people who face serious personal problems, the proposals in the Government's programme, 'Every Child Matters', will be crucial in breaking down the barriers to achievement. In addition, we will develop a pilot programme for 14-16 year-olds, based on the post-16 Entry to Employment programme. This new route will:

- provide a tailored programme for each young person and intensive personal guidance and support;
- involve significant work-based learning, probably amounting to two days each week;
- lead towards a level 1 Diploma; and
- lead on to a range of further options including Apprenticeship.

We expect this to be available to up to 10,000 young people from 2007/8.

We will increase the capacity of the education system to offer vocational education. We will do so by building on existing strengths for example, extending the role of Centres of Vocational Excellence to making excellent vocational provision available for young people. We will also develop new Skills Academies as national centres of excellence in skills. We will strengthen schools' capacity to offer vocational education, through specialism. The best Specialist Schools will be able to become a leading school with additional resources to boost vocational provision. Significantly more post-16 opportunities will be needed to meet the objectives set out in this paper. Both schools and colleges will make additional provision. We will be consulting in detail on our proposals, set out in our 5-year plan, for a presumption in favour of high-performing 11-16 schools engaging in post-16 provision.

We will support the workforce to deliver. We will ensure that the right staff are in place, including those who have the necessary experience of the workplace to deliver vocational education, and that they have the professional development, qualifications and support that they need.

Schools, colleges and other providers will take the lead in each local area. A prospectus of options will be made available to all young people, setting out what is on offer to them. Where there are any gaps, it will be the responsibility of local authorities and the local Learning and Skills Councils to commission provision to fill them. Each school and college will be expected to make the full range of choices available to young people on its roll, though perhaps at other institutions. Inspection will ensure that this is delivered.

The 14-19 Phase in Rochdale

The Rochdale Borough Learning Partnership has drawn up a 14-19 strategy. The strategy has a vision, which states "Rochdale's young people will have access to, and be able to participate in high quality learning opportunities, to maximise achievements and fulfil their potential. This will empower young people to progress and succeed."

The strategy also articulates an entitlement for young people. This is:

1. High quality, comprehensive and impartial information, advice and guidance about learning opportunities and career pathways at a time and in a format that enables the learner to make key decisions.
2. Fair and transparent recruitment and admissions processes at points of transition
3. Flexible provision, which combines vocational, occupational and work related learning, with a choice of learning options (including e learning) that challenge, motivate and

stimulate learning at all levels from pre entry to Level 3. Providers should highlight and promote clear progression routes to school, college, training providers and the workplace

4. High quality teaching and learning which raises aspirations, challenges individuals to achieve their best, raises expectations and encourages them to progress to further learning or employment
5. Recognition of a wide range of learner achievements and opportunities so that the learner develops a wide set of skills including citizenship, essential skills, enterprise and employability. Combined with this a recognition that the curriculum offer, should, enrich the learners life, preparing them for continued learning and the world of work.
6. The learner is given the opportunity to participate in the review, evaluation and shaping of their own learning, in the knowledge that they will receive appropriate support and learn at a pace which is suited to their needs and is inclusive.
7. A first class learning environment, equipped to the highest standards.

The Rochdale area is currently running an Increased Flexibility project to develop opportunities for 14-19 year olds across the area. The programme is on its third cohort. In 2003/04, 420 pupils participated in Increased Flexibility project. The 2004/05 offer included the opportunity to gain vocational GCSEs in engineering, health and social care and catering. There were also opportunities for young people to gain experience in motor vehicle, horticulture, computer maintenance, art and design, hairdressing and joinery. The majority of courses were offered by Hopwood Hall College, with others delivered by Rochdale Borough Training Services, Rochdale Training Association and the Kashmir Youth Project.

Post-19 Learning in Rochdale

Post-19 Learning in Rochdale is supplied by Hopwood Hall College and Rochdale MBC's Workbased and Community Learning Service.

Hopwood Hall College offers a wide range of FE provision to adult learners. There is provision for adult learners in all areas of learning at the college. The college also offers English for Speakers for Other languages (ESOL) and basic skills literacy and numeracy courses. The recent Ofsted report on Hopwood Hall college noted that the provision for ESOL was good and it was awarded grade 2. Strengths of ESOL provision were identified as;

- very good teaching
- good achievement in the spoken skills test
- high retention rates in 2003
- good development of and integration of students IT and English language skills
- effective widening participation.

There were seen to be few weaknesses in the ESOL provision at the college, though Ofsted noted that there should be more use of audio visual and ICT resources and better

assessment and recording of progress. In 2003 there were 580 starts on ESOL courses at the college, at levels from entry to level 2. The college offers ESOL courses both in the college and in community centres throughout the borough and provides a range of introductory courses such as cooking, ICT and sewing to encourage students to participate in ESOL courses.

The college also offers literacy and numeracy courses and their provision in this area was graded as satisfactory. The college offers basic skills support for students on other courses, as well as key skills at levels 1 and 2, basic skills provision for JobCentre plus clients and some discrete community basic skills courses. Strengths in the teaching of literacy and numeracy were identified as

- good teaching and learning in key skills level 1
- good staff development which has improved teaching and learning
- effective initial and diagnostic assessment which supports learning.

Inspectors also felt that amongst the weaknesses in this provision was an insufficient use of ILT, insufficient discrete basic skills provision and failure to meet some students' literacy and numeracy learning needs.

The Workbased and Community Learning Service offer a wide range of both FE and adult and community learning for adults in the Rochdale area. The separate component parts of the WBCLS offer a variety of different opportunities for adult learners. LearnLocal provides community based ACL and FE courses in Early Years and Childcare, Essential Skills, Health and Humanities and ICT from entry level to level 2. There are a limited number of level 3 courses provided by LearnLocal in these areas.

The Social Inclusion Business Unit provides a targeted ACL and FE programme designed to increase the confidence, independent living skills, communication skills and employability of adults with multiple disadvantages, including young adults with learning disabilities, carers, adults with physical or sensory impairments, and adults recovering from drug or alcohol misuse.

The Partnership Education Service provides Family Learning, Literacy and Numeracy (FLLN), delivering both ACL and FE opportunities to learners, in particular learners from ethnic minority populations. This provision includes an access and progression framework using arts-based workshops as a first step towards accredited basic skills courses, and a team of outreach workers who engage and support new learners.

The roles of the WBCLS and that of Hopwood Hall are seen to differ, with the WBCLS offering first rung and targeted provision, feeding learners onto courses at Hopwood Hall college.

Higher Education

Hopwood Hall College offers a range of Higher Education at both the Rochdale and Middleton campuses. Courses on offer include Higher National Diplomas, Higher National Certificates and Foundation Year courses. The college also offers the Post Graduate Certificate in Education and professional qualifications such as Association of Accounting Technicians and Institute of Personnel and Development. The college has around 600 learners accessing predominantly part time provision in HE. The college is the only provider of HE in the borough. Other HE providers accessible from the Rochdale area include Oldham College, and the Manchester universities.

AimHigher

Nationally, the Aimhigher Programme began in September 2001 as the Excellence Challenge Programme with over £190m to increase the number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who apply for and enter higher education. Ministers recently announced the extension of the programme until 2006, its expansion into new areas and a further commitment of £130 million for the programme. A key purpose is to improve links between universities, colleges and schools. From 2004 this programme is being brought together with the Aimhigher: Partnerships for Progression initiative to deliver a coherent national outreach programme to be called "Aimhigher" operating in the most disadvantaged areas.

The Rochdale area successfully bid for Excellence Challenge funds in June 2001. The area has established an Aimhigher management group, with representation from the LSC, LEA, schools and Manchester University.

A series of projects have since taken place under the Aimhigher banner. These have included gifted and talented summer schools for Rochdale pupils at Manchester University, Parents Awareness sessions and higher education information sessions. Staying-on tutors have also been appointed and this scheme is in its second year and appreciated by schools, though there are some issues about recruitment and monitoring. The Aimhigher group is also overseeing take up of Education Maintenance Awards in the borough. Take up of EMAs in Rochdale is currently at 71%, significantly higher than the national average. EMAs were introduced in the Rochdale area in 2004.

Entry to Employment

Entry to Employment or E2E provision was developed as an entry to level 1 programme on the workbased learning route, intended to support young people in working towards positive destinations to level 2. The scope of achievement for the young person progressing through E2E is from entry to level 1 and, where appropriate, working towards level 2 through the accumulation of unit achievement.

There are three providers offering E2E provision in Rochdale. Rochdale Borough Training Services deliver the majority of E2E in the borough, with 80 E2E places planned for 2004/05. RBTS' provision is, in part, delivered by the Rochdale youth service. Kashmir Youth Project has 15 learners on a E2E programme and Rathbone Training, which contract Greater Manchester wide, have between 50 and 60 learners on E2E programmes. The Youth Service recently submitted a bid for European Social Fund monies for a pre-E2E programme for young people who would find an Entry to Employment difficult to access. There is currently one pre-E2E programme operating in Rochdale; this is run by Groundwork Oldham and Rochdale and reaches a limited number of learners.

Employer Engagement

Hopwood Hall College and the WBCLS work with businesses and employers in the Rochdale area. All work based learning providers also work with business and employers. Hopwood Hall College operates a number of initiatives to react to employer needs in the borough. Examples of these include the planned Kingsway Scholars programme which aims to prepare local people to take up employment opportunities at the developing

Kingsway Business Park. Another example is work being done by the college with the Groundwork Trust to develop a range of vocational training opportunities in forestry and conservation with the Pennine Edge Forest Trust. The college is also looking at working with Oldham College to develop local labour initiatives through the Housing Renewal Fund.

The college also offers Business2Business training provision, which is bespoke training packages for employers. Companies who have received training from the college under this banner include Littlewoods, Carcraft and Dale joinery.

The WBCLS has four key aims in relation to employer engagement. These are

- Improving the work readiness and employability of learners
- Increasing employer satisfaction
- Increasing the number of employers engaging in workforce development
- Increasing the financial contribution of employers to workforce development and initial training

The WBCLS are looking to expand their current activity and to develop a number of initiatives, including developing customised training packages in areas such as citizenship, community participation, volunteering and preparing for employment. The WBCLS is looking to gain Open College Network accreditation for this training. The WBCLS is also looking to develop a number of initiatives to engage employers in workforce development, in particular working with established partners such as the Schools Improvement Service and Pennine Care.

Connexions Rochdale also makes a significant contribution to the engagement of employers in the training, recruitment and development of young people: key elements of the service include:

- ◆ Advice to employers by Personal Adviser visits or telephone contact to alert them to their rights and responsibilities in relation to recruiting, employing and training young people
- ◆ Encouraging employers to provide training/structured learning. Connexions Rochdale has utilised LSC money to employ a Modern Apprenticeships Personal Adviser
- ◆ Helping/challenging employers to address potential prejudices or stereotypes and not accepting inappropriate vacancies, describing the benefits of an inclusive and representative workforce and promoting good practise in recruitment processes.
- ◆ Computerised matching service to assist employers to recruit the right young people
- ◆ Vacancy service which identifies and publicises education, training, volunteering, leisure, personal development and employment opportunities including Modern Apprenticeships
- ◆ Close liaison and joint activities with Jobcentre Plus
- ◆ Supporting schools and young people with brokering, preparing for and debriefing after work experience placements.
- ◆ Referring employers and young people to work based learning providers

Rochdale Training Association's contribution to employer engagement in the Rochdale area includes;

- Plans to set up a plumbing centre (Sept 05) to meet local demand.
- 50% of apprentice placements last year in previously unengaged companies.
- Expanding provision to include manufacturing, distribution and warehousing and electrical contracting apprenticeships.
- Operation of the employer training pilot (around 200 learners engaged)
- Deliver EDCL in-company at employers in the area
- Delivery of Institute of Leadership and Management courses.
- Delivery of Management NVQ's from Level 2 to Level 5.
- Offering customised business support and training courses for to a range of employers, including SMEs and larger companies such as Argos, Woolworths, Bramalls.
- Operating a Programme Led Apprenticeship for a group of 10 engineers.