Evaluation of Excellence in Cities Primary Pilot 2001-2003

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National Foundation for Educational Research
Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics
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Institute for Fiscal Studies

department for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

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Introduction

The Excellence in Cities (EiC) policy was introduced to secondary schools in Phase 1 Partnerships in September 1999 and was extended into other areas in September 2000 and September 2001 (Phase 2 and Phase 3 Partnerships, respectively). EiC targets major urban areas in England, with the broad aims of regenerating schools in deprived settings by raising educational standards, promoting educational partnerships, and sharing and disseminating good practice. The EiC policy was extended to primary schools in spring 2000. This Primary Pilot is based on a partnership between the local education authority (LEA) and participating schools, and involves Learning Mentors who are school-based employees supporting pupils facing barriers to learning, Learning Support Units (LSUs) for pupils who would benefit from time away from the normal classroom, and provision for gifted and talented pupils. Approximately a third of all the primary schools in Phase 1 areas were included in the Primary Pilot, and all of these schools received funding for the Learning Mentor Strand. Sub-sets of these schools were also involved in the LSU and/or Gifted and Talented Strands.

The EiC Primary Pilot has been evaluated by a consortium, led by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), which also included the Centre for Educational Research (CER) and the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) at the London School of Economics (LSE), and the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). This evaluation covered the period up the the end of the 2002/2003 academic year.

Methodology

The national evaluation of EiC Primary Pilot includes data collected from four main sources:

1. interviews with EiC Partnership coordinators
2. case studies of Primary EiC provision in schools, involving detailed qualitative research, focused on work associated with the three EiC Strands
3. large-scale surveys of headteachers, teachers and pupils
4. relevant secondary data sources, notably the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), linked with pupil level attainment data to form the National Pupil Dataset (NPD).

The information from these sources provides a substantial body of evidence relating to EiC primary schools, and to other schools in similar circumstances

but not in receipt of Primary Pilot funding. By its nature, the Primary Pilot targeted schools with particular characteristics and situated in certain areas. There was, therefore, no specially designed 'control group' for the evaluation – no group of schools that were similar to schools in the Primary Pilot but were deliberately excluded from the initiative for evaluation purposes. Such a control group would have provided a baseline against which changes in EiC schools could be tested. The national evaluation used a variety of strategies to address this issue, including the use of comparison groups of schools in broadly similar circumstances, drawn from EiC Phase 1 and 2 areas, and the use of statistical techniques to increase the validity of these comparisons and to ensure that they were, as far as possible, on a 'like-for-like' basis. In particular, the evaluation sought to take account of a wide range of background and contextual information relating to schools and pupils.

Evaluation aims

The overarching aim of EiC is to generate long-term and sustainable improvement in urban schools. The main aims of the evaluation were to evaluate:

- the effectiveness of the EiC Primary Pilot in:
  - raising standards through improved attainment, motivation and self-esteem
  - reducing the barriers to learning young people face in areas of disadvantage
  - enabling Partnerships to generate solutions to local problems
  - improving public perceptions of schools in urban areas
  - contributing to greater collaboration between schools and to improved pupil transition between schools
- the use of financial resources within the Primary Pilot and its cost-effectiveness.

Impact on pupils

This section focuses on the evidence relating to the impact of the Primary Pilot in raising attainment and reducing barriers to learning.

Attainment

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is related to a range of background and contextual factors, including prior attainment, and it is important that these factors are taken into account in assessing whether the Primary Pilot was related to improved attainment. The results presented here focus on progress from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2.

There was some evidence of a small but statistically significant impact of the Primary Pilot when the progress of pupils attending Primary Pilot pupils was

compared with that of similar pupils attending schools in EiC Phase 2 areas. Multilevel modelling found that, amongst those with average prior attainment, in 2002 pupils in Primary Pilot schools scored about 0.4 of a point lower than pupils in Phase 2 schools, but by 2003 the Primary Pilot pupils had 'caught-up' in that there was no longer a difference in Key Stage 2 performance. Econometric approaches found that the effect was significant only in relation to progress in English, and that it was of the order of 0.04 of a level, or about one month of progress over the course of Key Stage 2 for pupils as a whole. There were no significant differences in progress when Primary Pilot pupils were compared with otherwise similar pupils attending non-Pilot schools in the same areas (Phase 1). This may be partly because many non-Pilot schools, particularly those in Phase 1 areas, adopted elements of the Primary Pilot and/or had access to some EiC resources such as training or enrichment activities.

As well as this overall impact, there was evidence that involvement in the Primary Pilot was related to improved academic outcomes for some specific groups of pupils.

- In 2002, Year 6 pupils who had been referred to a Learning Mentor generally had lower levels of attainment (having taken into account a range of background factors including attainment at the end of Key Stage 1) than otherwise similar pupils. By 2003, the difference between mentored and non-mentored pupils had reduced, suggesting the Primary Pilot was helping to address pupils' barriers to learning.

- Pupils identified as gifted and talented made more progress than otherwise similar pupils who were not part of the gifted and talented cohort but had similar levels of prior attainment.

- Black pupils in Primary Pilot schools made more progress than Black pupils in non-Pilot schools.

- Black pupils generally made less progress than their White peers. However, those who had been referred to a Learning Mentor made more progress during Key Stage 2 than otherwise similar White pupils, both those who had or had not been referred to a Mentor.

Attitudes and behaviour

Motivation and self-esteem are linked to attainment, and there was both qualitative and quantitative evidence that involvement in the Primary Pilot was related to improved attitudes to teachers among pupils. Teachers, headteachers and Partnership Coordinators all referred to improved pupil attitudes and behaviour as a result of the Primary Pilot. Additionally, Primary Pilot pupils with low prior attainment had greater confidence in their academic abilities than non-Pilot pupils with low prior attainment. (However, among pupils with high levels of prior attainment, those in Primary Pilot schools had less confidence than their peers attending non-Pilot schools.)

Barriers to Learning

Many Partnership Coordinators, headteachers and teachers reported that the Primary Pilot was reducing barriers to learning in a number of ways: by increasing opportunity, by providing appropriate support for pupils with emotional, behavioural or social needs, and by improving attitudes, behaviour and attendance. The quantitative work provided evidence to support the qualitative findings.

- Amongst pupils who reported that they had no books at home, those in Primary Pilot schools had more positive attitudes to teachers and to school than did otherwise similar pupils attending non-Pilot schools. Amongst pupils with no computer at home, those identified as gifted and talented made substantially more progress than similar pupils who were not designated as gifted and talented.

- The Gifted and Talented Strand was targeted at the most able pupils in each school. In many cases, the Strand provided these young people with their first opportunity to participate in cultural events such as theatre visits. The Strand was implemented in such a way that it benefited not only benefited those pupils on the gifted and talented register but also lead to improved curriculum planning, greater differentiation, and wider access to enrichment activities.

- The Learning Mentor Strand was reported to: improve behaviour, reduce bullying, improve attendance, and provide support for those with difficulties at home. The Strand also freed teachers to focus on other pupils within the classroom.

- The LSU Strand was reported to have led to improvements in behaviour, self-confidence, and social interaction. As with the Learning Mentor Strand, the LSU Strand led to a reduction in disruptive behaviour within mainstream classes.

Impact on schools and teachers

Teachers and headteachers were positive about the Pilot, and referred to the improvement to their working lives that it had brought about, particularly through the Learning Mentor and LSU Strands with their additional support for pupils. The Gifted and Talented Strand has led to developments in whole school curriculum planning.

Until 2003, teachers in Pilot schools were less positive about public perceptions of their schools than their peers in non-Pilot schools, but this gap had closed by 2004.

Partnerships had considerable flexibility in deciding which schools should receive funding as part of the Primary Pilot, and they had been able to use this flexibility to tailor funding to meet local needs. Reviewing these initial

decisions three years into the Pilot, some Coordinators reflected on whether the schools selected to be in the Primary Pilot were the right ones, and there was a sense that the criteria used had sometime meant that those schools which could have derived the greatest benefit. Some Partnerships also noted a tension between the local focus of the Primary Pilot and the demands of being accountable to the LEA and to DfES.

Over the course of the evaluation, the recruitment and retention of teachers appeared to have become easier, particularly for Primary Pilot schools.

Coordinators noted the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers if the new demands created by the Primary Pilot were to be met. However, teachers in Primary Pilot schools generally reported a smaller range of types of CPD activities than their colleagues in non-Pilot schools.

The Primary Pilot also had an effect in many non-Pilot schools, with elements (specifically Learning Mentors and gifted and talented provision) being implemented in non-Pilot schools. These schools sometimes had access to Primary Pilot training opportunities and other resources from the Primary Pilot, for example through involvement in EiC Action Zones[1] (EiCAZs) or from additional funds from the LEA as compensation for not being included in the Primary Pilot. Such 'overspill' of activities may mean that the impact of the Primary Pilot is underestimated.

Impact at the local area level

EiC led to the creation of local area Partnerships which initially involved secondary schools and the LEA; with the introduction of the Pilot, these Partnerships were extended to include primary schools. Over the course of the evaluation, primary schools took on greater decision-making powers within the Partnerships.

The Partnerships enabled and enhanced opportunities for coordinated training and networks to support the implementation of the Primary Pilot (including collaboration between different Partnerships). Many Partnerships developed strong local links, for example with Sure Start or the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) initiative, which is now within the remit of EiC Partnerships.

The Pilot enabled Partnerships to implement the initiative flexibly in order to meet local needs. Partnerships generally had mechanisms to ensure that stakeholders at all levels – teachers, schools and Partnership Coordinators – were involved in the decision-making process.

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[1] EiCAZs are small groups of schools, including one or two secondary schools and a small number of primary schools, that work together to raise standards in particular areas.

In many Partnerships, monitoring and evaluation was weak. Some lacked the necessary skills and experience, and several Partnership Coordinators commented on the lack of initial guidance as to what should be monitored and evaluated and how.

Cross-cutting issues

Collaboration

Over the course of the evaluation there appears to have been a marked improvement in collaboration between schools and between Partnerships and a reduced focus on competition between schools. Networks within the Primary Pilot had led to an increased sense of cooperation between schools. There was particularly strong collaboration between LSUs and Behaviour and Education Support Teams[2] (BEST). Primary Pilot schools demonstrated a greater interest in working with parents and broadening their provision to the local community than did schools not involved in the policy.

Transition

The Primary Pilot did not appear to be having a specific impact on the transition process, and the need for improved cross-phase communication regarding the Primary Pilot was highlighted – for example, which pupils had been identified as gifted and talented. However, more generally cross-phase working did appear to have improved as a result of the Primary Pilot and this should lead to improvements in the transition process in the future.

Resourcing the Primary Pilot

The way in which resources had been used varied between Partnerships as allocation formulas had been developed at the local level. It was felt that initial levels of funding had not been maintained with inflation and there was concern about future funding of the initiative. In assessing the cost-effectiveness of the Primary Pilot, some caution is needed both because the impact was not the same for all types of outcome or for all groups of pupils, and because it is necessary to make some strong assumptions in order to estimate the economic return on the investment. Given this, it appears that, because of the relatively low cost per pupil, the small overall impact on attainment meant that the initiative was cost-effective.

The Strands

The Learning Mentor Strand

Schools employed an average of about one full-time and one part-time Learning Mentor. Learning Mentors tended to come from a learning support background. Over the course of the evaluation, there was growing concern about the retention of Learning Mentors and the lack of career progression

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[2] Multi-agency teams that work closely with schools to provide support in addressing the needs of children with emotional and behavioural problems.

available. In terms of professional development, the national Learning Mentor training was said to have been extremely useful, and Learning Mentors were usually involved in networks in which expertise was shared.

The Learning Mentor Strand had been implemented in a flexible way, and varied according to the needs of each school. In general, the work of Learning Mentors was targeted at those pupils with the greatest barriers to learning, and Learning Mentors provided a combination of behavioural, pastoral and academic support.

Learning Mentors had integrated well into schools and worked with teachers, parents, and other school groups such as gifted and talented pupils or parent and toddler groups.

Non-Pilot schools were increasingly employing Learning Mentors, suggesting a growing awareness of a positive impact of such staff.

The Gifted and Talented Strand

Almost all schools involved in the Gifted and Talented Strand had appointed a Responsible Teacher and an average of just over half a day a week was allocated for their work on the Strand. There was usually good collaboration between primary Responsible Teachers, but there was scope for improved collaboration with those in secondary schools.

Provision for gifted and talented pupils had become embedded in teaching and learning and was not seen as simply 'bolt-on' activities. The Gifted and Talented Strand was seen as being of benefit not only to pupils on the gifted and talented register but to the whole school through a greater emphasis on curriculum planning and the monitoring of the progress of individual students.

The LSU Strand

LSUs had experiences some difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff, primarily due to lack of job security and a lack of suitable candidates. The reduction in support staff within LSUs over the evaluation period seems to have been related to concerns over funding.

The pupils that attended LSUs represented a variety of year groups, ability levels, ethnicities and educational needs. Referral was usually for behavioural and/or academic reasons, and a range of staff were involved in deciding referrals. Exit and entry criteria were clear and there was no evidence that LSUs were used as a 'dumping ground'. Monitoring systems were in place but there was scope for greater development of evaluation processes.

Links between Strands

There was limited evidence of interaction between the Strands of the EiC Primary Pilot.[3] The Learning Mentor Strand appeared to have been the main link between the Strands, i.e. links between the Learning Mentor and LSU Strands, and also links between the Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented Strands.

Conclusions and implications

Primary Pilot resources have been used to bring about visible changes in primary schools, most notably by bringing in new types of pupil support in the form of Learning Mentors and LSUs, and in providing greater challenge to, and opportunities for, the most able pupils in primary schools. Schools have also seen new approaches to curriculum planning. For Partnerships, there have been changes such as the creation of a more cooperative and collaborative approach to school improvement. There was also evidence of:

- improved attainment for pupils attending Pilot schools compared with similar pupils in schools in EiC Phase 2 areas

- a widespread expectation that the Pilot would bring about better academic results and improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

All three of the Strands of the Pilot – Learning Mentors, LSUs and the gifted and talented programme – were seen by schools as important developments which they would wish to see as part of mainstream provision.

Collaboration

The Primary Pilot has led to increased collaboration within Partnerships, with external agencies, with other initiatives and with the local community. The creation of EiC Partnerships appears to have encouraged schools to rethink how they relate to others and, instead of focussing on competition, they have examined how to maximise the impact of resources, training and experience for all those involved.

Flexibility

One of the successes of the initiative was the way in which it had be designed to be implemented in a flexible manner in order to meet local needs. Over time, Partnerships have gained a greater understanding of how EiC resources and approaches could be used to best meet their needs.

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[3] While all Pilot schools received funding for the Learning Mentor Strand, only a minority received resources for the Gifted and Talented and/or LSU Strands.

Monitoring and evaluation

Partnerships did not always have the capacity to put robust systems for monitoring and evaluation in place. The Primary Pilot would have benefited from greater clarity and guidance in the area of monitoring and evaluation. Over time both schools and Partnerships became more aware of the need for, and more capable of undertaking, effective monitoring and evaluation. But the increasing flexibility in the ways in which the Pilot was implemented added to the challenges.

Non-Pilot schools

That some primary schools have been excluded from the Primary Pilot has been a cause of some concern and tension within Partnerships. The desire of non-Pilot schools to be involved in the Primary Pilot and, in many cases, to emulate EiC approaches such as Learning Mentors or gifted and talented provision, is evidence in itself of the perceived beneficial impact of the initiative amongst schools. As mentioned above, this 'overspill' may lead to an underestimate of the impact of the Primary Pilot, particularly in relation to quantitative measures of attainment.

Funding concerns

There was continuing concern about future funding among Partnership Coordinators and schools, who were not always aware of whether funding would continue and at what level. For the funding spent on initiatives to have the greatest impact, it is important that any barriers to implementation are reduced, and late notification about funding streams was a major concern to Partnerships.[4]

Primary EiC and the New Relationship with Schools

The policy context in which the Primary Pilot operates is changing, not least through the New Relationship with Schools and the Primary National Strategy. There are two broad themes which are common to both the New Relationship and the Primary Strategy, and these reflect some of the major areas of strength of the Primary Pilot: the concepts of innovation, ownership and autonomy, and a focus on collaboration and partnership. The continuation and expansion of EiC in primary schools therefore fits well within this new policy context, and schools will be able to learn from the Primary Pilot and build on what they have already achieved.

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[4]   Information on future funding of EiC in primary schools was issued in September 2004, after the final stages of data collection in relation to the evaluation.

1.   The changing policy context[5]

Excellence in Cities (EiC) is a major government policy aimed at raising standards in urban schools. It was launched by David Blunkett and Tony Blair in March 1999 with these words:

> *Successive Governments have failed to resolve the educational problems of the major cities. Standards have been too low for too long. Raising standards in order to lift opportunities for our children is the key priority for the Government. It is clear that schools in our inner cities demand urgent attention.* (DfEE, 1999a)

The overall vision was ambitious:

> *Our **aim** is to drive up standards in our schools in the major cities higher and faster; to match the standards of excellence found in our best schools. The **output** must be that city parents and city children expect and gain as much from their schools as their counterparts anywhere else in the country. A vision of what city education can become is what Excellence in Cities is all about. Excellence must be the norm.* (DfEE, 1999b)

EiC adopted an innovative mode of delivery, and no overall bidding process was involved. The Government identified the areas to be included and the strategies that should be employed, and the only condition was that there should be an approved delivery plan. Schools themselves, in partnership with their local authorities and each other, were responsible for delivery and local targeting of the programme in their areas.

At the outset, EiC included 25 local authorities in six major conurbations of England: Sheffield/Rotherham, Manchester/Salford, Leeds/Bradford, inner London, Liverpool/Knowsley, and Birmingham (the Phase 1 areas). In the period following the announcement of EiC in spring 1999, the secondary schools in these areas, working with their local education authorities (LEAs) drew up a Partnership plan and, following agreement with DfES, money was released to Partnerships from September of that year.

A year later, the Primary Pilot was launched in the Phase 1 areas, at the same time as the secondary programme was being extended to more local authorities (Phase 2). Unlike the secondary programme, which included all secondary schools within the LEA, the funding for the Primary Pilot was such that about a third of primary schools would receive additional resources.

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[5]   The evaluators would like to thank DfES for their assistance in writing this section of the report.

There were three central elements within the Primary Pilot:

- programmes to support gifted and talented children, defined as five to ten per cent of each school's pupil cohort

- provision of Learning Mentors, to provide advice, access to services and support to students with barriers to learning

- the establishment of Learning Support Units (LSUs), to provide specific support for pupils with barriers to learning, to aid them in a return to normal schooling as quickly as possible.

1.1 Changes within the programme

Since the launch of EiC in primary and secondary schools, there have been various changes in the programme and in the context in which the programme operates.

1.1.1 The programme package

Since the programme started, some elements of EiC have become part of mainstream provision outside of EiC areas. Gifted and talented policy now has a national presence within personalised learning. Learning Mentors and LSUs are increasingly found in primary schools within Phase 1 areas which were not originally included within the Primary Pilot (sometimes at least partly funded through EiC) as well as in schools in other areas, including those outside the geographical boundaries of EiC.

The programme has also expanded beyond the original key Strands to include Behaviour Improvement Plans (BIPs). These were introduced in 2002 with aims that were complementary to EiC's initial introduction of Learning Mentors and LSUs. EiC Partnerships are responsible for the strategic management of BIPs within the Partnership area so that resources can be effectively matched to local need. The Plans are delivered through small groups of schools – primary and secondary – and aim to:

- reduce both serious and low-level behavioural problems

- reduce exclusions

- provide high quality alternative provision for those who are excluded

- reduce truancy, tackle the root causes and improve attendance levels

- ensure effective mechanisms are in place for identifying and re-engaging children going missing from school

- improve perceptions of behaviour and attendance amongst teachers, parents and the community at large.

1.1.2 Monitoring the Primary Pilot

Monitoring has moved from internal DfES annual reviews of Partnership progress, through annual reviews fully involving EiC Coordinators (and their teams and representative Partnership headteachers if they so wished), to the current system of Partnership self-review and peer-review.

This latter approach is more developmental: it exposes Partnerships to good practice in other areas, emphasises evidence and outcomes, and encourages constructive challenge. The system was piloted across five partnerships in the North East in 2003 and now involves all whole authority Partnerships and Excellence Clusters. Separate arrangements apply in relation to the monitoring of BIP plans.

1.2 National educational policy changes

Further changes in national policy are now being developed by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). These changes will have a greater impact on EiC than the changes within the EiC programme itself. The findings of the evaluation described in this report will, therefore, be considered in a very different context from that anticipated when the programme and its evaluation began. These national policy changes were set in motion on 8 January 2004, at the North of England Education Conference. There David Miliband, Minister of State, announced a new relationship with schools:

> *I want to forge a new relationship with schools in which DfES and LEAs' support for secondary schools is more closely integrated, draws on the proven expertise of those in the field, including serving heads and leading schools, and offers a substantial reduction in burdensome bidding and reporting requirements.* (Miliband, 2004)

The New Relationship will focus on simplifying targets and making them responsive to local needs, simplification and rationalisation of funding support for school improvement, and an emphasis on self-evaluation.

The development of this New Relationship is still being worked through and is being trialled in selected authorities, but DfES has already published its Five Year Strategy (2004a), which fleshes out some of the thinking behind the North of England speech.

Part of the current thinking is about simplifying funding and delivering it to individual schools so that they can take control of their own development. These changes will clearly have an impact on EiC. It is anticipated that schools will continue to receive, overall, the levels of funding currently available for EiC purposes – but it will be for schools themselves (subject only

to their discussions with the School Improvement Partner[6]) to decide how far they will work collaboratively and how much funding to contribute to wider partnerships.

The Government is also proposing the development of Foundation Partnerships, which will provide a new framework 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. It is likely that many EiC Partnerships and Clusters will see this kind of partnership as a natural successor to the more uniform EiC Partnership model. DfES is working with EiC Partnerships to help them make the transition from a 'dependancy model' of EiC Partnership to the more autonomous 'partnership model' which Foundation Partnerships offer. The challenge is to preserve the best of EiC Partnership working and strategies in a freer context where schools develop collaborative working from the ground up and take ownership of their own Partnership goals and priorities.

In summer 2001, the DfES commissioned a consortium led by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and including the London School of Economics (LSE) and the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) to conduct an evaluation of the Primary Pilot, to cover the period from July 2001 to July 2003.

Some of the changes noted above fall outside the remit of this evaluation, but it is hoped that this study of the Primary Pilot in its formative stages will contribute to identifying what is most important in the success of EiC so that its benefits are not lost as the New Relationship with schools develops.

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[6] The intention is that each school will have a 'single conversation' each year, led by a 'school improvement partner' (SIP). SIPs will usually be experienced serving or recent headteachers.

2. The national evaluation of the Excellence in Cities Primary Pilot

The national evaluation of EiC Primary Pilot includes data collected from four main sources:

- interviews with EiC Partnership coordinators

- case studies of Primary EiC provision in schools, involving detailed qualitative research focused on work associated with the three EiC Strands (Learning Mentors, LSUs and provision for gifted and talented pupils)

- large-scale surveys of headteachers, teachers and pupils

- relevant secondary data sources, notably the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), linked with pupil attainment data to create the National Pupil Dataset (NPD).

2.1 The evaluation approach

Stoney *et al.* (2002) sets out a model of the levels of impact which we might expect to observe as the EiC policy develops and matures in schools. These are:

- **first-level impacts** that change inputs (for example infrastructure, staffing and material resources, staff expertise and skills) and institutional processes (such as Partnership operations, approaches to curriculum planning, and the development of strategies for providing support for all pupils)

- **second-level impacts**, where the first level changes begin to make their presence felt on the key players within the main initiative institutions and to bring about change in their everyday experiences

- **third-level impacts**, where changes begin to have measurable impact on the outcomes for the target population(s) of schools, teachers, pupils, employers and the community

- **fourth-level impacts** associated with embedded change to infrastructure, systems and processes and with more widespread transference of practices and ideas to institutions outside the initiative.

The national evaluation was designed to gather evidence relating to these levels of impact within a structure determined by the multidimensional nature of the EiC Primary Pilot. This structure had to ensure that the evaluation:

- would be capable of providing robust findings and yet flexible enough to allow for the likelihood that the policy would evolve during the period of the evaluation, in response both to growing understanding among stakeholders of how best to achieve its aims and to changes in the wider policy context

- would capture both quantifiable changes, for example in pupils' attainment, and more qualitative changes, for example in attitudes and perceptions

- would lead to a greater understanding of the processes bringing about these changes and of the extent to which these changes were attributable to the Primary Pilot.

These criteria led to a multi-faceted approach to the evaluation, encompassing analysis of data at a national level, to obtain a broad overall picture of EiC: a series of linked surveys of pupils, teachers and schools involved in the Primary Pilot (and of similar schools not involved); and in-depth qualitative studies.

By its nature, the Primary Pilot targets schools with particular characteristics and situated in certain areas. There was, therefore, no specially designed 'control group' for the evaluation – no group of schools that were similar to schools in the Primary Pilot but were deliberately excluded from the initiative for evaluation purposes. Such a control group would have provided a baseline against which changes in EiC schools could be tested. The national evaluation uses a variety of strategies to address this issue, including the use of comparison groups of schools in broadly similar circumstances, drawn from EiC Phase 1 and 2 areas, and the use of statistical techniques to increase the validity of these comparisons and to ensure that they are, as far as possible, on a 'like-for-like' basis. In particular, the evaluation seeks to take account of a wide range of background and contextual information relating to schools and pupils. The best single predictor of a pupil's achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is that pupil's performance at the end of Key Stage 1 and, wherever possible and because of this, the analysis took prior attainment into account.

2.2 The evaluation framework

The overarching aim of EiC is to generate long-term and sustainable improvement in urban schools. Table 2.1 sets out the key aims of the evaluation of the Primary Pilot and the main research questions which flow from these aims.

Table 2.1   The evaluation of the EiC Primary Pilot

EVALUATION AIMS	KEY ISSUES/QUESTIONS
To assess the effectiveness of the EiC Primary Pilot in:	
Raising standards through improved attainment, motivation and self-esteem	What is the impact of EiC on pupils in terms of their progress, attainment, attitudes, motivation, and self-esteem? What are the characteristics associated with the greatest impact?
Reducing the barriers to learning faced by young people in areas of disadvantage	What are the main barriers to learning and what is their relationship with progress and achievement? What evidence is there that EiC is reducing barriers? What strategies are effective in reducing barriers?
Enabling Partnerships to generate solutions to local problems	What is the nature of an EiC Partnership? How does the Partnership contribute to school improvement at school and Partnership level? How does EiC interact with other local and national policies and programmes?
To evaluate the use of financial resources and their cost-effectiveness	
Use of resources	How have resources been allocated between and within schools? To what extent, and why, have schools used their own resources to supplement EiC funding? Have EiC resources funded existing activity within schools and thereby released money for other activities?
The cost-benefit of the Primary Pilot	What is the relationship between EiC expenditure and outcomes? How could expenditure be targeted to maximise impact?
To evaluate the Strands of the Primary Pilot	
Learning Mentors Learning Support Units Gifted and Talented	How have Partnerships and schools implemented the Strands? Have the Strands been successful in removing barriers to learning and enabling pupils' needs to be met? What contribution have the Strands made to improving pupils' outcomes (attainment, attitudes, etc.)? What have been the main challenges in implementing the Strand (resources, staffing, sustainability, etc)?
The Strands in combination	To what extent have the Strands worked together to support individual pupils (e.g. Learning Mentor support for gifted and talented pupils, Learning Mentors and LSUs working together to provide a continuum of support)? What are the advantages to pupils and schools of being resourced for more than one Strand? Which combinations of Strands provide the greatest impact?

EVALUATION AIMS	KEY ISSUES/QUESTIONS
To enhance public perception of schools in urban areas	How are urban schools perceived by parents and the wider public?
Improving transition to and from primary schools	Is there evidence that EiC has changed processes, structures and provision for transition? Is there evidence that EiC is improving transition in terms of pupils' attitudes and achievement? How does the Partnership contribute to improved transition from primary to secondary school?
Encouraging collaboration	Is EiC contributing to enhanced partnership working between schools, and between schools and other agencies? What is the nature and extent of these partnerships and are they sustainable? What are the attitudes and experiences of pupils and teachers in relation to collaboration with other schools?

2.3 Data sources and analytical methods

The evaluation design included a number of key elements:

- In-depth interviews with the person within each Partnership with overall responsibility for the Primary Pilot (conducted in autumn 2001, autumn 2002 and autumn 2003)

- Surveys of headteachers and teachers in primary schools in direct receipt of EiC funding, as well as samples of primary schools not receiving funding within EiC Phase 1 and Phase 2 Partnerships (spring 2002, 2003 and 2004)

- Surveys of Year 5 pupils (spring 2002) and Year 6 pupils (spring 2003) in a sub-set of these schools

- Pupil background data relating to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils (spring 2002) and Year 6 pupils (spring 2003) to gather information in relation to pupils' involvement in the Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentor and LSU Strands. Some of the Year 6 pupils for whom data was collected in spring 2002 also completed questionnaires when they were in Year 7, as part of the concurrent evaluation of EiC in secondary schools.

The information from these sources provides a substantial body of evidence relating to EiC primary schools, and to other schools in similar circumstances but not in receipt of Primary Pilot funding. Further information relating to the individual Strands of EiC and to two important cross-cutting themes, those of improving transition and of strengthening inter-agency working, were gathered through in-depth case studies in selected schools.

The evaluation consortium has also been able to make use of appropriate versions of the NPD compiled by DfES. This is a comprehensive database including all pupils in maintained schools in England. For each pupil, it links information relating to the pupil and his or her background (gathered through the Pupil Level Annual School Census, PLASC), the school attended and the pupil's achievements at the end of each Key Stage.[7]

Information from the pupil, teacher and school surveys, together with the pupil background data and information relating to school characteristics such as size, type and overall level of achievement, was compiled to build up a rich dataset for exploring the delivery and impact of the Primary Pilot. This exploration has taken a number of forms, including descriptive statistics presenting and comparing quantitative information, sophisticated statistical modelling techniques, and the synthesis of qualitative information.

2.4 The strength of the evidence base

Aspects of the nature of the Primary Pilot posed considerable challenges for the evaluators: these included: the relatively small additional resources going to each of a large number of schools, the considerable local flexibility in the way resources were distributed and utilised, and the context of evolving national priorities and policies.

The size and scope of the available datasets provides a good basis for a robust evaluation of the Primary Pilot, both in relation to pupils' progress and attainment, and also in relation to pupils' own views of themselves and of their schools and teachers. The evidence is particularly strong for EiC as a whole and for the Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented Strands. The small numbers of pupils involved in the LSU Strand, the way in which the Strand has evolved to meet local needs, and the variety of barriers to learning faced by pupils attending the Units, mean that quantitative evidence in relation to this Strand is more limited. Here, as elsewhere, the evidence from talking to Partnership Coordinators, to school staff and to relevant pupils both strengthens and illuminates the quantitative findings.

As mentioned in Section 2.3, comparisons are made between schools involved in the Primary Pilot and schools in similar circumstances that are not directly receiving funding. The comparison schools came from Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas only, as these areas are most similar in terms of the characteristics and demographics of the schools. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with each of the comparison groups. Phase 1 non-Pilot schools are, in many ways more directly comparable with Pilot schools, for example in terms of proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, but they are

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[7]   For pupils in Year 6, this means that the database includes pupils' achievements at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2.

also more likely to be subject to indirect impacts of the Pilot (both positive and negative) than schools in Phase 2 areas. In particular, Phase 1 non-Pilot schools may have had access to Primary Pilot training events, enrichment activities and in some cases additional or 'compensatory' funding from the LEA. This means that comparisons may underestimate the impact of the Primary Pilot. The results reported here use the most appropriate comparison group(s), depending on the nature of the analysis.

Some limitations must, however, be acknowledged.

- The Primary Pilot was launched in autumn 2000, and so it was not until summer 2004 that any pupils completed Year 6 having spent their whole Key Stage 2 experience in a school involved in EiC. For the pupils included in this evaluation, a significant part of their Key Stage 2 experience pre-dates EiC. It is possible, therefore, that any observed differences in progress during Key Stage 2 between, for example, pupils attending EiC schools and those attending non-EiC schools reflect differing experiences in the early part of the Key Stage, rather than an effect associated with EiC. However, the range of contextual and background factors included in the major statistical analyses, and the congruence between the findings in relation to pupil attainment using a variety of analytical techniques, suggest that these findings are robust in relation to the Primary Pilot in its first few years of implementation.

- The timeframe of the evaluation means that evidence in relation to the embedding of elements of the Primary Pilot in schools and LEAs (the fourth-level impacts described earlier) is relatively limited. The full extent of impacts at this level will become apparent over the next few years.

- Participation in the evaluation was voluntary, and those schools in the most challenging circumstances were slightly less likely to participate than those facing fewer difficulties. Also, although schools were asked to ensure that as many of the relevant pupils as possible completed a questionnaire; pupils with high levels of absence may be under-represented in the evaluation, as may more mobile pupils.

- The changing policy context within which schools operate has been described in Section 1. These changes mean that it may not always be possible to disaggregate the effects of differing policies and initiatives, or to address issues which developed as the Primary Pilot evolved, for example in relation to behaviour and attendance.

- The results reported here relate to a national evaluation of the EiC Primary Pilot, and may not always capture local strengths and weaknesses.

Despite these limitations, the evidence presented here contributes to an understanding of what works, in relation to the Primary Pilot, and to its impact in terms of the four levels described in Section 2.1.

EiC is an initiative that seeks to achieve its overall aims by bringing about change at all levels: for pupils, teachers, schools and Partnerships. Section 3 of this report therefore summarises the evidence of impact for each of these levels in relation to the overall evaluation aims set out above. Section 4 looks in more detail at the Strands of the Primary Pilot and focuses in particular on the delivery and implementation of these within schools and Partnerships. Section 5 draws together the evidence from the evaluation to identify the main conclusions from the evaluation and also to explore how Primary EiC might interact with the new policy context.

3. Overall impacts

3.1 Impacts on pupils

This section explores the main impacts of the Primary Pilot on pupils. As discussed in Section 2, the main evaluation aim in relation to pupils was to explore whether EiC led to a rise in standards, through improved attainment, motivation and self-esteem, and also to investigate whether EiC reduced the barriers to learning faced by young people in areas of disadvantage.

3.1.1 The context of the Primary Pilot

The Primary Pilot sought to improve the attainment of pupils in schools in deprived areas. There is considerable evidence that, overall, pupils' attainment and attitudes at a given stage in their development are linked not only to prior attainment but also to background factors such as ethnicity, gender and home circumstances (see, for example, West and Pennell, 2003). When seeking to compare pupils in Primary Pilot schools with those in other schools, operating in diverse circumstances, these differences in pupil characteristics need to be considered.

Consider, for example, the sample of pupils taking part in the Year 6 survey in spring 2003. These pupils were drawn from Primary Pilot schools as well as from other schools in EiC Phase 1 areas and from Phase 2 areas. Pupils' responses to the survey were matched with data from the National Pupil Dataset (NPD) and with information provided on pupil data forms (PDFs) completed by schools. Table 3.1 summarises the background characteristics of the pupils in this matched sample.

The main differences between the Primary Pilot and non-Pilot pupils were in relation to ethnicity, fluency in English, and entitlement to free school meals (FSM). Primary Pilot schools had higher proportions of pupils with English as an additional language and who were eligible for free school meals than non-Pilot schools. Primary Pilot schools also had higher proportions of pupils from non-White backgrounds than non-Pilot schools. As noted above, some differences in performance and attitudes between these groups may be due to these background factors rather than to involvement in EiC. Because of this, these contextual and background factors were taken into account in the detailed statistical modelling. For the non-modelled work, such as the descriptive statistics presented in relation to the pupil, teacher and school questionnaires, the non-Pilot results were weighted so that the characteristics and demographics of the non-Pilot schools should better reflect those of

Primary Pilot schools. (Details of the characteristics of the schools can be found in the technical appendices).

Table 3.1   The background characteristics of pupils

		Primary Pilot pupils %	Non-Pilot Pupils %
Sex	Male	50	50
	Female	50	50
Ethnicity	White	58	81
	Asian	18	7
	Black	14	5
	Other	8	4
	Unknown	2	2
English as an additional language	English first language	69	89
	Fluent in English as an additional language	19	8
	Becoming confident in English as an additional language	9	3
	New to/becoming familiar with English	3	1
Eligibility for free school meals	Not eligible	62	76
	Eligible	38	24
Special Educational Needs	No identified special needs	73	80
	School action/plus	24	18
	Statement/assessment	3	2
Total number of pupils		**8,191**	**8,371**

Source: EiC Year 6 pupil survey, NPD, PDFs (spring 2003)
Primary Pilot pupils: schools in EiC Phase 1 areas and in receipt of EiC resources
Non- Pilot pupils: schools in EiC Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas but not in receipt of EiC resources

Table 3.2 shows the average Key Stage 2 levels achieved by pupils completing Key Stage 2 in 2002 and 2003.[8]

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8   Most of the results reported here focus on the average levels achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The economic evaluation also considers the proportions of pupils achieving specific thresholds. The pattern of findings was generally similar for English, Mathematics and Science: differences are noted where these occur. Table 3.2 reports average levels in terms of the point score, which is equal to 6 times the average level plus 3. This is the conversion system used by QCA.

Table 3.2   Key Stage 2 attainment in EiC areas (2002 and 2003)

| | **2002** | | **2003** | |
	Mean	**N**	**Mean**	**N**
EiC Primary Pilot	26.19	40,200	26.22	40,136
Phase 1 Non-Pilot	27.37	20,445	27.29	19,982
Phase 2	27.02	20,426	26.95	20,184
Total	**26.69**	**81,071**	**26.67**	**80,302**

Average level achieved (point score)
Source: NPD 2002/2003

The difference in performance between Primary Pilot and Phase 1 non-Pilot pupils reduced from 1.18 points, or just over one sixth of a level, to 1.07 points between 2002 and 2003. Before considering whether this is evidence of an impact of the Primary Pilot, it is important to consider the prior attainment of these pupils. The performance of the same pupils when they completed Key Stage 1 (in 1998 and 1999) is summarised in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3   Key Stage 1 attainment in EiC areas (1998 and 1999)

| | **1998** | | **1999** | |
	Mean	**N**	**Mean**	**N**
EiC Primary Pilot	13.90	40,200	14.11	40,136
Phase 1 Non-Pilot	14.99	20,445	15.12	19,982
Phase 2	14.43	20,426	14.79	20,184
Total	**14.31**	**81,071**	**14.53**	**80,302**

Average level achieved (point score)
Source: NPD 2002/2003

It can be seen that the difference in Key Stage 1 scores between EiC and non-Pilot pupils was less for the second of these cohorts of pupils (those who took their Key Stage 2 tests in 2003) than for the first. At least part of the improved attainment of Key Stage 2 pupils in Primary Pilot areas in 2003 may, therefore, be as a result of improved attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.

3.1.2 Pupils' academic progress

This section summarises the key findings related to the attainment of Primary Pilot pupils. This draws on detailed analysis of performance data, as well as the views and perceptions of Partnership Coordinators, school senior managers, and teachers.

Has the Primary Pilot had an impact on pupils' levels of achievement?

As noted above, consideration of changes in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 alone does not provide a complete picture of the possible impact of the Primary Pilot on attainment, and it is necessary to consider the progress made

by pupils during Key Stage 2: the fundamental question is whether pupils in Primary Pilot schools made greater progress than otherwise similar pupils attending other schools in EiC areas.[9] (For simplicity, we refer to these as non-Pilot pupils and non-Pilot schools, although some of the latter may have been directly or indirectly involved in EiC activities.)

First, we consider the results obtained using multilevel modelling techniques[10] for pupils from the sample of schools completing surveys in 2002 and/or 2003. The main area of change in the performance of schools in our sample was in relation to performance in comparison with Phase 2 non-Pilot schools. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show the difference in attainment between pupils in Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools in 2002 and 2003.

Figure 3.1   2002 Key Stage 2 performance of pupils in Pilot and non-Pilot schools (point score)
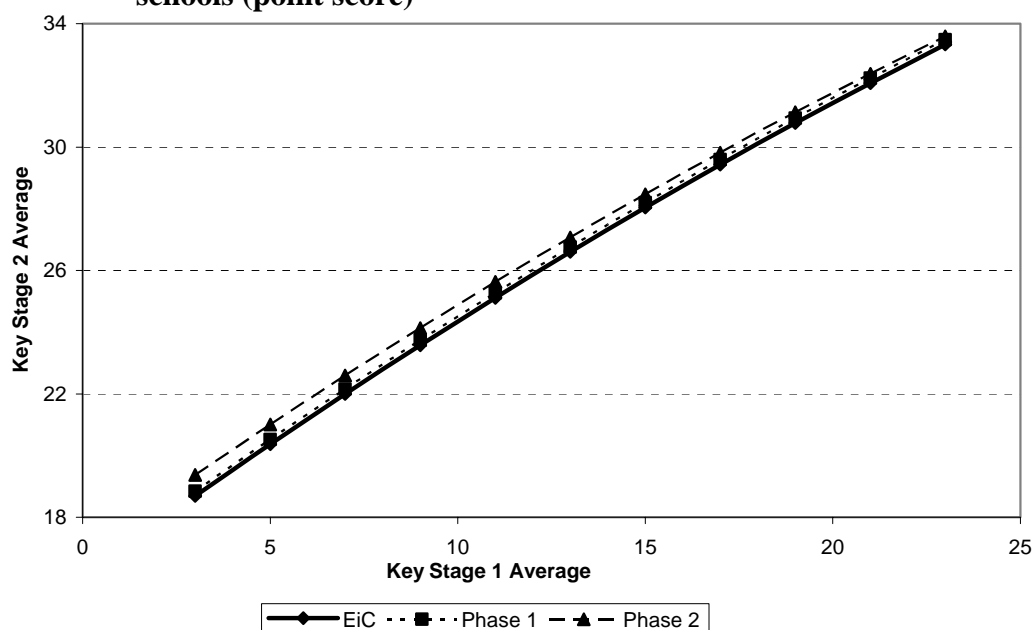

Figure 3.1 shows that, for pupils completing Key Stage 2 in 2002, those in Pilot schools were making slightly less progress than similar pupils in Phase 2 non-Pilot schools: this is shown by the separation between the lines for Primary Pilot pupils and for Phase 2 pupils. For pupils with average levels of attainment, those in Pilot schools scored about 0.4 of a point lower than similar pupils in Phase 2 non-Pilot schools. The difference was most marked for pupils with low levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, where it was equivalent to about 0.6 of a score point (between two and three months of progress).

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9   The available prior attainment measures for pupils are their end of Key Stage 1 assessments, but the Primary Pilot was implemented while pupils were already part way through Key Stage 2. Some of the differences attributed to the Primary Pilot may, therefore, relate to changes in Primary Pilot areas which pre-date its implementation.

10   For a description of this technique, see the Technical Annex. The technique allows us to control for a wide range of background and contextual factors.

Figure 3.2   2003 Key Stage 2 performance of pupils in Pilot and non-Pilot schools
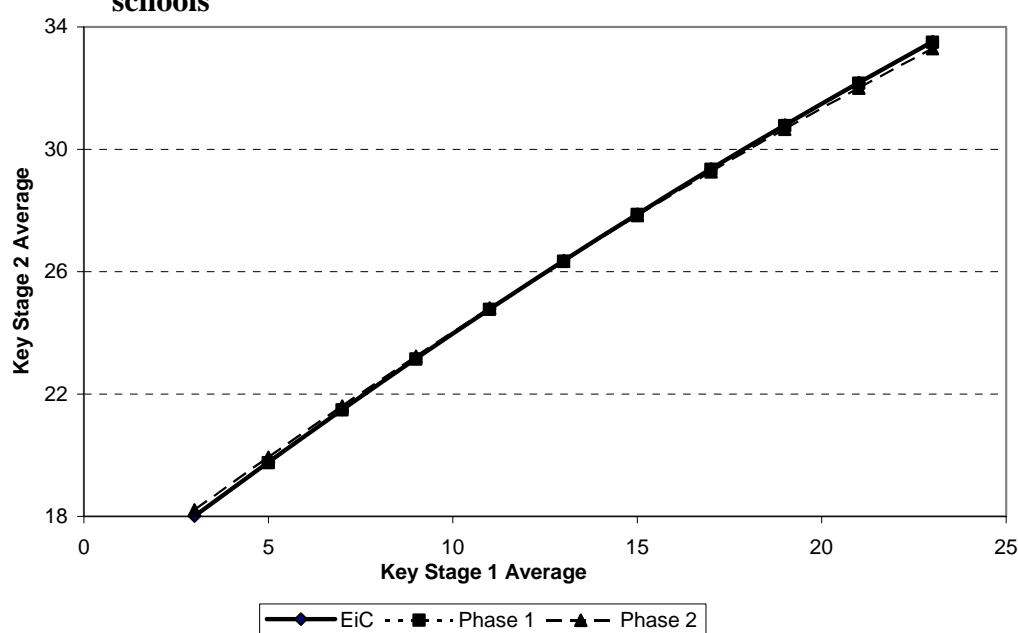

Figure 3.2 shows similar information for pupils completing Key Stage 2 in 2003. In this case, the results for the three groups of pupils (Pilot, Phase 1 non-Pilot, and Phase 2 schools) are almost indistinguishable. For those with average prior attainment, there was no difference in the Key Stage 2 point scores for the three groups of pupil. This indicates that the progress gap between pupils in Pilot schools and those in Phase 2 schools that existed in 2002 was not evident in 2003.

This could be seen as a very positive result for the EiC Primary Pilot. The schools appear to have 'caught up' with other similar schools in terms of pupil progress (measured by average end of Key Stage assessment). There was, however, no measurable difference in pupils' progress when comparing Pilot and non-Pilot Phase 1 schools. One explanation is that many non-Pilot schools in Phase 1 areas may have became indirectly involved in EiC activities despite the fact that they were not receiving EiC funding and therefore have benefited from the same changes. As noted earlier, the Primary Pilot was launched after pupils completing Key Stage 2 in 2002 and 2003 had started on this Key Stage, and some differences may be attributable to other changes in the pupils' Key Stage 2 experience. For example, other policies such as the literacy and numeracy strategies have coincided with EiC, and these may have had a greater effect in more deprived schools.

In addition to multilevel modelling, two econometric techniques ('difference-in-differences' and propensity score matching[11]) have been used to explore the relationship between involvement in the Primary Pilot and attainment at the

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[11]   See the Technical Annex for a brief description of these techniques. The analyses used all pupils in Primary Pilot schools and compared their progress with that of all pupils in Phase 2 areas.

end of Key Stage 2, by comparing the attainment of pupils in Pilot schools with that of pupils in Phase 2 schools. The difference-in-difference approach compares the 2000 and 2003 cohorts in these schools (i.e. before the implementation of the Primary Pilot and after three years). The propensity score matching considers those pupils completing Key Stage 2 in 2003, and controls for a wide range of background and contextual factors. Overall, these techniques and the multilevel modelling approach produced very similar results, indicating the robustness of the findings. The propensity score matching found no increase in attainment. Whilst the difference-in-differences approach found a small increase in attainment (in particular for boys) this was found to be significant only for English (but not for Mathematics or Science). The effect for English was of the order of 0.04 of a level, or about a month of progress over the course of Key Stage 2.

For the sample of pupils included in the multilevel modelling, it was possible to identify which pupils had been identified as gifted and talented, which had been referred to a Learning Mentor, and which had attended a Learning Support Unit. It was therefore possible to explore the relationship between pupils' involvement in these Strands and their progress during Key Stage 3.

- There was some evidence that the **Learning Mentor Strand** was associated with pupils' progress and attainment. Pupils who were referred to a Learning Mentor generally made less progress during Key Stage 2 than other pupils in Primary Pilot schools (by 0.8 of a point), but by 2003 this gap had reduced slightly (to 0.2 of a point): this may suggest that the Strand was leading to a reduction in differences in attainment. Many pupils referred to a Learning Mentor had relatively low levels of attainment at Key Stage 1. However, there was evidence that pupils with relatively high levels of attainment at age 7 and who were referred to a Learning Mentor may have benefited more than those with lower levels of prior attainment; the difference in progress between Learning Mentor pupils and non-Learning Mentor pupils with the same level of prior attainment was 0.8 of a point for those with low prior attainment, but only 0.4 amongst those with high prior attainment.

- **Pupils identified as gifted and talented** made considerably more progress (by about a point) than other pupils with similar characteristics and prior attainment: the difference was equivalent to about a term's more progress.[12]

- No differences were found that related to pupils identified by their school as having attended a **LSU**, but this may be due in part to the relatively small number of such pupils in the samples (94 in 2003 and so few in 2002 that it was not possible to include them in a statistical analysis).

- All schools in the Primary Pilot receive funding for Learning Mentors whereas, of the sample completing the survey in 2004, 40 per cent

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[12] One level (6 points) is generally taken to represent the change in performance that would be expected over a two year period.

received funding under the Gifted and Talented Strand, and 38 per cent had access to a LSU (five per cent on-site and 33 per cent elsewhere). The question arises as to whether there is any evidence of synergistic relationships, with some **combinations of Strands** interacting to give greater impact that would arise from consideration of each Strand alone. The analysis therefore looked at how pupils in Primary Pilot schools performed in relation to the combination of Strands that their school was involved in (regardless of whether the pupils were directly involved in any Strands). This analysis found no significant and robust differences in the performance of pupils on the basis of the schools' Strand involvement.

More detailed analysis within Primary Pilot schools using multilevel modelling showed that the relationship between Strand involvement and progress was associated with background and contextual factors. There were some differences in progress related to **pupils' ethnic background**. In non-Pilot schools, Black pupils made less progress than otherwise similar White pupils during Key Stage 2 (by about 0.4 of a point). In 2003, the scores of Black pupils in Primary Pilot schools were significantly higher (by 0.3 of a point) than those of otherwise comparable Black pupils in non-Pilot schools, and were similar to those of White pupils in both Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools. In 2003, Black pupils who were referred to a Learning Mentor not only 'closed the gap' that was seen between Black and White pupils in non-EiC schools but they actually made more progress during Key Stage 2 (by 0.4 points) than similar White pupils referred to a Learning Mentor and made more progress (by 0.2 points) than White pupils who were not referred to a Learning Mentor. This may suggest that referral to a Learning Mentor might be particularly beneficial in improving the attainment of Black pupils.

Pupils entitled to free school meals made less progress than other pupils, and this relationship did not seem to be affected by involvement in the Primary Pilot in general, or its specific Strands.

Girls tended to make less progress than **boys** during Key Stage 2 regardless of whether they were involved in the Primary Pilot. Girls outperform boys to a greater extent at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2, and so boys actually make more progress during Key Stage 2, even though they still tend to scores slightly lower than girls at the end of the Key Stage.

What did Partnership Coordinators, headteachers and teachers say about pupils' levels of achievement?

Partnership Coordinators were first interviewed in autumn 2001. Targets for improved attainment had been set within each Partnership, but about a third of Partnership Coordinators expressed some concern about progress towards achieving these, or indeed whether they were achievable. By autumn 2003, Coordinators commonly reported being pleased with the progress made towards achieving their targets but felt that targets were 'aspirational' and

unlikely to be met in full. While Partnerships reported that relevant data was being collected, Coordinators did not seem to focus on attainment targets in their personal assessments of the impact of the Primary Pilot.

Similarly, although headteachers surveyed in spring 2004 were generally very positive about the Primary Pilot, only about ten per cent of them saw improved attainment as one of the main benefits. About five per cent of the teachers surveyed at the same time mentioned improved attainment as a benefit of the Primary Pilot.

3.1.3 Pupils' motivation and self-esteem

In addition to improving pupils' attainment, the Primary Pilot also aimed to improve their motivation and self-esteem. The evaluation investigated pupils' attitudes and behaviour by asking them how they felt about their teachers, their school and their own academic ability. Pupils in Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools completed a questionnaire when they were in Year 5, and again a year later, when they were in Year 6.

The findings from these surveys suggest that involvement in the Primary Pilot was associated with improved attitudes to teachers. Amongst pupils with similar attitudes to their teachers when they were in Year 5, by Year 6 the Primary Pilot pupils had become more positive about their teachers than otherwise similar non-Pilot pupils.

Overall, the difference in attitudes between pupils in Pilot and non-Pilot schools was not significant. However, pupils referred to a Learning Mentor appeared to have less positive attitudes towards school and schoolwork than other pupils, both those in Primary Pilot schools and those in non-Pilot schools.[13] This is not surprising as less positive attitudes are a trigger for potential referral to a Learning Mentor. Amongst pupils who felt that they were not academically able, those referred to a Learning Mentor made greater progress in Key Stage 2 than similar pupils in both Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools. The reverse was also true: pupils with high levels of confidence in their academic skills who were referred to a Learning Mentor made less progress during Key Stage 2 than otherwise similar pupils not referred to a Learning Mentor.

Primary Pilot pupils with low levels of prior attainment had greater confidence in their academic abilities than did non-Pilot pupils with similar levels of prior attainment. The opposite was also true: amongst those with high prior attainment, pupils in Primary Pilot EiC schools had less confidence in their academic abilities than similar pupils attending non-Pilot schools. This

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[13]   There was no evidence of any change in the attitude of Learning Mentor pupils between Year 5 and Year 6.

suggests that EiC may have raised the confidence of low achievers, but not that of high achievers.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, pupils identified as gifted and talented had greater confidence in their academic abilities than other pupils with similar attainment levels and background characteristics. Schools' practice in relation to informing pupils or their parents that they were part of a designated gifted and talented group varied, but many pupils would have been told about this designation, or would have become aware of it, and this may have had an impact on their own perceptions of their ability.

What did Partnership Coordinators, headteachers and teachers say about pupils' motivation and self-esteem?

Many of the impacts of the Primary Pilot reported by Partnership Coordinators related to improvements in pupils' attitudes, enhanced self-esteem, and positive changes in behaviour. While much of this change was attributed by Coordinators to specific Strands, there also seemed to be 'spill-over' effects, with pupils not specifically involved in any of the Strands also benefiting.

Almost one in five headteachers identified improved attendance and punctuality as one of the main benefits of the Primary Pilot, and almost as many welcomed the focus on improving behaviour. As one headteacher said, *'Most importantly, the self-esteem and confidence of many pupils have been raised, which has impacted positively on attainment and behaviour.'*

Headteachers particularly noted the impact of the Learning Mentor Strand, in relation to the programme as a whole, to how Learning Mentors have worked with parents, and in releasing teachers to teach. The following comment exemplified their responses: *'Learning Mentor – pivotal member of staff. Instrumental in enriching curriculum experiences and removing barriers to learning.'*

Teachers taking part in the surveys perceived the Primary Pilot as having led to improved attendance and achievement, and it had given them the opportunity to use specific approaches such as focusing on behaviour and targeting specific groups of pupils. As with headteachers, teachers emphasised the positive benefits of the Learning Mentor Strand in providing pastoral support to pupils.

Teachers in Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools had similar views of their pupils, for example in terms of whether pupils wanted to succeed, had high self-esteem, listened to what the teacher said, and did their homework. While most teachers thought that their pupils worked hard at school, and that they behaved well in class, teachers in Primary Pilot schools were less likely to agree with these statements than those in non-Pilot schools. Similarly, a smaller proportion of Primary Pilot teachers thought that their pupils had high

aspirations, and that they were well motivated, than did non-Pilot teachers. These results were very consistent over the course of the evaluation.

3.1.4 Reducing barriers to learning

Potential barriers to learning include factors such as difficult family circumstances and lack of parental interest in, or support for, education, as well as pupils' own attitudes and behaviour. Some of these barriers, and how the Primary Pilot is addressing them, are discussed in this section.

What did Partnership Coordinators, headteachers and teachers say about reducing barriers to learning?

Partnership Coordinators were increasingly seeing the Primary Pilot as a way of reducing these barriers and many felt that the strengths of the Primary Pilot lay in the way the policy as a whole, rather than the individual Strands, was addressing the needs of those pupils who are most likely to be facing barriers, however these arose.

Results from the surveys suggested that teachers in Primary Pilot schools valued pastoral and non-academic support for pupils more highly than did those teachers in non-Pilot schools. For example, Primary Pilot teachers were more likely to place importance on pupils having access to educational opportunities beyond school. Throughout the evaluation, Primary Pilot teachers were more likely to report that pupils in their school had benefited from improvements in pastoral support.

Which pupils are benefiting from reducing barriers to learning?

The information gathered about pupils included both whether or not they were entitled to free schools meals and pupils' own assessment of the number of books in their homes. Although the number of books in a pupil's home will be related to a number of social and cultural factors, it provides a more discriminating measure of family circumstances and attitudes to learning and education than does entitlement to free school meals. Pupils in Primary Pilot schools who reported that they had no books at home had more positive attitudes to teachers and to school than similar pupils in non-Pilot schools. (This is over and above effects relating to other factors such as free school meal entitlement.) In relation to the academic outcomes of those from more deprived backgrounds, in general pupils with no books at home and attending a Primary Pilot school made less academic progress during Key Stage 2 than similar non-Pilot pupils. However, this was not the case for those pupils referred to a Learning Mentor: these pupils made similar progress to pupils who attended non-Pilot schools and who reported no books at home. This suggests that the Learning Mentor Strand has a relationship with the improved attainment of those from more deprived backgrounds.

In general, pupils with no computer at home made less progress during Key Stage 2 than their peers. Again, this is after having taken account of differences in factors such as gender, ethnicity and free school meal entitlement. The school survey found that Primary Pilot schools were more likely to offer ICT outside of lessons than non-Pilot schools. This may be an attempt to address this particular barrier to learning. Among pupils with no computer at home, those identified as gifted and talented made substantially more progress than other Primary Pilot or non-Pilot pupils: it may be that the Gifted and Talented Strand offers these pupils further educational opportunities not available to similar pupils.

Parents' own attitudes to education, as well as the support they offer to their children, both practically and emotionally, are important for the development of children's attitudes to education, their self-esteem and the value they place on learning, as well as for academic outcomes (see, for example, West and Pennell, 2003; Twist *et al.*, 2003). Teachers in Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools reported similar levels of parental involvement, such as being interested in their child's education and wanting their child to do well, and also similar results in relation to their pupils' desires to succeed and their aspirations.[14]

What are the strategies that are effective in reducing barriers to learning?

The three Strands of the Primary Pilot can be seen as addressing barriers to learning faced by specific groups of pupils, and the impacts of these Strands are discussed below. Section 4 discusses the implementation of the Strands in more detail.

Learning Mentors

Learning Mentors work with teaching and pastoral staff to identify and support pupils who face barriers to learning such as behavioural problems, bereavement, difficulties at home, or poor organisational skills. All Primary Pilot schools receive funding for Learning Mentors, and so it is not surprising that it was seen as a key element of the Primary Pilot. Indeed, for the many schools which are not involved in the Gifted and Talented Strand, and who do not have access to a LSU, the Primary Pilot is virtually synonymous with Learning Mentors.

Partnership Coordinators, headteachers and teachers were very positive about the Strand, and many Coordinators agreed that *'schools can't see a future now without Learning Mentors'*. Over a third of headteachers saw the Strand as a

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[14] This finding occurred when the results of the non-Pilot schools where weighted to reflect the demographic characteristics of Primary Pilot schools. Using unweighted results, which did not take account of the higher levels of deprivation in Pilot schools, teachers in non-Pilot schools reported a greater level of parental involvement than in Pilot areas.

benefit of the Primary Pilot, with the Learning Mentor becoming a key member of staff. Almost half the Primary Pilot schools surveyed were using money from the main school budget to enhance the Learning Mentor Strand, an indicator of the value placed by schools on this type of support for pupils. Over the period of the evaluation, the proportion of non-Pilot schools employing mentors has increased, again suggesting that this form of support is highly valued. By 2003, over half the teachers surveyed in Primary Pilot schools said that it was very important for pupils to have access to a Mentor, and most of the remainder thought this was quite important. Over 60 per cent of teachers thought the Strand was benefiting all pupils in the school.

Interviews with school staff and pupils in a number of schools suggested the following benefits of the Strand: improved behaviour; reduced bullying; raised self-esteem; improved attendance; the therapeutic benefits of being able to speak about issues; happier pupils; improved school work; higher levels of attainment. Some pupils and teachers commented that there had been some teasing of pupils as a result of referral to a Learning Mentor, but this was not reported as being a major problem.

Teachers in the case study schools reported that the Strand had had an impact on all pupils in the school in that their lessons were less disrupted and that, in most cases, all pupils could access a Learning Mentor if they wished.

The analysis of pupils' responses to the survey showed that pupils referred to a Learning Mentor were less likely than other pupils to report that they were well-behaved at school, or good at working on their own at school. They were also less likely to have a computer at home and less likely to be living with their fathers, whilst they were more likely to report being bullied or picked on at school. All of these factors were associated with reduced levels of academic progress and this suggests that the Learning Mentor programme did indeed reach those pupils with the greatest barriers to learning. As noted earlier, there is some evidence that Learning Mentors are reducing (although not eliminating) differences between referred pupils and those not referred.

The Gifted and Talented Strand

The Gifted and Talented Strand provides schools with additional resources to support the most able pupils, in order to ensure that these pupils are sufficiently challenged and can fulfil their potential.

Teachers were initially very mixed in their response to the Gifted and Talented Strand. Yet, by 2003, almost all teachers taking part in the survey – in both Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools – thought that it was important for every school to have a distinct programme for its most able pupils. Over 50 per cent of teachers in schools with the Gifted and Talented Strand felt that it was raising the attainment of gifted and talented pupils, and about 40 per cent that it was raising the attainment of all pupils.

The manner in which the Strand was seen as having an impact on the teaching and learning of more than just the target pupils took two forms. First, schools were reluctant to create an elite group of pupils and so tended to open activities up to a wider group of pupils than just those on the gifted and talented register. Second, as the Strand became more embedded, it affected curriculum planning and raised awareness of the need to meet and monitor pupils' needs on an individual basis and to develop flexible and differentiated lessons. Teachers and Partnership Coordinators reported that this led to benefits for all pupils at the school.

Staff in the case study schools commonly referred to the positive effects of the Gifted and Talented Strand on pupils from deprived backgrounds, in particular the opportunity to attend cultural events such as theatre visits and to engage in creative or arts based activities. In many cases, the gifted and talented provision had been the first opportunity for these children to participate in such activities.

No case study pupils or school staff reported any stigma for the pupils involved in activities for gifted and talented pupils.

Learning Support Units

LSUs are small, school-based units for pupils at risk of exclusion. The Units provide short-term teaching and support programmes tailored to the needs of the pupils attending them.

As noted in Section 3.1, the analysis of performance data did not reveal any impacts on attainment associated with attending a LSU. This may be because of the relatively small numbers of pupils attending such Units, the diversity of needs which the Units were addressing, and the range of provision offered by the Units. Visits to a number of LSUs, however, found some very positive reported impacts on pupils. Unit managers thought that there had been benefits for almost all the pupils referred to them and managers' accounts of positive impacts were consistent across the case study LSUs. The main positive changes in pupils who attended the Units were seen to be: academic improvements; behaviour changes; increased self-confidence; and positive social and peer group effects. For many pupils, academic improvements were said to have been considerable as this comment indicates:

> *Most* [of the children] *made improvements in their reading. The children do tests at the beginning and at the end of their placement: 23 per cent made over one year's progress in the six weeks with the centre, 42 per cent made progress* [of] *between three and 11 months.* [LSU manager, quoted in LSU Strand Study Paper 2]

In addition to these benefits, school staff also noted wider benefits, in that Units were often used as a resource for all pupils at the school and that, as

with the Learning Mentor Strand described above, pupils in mainstream classes were now less likely to be distracted by disruptive peers.

Impact on pupils – summary

This section focuses on the evidence relating to the impact of the Primary Pilot in raising attainment and reducing barriers to learning.

Attainment

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is associated with a range of background and contextual factors, including prior attainment, and it is important that these factors are taken into account in assessing whether the Primary Pilot is related to improved attainment. The results presented here focus on progress from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2.

There is some evidence of a small but statistically significant impact of the Primary Pilot when the progress of pupils attending Primary Pilot pupils is compared with that of similar pupils attending schools in EiC Phase 2 areas. The effect for English[15] (found using an econometric measure) was of the order of 0.04 of a level, or about one month of progress. There were no significant differences in progress when Primary Pilot pupils were compared with similar pupils attending non-Pilot schools in the same areas (Phase 1).

Involvement in the Primary Pilot was related to academic progress for some specific groups of pupils.

- In 2002, pupils referred to a Learning Mentor generally made less progress than other pupils (by 0.8 of a point, about 14 weeks of progress), but by 2003 this gap had reduced (to 0.2), suggesting improved progress.

- Pupils identified as gifted and talented made about a point more progress (about a term's progress) than similar pupils, with similar levels of prior attainment, who were not part of the gifted and talented cohort.

- Black pupils in Primary Pilot schools made more progress (by about 0.3 of a point – five weeks' progress) than Black pupils at non-Pilot schools.

- Black pupils who had been referred to a Learning Mentor made more progress during Key Stage 2 than White pupils who had been referred to a Learning Mentor (0.4 of a point), and White pupils who had not been referred to a Learning Mentor (0.2 of a point).

Motivation and self-esteem are linked to attainment and there was evidence that involvement in the Primary Pilot was related to improved attitudes to teachers. Primary Pilot pupils with low prior attainment had greater confidence in their academic abilities than non-Pilot pupils with low prior attainment. However, among pupils with high levels of prior attainment, those in Primary Pilot schools had less confidence than their peers attending non-Pilot schools. Teachers, headteachers and Partnership Coordinators referred to improved pupil attitudes and behaviour as a result of the Primary Pilot.

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[15]   Using the 'difference-in-differences' approach.

> **Barriers to Learning**
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> Many Partnership Coordinators, headteachers and teachers reported that the Primary Pilot was reducing barriers to learning.
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> Amongst pupils who reported that they had no books at home, those in Primary Pilot schools had more positive attitudes to teachers and to school than did otherwise similar pupils attending non-Pilot schools. Amongst pupils with no computer at home, those identified as gifted and talented made substantially more progress than similar pupils who were not designated as gifted and talented.
>
> The Learning Mentor Strand was reported to: improve behaviour, reduce bullying, improve attendance, and provide support for those with difficulties at home. The Strand also freed teachers to focus on other pupils within the classroom.
>
> The Gifted and Talented Strand was targeted at able pupils from deprived backgrounds and, in many cases, provided these young people with their first opportunity to participate in cultural events such as theatre visits. The Strand has been implemented in such a way that it has benefited more than just those pupils on the gifted and talented register, and it has also led to improved curriculum planning, greater differentiation and wider access to enrichment activities.
>
> The LSU Strand was reported to have led to improvements in behaviour, self-confidence, and social interaction. As with the Learning Mentor Strand, the LSU Strand led to a reduction in disruptive behaviour within mainstream classes.

3.2 The impact of the Primary Pilot on schools and teachers

This section summarises the main findings of the evaluation in relation to the impact of the Primary Pilot on schools and teachers. The Primary Pilot aimed to raise standards through improved attainment, to improve the public perception of schools in urban areas, and to enable Partnerships to generate solutions to local problems. Meeting these aims requires that schools have sufficient well qualified teachers to implement their teaching and learning programmes, and issues around the recruitment, retention and professional development of teachers were, therefore, part of the evaluation.

Are public perceptions of schools changing?

In the spring 2004 survey, teachers in Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools reported similar public perceptions of their school whereas, in the two previous years, non-Pilot teachers had been more positive about the perceived strengths of their schools than their Primary Pilot colleagues, particularly in relation to academic results and the behaviour of pupils. Similarly, in 2004 but not in preceding years, Primary Pilot schools were more likely than non-Pilot schools to report that supporting able pupils was a strength of their school.

Teachers were therefore reporting improved public perceptions of Primary Pilot schools, particularly in relation to support for gifted and talented pupils. Throughout the evaluation, Primary Pilot teachers were more likely than non-Pilot colleagues to report that welcoming ethnic groups was a strength of their schools, although this may have been due, at least in part, to the larger proportions of minority ethnic pupils attending Primary Pilot schools.

Are Partnerships enabling schools to address local problems?

The Primary Pilot offered considerable flexibility to Partnerships as to how the Pilot should be managed and how resources should be allocated. Partnerships used this flexibility to address local needs and concerns in a number of ways.

The initial DfES guidance to Partnerships suggested that about a third of the primary schools in each local education authority (LEA) should be included, and that inclusion should broadly ensure that resources were targeted at schools facing the greatest challenges. Partnerships developed inclusion criteria to suit their local circumstances: most targeted those schools with high levels of entitlement to free school meals, a few included all schools, and other Partnerships specifically excluded schools which were already part of other targeted initiatives (for example through Single Regeneration Budget funding or statutory Education Action Zones (EAZs)). Reflecting on these initial decisions in autumn 2003, some Coordinators noted that the criteria used had not always been the most appropriate in terms of targeting the schools in greatest need, and that some schools that could have benefited from the initiative had missed out. There was also an awareness that the limited resources of the Primary Pilot could fail to have an impact if they were too widely dispersed.

Similarly, while the initial guidance had been to target resources at the oldest pupils, those in Years 5 and 6, as the Primary Pilot evolved it increasingly included younger pupils.

As the Pilot developed, Partnership Coordinators reported that they had greater flexibility, for example in how resources were used, and this flexibility was welcomed and utilised to meet local needs. At the same time, there was sometimes a tension between this local focus and the demands of being accountable to LEA and DfES targets. Partnership Coordinators reported that schools were often cynical about targets but tolerated them in order to get funding. It appeared that, over the course of the evaluation, Partnerships had improved their mechanisms for financial accountability and by 2004 most Partnership Coordinators were confident about the methods they had in place and that schools could be held to account if money was inappropriately used.

How did teacher recruitment and retention change?

The surveys indicate that, whilst the Primary Pilot schools appeared to have slightly higher staff turnover than non-Pilot schools, perceived difficulties with teacher recruitment and retention were very similar for both Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools. Over the course of the evaluation, recruitment and retention appear to have become easier, particularly for Primary Pilot schools.

Although Partnership Coordinators continued to see the recruitment and retention of specific Strand staff as a challenge, it had become easier in recent years, in particular for Responsible Teachers[16] for gifted and talented pupils. However, the recruitment and retention of Learning Mentor and LSU staff was said to be difficult: this appeared to be related to uncertainty about the future of the Primary Pilot, lack of clear career progression, and a lack of suitable applicants.

What had been the effect on teachers' professional development?

Partnership Coordinators noted that the Primary Pilot was most effective where the principles had been incorporated into the whole teaching and learning approach of the school and that, for this to happen, it was vital that teachers were provided with professional development opportunities.

The teacher survey results suggest that Primary Pilot teachers took part in a smaller range of continuing professional development (CPD) activities than non-Pilot teachers. The results for Primary Pilot and non-Pilot teachers were very similar in relation to ICT, activities for able students, observation of others teaching and mentoring. Non-Pilot teachers reported greater participation in activities related to new teaching strategies, behaviour management, gaining qualifications and sharing good practice. The only type of activity in which Primary Pilot teachers were more likely to have been involved was working with mentors (which is unsurprising given that fewer non-Pilot schools have such posts).

Has the quality of teachers' working lives been enhanced?

Teachers and headteachers felt that the Primary Pilot had improved their working lives in a number of ways, particularly because of the additional support for pupils which it provided. This was one of the most frequently mentioned benefits of the Primary Pilot among those taking part in the surveys.

During the visits to schools, classroom staff reported that the introduction of LSUs had benefited them, noting the support provided by staff from the Unit and the fact that they now had some time without the most disruptive pupils.

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[16] Each school involved with the Gifted and Talented Strand had a designated Responsible Teacher to lead the Strand within the school.

Some staff had been initially sceptical about the potential of the Strand, but were now more aware of the potential benefits.

Teachers and pupils interviewed about their perceptions of Learning Mentors indicated that these staff had had a positive effect on teachers and teaching, and on the school as a whole. Teachers felt that they had benefited from the Strand, primarily in relation to having additional, specialist, help in dealing with pupils and therefore being able to devote more of their time to teaching. As one pupil noted, the effect was that '*teachers don't shout as much now*'.

The Gifted and Talented Strand appeared to have had a particular impact on school staff. Whilst the Responsible Teacher was the main staff member to benefit from external training and networking opportunities, over the course of the evaluation the Strand became increasingly embedded in whole school curriculum planning and this affected all teaching staff, an effect commented on by both school staff and Partnership Coordinators.

How has the Primary Pilot affected non-Pilot schools?

The Primary Pilot appeared to have had an impact on some schools that were not directly involved in it. The surveys asked non-Pilot schools about their awareness of the Primary Pilot. Nearly all schools reported that they were aware of it to some extent, and about a quarter of these indicated that it had had an impact on their own school: the remaining respondents most commonly stated that it had no impact on them as they had no access to resources. The types of impact mentioned were access to financial assistance and EiC activities. For example, one school noted: '[we] *have matched funding[17] from EiC for Learning Mentor. This has been the best thing to happen to us for ages. The Learning Mentor is able to provide support to pupils/parents and remove learning barriers'*. Other non-Pilot schools were involved in EiC through being in EAZ areas, as this comment illustrates:

> *through EAZ we have access to subject coordinator training sessions; links to other schools, including cross-Phase; regular meetings on teaching and learning; funding supports the school Learning Mentor – great impact on whole school and increasingly important to us.* [non-EiC school, quoted in Analysis of the Teacher and School Surveys 2004]

Phase 1 Partnership Coordinators described the various impacts that the Primary Pilot had on non-Pilot schools in their Partnerships. They referred to how non-Pilot schools wanted to participate in the Primary Pilot and felt '*discriminated against*' and '*resentful*' because they were excluded. Because of the perceived benefits of the Primary Pilot, elements of EiC were being

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[17]   Where the school contributes an equal amount to what they are given from another source.

implemented in non-Pilot schools, most commonly in relation to Learning Mentors and gifted and talented provision.

Despite the potential benefits of extending the Primary Pilot to all schools, this may lead to a conflict if adequate funding cannot be maintained for those schools already involved. If funding were to be spread too thinly, the Primary Pilot could become less effective, particularly in relation to Learning Mentors and LSUs where much of the expenditure is direct staff costs.

Impact on schools and teachers – summary

Teachers and headteachers were positive about the Pilot, and referred to the improvement to their working lives that it had brought about, particularly through the Learning Mentor and LSU Strands with their additional support for pupils. The Gifted and Talented Strand had led to developments in whole school curriculum planning.

Until 2003, teachers in Pilot schools were less positive about public perceptions of their schools than their peers in non-Pilot schools, but this gap had closed by 2004.

Partnerships had considerable flexibility in deciding which schools should receive funding as part of the Primary Pilot, and they had been able to use this flexibility to tailor funding to meet local needs. Reviewing these initial decisions three years into the Pilot, some Coordinators reflected on whether the schools selected were the right ones, and there was a sense that the criteria used had sometimes meant that the schools which could have benefited most had not been included. Some Partnerships also noted a tension between the local focus of the Pilot and the demands of being accountable to the LEA and to DfES.

Over the course of the evaluation, the recruitment and retention of teachers appeared to have become easier, particularly for Primary Pilot schools.

Coordinators noted the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers if the new demands created by the Primary Pilot were to be met. However, teachers in Primary Pilot schools reported a smaller range of CPD activities as their colleagues in non-Pilot schools.

The Primary Pilot has had an effect in many non-Pilot schools, with elements (specifically Learning Mentors and gifted and talented provision) being implemented in non-Pilot schools. Non-Pilot schools sometimes had access to Primary Pilot training and/or resources from the Primary Pilot, secondary EiC, EAZs or additional funds from the LEA as compensation for not being included in the Primary Pilot.

3.3   Impact at the local area level

The EiC programme required schools to work together in Partnerships (based on LEA areas) and most Partnerships had a designated Coordinator to oversee the initiative. The Partnership Coordinators were interviewed over the course

of three years, in the autumn of 2001, 2002 and 2003. This section summarises some of the main findings and changes over the course of the evaluation, and explores whether Partnerships were able to generate solutions to local problems.

The Primary Pilot represented an extension of the work of existing EiC Phase 1 Partnerships, and so some of the initial challenges faced by these Partnerships, particularly in areas without a history of cooperative and collaborative working, were already being addressed for secondary schools. Partnerships welcomed the extension of the EiC policy to primary schools and were able to build on and modify existing structures and systems.

How have EiC Partnerships developed?

As they developed, Partnerships became more devolved, with responsibility for operational matters moving from an over-arching Partnership Board to various sub-groups and committees. In some cases, this included the development of a primary headteachers' forum, separate from the main EiC Partnership Board, which made recommendations to the Partnership Board. At the same time, there was an emphasis on finding flexible, creative ways to meet local needs, and as a result the implementation of EiC has become increasingly diverse over time. In many areas, the flexibility of the Pilot allowed Partnerships to ensure that there was greater coherence between the many different funding streams going into schools.

An issue raised by many Partnership Coordinators interviewed in late 2003 was uncertainty about future policy and funding related to EiC. Clarity about the future was a major concern to Partnerships at this stage, particularly in relation to their commitments to staff employed using Primary Pilot resources.

How have Partnerships contributed to school improvement?

The extent, nature and quality of monitoring and evaluation within Partnerships was very variable during the period of the evaluation. Partnerships reported that they were making progress in this area but this was, for some, from a very low base. This has limited the extent to which it was possible for them to provide robust evidence of the impact of the Partnerships.

Due to the flexible nature of EiC implementation and the devolution of many operational and strategic issues to schools, Partnerships contributed to school improvement in a variety of ways. One of the major contributions was through Partnership-level organisation of training and networks to support EiC related staff, in particular Learning Mentors and Responsible Teachers for gifted and talented pupils, the two Strands where there is evidence of beneficial impacts on particular groups of pupils, (see Section 3.1.2). It may be that the flexibility of the guidance on EiC actually encouraged Partnerships to become more collaborative, because they had to decide how to implement the initiative.

What were the internal and external links?

EiC was seen in many Partnerships as one of a range of initiatives promoting social inclusion and seeking to raise attainment. EiC Coordinators referred to the increase in the number and range of initiatives and policies that linked with EiC and its Strands. These included statutory EAZs, New Deal for Communities and Sure Start as well as those initiated by voluntary organisations. A challenge faced by all Partnerships, but more successfully addressed in some than in others, was to ensure that there were appropriate links between the Primary Pilot and other policies and initiatives, as well as between the Strands of the Pilot itself. An area where some of the best examples were seen was in relation to the Learning Mentor and LSU Strands and BIP, where these have been brought together to provide a coherent social inclusion agenda.

Has the Primary Pilot allowed Partnerships to generate solutions to local problems?

EiC has allowed Partnerships to focus on innovative ways to solve local problems. Their ability to do this has been enhanced by the increasing flexibility given to Partnerships in relation to implementation of the Primary Pilot. In some Partnerships implementation of one or more of the Strands has moved quite a distance away from the initial guidance on implementation.

There was also evidence that partners at all levels – teachers, schools and Partnership Coordinators – were involved in identifying local needs and in making decisions on a collaborative basis.

The interviews with Partnership Coordinators suggested that, as the Primary Pilot became more established, there had been a greater emphasis on implementing it flexibly and creatively to address local needs: '*In the first year or so* [guidance documents] *were fairly rigidly implemented but we are finding a little more flexibility these days.*'

How did partnerships monitor and evaluate the Pilot?

Some Partnerships had established systems for monitoring and evaluating the Primary Pilot, with monitoring being better established than evaluation. These systems often linked to or built on wider LEA systems and procedures. In other Partnerships, Coordinators perceived that their monitoring and evaluation needed to be strengthened, but that the necessary skills and expertise – at school and Partnership level – were lacking. There was uncertainty about what should be monitored or evaluated, and how this should be done.

> **Impact at the local area level – summary**
>
> EiC led to the creation of local area Partnerships which initially involved secondary schools and the LEA: with the introduction of the Pilot, these Partnerships were extended to include primary schools. Over the course of the evaluation, primary schools took on greater decision-making powers within the Partnerships.
>
> The Partnerships enabled and enhanced opportunities for coordinated training and networks to support the implementation of the Primary Pilot (including collaboration between different Partnerships). Many Partnerships developed strong local links, for example with Sure Start or the BIP initiative. The Pilot enabled Partnerships to implement the initiative flexibly in order to meet local needs. Partnerships usually had mechanisms in place to ensure that stakeholders at all levels – teachers, schools and Partnership Coordinators – were involved in the decision-making process.
>
> In many Partnerships, monitoring and evaluation was weak. Some lacked the necessary skills and experience, and several Partnership Coordinators commented on the lack of initial guidance as to what should be monitored and evaluated and how this should be done.

3.4   Cross-cutting issues

This section examines two cross-cutting issues which are of particular policy relevance to the Primary Pilot:

- collaboration between schools, and between schools and other agencies
- pupils' transition from primary to secondary school.

3.4.1 Collaboration

Is the Primary Pilot contributing to enhanced partnership working between schools, and between schools and other agencies?

Primary Pilot headteachers and teachers completing the surveys reported improved working relationships with local schools, although teachers in Primary Pilot schools were less positive about their relationship with local special schools than were their peers in non-Pilot schools.

Partnership Coordinators reported an increase in links and collaboration both within and between Partnerships since the start of the Primary Pilot, and these links were seen as being extremely beneficial. This increased collaboration had reduced the competition that had existed between schools, although some Coordinators noted that non-Pilot schools sometimes resented not being involved in the Pilot and that this had led to tensions between schools. Coordinators made particular reference to improved cross-phase links: these often took the form of shared training events and Learning Mentors working specifically on primary/secondary transition.

The sharing of LSUs between schools meant that there was a need for an element of cooperation and collaboration between schools and the Unit serving them. Staff in the Units visited reported that, over time, such relationships became more embedded, to the extent that the distinction between host and partner schools was no longer relevant as all schools were seen as being equally involved in the LSU.

All Partnerships had developed various groups and networks to support and develop staff involved in the Pilot and its Strands, for example networks of Responsible Teachers for gifted and talented pupils. Whilst such networks varied in their structure and their effectiveness, they were highly valued by those involved. Staff reported that such networks had not only allowed the Primary Pilot and its Strands to develop but they had also increased the sense of cooperation between schools and across the Partnership.

Interviews with staff in the schools visited and with Partnership Coordinators provided evidence of strong collaboration between LSUs and Behaviour Support Teams, and subsequently Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) and with other agencies. In these schools, greatest collaboration appeared to be related to effective school leadership. Also key was how closely the LSU and BEST team shared frames of reference – as EiC becomes more part of mainstream provision, frames of reference are likely to converge.

As described in Section 3.3 above, Partnerships were increasingly directing efforts at ensuring effective linkages between the Primary Pilot and other initiatives, with an emphasis on 'joined-up' working.

The Primary Pilot also seems to have had an impact on improving collaboration with parents and the wider community. Schools involved in the Primary Pilot were placing a particular emphasis on broadening their concept of their 'partners'. In terms of working with the community, the surveys suggest that Primary Pilot schools offered a wider range of activities that were open to the community than did non-Pilot schools. LSUs appeared to be making particular efforts to work with and involve parents: although it was challenging to increase parental involvement, this was seen as an important area of work by Unit staff. The Learning Mentor Strand also appeared to be encouraging collaboration with parents and the wider community. Visits to schools showed that Learning Mentors were often seen as a valuable link between teaching staff and the wider community: one headteacher reported that '[The Learning Mentors] *need to support parents of children... I didn't appoint people to primarily work with pupils; they mainly work with parents*'. Half of the headteachers interviewed about Learning Mentors thought that these Mentors had contributed to improved relations with families and the community. Staff in one school commented that the Gifted and Talented Strand had enhanced their existing efforts to improve parental understanding of education and to raise expectations of what their child could achieve.

Partnership Coordinators reported extensive links with other Partnerships, and these were said to be extremely useful. Such links often seem to have developed in an *ad hoc* manner and there was considerable variability in the quality of links between Partnerships.

Is collaboration sustainable?

Coordinators recognised that schools do not promote change as successfully when they work in isolation, and that therefore partnership and collaboration were key to the sustainability of EiC. Partnership and collaboration will be maintained only if schools have shared goals and aspirations.

Some types of collaboration will be easier to maintain than others. Cross-phase collaboration, including transition work, appeared to be an area that, once it is established and the benefits recognised, is relatively sustainable even with limited funding.

When interviewed in 2003, many of the Coordinators felt that they needed to strengthen their links with other initiatives and other Partnerships. This desire for increased collaboration appeared to be stronger than in previous interviews. However, this seemed to be more because there was a greater awareness of the benefits of such collaboration rather than as the result of a deterioration in existing relations. This growing awareness may well reflect an increased emphasis on collaboration and partnership in national policy.

What are the attitudes and experiences of pupils and teachers in relation to collaboration with other schools?

Gifted and talented provision often involved pupils working with children from other schools, for example in masterclasses. Teacher perceived there to be two main benefits to such links. First, it was good for pupils' social skills to meet children from other schools and, second, pupils were motivated by the opportunity to work with other able children. Pupils themselves reported that they enjoyed meeting other children.

LSUs also provided pupils with a chance to meet children from other schools as a result of provision being shared between several schools. In one of the Units visited, a system had been established to enable the pupils to meet up after they had left the Unit in order to further develop their social skills. One of the staff in the Unit reported that this enabled pupils who were usually the *'odd one out'* to develop and maintain friendships.

Primary Pilot teachers were more likely than non-Pilot teachers to feel that it was very important that schools should work together to provide opportunities for pupils, and that schools should have the opportunity to work with Beacon and Specialist Schools.

3.4.2 Transition

This section explores the evidence relating to whether EiC has led to improvements in pupils' transition between Key Stages, particularly from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 (i.e. from primary to secondary school).

For the transition from pre-school (foundation stage) to Key Stage 1, there were few differences in the links with pre-school providers and the types of activities that Primary Pilot and non-Pilot schools were involved with. For Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 transition, non-Pilot schools were more likely than Primary Pilot schools to report that they were involved in cross-phase projects and taster days, whilst Primary Pilot schools were more likely to be involved in other activities; many of these involved Learning Mentors, a resource not available to most non-Pilot schools.

What were the views of pupils and teachers of the transition process?

An in-depth study of seven primary and seven secondary schools focused on transition issues.[18] Staff and students were interviewed to explore the transition process. Whilst much work relating to transition was taking place, the study did not find clear evidence that EiC was having a specific impact on the transition process in the schools visited. The majority of secondary school staff were not aware of which of their 'feeder' primary schools were involved in the Primary Pilot, which suggests that it was not a factor that they took into account in relation to transition activities. Year 7 pupils were interviewed to explore any differences in their transition experiences between those who had attended Primary Pilot schools and those who had not. However, no systematic differences were found between these two groups of pupils. The key area in the effectiveness of the transition process appeared to be cross-phase communication and collaboration.

Interviews with school staff about the Gifted and Talented Strand also highlighted areas for future development, for example liaison between primary Responsible Teachers and secondary coordinators for gifted and talented pupils. Some primary staff thought that secondary schools were not currently aware of which pupils had been on the gifted and talented register at primary school, and that there would not be continuity of support for these pupils.

Pupils surveyed in Year 7 who transferred to secondary school in autumn 2002[19] were generally positive about the transfer from primary to secondary school. Pupils from Primary Pilot schools were slightly less positive than comparable pupils from non-Pilot schools in terms of whether they had been

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[18]   These visits took place during the spring term, 2003. The Year 7 pupils interviewed had transferred to secondary school in autumn 2002, two years after the introduction of the Primary Pilot.

[19]   These pupils were surveyed as part of the evaluation of EiC in secondary schools.

looking forward to coming to secondary school when they were in Year 6 and also in terms of whether they now thought that work at secondary school was more interesting than it had been in primary school.

Whilst there was no direct evidence that the Primary Pilot had led to changes in the transition process, interviews with Partnership Coordinators and headteachers' responses to the surveys both suggest that the Primary Pilot improved cross-phase collaboration and led to greater Partnership working, both of which are likely to contribute to improving transition arrangements in the future.

Cross-cutting issues – summary

Collaboration
Over the course of the evaluation, there appears to have been a marked improvement in collaboration between schools and between Partnerships with, for example, a reduced competition between schools. Networks within the Primary Pilot led to an increased sense of cooperation between schools. There was particularly strong collaboration between LSUs and BEST teams. Primary Pilot schools demonstrated a greater interest in working with parents and broadening their provision to the local community.

Transition
The Primary Pilot did not appear to be having a specific impact on the transition process, and the need for improved cross-phase communication regarding the Primary Pilot was highlighted – for example, which pupils had been identified as gifted and talented while at primary school. However, more generally, cross-phase working does appear to have improved as a result of the Primary Pilot, and this should lead to developments in the transition process in the future.

3.5 Resourcing the Primary Pilot

How have additional resources been used in schools?

This section first considers comments by Partnership Coordinators, headteachers and teachers on funding issues generally, and then looks at the relationship between funding and outcomes. Strand-related funding issues are discussed in Section 4.

In 2001, Partnership Coordinators commented on the benefits to Pilot schools of the additional funding associated with the Pilot, as well as some of the challenges of allocating limited resources in areas where schools were all, to a greater or lesser extent, working in difficult circumstances. The variety of allocation formulas that were used meant that two schools, in similar circumstances but different Partnerships, could receive very different levels of

funding.[20]   Several Partnerships were intending to change their funding formula on an annual basis, while others were re-considering their initial formula as they gained greater understanding of what was needed. In some cases, this was resulting in reduced allocations to schools, in order to increase central funding.

By 2004, Coordinators tended to report that funding allocations had stabilised, partly because of constraints imposed by staffing commitments: there was an awareness that '*if we do change the funding we are affecting people's jobs*'. Coordinators noted that there was greater flexibility in the way funding could be used, but that increases in funding did not match the increases in the costs of employing staff.

The additional funding was clearly important to headteachers and to teachers, and was frequently mentioned by those completing the surveys as one of the main benefits of the Pilot. In spring 2004, almost half the headteachers surveyed identified uncertainty about future funding as one of the main challenges facing the Pilot. They wanted to be able to maintain and expand on what had been achieved and were unsure about whether this would be possible. About a fifth of teachers expressed similar concerns.[21]

How cost-effective has the Primary Pilot been?

As discussed in section 3.1.2, the economic evaluation of the Primary Pilot used two different methods to evaluate the impact of the policy; these assessments of the impact were then used to investigate the cost-effectiveness of the policy. The first method, propensity score matching (see Emmerson *et al.* 2004 for further details or the Technical Annex for a brief description of the technique), found no increase in attainment and so using this method the initiative was not found to be cost-effective. The second method, the difference-in-differences approach (also described in the Annex) found a small increase in attainment, in particular for boys, although this was statistically significant only for English scores.

It is possible to conduct a Cost-Benefit Analysis of this effect only under strong assumptions (in particular that moving up one level is equivalent to two years of schooling and that the effects which we observe as a result of the Primary Pilot have a lasting impact on the affected individuals). However, with these caveats an estimated increase in earnings was calculated for pupils from Primary Pilot schools, on the basis that the slight increase in attainment would lead to high salaries in later life. When the costs (which were quite small at around £100 per pupil per year) are balanced against the estimated increase in salary, the Primary Pilot was, in some cases, found to be cost

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[20]   DfES guideline suggested that schools should receive funding sufficient for at least a half-time Learning Mentor. Schools could also receive funding for a higher level of Learning Mentor provision, support for gifted and talented pupils and for the provision of a Learning Support Unit.

[21]   Announcements about the future funding of EiC in primary schools were made in September 2004.

effective. In particular a real annual rate of return of either 9.2 per cent or 13.3 per cent was found for boys (with the precise estimate depending on the exact outcome measure used and how this is related to subsequent wages). For girls the policy found to either be not cost effective, or offering a lower real rate of return of 5.5 per cent (again depending on the outcome measure considered and how it is related to subsequent wages). It is important to note that the Primary Pilot is a low-cost policy and that, if the benefits observed to occur as a result of the Primary Pilot have a lasting impact on the individual and even a modest economic return in the labour market, it is likely that the policy will be cost-effective.

> **Resourcing the Primary Pilot – summary**
> The way in which resources had been used varied between Partnerships as allocation formulas had been developed at the local level. It was felt that initial levels of funding had not been maintained with inflation and, at the end of the period covered by the evaluation, there was concern about future funding of the initiative.
>
> Some assessments of the impact of the Primary Pilot found that it was cost-effective; although the impact was limited, the cost per pupil was also relatively low.

4. The Strands of EiC – key findings

This section looks at the delivery of the three Strands of the Primary Pilot: Learning Mentors, provision for gifted and talented pupils, and LSUs. For each of the three Strands within the Primary Pilot, the evaluation included an in-depth qualitative Strand Study. This section draws on these studies and other data sources to explore how delivery has been achieved.

4.1 Learning Mentors

All schools involved in the Primary Pilot received funding for the Learning Mentor Strand and almost all schools employed Mentors. In addition to survey data and Partnership Coordinator interviews, this section draws on data relating to 11 schools visited between April and June 2002.

How is the Strand staffed?

The survey data found that schools employed an average of 1.1 full-time and 1.1 part-time Mentors, and this was reflected in the case study schools. The most common professional background of Learning Mentors was in learning support, and the main quality headteachers sought in a Learning Mentor was the ability to relate well to pupils.

The initial recruitment of Learning Mentors had not been a problem in the case study schools. However, despite being only two years into the initiative at the time of the visits to schools, concerns were being raised over the retention of Learning Mentors. This was felt to be due in part to dissatisfaction over salary levels and contractual issues. These issues were consistently reflected by Partnership Coordinators, who were concerned about the lack of national salary scales for Learning Mentors, the lack of career progression opportunities and the need for a clearer definition of the role and for more professional development.[22]

While Learning Mentors interviewed noted that their role would need to vary according to the school and the children involved, they saw their main function as reducing barriers to learning.

All Learning Mentors in the case study schools had either already attended or were about to attend the five-day national training programme for Learning Mentors. This training was received well, as the following comment

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[22] The publication of National Occupational Standards for Learning, Development and Support Services (DfES, 2004b) should address some of these issues.

illustrates: *'It covered every aspect of school... It was well prepared... It was invaluable'*. The Learning Mentor Strand had the most structured introductory training programme and the lack of such training was noted by both Responsible Teachers (in relation to the Gifted and Talented Strand) and by LSU staff.

Learning Mentors usually felt supported by staff in the school in which they worked and they appreciated opportunities to network with Learning Mentors from other schools. Over the course of the evaluation, many Learning Mentor networks were established, within and across Partnerships. These networks provided both support and opportunities to share good practice.

What do Learning Mentors do?

Various processes were in place regarding the referral of pupils to a Learning Mentor: those involved in identification were commonly the Learning Mentors themselves, class teachers, headteachers and, in some cases Learning Support Assistants, Education Welfare Officers and parents. Increasingly, Learning Mentors offered 'drop-in' access allowing pupils to decide for themselves when they wanted the support of a Learning Mentor. The types of issue for which pupils were referred to a Learning Mentor were usually personal (such as poor behaviour or low self-esteem), problems with school (such as bullying or attendance), and problems at home (such as bereavement or divorce).

In general, provision was focused on Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, but in some cases it was extended to those in Years 3 and 4, or to Key Stage 1 pupils. The surveys found that Learning Mentor support was provided both within and outside the classroom and for both groups and individuals. Although many schools offered drop-in access, Learning Mentor support was usually targeted at particular individuals or groups of pupils.

At the outset, schools would have appreciated having examples of good practice on the deployment of Learning Mentors. However, schools appreciated the ability to implement the Strand in a flexible way according to the needs of the school. Most of the case study Learning Mentors provided a combination of behavioural, pastoral and academic support, and many worked on supporting the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. As the initiative progressed, there was increasing variation in the way that Learning Mentors were deployed.

The case study Learning Mentors described working with class teachers, and most teachers completing the surveys reported that they had been involved in the identification of pupils to be referred to a Learning Mentor. Learning Mentors also reported various types of work with parents, for example running a mother and toddler group. In some cases, Learning Mentors reported that a pupil referred for support could not benefit as much as hoped for because of

parenting problems. About two-thirds of the teachers taking part in the surveys thought that Learning Mentors were popular with parents.

How do schools assess the impact of Learning Mentors?

While most schools visited reported that they were monitoring and evaluating Learning Mentor provision, this activity did not always seem to be systematic or rigorous.

Over the course of the evaluation there was a large increase in the proportion of non-Pilot schools which reported that they were employing Mentors. This suggests that schools had become aware of the benefits which Mentors can bring to schools, and are prepared to use their own resources in this way.

The Learning Mentor Strand – summary

Schools employed an average of about one full-time and one part-time Learning Mentor. Learning Mentors tended to come from a learning support background. Over the course of the evaluation, there was growing concern about the retention of Learning Mentors and the lack of career progression available. In terms of professional development, the national Learning Mentor training was said to have been extremely useful, and Learning Mentors were usually involved in networks in which expertise was shared.

The Strand had been implemented in a flexible way, and varied according to the needs of each school. In general, the work of Learning Mentors was targeted at those pupils with the greatest barriers to learning, and Learning Mentors provided a combination of behavioural, pastoral and academic support.

Learning Mentors had integrated well into schools and worked with teachers, parents, and other school groups such as gifted and talented pupils or parent and toddler groups.

Non-Pilot schools were increasingly employing Learning Mentors, suggesting a growing awareness of a positive impact of such staff.

4.2 Gifted and Talented Strand

About 40 per cent of schools taking part in the surveys were involved in the Gifted and Talented Strand. Visits to eight primary schools during the summer term 2003 provided in-depth information about the implementation of the Strand in a variety of settings.

How did schools and teachers perceive the Strand?

Overall, it was found that the Strand had been extremely well received and schools appeared to have been delivering the Strand innovatively. Some teachers had initially been concerned that the Strand may be elitist, but by the end of the evaluation period this was no longer the case.

Survey responses showed that almost all schools taking part in the Strand had a Responsible Teacher in post; although the level of seniority of post holders varied, almost a third were either headteachers or deputies, and over half held other coordinator posts in the school. Responsible Teachers were, therefore, usually more experienced teachers, and this is an indicator of the importance placed by schools on ensuring effective implementation of the Strand. On average, just over half a day a week was allocated to them for this work. The case studies demonstrated that there was generally a major commitment to the Strand not only from the Responsible Teacher but also from the Headteacher: this appeared to be key to effective delivery.

Responsible Teachers had usually attended training or meetings run by the Partnership or LEA Strand Coordinator, although the Responsible Teachers varied in their perceptions of the value of these contacts. Whilst there seemed to be some collaboration and discussion between Responsible Teachers in primary schools, there was limited contact with secondary school coordinators for gifted and talented pupils, particularly in relation to the transition of gifted and talented pupils. Responsible Teachers felt that this was an area that needed to be addressed.

Slightly more than half the teachers taking part in the surveys felt that it was very important that schools should have a distinct programme for able pupils: the proportion was very similar for Primary Pilot and for non-Pilot schools. Within Pilot schools, teachers in schools involved in the Strand had similar views to those in schools not involved.

Among teachers in schools with the Strand, about 60 per cent felt that it was raising the attainment of gifted and talented pupils, and about 40 per cent that all pupils were benefiting. Concerns about elitism were not widespread – only about five per cent of teachers felt that the Strand was creating undesirable distinctions.

It was noted that some level of provision for gifted and talented pupils had usually been in place in the schools prior to EiC and that involvement in the Strand had enabled the schools to build on this existing provision. The schools visited valued the provision of support for gifted and talented pupils, and considerations related to such pupils were an integral part of the schools' curriculum planning.

The schools visited undertook regular monitoring of activities, provision and pupils' progress. Evaluation of this Strand appeared to be more systematic than that for other elements of the Primary Pilot.

Over the course of the evaluation, the Strand developed from being seen initially as 'bolt-on' activities for a sub-group of pupils to being an inherent aspect of curriculum planning and delivery. Case study interviewees stressed

that they were implementing the Strand in all areas of teaching and learning, and this perception was reinforced by Partnership Coordinators.

Which pupils are involved in the Strand?

The Gifted and Talented Strand was initially intended to be targeted at the top five to ten per cent of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Responses to the questionnaire survey, visits to schools, and interviews with Partnership Coordinators all indicated that the Strand was impacting on a wider range of pupils. This was partly because pupils from other year groups and those who did not fall within the top ability group were sometimes included in activities. More fundamentally, the Gifted and Talented Strand encouraged schools and teachers to have a greater focus on the individual needs of all pupils. Most of the case study schools felt that the Strand was benefiting a wider range of pupils than only those on the gifted and talented register as a result of this increased awareness of the need for differentiation and increased access to stimulating activities.

In the three years of the evaluation, there was a large increase in the proportion of non-Pilot schools that ran gifted and talented programmes. Partnership Coordinators reported that non-Pilot schools were introducing gifted and talented programmes and sending teachers to Partnership-run training for gifted and talented Responsible Teachers. The number of non-Pilot schools who indicated in the surveys that they had staff who were specifically responsible for gifted and talented pupils increased from about half in 2002 to three-quarters in 2004. One of the schools visited reported that there was an LEA-wide gifted and talented programme for all schools regardless of EiC involvement.

The way in which specific activities are organised can have an impact on which pupils can attend. Teachers in the schools visited reported that, where out of hours activities such as Saturday masterclasses were provided, some parents were reluctant to transport their children because they would have to 'wait around' for the session to finish.

How effective is the monitoring and evaluation of the Strand?

The monitoring of the Gifted and Talented Strand appeared to be relatively well developed, compared with other aspects of the Primary Pilot. The reason for this seemed to be that schools perceived monitoring the progress of gifted and talented pupils to be a key element in providing for them. The case studies found that a wide range of techniques were used to identify those pupils to be included on the gifted and talented register, such as end of Key Stage 1 assessment, other assessment tests, teacher assessment and observation, analysis of pupils' work, and parental input. Case study schools reported that the main objective for the gifted and talented cohort was to increase the proportion of pupils achieving at least level 5 at Key Stage 2, and hard data

was being collected to assess this objective. There was also evidence from the case studies that the monitoring of the progress of gifted and talented pupils was informing pedagogic planning.

> **The Gifted and Talented Strand – summary**
> Almost all schools involved in the Gifted and Talented Strand had appointed a Responsible Teacher, and an average of just over half a day a week was allocated for their work on the Strand. There was usually good collaboration between primary Responsible Teachers, but there was scope for improved collaboration with their counterparts in secondary schools.
>
> Provision for gifted and talented pupils had become embedded in teaching and learning and was not seen as simply 'bolt-on' activities. The Strand was seen as being of benefit not only to pupils on the gifted and talented register but to the whole school through a greater emphasis on curriculum planning and the monitoring of the progress of individual students.

4.3   Learning Support Units

As with the other Strands, information relating to LSUs was gathered through questionnaires[23] and interviews with Partnership Coordinators. Two sets of school visits were also carried out. The first visits took place in the summer term of 2002, when six primary schools were visited. Four had a LSU on site and the remaining two had access to a Unit at another school. Interviews were carried out with Unit staff, school staff and pupils, as well as staff from external agencies that worked closely with the Units. The second set of visits took place a year later, when interviews were carried out with the managers of the four on-site Units. This section draws on these sources.

In spring 2004, five per cent of the schools responding to the survey reported that they had a LSU on site and a further 33 per cent were 'partner schools', i.e. they had access to a Unit at another school.

What do we know about the recruitment and retention of LSU staff?

Although half of the 20 schools in our survey sample with an LSU reported that staffing the Unit was not a problem,[24] six reported that this was quite difficult and four that it was very difficult. There were few suitable applicants for available posts, and the perceived lack of job security was seen as contributing to this. Both LSU staff and Partnership Coordinators reported high staff turnover, with a consequent need to keep training new staff.

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23   Note that there were only 20 of the schools taking part in the 2004 survey had an LSU on site, and so results relating to these Units should be treated with caution.

24   Spring 2004 survey

The surveys and case studies suggested that lack of funding had led to a reduction in LSU support staff over the course of the evaluation. The surveys found that in 2002 and 2003, Units employed an average of two (fte) support staff, whereas in 2004 this figure was 1.3 (the number of teaching staff remained consistent throughout at about 1.2). During the second set of case study visits, managers reported that running costs had become an increasing concern and one result of this was that they had reduced the number of support staff that they employed.

What makes an LSU effective?

Most Coordinators felt that LSUs were effective, and they also noted that there was good collaboration between the Strand and other aspects of behaviour support within the LEA. The case study work suggested that LSU managers were key to the effective running of the Units as they were involved with creating working relationships with schools and local agencies.

Units need to employ staff with appropriate skills and experience if they are to be effective, and there appeared to be a lack of professional development opportunities available to LSU staff, for example a lack of specialised courses. One of those working in an LSU commented: *'it is a shame that there is not the same type of training provision for LSU managers as there is for Learning Mentors'*.

Which pupils attend LSUs?

The case study LSUs primarily offered provision for Key Stage 2 pupils, and one of the Units also targeted pupils in Key Stage 1. The surveys found that in 2004, an average of three pupils from each year group (3, 4, 5 and 6) per school had attended a LSU: the figure for Year 5 pupils was around 0.5 higher than for the other year groups.

The pupils attending the Units varied in terms of characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, ability level, and special educational needs (usually pupils on the special needs register but without a statement).

Referral to the LSU was usually for either behavioural and/or academic reasons. Consideration was also given to social aspects and to the home circumstances of pupils. The Units visited varied in size: the smallest catered for up to five pupils and the largest for up to 12. The schools taking part in the spring 2004 survey which had access to an LSU (on-site or elsewhere) reported that an average of about ten of their pupils had attended a Unit during the previous academic year. The corresponding figure a year earlier was around six, but this increase may be partly due to Units becoming more established. Attendance at LSUs was mostly on a part-time basis for an average of five to six weeks at a time. Re-referrals (i.e. the same pupil

attending a Unit for a second time) had been used by three of the four LSUs visited, and were said to have been beneficial.

As mentioned in Section 3.4.1, relationships between host and partner schools had developed to such an extent that these terms were felt to be almost irrelevant. At the time of the first visits, the same number of places were allocated to the host school as to each partner school as this was seen as the fairest means of allocation. By the following year, places were being allocated on the basis of need, reflecting the more developed sense of collaboration and sharing of resources that had developed.

In all the Units visited, exit and entry criteria were very clear and there was no evidence that the Units were being used as a 'dumping ground' for children with behavioural problems.

The Units visited put considerable emphasis on the reintegration process, including end of placement meetings, hand-over periods, and follow-up work. One LSU manager said that spelling out responsibilities and actively involving everyone in the process was about *'giving ownership back to teachers, the families and the children'*.

How is the effectiveness of LSUs being monitored?

All the LSUs visited were involved in some elements of monitoring and evaluation, mainly in relation to progress towards targets. In general, monitoring was better established than evaluation. Those interviewed were concerned about the lack of guidance in this area and the effect this had on their ability to determine the impact of the Strand.

The LSU Strand – summary
LSUs had experiences some difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff, primarily due to lack of job security and a lack of suitable candidates. The reduction in support staff within LSUs over the evaluation period seems to have been related to concerns over funding.

The pupils that attended LSUs represented a variety of year groups, ability levels, ethnicities and educational needs. Referral was usually for behavioural and/or academic reasons, and a range of staff were involved in deciding referrals. Exit and entry criteria were clear and there was no evidence that LSUs were used as a 'dumping ground'. Monitoring systems were in place but there was scope for greater development of evaluation processes.

4.4 Links between Strands

There was some evidence of interaction between the Strands of the EiC Primary Pilot. The Learning Mentor Strand appeared to have been the main link between the Strands, i.e. links between the Learning Mentor and LSU

Strands, and also links between the Learning Mentor and Gifted and Talented Strands. The case study evidence found that some LSUs had Learning Mentors as staff members, or found Learning Mentors accompanying gifted and talented pupils on trips. There were few observed links between the LSU and Gifted and Talented Strands, a finding which was confirmed by Partnership Coordinators.[25]

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[25] Relatively few schools were receiving funding for both the Gifted and Talented and LSU Strands.

5. Conclusion and implications

Section 1 of this report has set out the policy context in which the EiC Primary Pilot was launched in 2000, and the ways in which that context has developed since then. Section 2 set out the framework of the national evaluation of EiC, while Sections 3 and 4 summarised the findings of the evaluation. This Section sets out the key findings of the evaluation and the implications of these for the future.

The four levels of impact described in Section 1 relate to changes in inputs (first-level impacts), changes in processes (second-level impacts), changes in outcomes (third-level impacts) and the embedding of change and transference of practice (fourth-level impacts).

The Primary Pilot has clearly had an impact at both the first and second of these levels – the policy provided additional resources to schools and LEAs through a new sort of Partnership, and these resources have been used to bring about visible changes in primary schools, most notably by bringing in new types of pupil support in the form of Learning Mentors and LSUs, and in providing greater challenge to, and opportunities for, the most able pupils in primary schools. Schools have also seen new approaches to curriculum planning. For Partnerships, the Primary Pilot has seen changes in inputs, such as the creation of new roles, for example Partnership Coordinators, and changes in process, particularly through creating a more cooperative and collaborative approach to school improvement.

By summer 2003, early evidence of third level impacts was emerging in terms of improved attainment for pupils attending Pilot schools compared with similar pupils in schools in EiC Phase 2 areas, as well as widespread expectations among schools and Partnerships that the Pilot would bring about better academic results. Schools and Partnership Coordinators also noted improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

It is too early to draw any final conclusions about fourth-level impacts, but there is considerable evidence that all three of the Strands of the Pilot – Learning Mentors, LSUs and the gifted and talented programme – are seen by schools as important developments which they would wish to see part of mainstream provision. Future funding for schools involved in the Primary Pilot is now clearer than it was when the national evaluation team finished gathering information. The New Relationship with schools (DfES and Ofsted, 2004), and the five year strategy (DfES, 2004a), will change the ways in which schools and LEAs work together. In this new climate, the ways in

which schools choose to use their new freedoms and to decide what forms of partnership they find most supportive, will be powerful indicators of whether the essential elements of the Primary Pilot approach are sustainable.

5.1 Successes and challenges

5.1.1 Collaboration

As discussed in Section 3.4.1, headteachers, teachers and Coordinators referred to the various ways in which the Primary Pilot has led to increased collaboration within the Partnership, with external agencies, with other initiatives and with the local community. The creation of EiC Partnerships appears to have encouraged schools to rethink how they relate to others. Instead of focussing on competition they have examined how to maximise the impact of resources, training and experience for all those involved; in some Partnerships, this included extending support elements to schools not formally involved in the Primary Pilot. Other positive aspects of this collaboration included schools' greater commitment to working with parents and the wider community, and primary schools taking an equal role with secondary schools in Partnership decision making.

5.1.2 Flexibility

Another of the major areas where the Primary Pilot appears to have been successful is in relation to Partnerships' ability to implement the initiative in a flexible manner in order to meet local needs. Initially many Partnerships saw EiC as overly prescriptive, but over time they gained a greater understanding of how EiC resources and approaches could be used more flexibly to meet local needs, a process which was helped by increasing flexibility in DfES guidelines. At the same time, schools and Partnerships have approached overall resourcing – from all sources – more strategically, in order to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

While in many ways this flexibility is to be welcomed, one consequence is that is difficult to identify 'an EiC effect', and observed changes cannot be unequivocally ascribed to one initiative rather than another.

5.1.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation always require a balance between the work involved in the systematic collection and analysis of data and the value of the resulting information, and the Primary Pilot as a whole would have benefited from greater clarity and guidance in this area. At the outset, Partnerships were unclear what was expected of them. They did not always have the capacity to put robust systems for monitoring and evaluation in place, although there was considerable variation between Partnerships, and indeed schools, in this respect. While over time both schools and Partnerships became more aware of

the need for, and more capable if undertaking, effective monitoring and evaluation, the increasing flexibility in the ways in which the Pilot was implemented added to the challenges.

A greater coherence in local monitoring and evaluation would have resulted in a stronger evidence base in relation to the overall impact of EiC.

5.1.4 Non-Pilot schools

The issue of some primary schools being excluded from the Primary Pilot has been a cause of some concern and tension within Partnerships – particularly as all secondary schools are included. The desire of non-Pilot schools to be involved in the Primary Pilot and in many cases to emulate EiC approaches such as Learning Mentors or gifted and talented provision is evidence in itself of the perceived beneficial impact of the initiative amongst schools. While Partnerships have targeted resources at those schools in most need, a number of factors point to the benefits of including a wider range of schools than the one third suggested in the original DfES guidance.

- The Primary Pilot itself was targeted at areas of deprivation, and it could be argued that all schools in such areas are facing challenges and 'in need' of additional support.

- Targeting resources at a proportion of schools meant that Partnerships had to make difficult decisions about which schools should be included, at a time when the pilot was still developing and evolving. These decisions were sometimes made on criteria which Partnership Coordinators subsequently felt were not wholly appropriate.

- Including all schools would create a stronger feeling of 'partnership' and greater opportunities for sharing good practice.

However, the inclusion of more schools with unchanged overall funding could reduce the funding going to those schools in the most challenging schools, possibly to a level where the resources were inadequate to bring about change.

The fact that increasing numbers of primary schools within Phase 1 Partnerships were influenced by the Primary Pilot, whether by formal funding or less formally by adopting similar approaches such as employing Learning Mentors, meant that increasingly the effectiveness of the Primary Pilot could not be judged by comparing schools within Phase 1 Partnerships. Even within Phase 2 Partnerships, national developments, such as increasing emphasis on identifying and meeting the needs of the most able, have had an impact on schools, and make if difficult to identify the unique contribution of the Primary Pilot itself.

5.1.5 Funding concerns

There was continuing concern about future funding among Partnership Coordinators and schools, despite expressed commitment to the programme from DfES. Partnership Coordinators remained uncertain whether funding would continue and at what level. This was of particular urgency where funding related to the employment of individuals (for example the Learning Mentors and LSU staff). It should be recognised that this area was one of the main concerns of those implementing the initiative; it not only created pressures for those responsible for managing resources at school and Partnership level, but it also impacted on staff recruitment and retention. If the funding spent on initiatives is to have the greatest impact, it is important that any barriers to implementation are reduced, and late notification about funding streams was a major concern to Partnerships. In their view, greater efforts could have been made to provide information and reassurance in a timely manner and to ensure that this information was shared with those likely to be affected: this should be seen as an important element of the reciprocal relationship between those providing funding and those responsible for making decisions about spending.

5.2 The Primary Pilot and the New Relationship with Schools

As noted in Section 1, the policy context in which the Primary Pilot operates is changing, not least through the New Relationship with Schools and the Primary National Strategy (PNS). This section highlights how some of the key themes from the Primary Pilot relate to this new policy context.

The New Relationship and the PNS both emphasise the concepts of innovation, ownership and autonomy, and in particular:

- self-evaluation within schools

- a greater responsiveness to local needs, achieved by more flexible use of funding and target setting

- a simplification of funding support, achieved by fewer 'competing' initiatives and a reduction in the bureaucracy involved in initiatives

- creativity, flexibility and innovation in teaching and running the school

- greater power and freedom to schools.

The current policy agenda also focuses on collaboration and partnership, including:

- schools working together
- partnership working with parents
- links with the community.

As described in this report, these areas were also key aspects of the Primary Pilot and areas where the Primary Pilot appears to have led to positive change. The continuation and expansion of EiC in primary schools therefore fits well within this new policy context, and existing EiC primary schools will be able to build on what they have already achieved.

There are some specific areas where we can learn from the Primary Pilot, in particular around self-evaluation and flexibility. Partnership Coordinators and Headteachers would have liked greater guidance and support on monitoring and evaluation. In light of this it will be important that the purpose of, and methods for, self-evaluation are made very clear to schools and that adequate training is provided (particularly given new school inspection arrangements). On the issue of flexibility, whilst this has been greatly welcomed by schools it is important that this flexibility is implemented within a framework which ensures that the most effective elements are maintained.

5.3 Final thoughts

Given the relatively small amount of funding that has been available for the EiC Primary Pilot, it appears to have had an impact on a wide range of areas, from broad issues such as improved collaboration, to more specific benefits such as the impact of Learning Mentors on the attainment of Black pupils.

Over the course of the evaluation, there have been changes in the way that the Primary Pilot has been implemented rather than specific changes in the initiative. The Primary Pilot has become more flexible and fluid, and as it has moved on there has been a spill-over to non-Pilot schools, particularly in relation to Learning Mentors and the Gifted and Talented Strand.

Due to the increasing spill-over of elements of the Primary Pilot to non-Pilot schools, it has at times been difficult to draw clear comparisons between Pilot and non-Pilot schools and this has been a challenge to the evaluation team. Also, given the common themes of many initiatives (such as an emphasis on innovation) it has sometimes been difficult to distinguish between the impact of the Primary Pilot and, for example, the Primary Strategy. Although a challenge to the evaluation team, this commonality has probably been beneficial to those schools implementing multiple strategies.

The way in which the Primary Pilot will develop and which benefits are sustainable in the longer term will be dependant upon decisions about the re-engineering of EiC. It remains to be seen whether the Leadership Improvements Grants, which have been welcomed by secondary schools and incorporated into the secondary EiC package, will be extended to primary schools. New policies and funding arrangements will strongly effect the future implementation and sustainability of the EiC Primary Pilot.

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Appendix: Evaluation reports

Date	Title of publication
2002	
March	HOBSON, A., BRAUN, A., KINGTON, A., FELGATE, R. and O'CONNOR, K. (2002). *National Evaluation of Excellence in Cities Primary Pilot. A Report of the Findings of Interviews with Partnership Coordinators.*
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October	BRAUN, A., XAVIER, R. and WEST, A. (2002). *Primary Learning Support Units and Multi-Agency Working.*
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July	KIRKUP, C., RIDLEY, K. and BENTON, T. (2004). *Evaluation of Excellence in Cities Primary Extension. Report of Pupil Attitudes and Attainment.*
September	RIDLEY, K., BENTON, T. and MACAULAY, A. (2004). *Evaluation of Excellence in Cities Primary Pilot: Analysis of the Teacher and School Surveys for 2004.*
October	EMMERSON, C., FRAYNE, C., McNALLY, S. and PELKONEN, P. (2004). *Evaluation of Excellence in Cities Primary Pilot: Economic Evaluation of the Excellence in Cities Primary Pilot.*

The reports above are all available from www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/excellence-in-cities/primary-eic-pupils.cfm

Technical Annex

A: Survey administration

The evaluation of the Excellence in Cities Primary Pilot took place over a three year period. Each year from 2002 to 2004 schools were sent a set of survey materials to complete. The administration of the surveys was very similar across the three years.

A1 Description of samples

For the 2002 survey and data collection exercise, the DfES provided the NFER with the names and contact details of primary schools receiving Primary Pilot funding. The DfES also supplied the names and contact details of primary schools in EiC Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas which were not in receipt of Pilot funding. All Primary Pilot schools were invited to take part in the evaluation. At the same time, samples of 500 non-Pilot schools in Phase 1 areas, and 500 Phase 2 schools were also invited to participate, to provide comparative data. The same schools were approached to participate in the evaluations in 2003 and 2004.

A2 Survey materials

In all three years of the evaluation, schools were sent a 'school survey' questionnaire and also a questionnaire for completion by a Year 5 or Year 6 teacher. During the first and second year evaluations, particular groups of schools were also asked to administer a questionnaire to pupils and to provide pupil background data. In 2002 all sampled schools were asked to provide pupil data for Year 6 pupils, whilst approximately half of the sampled schools were also asked to administer a survey to pupils in Year 5 and to provide Year 5 pupil background data. In 2003, those schools that had previously been asked to administer Year 5 pupil questionnaires were approached again to administer another questionnaire to pupils in Year 6 and to supply up-to-date background data on those pupils. For the third year of the evaluation, all schools were asked to complete school and teacher questionnaires only.

A3 Administration

Before schools were approached in connection to any round of surveys, the LEA and EiC Partnership Coordinators were contacted to inform them of schools within their authority that were to be invited to participate in the evaluation. For the first survey all sampled schools were sent invitation letters in the autumn term of 2001. Schools agreeing to participate were asked to supply NFER with 'class lists' of pupil background information such as pupil name, gender and date of birth. This information was then overprinted onto data collection forms and pupil questionnaires before being sent to schools for

completion during the 2002 spring term survey period. The teacher survey questionnaires were allocated alternately across the sample of schools to either Year 5 teachers or Year 6 teachers in order to gain responses from an equal number of staff from each year group.

The invitation process for the second round of surveys conducted in spring 2003 was undertaken in a similar way to the first round, except that school and teacher survey questionnaires were sent with initial invitation letters in a 'cold call' fashion to any school that was not involved with a survey of their Year 6 pupils. For the final round of surveys conducted in 2004 a cold call approach was again adopted, whereby school and teacher survey questionnaires were enclosed with the initial invitation letter and sent to all sampled schools.

Schools in the comparison group samples were offered a financial incentive each year to take part. This incentive amounted to a £75 payment for the return of the school and teacher survey questionnaires and a £135 payment for the return of the school and teacher survey questionnaires plus the provision of data and completed questionnaires for at least 80 percent of pupils in the appropriate year group. Schools were asked to provide consent for their details to be forwarded to the DfES if they qualified for payment.

For each round of surveys, in order to maximise the level of participation, two reminders letters were sent to non-responding schools at the end of the survey period, followed by targeted telephone reminder exercises. Schools in the comparison group samples were specifically contacted if they had not returned enough materials to qualify for the reimbursement.

All schools were sent an acknowledgement letter upon return of completed survey materials and the DfES was notified of any comparison group schools that qualified for payment.

A4   Response

Despite extensive reminding exercises, at both initial invitation stage and the survey stage, the response for the first round of surveys was disappointing with only 36 per cent of the original sample of schools returning completed survey materials. The response for the second round of surveys, however, was considerably better than the first round as an additional 120 schools participated with 2,552 more pupils completing questionnaires. The 2004 survey gained a similar response with 44 per cent of sampled schools returning survey instruments.

Across the three years it is noticeable that the financial incentive offered to comparison group schools appeared to have little effect on the response rate in comparison to the Primary Pilot schools where no incentive was offered. The main reasons given by schools for non-participation or withdrawal from the evaluation were lack of time and pressure of work.

A5   Participation – response by schools

	2002	**2003**	**2004**
Schools drawn in sample	2,045	2,040	2,004
Schools sent survey materials	1,122	1,442	2,001*
School survey questionnaires returned	732	853	814
Teacher survey questionnaires returned	696	791	719
Pupil survey questionnaires returned	16,236	18,788	N/A

* For the 2004 survey, all schools were sent survey materials enclosed with their initial invitation letter.

B: Characteristics of the school sample

Full details of samples are given in the series of reports produced by the evaluation consortium. The following table provides an example.

EiC Sample Characteristics 2004

		Primary Pilot		Non-Pilot	
		Number	*%*	**Number**	*%*
Primary school type	Infant/First	1	*0*	2	*0*
	Primary/Combined	375	*92*	338	*83*
	Junior	30	*7*	64	*16*
	Special schools/ PRUs	3	*1*		
	Other type			1	*0*
Region	North	247	*60*	245	*60*
	Midlands	47	*11*	74	*18*
	South	115	*28*	86	*21*
% of pupils with English as an additional language	None	103	*25*	145	*36*
	1 – 5%	98	*24*	133	*33*
	6 – 49%	141	*34*	112	*28*
	50% +	52	*13*	10	*2*
	Unknown	15	*4*	5	*1*
% eligible for free school meals	Lowest 20%	8	*2*	21	*5*
	2nd lowest 20%	20	*5*	40	*10*
	Middle 20%	31	*8*	67	*17*
	2nd highest 20%	76	*19*	106	*26*
	Highest 20%	274	*67*	170	*42*
	Unknown			1	*0*
Achievement Band (KS1)	Lowest band	167	*41*	93	*23*
	2nd lowest band	87	*21*	70	*17*
	Middle band	51	*12*	60	*15*
	2nd highest band	39	*10*	52	*13*
	Highest band	28	*7*	64	*16*
	Not Applicable/ Unknown	37	*9*	66	*16*
Achievement Band (KS2)	Lowest band	180	*44*	80	*20*
	2nd lowest band	85	*21*	85	*21*
	Middle band	49	*12*	62	*15*
	2nd highest band	44	*11*	87	*21*
	Highest band	45	*11*	86	*21*
	Not Applicable/ Unknown	6	*1*	5	*1*
Total schools		**409**	*100*	**405**	*100*

Since percentages are rounded to the nearest integer, they may not always sum to 100

The demographics of Primary Pilot schools differed considerably from those of the comparison group, which included Phase 1 schools not involved in the Primary Pilot and schools in Phase 2 areas. The Pilot was targeted at the most disadvantaged schools and it is therefore to be expected that Pilot schools had higher levels of entitlement to free school meals than non-Pilot schools. Because of this, a range of analytical techniques were used in order to make valid and reliable comparisons between Pilot and non-Pilot schools and pupils. These methods are described in Sections D to F of this Annex.

C: The pupil sample

Background data relating to all Year 5 pupils (2002) and all Year 6 pupils (2002 and 2003) was collected from schools. This included information on EiC Strand involvement, absences, exclusions and fluency. This data was matched against the NPD which provided information on Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 attainment levels, entitlement to free school meals, gender, etc. In 2002, data was collected for a total of 13,219 Primary Pilot and 12,500 non-Pilot pupils. In 2003, data was collected for a total of 8,395 Pilot and 8,793 non-Pilot pupils (Ridley *et al.*, 2004)

Additionally, a sample of pupils were surveyed when in Year 5 (in 2002) and then again when they were in Year 6 (in 2003). The survey data was linked with background characteristics from the NPD and with the pupil data provided by the schools covering involvement in the Strands of the Primary Pilot. In 2002, this data was collected for a total of 7,140 EiC and 3,407 non-Pilot pupils (Ridley *et al.*, 2003). In 2003, data was collected for a total of 8,191 EiC and 8,371 non-Pilot pupils. When these two samples were matched together to include only pupils for whom we had data for both 2002 and 2003, there were 4,140 Pilot and 2,118 non-Pilot pupils (Kirkup *et al.*, 2004).

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D: **Multilevel modelling: exploring the link between involvement in the Primary Pilot and pupil attitudes and attainment**

Much of the analysis undertaken as part of the national evaluation of the Primary Pilot is intended to help to assess the links between involvement in the policy, and its Strands, with pupils' attainment and attitudes. Given the nature of the data, one appropriate approach towards this is multilevel modelling. This section provides a brief discussion about multilevel modelling.

In general, Primary Pilot schools are in more deprived areas than those in the comparison group, and the samples reflect this, i.e. there are differences in the background of the pupils in our sample. The differences between the Pilot sample and the comparison group were apparent on a number of measures, such as a higher proportion of pupils being entitled to free school meals among the Pilot sample. There were also differences in the background characteristics of pupils involved in the various Strands. For example, of those seeing a Learning Mentor, 55 per cent were recorded as having special educational needs, while 14 per cent were identified as gifted and talented. In the analysis, we seek to identify which differences in achievement and attitudes between our samples were related to involvement in the Primary Pilot rather than due to any background factors.

As well as taking account of differences in background characteristics, the analysis also needed to take into account the structured nature of the data. Pupils within a particular school are likely to have more in common than pupils from different schools and failing to allow for this clustering effect can lead to the overestimation of the significance of differences between groups.

Multilevel modelling is a form of regression analysis that takes account of the fact that pupils are grouped into clusters at different levels. The technique also allows us to take account of a range of background variables, some of which are measured at the pupil level, e.g. whether a pupil is entitled to free school meals, and some at the school level, e.g. whether or not the school is receiving funding for the Gifted and Talented Strand of EiC.

For the overall analysis of Key Stage 2 attainment, the data from 2002 and 2003 were put together into the multilevel model. This was in order to allow us to explore the statistical significance of both overall effects and also of changes between the two years. Analysis involving data from the Year 6 questionnaire looked at 2003 data only.

Pupils' attitudes were explored in two ways. Firstly multilevel modelling was used to make an overall comparison of pupils in Primary Pilot schools with similar pupils at comparison schools. In addition to this, further analysis was carried out including data from the 2002 Year 5 questionnaire as background factors. This allowed a comparison of the 2003 attitudes of pupils attending

Pilot schools with pupils at comparison schools who had had similar attitudes in 2002.

E: Difference-in-differences

The 'difference-in-differences' methodology involves comparing outcomes in the 'treatment' group (in our case the group of schools subject to Primary Pilot) with those in the comparison group before and after the policy was introduced. In other words, this analysis is looking at the change in test scores over time in the group of schools that became subject to the policy compared with those in a group of schools that did not become subject to the policy. The advantage of this approach is that it 'differences out' the effect of time-constant factors that may be correlated with the outcome of interest and whether the school is in the treatment group (even if these factors are unobserved – for example, socio-economic characteristics of the average intake of schools, which is only crudely measured in available indicators).

Further details can be found in Machin *et al*. (2003) and Emmerson *et al*. (2004).

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F: Propensity score matching

Propensity score matching balances the distribution of observable characteristics between those pupils in Primary Pilot schools and those in the comparison non-Pilot schools. Under the assumption that we take into account all characteristics which could affect the outcomes of interest and that might vary between the two groups, then any remaining difference in outcomes can be attributed to the policy.[26] We still allow for the possibility that there may be unobservable characteristics that affect the outcomes of interest – as long as these are distributed in a way that is independent of the group to which pupils belong.[27]

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[26] For more details see, for example, Heckman *et al.* (1997).
[27] It is not possible to test this assumption – if it is violated then the results could be biased.

We estimate the propensity score as the probability of being in a Pilot school using a probit model with whether or not the pupil attends an EiP school as the dependent variable and all of the observable background characteristics as regressors. Then, for each pupil, estimated coefficients are used to estimate the probability that he/she attends a Pilot school. This probability is used as a propensity score. We then compare the outcomes of pupils in the Pilot schools with individuals in the comparison schools who have a similar estimated propensity score.[28]

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G: Summarising pupil attitudes

To simplify the interpretation of the data collected from the pupil survey, a factor analysis of the pupil questionnaires was carried out. Rather than looking at each question individually, factor analysis was used to group questions into related themes or 'factors'. Each factor comprises a cluster of questions and represents a particular set of attitudes or self-reported behaviours. A further advantage of examining factors rather than individual questions is that it gives more robust findings. A description of the factors derived from the pupil questionnaire is reported in Kirkup *et al*. (2004).

References

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[28]   We are able to match on just one single propensity score rather than separately on all characteristics using a theorem by Rosenbaum and Rubin (1983). Kernel based matching is used with a bandwidth of 0.005, i.e. outcomes of individuals in the treatment areas are compared to individuals in the comparison areas whose propensity score is within 0.5 percentage points. The effects of the policy were also estimated with bandwidths of 0.01, 0.001 and 0.0005 and the results were not qualitatively different.