

# High Performing Specialist Schools

Final Evaluation Report

PricewaterhouseCoopers



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*High Performing Specialist Schools*  
*Final Evaluation Report*

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## Contents

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Executive summary                    | 1   |
| List of acronyms                     | 12  |
| 1 Background                         | 13  |
| 2 Embedding the programme            | 24  |
| 3 Internal impact                    | 35  |
| 4 External impact                    | 56  |
| 5 Monitoring and evaluation          | 74  |
| 6 Value for money and sustainability | 85  |
| 7 The programme moving forward       | 96  |
| 8 Conclusions and Good Practice      | 104 |

# Executive summary

## Introduction

**Note: 1]** The good practice notes at the end of each section of the executive summary arise out of good practice evidenced by the evaluation team from school visits and survey research. These areas of good practice are already embedded in many schools involved in the HPSS programme. Where possible, the recommendations advocate the wider dissemination of these areas of good practice to enable increasing success for individual schools and the programme as a whole.

**Note: 2]** Where all or close to all schools that responded to the survey responded to individual questions, no base response rate is given in the executive summary. Where a smaller number of schools responded to particular questions, specific base response rates are given in brackets.

Approximately nine-tenths of all maintained secondary schools in England are now part of the Specialist School Programme (SSP). Schools can choose from one of the following ten specialisms, or can combine any two: Arts, Business & Enterprise, Engineering, Humanities, Languages, Mathematics & Computing, Music, Science, Sports and Technology. In addition, special schools can specialise in one of the four areas of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice: Communication and Interaction; Cognition and Learning; Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties; *and* Physical and/ or Sensory needs. The purpose of this programme is to enable schools to have the opportunity to develop centres of excellence which act as a catalyst for whole school improvement.

In addition to schools having the opportunity to designate with an initial specialism, a total of 603 schools have met the High Performing Specialist Schools (HPSS) criteria and have taken on one or more HPSS options. Each of these schools already had an initial specialism and are expected to use the HPSS option as an opportunity to make an important contribution to achieving a number of the aims and objectives of the Children's and Young People's Plan (2007)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, those schools with training school status were invited to re-designate as part of the HPSS programme in order to maintain their Training School status. Schools that are selected to take on an HPSS option attract funding at £60 per pupil per year (a minimum of £60,000 and maximum of £90,000 per school per year) until their next re-designation. An additional £30,000 per annum is available to schools taking up the Applied Learning option. Schools taking up a Language option are funded at the level of £90 per pupil (minimum £90,000 and maximum £135,000 per year) to support the implementation of the National Languages Strategy.

Assuming a wider strategic community role is an essential requirement for schools receiving funding to implement their HPSS option. Schools are expected to use at least 50% of their total HPSS funding to facilitate outreach work, in particular to make a significant and positive impact in the community and partner schools, and to enable children to reach their full potential. This includes working with National Challenge schools to help turn around low levels of attainment. A key tenet of the HPSS programme is that schools with strong records of attainment and leadership should have robust capacity to form collaborative networks and disseminate good practice.

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<sup>1</sup>DCSF. Available at: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan/>

The range of HPSS options available reflect the curriculum areas of initial specialisms, but have broadened and diversified to include: the Applied Learning specialism; the Special Educational Needs (SEN)/Inclusion specialism; the YST school leadership programme; and Training school, Leading Edge Partnership Programme (LEPP) school or Raising Achievement Partnership Programme (RAPP) school status. The addition of these options provides diversity of choice for schools, in order to create centres of excellence with wide ranging expertise and remits across the country. High Performing Specialist (HPS) schools within one borough for example may be able to target and support underperformance through Training School status or Raising Achievement Partnership Programme (RATL) options, while offering focussed partnership based on curricular specialism. Priority HPSS options for 2008 included a focus on Gifted and Talented within any option and raising standards through a focus on underperformance, particularly through the Leading Edge Partnership Programme option.

In addition, curricular options were streamlined to focus on Languages, Maths and Computing, Science and SEN/Inclusion as areas of national priority for Government. The HPSS programme is designed to operate in conjunction with other leadership roles such as the National Support School (NSS) programme and the National Leader of Education Programme, where HPSS funding can be used to further existing collaboration.

It is this latter group of schools (those which have re-designated and taken on an HPSS option as outlined above) that have been the focus of this evaluation. Whilst there have been numerous research studies undertaken to evaluate the impact of the SSP on specialist schools and the wider community (NFER (2002) 'High performing Specialist Schools – what makes the difference?'; DCSF (2004) "Specialist Schools Programme Study"; RISE (2006) 'Specialist schools – what do we know?'; OFSTED (2001) "Specialist Schools - an evaluation of progress"; OFSTED (2005) "Specialist Schools - a second evaluation"<sup>2</sup>), there have hitherto been few, if any, research studies undertaken to examine the impact of the HPSS programme per se. The purpose of this final report (in addition to the interim which was published in 2008), therefore, is to provide both qualitative and quantitative evidence examining the longer term impacts of the programme on HPS schools, and those schools and organisations with which they collaborate.

### **Terms of reference and methodological approach**

In August 2007, DCSF commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP to evaluate the impact of two areas of the SSP: firstly, HPSS, including training schools; and secondly, SEN schools undertaking a curriculum or a SEN specialism. The fieldwork has been carried out over a two-year period (2007-2009).

The overarching aim of the evaluation is to further the evidence base of specific Specialist Schools policy strands and to provide guidance and good practice examples for all Specialist Schools, including those with a SEN specialism. The specific aims of the research are to:

- Collate and inform on the early outcomes and experiences of new entrants to the HPSS programme;
- Consider the longer term impact of the HPSS programme;

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<sup>2</sup>NFER (2002) 'High performing Specialist Schools - what makes the difference?' Slough: NFER.  
DCSF (2004) "Specialist Schools Programme Study" London: DCSF.  
RISE (2006) 'Specialist schools - what do we know?' London: Institute of Education.  
OFSTED (2001) "Specialist Schools - an evaluation of progress" London: Ofsted  
OFSTED (2005) "Specialist Schools - a second evaluation" London: Ofsted

- Address the question of sustainability of the programme; and
- Consider (though not explicitly undertake) the value for money of each of the three strands of the programme (Curricular, Non-curricular and SEN HPSS option). This will involve elucidating what the extra funding has provided and how this has impacted the school and its partners.

This final report presents findings from Year 2 of the research undertaken over the period August - December 2008. The research centred on examining how schools were further embedding their work in relation to HPSS status. In total, ten school visits took place, where 63 interviews were carried out with: headteachers; other members of the Senior Leadership Team; class-based teachers; and a range of interviewees from partner secondary and primary schools, businesses and the wider community. In addition, a survey of all headteachers in the HPSS programme was undertaken. The headteacher survey was distributed to all 603 HPS schools in England. Of those schools which were sent the survey, a total of 31 declined to take part, which resulted in an effective sample of 572. A total of 206 headteachers responded to the survey which equates to a response rate of 36%.

The sections which follow provide an overview of the key findings from Year 2 of the evaluation.

### **Embedding the programme**

Overall, schools have made good progress in embedding their HPSS option(s), with one-half of respondents to the headteacher survey indicating that they have made either significant progress towards achieving this goal or having finished implementing their three-year plan. On balance, schools that re-designated earlier on in the programme have almost finished implementation, although schools describe progress as ongoing. Schools which have a Non-curricular option (68%) have made most progress in this area. The findings from the school site visits suggest that all schools have made as much or more progress than expected: six out of ten schools reported making significant progress since Year 1, whilst the remaining 4 schools had almost completed implementation of their 3-year plan.

Findings from respondents to the headteacher survey suggest that initial specialism staff and HPSS specialism(s) staff are working together in almost all schools (93% or more of) in order to deliver integrated provision at some level. This integrated approach takes the form of planning, the sharing of ideas and best practice, training opportunities and curriculum delivery, all of which are achieving positive outcomes for both staff and pupils. Almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents to the survey stated that there were no negative impacts as a result of staff from the initial specialism and HPSS option working together. In terms of negative impacts, one-tenth of headteachers who responded to this question cited workload and resourcing. Evidence from the schools site visits suggests that interviewees were almost unanimously positive about the benefits of the two specialisms working together.

The HPSS programme is impacting wider government agendas, through the collaborative frameworks within which some schools operate. Where collaboration is well established, the 14-19 reform agenda, the Extended Schools programme and Every Child Matters are all being driven forward across schools, businesses and the wider community. Some of this work is being coordinated at local authority level, with strategic planning and delivery of HPSS taking place alongside other initiatives.

Interviewees in schools highlighted many key achievements as a result of the implementation of the HPSS programme. An overarching achievement of Year 2 has been the increasing local and national recognition of HPS schools, both as centres of excellence and best practice by their local authorities and more widely at a national level.

Respondents to the headteacher survey suggest that sustainability and resourcing (37%) is the most frequently identified challenge. In addition, one-fifth of headteachers suggested that balancing outreach needs with internal pressures and demands and making and sustaining links with partners was a challenge. A small proportion (5%) of headteachers suggested that the HPSS criteria for remaining in the programme posed an ongoing challenge. The findings from the school site visits are broadly consistent with the findings of the headteacher survey; however, the majority of interviewees expressed concerns about their school's or other schools' ability to meet the HPSS criteria.

#### **Good practice note 1**

Some schools in the latter stages of embedding their HPSS option(s) were found to be effectively sharing good practice with schools that were in the earlier stages of implementation. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT), the Training and Development Agency (TDA) and the Youth Sport Trust (YST) should continue to facilitate the sharing of good practice between schools with an emphasis placed on face-to-face visits where this is practical and/ or feasible.

#### **Good practice note 2**

Schools should strategically plan the ongoing development of their HPSS options with existing HPSS or initial specialisms, in line with whole school development priorities. HPSS option choices should promote breadth of choice and opportunity for staff and pupils, both within the HPS school and within their collaborative partners. Local Authorities should continue to take responsibility for ensuring an even spread of specialisms across their LA area.

#### **Good practice note 3**

The national profile of HPSS status and the individual merits of each option type, with particular reference to SEN HPSS options, should be raised by the DCSF /SSAT / TDA / YST. This is in order to create increased awareness of the programme, and, what it can offer to potential HPS schools, as well as partner schools, business and community organisations.

### **Internal impact**

Almost two-thirds (64%) of headteachers who responded to the survey indicated that the **attainment** profile of their school had improved since the introduction of HPSS. However, a large proportion of headteachers found it difficult to comment on the direct impact of HPSS status, with only 77 out of the 204 schools that returned the survey choosing to answer this question. A much higher proportion of respondents (79%) from schools which re-designated in 2006 or earlier indicated that the attainment profile of the subjects covered by the specialism had either improved greatly or improved slightly in comparison to 42% of respondents from schools which re-designated post-2006.

Interviewees from the school site visits provided a range of views on the impact of the programme on **raising attainment**; for example, some suggested that attainment was improving in the specialist subject(s) and that there is a more targeted approach to raising attainment. However, similar to the findings from the headteacher survey, there appears to be some general reluctance to attribute success solely to HPSS status.



Evidence from HPS school visits indicates that the implementation of the specialist option is impacting positively on **pupil motivation and behaviour**. For schools where improvements in motivation and behaviour were identified, the headteacher survey asked how much of that improvement could be attributed to the programme: 89% of headteacher respondents (of 125 schools that responded to this question) attributed some of the improvement in behaviour and motivation to the introduction of HPSS options. The data from both the headteacher and school site visits suggests that the HPSS option is impacting on the motivation and behaviour of pupils in some schools in a range of ways, e.g. through more personalised learning, extra and cross-curricular opportunities, improved teaching and learning, pupil leadership and development and improved facilities.

77% of headteachers who responded to the survey indicated that **career opportunities** had improved for some or all pupils. Data from school visits suggest that the HPSS option is encouraging pupils who are involved in monitoring trainee teachers to explore a career in teaching, enabling other pupils to progress to university and raising awareness of wider career options.

The HPSS option is also enabling schools to broaden **opportunities for pupils outside of the classroom** (e.g. through collaboration with primary schools, work experience and visiting other countries).

In addition, 81% of headteachers surveyed indicated that the HPSS option had enabled them to provide a **personalised curriculum** for pupils in their own school 'to some extent' or 'to a large extent'. Almost all headteachers (96%) indicated some overall improvement in the provision for Gifted and Talented pupils and for pupils with SEN (92%). Data from the school site visits provide examples of widening curricular options for pupils such as more appropriate courses at GCSE (or equivalent) and meeting the needs of English as an Additional language (EAL) pupils. There are also specific positive spin-offs for pupils with SEN. Almost three-quarters (74%) of headteachers who responded reported increased **uptake of subjects** covered by the HPSS option. The impact of this was less for schools with a SEN or Non-curricular option.

The vast majority (95%) of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that HPSS status had directly led to **enhanced CPD provision** for staff and that this was effective or very effective in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in their school. Interviewees from the school site visits suggested that HPSS had impacted on CPD through additional funding enabling a more focused approach, producing leaders and enhancing career opportunities.

Findings from the school site visits provide a mixed picture about the impact of the HPSS programme on staff workload; some schools reported increased **workload**, whilst others suggested a decrease in workload as a result of the introduction of the HPSS option. Overall, where workload had increased, schools were providing adequate support to meet increased demands on staff's time.

According to the headteacher survey, over three-fifths (61%) of headteachers who responded agree or strongly agree that HPSS status has led to improvements in **staff recruitment**, with just under three-fifths (59%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that HPSS status has led to improvements in **staff retention**. Findings from the school site visits provide clear evidence of direct positive impact on recruitment and retention. Almost four-fifths (79%) of headteachers who responded indicated that HPSS has boosted the **morale and motivation** of all staff.

The HPSS option is impacting positively on **teaching and learning** through improved staff aspirations, a broader curriculum, more personalised learning and effective CPD. The headteacher survey reinforces the findings from schools site visits, with 95% of headteachers stating that the impact of CPD on the quality of teaching and learning is effective or very effective. In addition, in excess of three-quarters (78%) of headteachers who responded stated that teachers use a greater range of teaching methods 'to some extent' or 'to a large extent' as a result of the HPSS option.

**Good practice note 4**

Schools should be encouraged to raise the profile of their HPSS status internally and to parents, clearly signposting the opportunities and benefits that the HPSS programme presents to staff and pupils.

## External Impact

Similar to last year's findings, schools' collaborative arrangements are most progressed with primary and secondary schools. The extent and nature of collaborative arrangements is largely dependent on option type, with Applied Learning schools and Training Schools favouring secondary school collaboration and schools with a curricular option focussing their efforts on primary collaboration. Similar to last year, collaboration is least progressed with businesses, with a large number of schools indicating that this remains a priority for the forthcoming year.

Collaboration is embedded and progressing well in over four-fifths (82%) of schools surveyed, facilitated by increased needs matched provision and improved communication and liaison, often in the form of a designated outreach worker or co-ordinator. Additionally, involving primary schools in planning outreach activities has led to more focussed provision of resources and improved transition routes for students. CPD opportunities for staff have increased across the board, both through shared experience and observation as well as more formalised sessions.

The degree of collaboration with secondary partners continues to vary across all schools; however, over three-quarters (78%) of headteachers surveyed indicated that arrangements have improved. Arrangements are most widespread amongst Non-curricular option schools, reflecting their central focus on supporting secondary schools. Common barriers to secondary school collaboration continue to include geographical proximity, lack of engagement and competition; however, a high proportion of schools indicate that they now have buy-in from the leadership teams in the secondary schools with which they collaborate. As with primary school collaboration, schools indicated positive benefits for staff and students in the schools with which they collaborate, including a broader curriculum offer, increased extra curricular opportunities and enhanced CPD provision.

The profile of business collaboration across HPS schools remains largely unchanged from last year, with just over two thirds (69% of the 130 schools that responded to this question) of all headteachers agreeing or strongly agreeing indicating that their collaborative arrangements with business partners have improved. A number of barriers prevent more widespread collaborative links, including identifying potential benefits for partners, marketing an 'offer' to businesses, sustainability of links and geographical proximity. Those schools that do collaborate with businesses identified a range of holistic benefits for pupils and staff, including increased extra-curricular opportunities and applied learning course support. The benefits to businesses include raising their profile in the community, advertising and more focused work experience programmes.

The headteacher survey shows that collaboration with the wider community has improved in the past year for over two-thirds (70%) of respondents. Benefits of collaboration for the wider community come in the form of resources and accommodation for activities, provision of adult and out-of-hours learning opportunities and student and staff involvement in the delivery of initiatives and projects. Barriers to community collaboration continue to centre on the cost of providing support and accommodation for community activities and identifying the needs of the wider community.

**Good practice note 5**

Schools should be encouraged and, where possible, supported to build capacity amongst staff within their institutions, to facilitate effective annual strategic planning and collaboration with partner schools and organisations. Examples of good practice should be used to highlight effective strategies for managing the interface between internal priorities and external collaboration.

**Good practice note 6**

Schools should continue to find ways of involving partners in planning outreach activities. The benefits of collaborating with business and the wider community should be clearly articulated to schools involved in the programme.

**Good practice note 7**

Schools which have established and effective collaborative arrangements with businesses should continue to be encouraged and enabled to share good practice with all schools involved in the programme.

**Good practice note 8**

Strategic planning and cooperation should be further encouraged by DCSF at Local Authority level between the HPSS programme and wider government initiatives, such as Extended Schools and the 14-19 reforms. This would better synthesise common themes between initiatives, in order to improve effective joined up provision.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

### **Internal monitoring**

The headteachers' survey revealed that almost all (94%) of the headteachers that responded use pupil attainment data to monitor the impact of the HPSS option and that just less than half (48%) use exclusions data. In addition, 62% of headteacher respondents indicated that they use attendance data as part of their monitoring processes. In addition, some schools use lesson observation as well as monitoring the uptake of courses by pupils. It is important to note that of the 204 schools that responded to the survey, 105 chose to answer this question, indicating that over half of all headteachers who responded did chose to respond to a question regarding the monitoring of the impact of HPSS.

These findings are supported by the findings from the school visits, where eight out of ten schools highlighted that they use pupil attainment data to monitor impact. However, interviewees also emphasised that their monitoring focused as much on softer data as on attainment data including, for example: lesson observations; personalised target monitoring by class teachers; and collaborative monitoring of whole class progress.

A small number of schools visited (two) indicated that their monitoring arrangements had improved over the past year. A number of interviewees suggested that monitoring processes were less well developed because of the constraints on time of key personnel. In addition, in a small number of schools, monitoring activities were robust and systematic, with one school having appointed a designated person with responsibility for this. Most schools stated that formalisation of their monitoring procedures was a priority for the next school year. Similar to last year's findings, HPSS is incorporated into formal school documents such as the SIP and the SEF.

## **Involvement of pupils and governors**

The findings from school visits suggest that pupils are being given an increasing role in monitoring the activities of the specialism through, for example, student voice and student observation.

92% of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that governors are involved in monitoring the HPSS option to some level. This takes place through discussions at Governing body meetings (90% of respondents), regular papers or updates (86% of respondents). Fewer schools involve governors in discussing target achievements (56% of respondents) and in options choices and target setting at the outset (31% of respondents). The most common type of monitoring to emerge from the school visits was feedback at governor meetings. In addition, 3 out of 10 schools reported that governors are involved in initial target setting for HPSS options.

## **Monitoring the outreach activities**

Similar to last year's findings, the data from the school visits suggests that monitoring of the outreach activities is less well developed. However, this year, the findings from the headteacher survey found that 68% of respondents agreed that their monitoring arrangements for primary schools were effective. This percentage dropped to 52% in relation to partner secondary schools and 54% for community organisations. Only 42% of respondents indicated that they have effective monitoring arrangements in place for businesses.

Interviewees provided a range of examples of monitoring procedures in place for partner primary and secondary schools, including attendance at consortiums, monitoring by outreach workers and evaluation feedback forms. Hard data is generally not readily used to monitor outreach activities.

The findings from school site visits also suggest that partner schools prefer a more informal system of feedback and monitoring based on dialogue rather than data, although some formal systems for monitoring are in place, including provision mapping to monitor the impact of SEN intervention. The headteacher survey suggests that little information exists about monitoring arrangements in place in partner schools.

Collaborative links with business and the wider community are not sufficiently progressed to allow for monitoring and evaluation.

**Good practice note 9**

Schools should be further encouraged and supported to build capacity within their institutions to establish and sustain robust systems for monitoring the effectiveness of their specialism(s), at middle manager and senior manager level. Measures should be put in place by DCSF / SSAT / TDA / YST to assist schools with strategies for benchmarking and monitoring the impact of HPSS status on pupils, in terms of attainment, achievement and enjoyment.

**Good practice note 10**

Schools should build on established practice of involving governors in the monitoring and evaluation of their initial specialism by further involving them in the monitoring of their HPSS option(s) and schools should be encouraged to appoint link specialism governors.

**Good practice note 11**

Schools and partners should establish clear monitoring procedures at the planning stage of outreach activities, and establish the mutual benefits of this. Clear guidelines on how feedback will be facilitated should be drawn up between HPS schools and their HPSS partners. This approach has already been adopted by some programmes.

**Good practice note 12**

Schools should ensure that their monitoring activities are achievable, effective and sustainable.

**Value for money and sustainability**

The headteacher survey revealed that all SEN option schools have a discrete budget set aside linked to their funding, compared to over three-quarters (78%) of schools with other specialist options. The majority of headteacher respondents (94%) agree that they had sufficient flexibility to determine how to allocate HPSS funding.

In addition, it emerged that the majority of the ten schools visited split their funding equally between outreach and internal activities and over half (58%) of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that they spent at least 30-39% of their funding on outreach work.

Some of the schools visited are driving forward collaboration by focusing their funding on the appointment of an outreach worker and the survey data suggest that HPS schools are spending a proportion of their funding on employing additional staff to drive forward the HPSS activities. In addition, 72% of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that they allocated some funding for additional staff to work on the HPSS option (of the 162 schools that responded to this question).

Over four-fifths (84%) of respondents to the survey agreed that HPSS funding enabled things to be done more efficiently, at least to some extent, and 43% believed this was being achieved to a large extent. 94% of respondents also agreed that funding enabled staff to work more effectively, at least to some extent, and all of the ten schools visited concurred that the funding was enabling things to be done more efficiently and effectively.

In addition, most of the schools visited agreed that the funding was delivering value for money, but stressed that the level of funding is not sufficient to sustain and progress the current activities. Indeed, a number of interviewees indicated that the school supplemented or matched the HPSS funding.

Respondents to the survey indicated that the money spent on staffing provided the best value for money, with almost four-fifths (84%) of respondents rating additional staff between 7 and 10 (a score of 10 representing good value for money). The vast majority of respondents to the headteacher survey agreed that collaboration with primary schools (97%), secondary schools (89%) and community organisation (85%) represented good value for money. Interviewees from partner schools concurred with this view, although they were usually unable to specify the monetary value of the support they received from schools. Overall, both interviewees from the school site visits and respondents to the headteacher survey agreed that what had been achieved as a result of HPSS funding represented the same value for money as the initial specialism, with almost one-quarter (22%) of survey respondents agreeing that HPSS represents better value for money.

Sustainability of activities was a concern for the ten schools visited, in terms of their ability to retain their funding. Due to the level of importance placed on activities linked to the specialism, most schools indicated that they would work to sustain these as much as possible. However, interviewees expressed concerns in relation to the sustainability of key posts created as a result of HPSS funding and about the ability to progress the work commenced with partner schools.

**Good practice note 13**

DCSF should reconsider the level of funding for the HPSS programme vis-à-vis the funding for the Specialist School Programme, as some concerns have been raised by HPS schools about their ability to sustain the level of activities linked to the amount of funding received.

**Good practice note 14**

DCSF should consider extending the guaranteed minimum period of HPSS funding beyond two years to enable schools in the programme to put in place strategic longer term plans for creating and delivering meaningful impacts.

**Good practice note 15**

DCSF should consider reviewing the type of criteria employed at re-designation to take account of the following:

- The context of schools; and
- The impact of their chosen HPSS option on their ability to meet the existing criteria.

At the point of a school's re-designation, DCSF could consider undertaking an assessment of the extent of good practice demonstrated by schools in relation to their HPSS option, as well as employing the existing criteria. This would be welcomed by a number of schools, particularly those with SEN or Applied Learning HPSS options.

## **The programme moving forward**

Schools were asked to identify their ongoing and future plans for the programme and there was evidence that schools were planning to progress their efforts both internally and externally. The following is a summary of plans identified by interviewees during the school visits:

- Apply for an additional specialism;
- Transfer the benefits of the specialism more widely to pupils throughout the school;
- Forge new partnerships;

- Collaborate with partners on wider issues;
- Increase the benefits to partner schools;
- Integrate the HPSS option more effectively with the initial specialism;
- Increase the impact on attainment;
- Appoint a key person to drive forward collaboration; and
- Share best practice with the wider education community.

Similarly, headteachers provided an indication of their future plans for the delivery of HPSS. These focused on:

- Further integration of existing specialisms;
- Improving monitoring arrangements;
- Cementing wider collaborative networks;
- Enhancing the curriculum offer; and
- Aligning HPSS with the wider government agenda and initiatives.

During the school visits, interviewees made a number of suggestions for the programme as it moves forward in terms of how it could be tailored to better suit their needs and those of their partners. Most suggestions centred on reassessing the criteria for redesignation and redesignation of HPSS status, particularly for Training schools and SEN option schools. Some schools indicated a system of inspection would be a more equitable approach than the current focus on attainment. Other suggestions included:

- Consider the way in which the programme is monitored;
- Facilitate the sharing of best practice;
- Increase the level and period of funding;
- Raise the profile of the programme; and
- Integrate the delivery and planning of HPSS more closely with other LA initiatives.

Finally, the evaluation has revealed that the HPSS Programme has the potential to enable schools to become centres of excellence, collaborate effectively locally and more widely, feed into wider government initiatives and provide schools with a platform to demonstrate a commitment to innovation and autonomy. However, in order for long term and sustained impact to be realised, a number of key factors should be addressed:

- The current funding arrangements;
- Criteria for re-designation;
- Sharing of best practice; and
- Raising the profile of the programme.

## List of acronyms

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AST    | Advanced Skills Teacher                       |
| BSF    | Building Schools for the Future               |
| BTEC   | Business and Technology Education Council     |
| CPD    | Continuing Professional Development           |
| CVA    | Contextualised Value Added                    |
| CYPP   | Children and Young People's Plan              |
| DCMS   | Department for Culture, Media and Sport       |
| DCSF   | Department for Children, Schools and Families |
| EAL    | English as an Additional Language             |
| ECM    | Every Child Matters                           |
| FE     | Further Education                             |
| FSM    | Free School Meals                             |
| GCSE   | General Certificate of Secondary Education    |
| HE     | Higher Education                              |
| HPS    | High Performing Specialist                    |
| HPSS   | High Performing Specialist Schools            |
| ICT    | Information and Communication Technology      |
| ITT    | Initial Teacher Training                      |
| IWB    | Interactive Whiteboard                        |
| KS     | Key Stage                                     |
| LA     | Local Authority                               |
| LEPP   | Leading Edge Partnership Programme            |
| NEET   | Not in Education, Employment or Training      |
| NSS    | National Support School                       |
| NQT    | Newly Qualified Teacher                       |
| PESSCL | PE, School Sport and Club Links               |
| PGCE   | Post-Graduate Certificate in Education        |
| pp     | Percentage points                             |
| PSA    | Public Service Agreement                      |
| RAPP   | Raising Achievement Partnership Programme     |
| RATL   | Raising Achievement Transforming Learning     |
| SDP    | School Development Plan                       |
| SEF    | Self-Evaluation Form                          |
| SEN    | Special Educational Needs                     |
| SENCO  | Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator        |
| SIP    | School Improvement Plan                       |
| SSAT   | Specialist Schools and Academies Trust        |
| SSP    | Specialist Schools Programme                  |
| TA     | Teaching Assistant                            |
| VLE    | Virtual Learning Environment                  |
| WRAT   | Wide Range Achievement Test                   |
| YST    | Youth Sport Trust                             |



# 1 Background

## Introduction

- 1.1. Approximately nine-tenths of all maintained secondary schools in England are now part of the Specialist School Programme (SSP). Schools can choose from one of the following ten specialisms, or can combine any two: Arts, Business & Enterprise, Engineering, Humanities, Languages, Mathematics & Computing, Music, Science, Sports and Technology.
- 1.2. The purpose of the programme is to enable schools to have the opportunity to develop centres of excellence which act as a catalyst for whole school improvement. Over the longer term, it is hoped the delivery of the programme will contribute to:
  - Raising attainment and achievement for all students;
  - Strengthening and developing the quality of teaching and learning;
  - Extending the opportunities for applied learning and enrichment activity (through formal links with sponsors, business and employers, further and higher education institutions and organisations);
  - Driving the provision of Diploma lines of learning;<sup>3</sup>
  - Encouraging increased interest and take up of the specialist subjects;
  - Encouraging schools to work collaboratively with partner schools; and
  - Developing capacity, either working as individual schools or collaboratively with other schools, to facilitate high quality learning opportunities in the specialist subject.<sup>4</sup>
- 1.3. The SSP also contributes to the achievement of wider Government objectives for improving the quality of education and the life chances of children and young people, as set out in the Children's Plan<sup>5</sup>.

## High Performing Specialist Schools (HPSS) Programme

### Background

- 1.4. Since 2004, Specialist schools have been invited to designate as High Performing Specialist Schools (HPSS), taking on an additional second, and in some cases third, specialism. These schools already had an initial specialism and are expected to use their HPSS option(s) as an opportunity to make a contribution to achieving a number of the aims and objectives of the Children's and Young People's Plan (2007). A total of 603 schools have met the HPSS criteria and have taken on one or more HPSS options. Assuming a wider strategic community role is an essential requirement for schools receiving funding to implement their HPSS option(s). Schools are expected to use at least 50% of their total HPSS funding to facilitate outreach work and, in particular, to make a significant and positive impact both in the community and in their partner

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.specialistschools.org>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools/guidance2008/?version=1>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan/>

schools, ultimately with the aim of enabling children, across the school system, to reach their full potential. A key principle of the HPSS programme is that schools with strong records of attainment and leadership should have robust capacity to form collaborative networks and disseminate good practice and should work to sustain that capacity over the longer term for the benefits of all HPS schools and the wider group of collaborative partners.

- 1.5. The range of HPSS options available reflect the curriculum areas of initial specialisms, but also include the Applied Learning specialism; the SEN/ Inclusion specialism; the YST School Leadership programme; and Training school, Leading Edge Partnership Programme (LEPP) or Raising Achievement Partnership Programme (RAPP). Priority options for 2008 included a focus on Gifted and Talented (within any option) and raising standards through a focus on underperformance, particularly through the LEPP option. In addition, curricular options were streamlined to focus on Languages, Mathematics and Computing and Science, as areas of Government national priority. The HPSS programme is designed to operate in conjunction with other leadership roles such as the National Support School (NSS) programme and the National Leader of Education programme, where HPSS funding can be used to further extend collaboration.

### Entry criteria

- 1.6. The entry criteria to become part of the programme have changed a number of times since the beginning of the programme, but are principally still based on the outcomes of an Ofsted inspection, at which point schools are required to re-designate. The revised criteria for 2008 are listed below:

#### Entry criteria for HPSS for re-designation in 2008

- (a) An overall Grade 1 Ofsted marking with a minimum of 30% 5+ A\*-C GCSE, including English and Maths, in the 2007 KS4 results; or
- (b) An overall Grade 2 Ofsted marking with a Grade 1 in 'Achievement and Standards'; with a minimum of 30% 5+ A\*-C including English and Maths in the 2007 KS4 results; or
- (c) An overall Grade 2 Ofsted with a Grade 2 in 'Achievement and Standards' with 65% or above 5+ A\*-C GCSE, including English and Maths, in the 2007 Key Stage 4 results; or
- (d) An overall Grade 2 marking with a Grade 2 in 'Achievement and Standards' and in the top 20% Contextual Value Added (CVA) national ranking and a minimum 35% 5+ A\*-C GCSE, including English and Maths, in the 2007 Key Stage 4 results.

As in previous years, schools will be allowed to 'graduate' if they meet the 60% or top 20% CVA and 35% thresholds in their summer 2008 results.

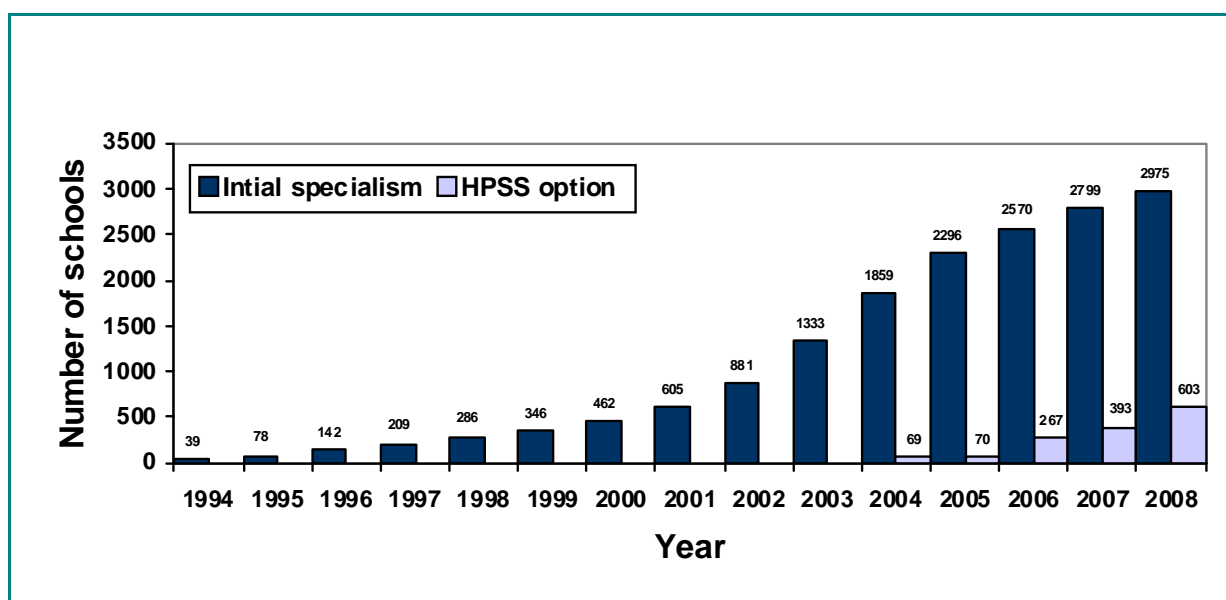
For special schools, under criteria (a) and (b) the minimum threshold of 30% 5+ A\*-C including English and Maths will not be applicable. Criteria (c) and (d) are replaced with: an overall Grade 2 Ofsted with a Grade 2 in 'Achievement and Standards' and the ability to demonstrate secure and robust tracking of pupil progress, informing challenging individual and cohort target-setting. There must also be clear and current evidence that pupil progress and outcomes remain very good, and a DCSF assessor will visit to establish this<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools/guidance2007/?version=1>

- 1.7. The criteria were revised to reflect the introduction of National Challenge and the Government's target that all secondary schools should have attainment scores of at least 30% 5+ A\*-C, including English and Maths. In addition, in order to make the best use of available resources, the revised criteria ensure that only the top one-third of re-designated schools qualify for the HPSS programme, to reflect improving standards in attainment. The changes to the criteria for HPSS introduced this year impacted on 8 existing HPS schools. These schools had the opportunity to maintain their status if their 2008 results were above the necessary threshold. For those schools that were unable to maintain their status, funding for their HPSS roles will be retained until August 2009 to enable them to plan for the loss of HPSS funding. Of the 603 HPS schools in England, approximately one-third of these re-designated on or after April 2008. As a result of this, schools which took part in the evaluation were at varying stages of implementing their 3-year plan.
- 1.8. Figure 1.1 indicates the total number of schools involved in both the SSP and those which have re-designated as High Performing and have taken on an HPSS option.

**Figure 1.1: Number of schools with 'initial' specialism and HPSS option**



Source: DCSF (compiled by PwC).

- 1.9. Table 1.1 provides details of the specialisms for those schools with an initial specialism only and for those schools which are high performing and have taken on one or more HPSS options. A number of the HPSS options detailed below are no longer available to those schools which entered the programme in 2008 (e.g. humanities).

**Table 1.1: Breakdown schools with an initial specialism and those with HPSS option(s) (2008)**

| <b>Initial specialism</b>           | <b>Number</b> | <b>HPSS option</b>                | <b>Number</b> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Arts                                | 505           | Arts                              | 31            |
| B&E                                 | 272           | B&E                               | 8             |
| Engineering                         | 66            | Humanities                        | 32            |
| Humanities                          | 146           | Language                          | 112           |
| Language                            | 230           | Leading Edge                      | 141           |
| M&C                                 | 289           | M&C                               | 51            |
| Music                               | 32            | Music                             | 16            |
| Science                             | 349           | RATL                              | 36            |
| Sports                              | 403           | SC Programme YST                  | 14            |
| Technology                          | 572           | Science                           | 63            |
| SEN Behaviour, Emotional and Social | 18            | Sports                            | 28            |
| SEN Cognition and Learning          | 43            | Technology                        | 3             |
| SEN Communication and Interaction   | 28            | Applied learning                  | 160           |
| SEN Sensory Physical                | 22            | Training School                   | 140           |
|                                     |               | SEN Cognition and Learning        | 6             |
|                                     |               | SEN Communication and Interaction | 3             |
|                                     |               | SEN Sensory Physical              | 1             |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>2,975</b>  | <b>Total</b>                      | <b>845*</b>   |

Source: Analysis undertaken by PwC and DCSF using data supplied by DCSF.

\*This figure represents the total number of HPSS options held by schools. A number of schools hold more than one HPSS option.

## Terms of reference and methodological approach

### Evaluation aims

- 1.10. In August 2007, DCSF commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) to evaluate the impact of two areas of the SSP; firstly, HPSS, including training schools; and secondly, SEN schools undertaking a curriculum or a SEN specialism. The fieldwork has been carried out over a two-year period (2007-2009).
- 1.11. The overarching aim of the evaluation is to further the evidence base of specific Specialist Schools policy strands and to provide guidance and good practice examples for all Specialist Schools, including those with a SEN specialism. The specific aims of the research are to:

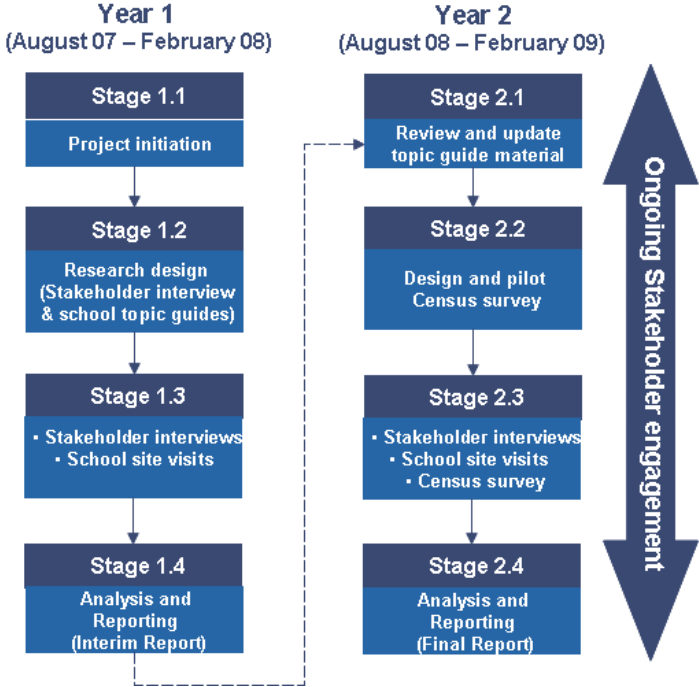
#### **Aims of evaluation**

- Collate and inform on the early outcomes and experiences of new entrants to the HPSS programme.
- Consider the longer term impact of the HPSS programme.
- Address the question of sustainability of the programme.
- Consider (though not explicitly undertake) the value for money of each of the three strands of the programme (curricular, SEN OPTION and training school). This will involve elucidating what the extra funding has provided and how this has impacted.

**Evaluation methodology**

1.12. There were two distinct phases to the research. Figure 1.2 provides a summary of the methodological approach.

**Figure 1.2: Overview of methodological approach**



1.13. Table 1.2 sets out the research activities, together with the numbers of interviewees/ respondents involved in each year of the evaluation. The sampling was undertaken jointly by DCSF and PwC.

**Table 1.2: Overview of research activity**

| Research Activity  | Number of completed interviews | Research Activity  | Number of completed interviews/questionnaires |
|--|--------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Year 1</b>  |                                | <b>Year 2</b>  |   |
| Stakeholder interviews                                   | 11                             | Stakeholder interviews                                   | 11  |
| School site visits to HPS schools                        | 15                             | School site visits to HPS schools                        | 10  |
| School site visits to schools with an initial specialism | 10                             | School site visits to schools with an initial specialism | 0   |
|  |                                | Census survey  | 206*  |

\*The Census survey was sent to a total of 603 HPS schools, of which 206 responded by returning a completed questionnaire

## **Year 1: Research aims**

1.14. The fieldwork for Year 1 of the research was conducted between August and December 2007. The research centred on examining how schools were adjusting to their new HPSS role.

1.15. Areas investigated in Year 1 included:

- Entry to the programme, including the application process and funding arrangements;
- The extent to which HPS schools were fulfilling the requirements of the programme;
- Delivery models and monitoring procedures;
- The extent to which HPS schools had implemented their plans;
- Evidence of good practice in implementation;
- Concerns arising from the implementation of the high performing role;
- Evidence of collaboration and partnership working;
- An assessment of the early evidence on the impact of HPSS status on raising aspirations and attainment, curriculum provision, staff recruitment and retention, CPD and teacher workload; and
- HPSS and wider government objectives.

Full details of the methodology and findings for Year 1 of the evaluation can be found in our Interim Report.<sup>7</sup>

## **Year 2: Research aims**

1.16. The fieldwork for Year 2 of the research was conducted between August and December 2008. The research centred on examining how schools are further embedding their work in relation to HPSS status. Whilst the methodology for the school site visits was primarily qualitative, the interview schedules across both phases included both open and closed questions. Consequently, where appropriate, the data presented has been quantified and this is reflected throughout the Report.

1.17. In addition, a headteacher survey was distributed to all HPS schools in England. The survey sought to quantify the impact of the HPSS option(s) on HPS schools and their partnering schools, businesses and the wider community. More details of this strand of the research are presented below.

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<sup>7</sup> Available at: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RW034.pdf>

1.18. Areas investigated in Year 2 included:

- The impact of the high performing role on schools and their partners more widely;
- The impact of HPSS status on the school's initial specialism;
- The extent to which the new role is embedded throughout the school and more widely through partner schools;
- Further evidence on the impact HPSS has had on raising schools' aspirations, relative to those schools currently with an initial specialism only;
- Further evidence on the impact HPSS has had on curriculum provision, relative to schools currently with an initial specialism only; and
- Evidence on shared good practice between schools and also in relation to collaboration with business and the local community.

## **Year 2: Evaluation methodology**

### ***Stakeholder interviews***

1.19. Stakeholder interviews were conducted with a number of stakeholders who work closely, or have an interest in, the implementation of the HPSS programme, such as SSAT, YST and TDA. The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain stakeholder views in relation to the impact of the programme, e.g. vis-à-vis enhancing collaboration between the HPS school and their outreach partners and to invite feedback and comment on the research instruments for both the school site visits and the census survey of headteachers. Comments were invited from stakeholders in relation to:

- The introductory text in both the topic guides and headteacher census survey instrument;
- The clarity of the questions asked;
- The focus of the questions (whether they were sufficiently focused on ascertaining the impact of the programme); and
- Value for money and sustainability.

1.20. The findings of the stakeholder interviews were incorporated into both the topic guides for the school site visits and the headteacher census survey instrument.

### ***Census survey***

1.21. The headteacher survey was distributed to all 603 HPS schools in England. Of those schools which were sent the survey, a total of 31 declined to take part, which resulted in an effective sample of 572. A number of reasons were given for not wishing to take part in the survey, including: that some schools felt they were too early in the HPSS programme to comment to any great extent on its impact; due to heavy workload; or because they had other pressing priorities.

1.22. A total of 206 headteachers responded to the survey, which equates to a response rate of 36%. It is important to note that while the response population is representative of all the HPS schools in the programme, even when the response base for a question is 204 schools, this indicates the viewpoints of just one third of all schools in the programme. Headteachers did not in all cases respond to all questions. Where the response rate to certain questions was significantly lower than the norm, this is indicated and referred to in the body of the text. Table 1.3 provides details of the distribution of the HPSS options in the schools which responded to the survey.

**Table 1.3: Distribution of HPSS options**

| <b>Second specialism</b>          | <b>Population</b> | <b>Achieved sample</b> | <b>Difference</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Applied Learning                  | 19%               | 24%                    | +5pp              |
| Arts                              | 4%                | 2%                     | -2pp              |
| B&E                               | 1%                | 1%                     | 0pp               |
| Humanities                        | 4%                | 5%                     | +1pp              |
| Language                          | 13%               | 12%                    | -1pp              |
| M&C                               | 6%                | 7%                     | +1pp              |
| Music                             | 2%                | 0%                     | -2pp              |
| Science                           | 7%                | 9%                     | +2pp              |
| SEN Sensory Physical              | 0%                | 0%                     | 0pp               |
| SEN Cognition and Learning        | 1%                | 1%                     | 0pp               |
| SEN Communication and Interaction | 0%                | 1%                     | +1pp              |
| Sports                            | 3%                | 5%                     | +2pp              |
| Technology                        | 0%                | 0%                     | 0pp               |
| LEPP                              | 17%               | 14%                    | -3pp              |
| RAPP (formerly RATL)              | 4%                | 5%                     | +1pp              |
| SC Programme YST                  | 2%                | 1%                     | -1pp              |
| Training School                   | 17%               | 14%                    | -3pp              |
| <b>Base</b>                       | <b>845*</b>       | <b>281*</b>            |                   |

\*This is the total number of HPSS options of the schools nationally and those which took part in the census survey. The total number of HPSS options is greater than the total number of HPSS schools as a number of schools have more than one option.

1.23. Table 1.3 illustrates that the population proportion and achieved sample for each of the HPSS options differs by no more than +/-3pp for 16 of the 17 HPSS options and by 5pp for one of the 17 HPSS options. In light of this, no re-weighting of the data has been undertaken.



### School site visits to HPS schools

1.24. As indicated above, a total of 10 HPS schools were visited in Year 2. A breakdown of the HPSS characteristics of the schools visited is provided in Table 1.4.

**Table 1.4: HPSS options of the schools visited**

| Type school                                | HPSS options*   | Number of schools |
|--|---|-------------------|
| <b>HPS schools</b>                         |   |                   |
| HPS schools (with a Curriculum specialism) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applied learning</li> <li>• Science (two selected)</li> <li>• Languages</li> <li>• Humanities</li> </ul> | 5                 |
| HPS schools with Training School status    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training School option</li> </ul>  | 3                 |
| HPS Schools with a SEN specialism          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEN Cognition &amp; Learning</li> <li>• SEN Communication &amp; Interaction</li> </ul>                   | 2                 |

\* Note: A number of these schools have two or more HPSS options. The Table above only provides details of the HPSS option which the interviews were primarily focused on during the school site visit.

1.25. A range of stakeholders were interviewed in each of the schools visited. Interviewees included: the headteacher; up to two members of the SLT; up to two class-based teachers; staff from partner secondary schools and primary schools; pupil focus groups of six to ten pupils in Year 10; and representatives from business and the wider community. The number and type of participants interviewed depended upon the availability of interviewees. In the case of representatives from business and the wider community, the number of interviews conducted was dependent on the extent of outreach work undertaken by schools. In total, 69 interviews were carried out in schools (excluding pupil focus groups).

1.26. Table 1.5 overleaf provides details of the number and type of interviewees that participated in this year's fieldwork.

**Table 1.5: Profile of interviewees**

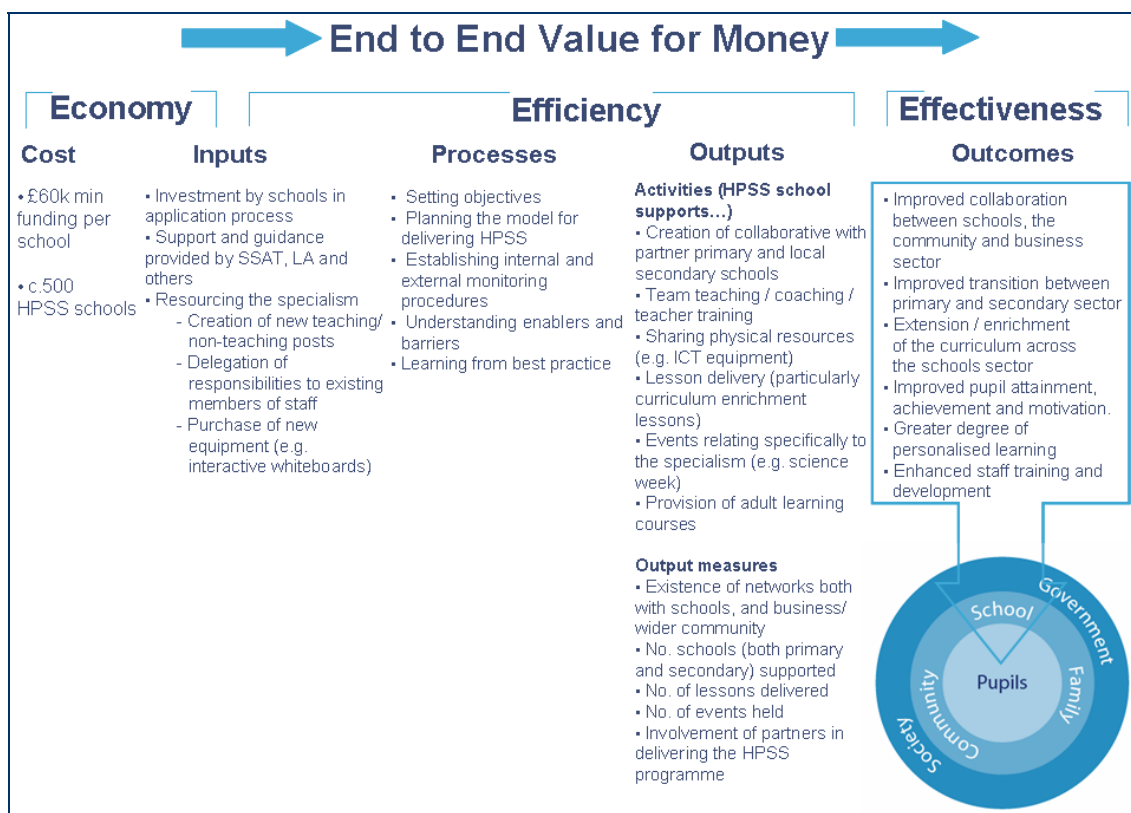
| Interviewees  | Number of interviewees |
|---|------------------------|
| <b>School site visits</b>                                       |                        |
| Headteacher   | 8                      |
| Other SLT members (including business managers)                 | 11                     |
| Class-based teachers (including Heads of Department)            | 26                     |
| ITT students  | 3                      |
| <b>Partnering schools</b>                                       |                        |
| Primary   | 6                      |
| Secondary   | 1                      |
| Special   | 1                      |
| School outreach workers   | 3                      |
| <b>Business/wider community</b>                                 |                        |
| Business representatives  | 2                      |
| Community representatives                                       | 4                      |
| Business or community outreach workers (employed by HPS school) | 1                      |
| Local authority appointed managers                              | 3                      |
| Total   | <b>69</b>              |
| Pupil focus groups  | 6*                     |

\*Note: Each focus group contained between 6 and 10 pupils. Findings from the pupil focus groups are integrated throughout the report

## Evaluation model

1.27. We have adopted an input, output and outcome model for the purposes of undertaking this longitudinal evaluation. This is illustrated in Figure 1.3 overleaf. In summary, the model illustrates the costs (funding received per school) and inputs of the programme at a school level (e.g. creation of new teaching/non-teaching posts etc.), processes involved in delivering stated outputs and outcomes (e.g. setting objectives), outputs (e.g. number of collaboratives created, provision of adult learning courses) and outcomes (e.g. impact on pupil achievement, attainment). Each of the chapters which follow broadly reflects each of the stages of the model although, in a number of areas there may be overlap; for example, Chapter 3 (Internal impact) and Chapter 4 (External Impact) examine a range of outputs and outcomes of the programme for both HPS schools and their partner schools, business and the community.

Figure 1.3: Evaluation model<sup>8</sup>



## Scope and structure of the report

1.28. This Final Report focuses primarily on the development of the programme one year on from publication of the Interim Evaluation report. It presents findings from the census survey and the ten school site visits completed. Where possible, comparative analysis between year 1 and Year 2 findings is included throughout the body of the report. However, this comparative analysis is based on qualitative rather than quantitative data, as no survey was carried out in Year 1 of the evaluation.

<sup>8</sup> Source: PwC (2008)

1.29. The remainder of the report is structured under the following headings:

- Chapter 2: Embedding the programme;
- Chapter 3: Internal impact;
- Chapter 4: External impact;
- Chapter 5: Monitoring and evaluation;
- Chapter 6: Value for money and sustainability;
- Chapter 7: The programme moving forward; and
- Conclusions and Good Practice.

**Technical Notes:**

1. For each of the tables illustrated in this report, we have provided a '**Listed response base**' which details the number of headteachers who responded by ticking **the options presented in this report**.
2. A '**Total response base**' is also provided, for the **total number of headteachers who have responded to the question in total** (i.e. including those who have ticked the options 'Not applicable' or 'I am unable to comment').
3. At the request of the Department, we have not provided the breakdown of responses for the 'Total response base' but rather have included those for 'Listed response base'.
4. Only four of the headteachers that responded to the headteacher survey are from a HPS school with a SEN option (Note: At the time of the survey, there were only six such schools in England). As a result, no HPSS SEN option school is referred to by specific SEN option, for example Cognition and Learning, to maintain confidentiality and to avoid identification of any individual school.
5. In subsequent charts and tables, HPSS options have been grouped under the headings given below:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Curricular     | Applied Learning; Arts; Business and Economics; Humanities; Languages; M & C; Music; <i>and</i> Science.  |
| SEN Option     | SEN Cognition and learning; SEN Communication and Interaction; <i>and</i> SEN Sensory and Physical.   |
| Non Curricular | Leading Edge Partnership programme (LEPP); Raising Achievement Partnership Programme (RAPP formerly RATL); Training Schools; <i>and</i> SC programme YST. |

## **2 Embedding the programme**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 A key focus of this chapter is to provide an assessment of how well the HPSS programme is embedded nationally. It is important to note that, given the large number of schools which have recently re-designated (approximately one-third of all HPS schools re-designated in 2008), many schools will be at the early stages of implementation and this is reflected in the data.
- 2.2 The remainder of this chapter is structured under the following headings:
- Stage of implementation;
  - Integration with initial specialism;
  - The HPSS programme and the wider educational agenda in the LA;
  - Key achievements and challenges; and
  - Summary.

### **Stage of implementation**

- 2.3 Table 2.1 below provides data from the headteacher survey on the stage of implementation of schools in the HPSS programme. In summary, it illustrates:
- One-quarter (25%) of schools have started delivering against their current three-year plan, whilst the same proportion (25%) have made some progress in HPSS delivery;
  - Almost two-fifths (38%) of schools stated they have made significant progress in delivery, whilst just over one-tenth (12%) have almost finished implementation;
  - By HPSS option type, schools with non-curricular options (which includes, for example, Leading Edge Partnership Programme) appear to have made the most progress in implementation, with over two-thirds (68%) of headteachers indicating they have made either significant progress or have almost finished implementation of their HPSS option; and
  - As expected, schools which have re-designated in 2006 or earlier have made significantly more progress than schools which re-designated post-2006. Over three-quarters (77%) of schools which re-designated in 2006 or earlier have either made significant progress or have almost finished implementation, compared to 30% of schools which re-designated post-2006.

**Table 2.1: Stage of implementation with HPSS option**

|   | <b>Started delivering</b> | <b>Make some progress</b> | <b>Make significant progress</b> | <b>Almost finished implementation</b> | <b>TOTALS</b> |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>HPSS option</b>                            |                           |                           |                                  |                                       |               |
| Curricular                                    | 25%                       | 29%                       | 33%                              | 13%                                   | 100%          |
| SEN   | 50%                       | 0%                        | 50%                              | 0%                                    | 100%          |
| Non-curricular                                | 23%                       | 10%                       | 58%                              | 10%                                   | 100%          |
| <b>Year of redesignation</b>                  |                           |                           |                                  |                                       |               |
| 2006 or earlier                               | 9%                        | 14%                       | 51%                              | 26%                                   | 100%          |
| Post-2006                                     | 37%                       | 33%                       | 28%                              | 2%                                    | 100%          |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                                 | 25%                       | 25%                       | 38%                              | 12%                                   | 100%          |
| Listed Response Base <sup>9</sup> :           | 50                        | 50                        | 76                               | 25                                    | 201           |
| <b>Total Response Base<sup>10</sup> = 201</b> |                           |                           |                                  |                                       |               |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

- 2.4 Evidence from the interviews conducted at the time of these visits indicates that schools have progressed in the implementation of their HPSS option and that it is more deeply embedded in comparison to the Year 1 baseline, as shown in table 2.2. All schools visited reported that they had made as much or more progress than expected, with six out of the ten schools reporting significant progress since Year 1. These levels of progress are reflected in increased collaboration with partners and in positive impacts within the HPS schools. Developments in integrating the HPSS option with the initial specialism were also evident.
- 2.5 The remaining four schools indicated that they had almost completed their 3-year plan, and all had observed positive and sustained outcomes in the standard of teaching and learning.
- 2.6 Whilst each of the schools had experienced some challenges over Year 2, none indicated that they had made limited or less progress than expected.

<sup>9</sup> Listed response base is the total number of headteachers who responded by ticking the particular response categories presented above, e.g. 'Started delivering'.

<sup>10</sup> Total response base is the total number of headteachers who have responded by ticking any of the presented options here and those who ticked 'Not Applicable' or 'I am unable to comment'.

**Table 2.2: Stage of implementation and embedding of the HPSS option**

|                        |                              | Stage of implementation  |   |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
|                        |                              | Almost completed implementing the 3-year plan  | Significant progress in implementing the 3-year plan  |
| Progress during Year 2 | More progress than expected  | <b>Beyond initial plans for the HPSS option:</b> <i>“Yes we are almost there... we have worked hard to get to where we are now and certainly I think we have made more progress than we had thought possible.”</i> (Head of specialism)  | <b>Whole school strategic approach:</b> <i>“I think the progress has been massive - what we had described last year were the foundations being put into place. We have a strategic approach to learning and the learning environment and this has been taken forward. Our vision is for a high quality learning environment and everything we do should emanate from that. HPSS has given us the opportunity to do this.”</i> (Headteacher) |
|                        | As much progress as expected | <b>Progress monitored externally:</b> <i>“Last month we had our annual review with the training school consultant. Our main role is to impact on student outcomes and to improve the quality of teaching and staff training. The number of teachers as mentors has increased: 38% in 2006 to 48% now. We are almost there in terms of implementing our plans.”</i> (Director of training school) | <b>Embedding for sustainability:</b> <i>“At this stage - we are very much at the embedding stage - there are so many initiatives and we need to make sure that we’ve got things settled. January is the time that our three specialisms look at what our big programme will be in terms of co-ordinating them all - so we need to come up with the next innovations.”</i> (Director of specialism)  |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

**Integration with initial specialism**

- 2.7 When staff from the initial specialism and HPSS option(s) work together, it can generate a range of benefits for the HPS school. The data suggests that staff with responsibility for implementing the HPSS option can potentially learn from the experiences of those involved in implementing the initial specialism, not least when it comes to developing collaborative arrangements with partner schools and/ or organisations.
- 2.8 The findings from the headteacher survey, illustrated in Table 2.3 indicate that in the vast majority of schools (93% or more), staff from the initial specialism and the HPSS option work together and share experiences. This applies to all schools with a SEN (100%) option, and the vast majority of Non-curricular option schools (98%). In addition, a slightly higher proportion of schools (97%) which re-designated in 2006, or earlier, stated that staff from across the initial specialism and HPSS option(s) work together and share experiences, in comparison to 93% schools which re-designated post-2006. It is important to note that of 204 schools that returned the survey, 128 chose to respond to this question.

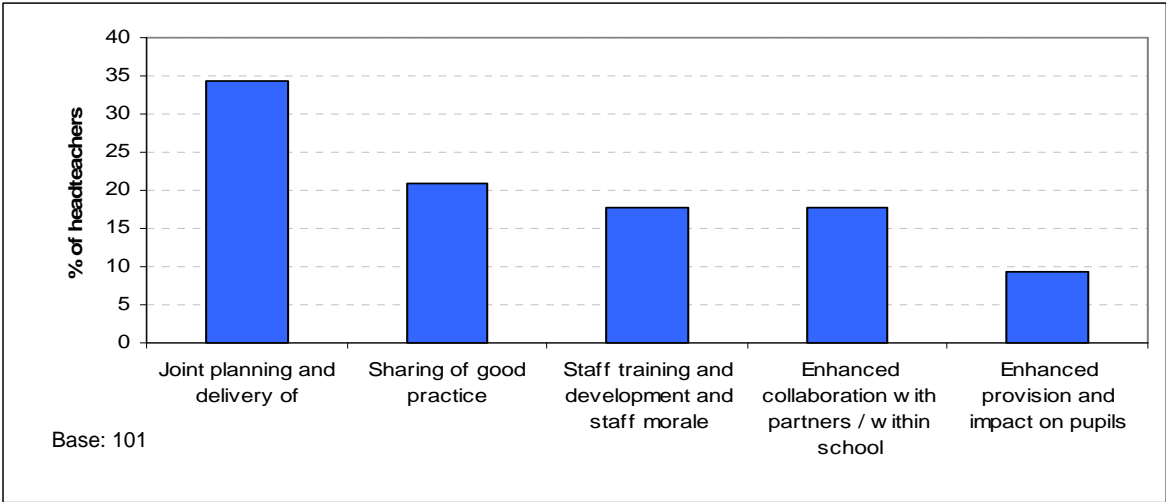
**Table 2.3: Staff from initial specialism and HPSS option working together to share experiences**

|   | Yes  | No | Totals |
|---|------|----|--------|
| <b>HPSS option</b>                            |      |    |        |
| Curricular                                    | 93%  | 7% | 100%   |
| SEN   | 100% | 0% | 100%   |
| Non-curricular                                | 98%  | 2% | 100%   |
| <b>Year of redesignation</b>                  |      |    |        |
| 2006 or earlier                               | 97%  | 4% | 100%   |
| Post-2006                                     | 93%  | 7% | 100%   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                                 | 94%  | 6% | 100%   |
| Listed Response Base:                         | 112  | 11 | 123    |
| <b>Total Response Base<sup>11</sup> = 128</b> |      |    |        |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.  
 Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

2.9 Headteachers were asked to identify positive impacts of the HPSS option for the initial specialism (through an open-ended question). Figure 2.1 summarises the key findings from the headteacher survey. Key findings to highlight are: one-third of respondents stated that it had enabled their staff to jointly plan and deliver elements of the curriculum; one-fifth (20%) stated that it enables their staff to share good practice and learn from each other; and just over one-sixth (17%) stated that staff working across the specialisms (both initial and HPSS) had improved opportunities for staff training and development and improved staff morale and that it enabled enhanced collaboration with partner schools/ organisations and within the school.

**Figure 2.1: Positive impacts of HPSS option on school’s initial specialism**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.  
 Note: Total may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

<sup>11</sup> A total of 128 headteachers ('Aggregate base') responded to this question, which includes a small group of headteachers who indicated that they were '...unable to comment on this area.' If this latter category are excluded, a total of 123 headteachers responded by stating either 'Yes' or 'No'.

2.10 The comments made by headteachers, as illustrated in Table 2.4, support the above data.

**Table 2.4: Positive impacts of HPSS option on school’s initial specialism: headteacher comments**

| Area of positive impact  | Supporting evidence   |
|--|---|
| Sharing good practice  | <i>“We have a ‘joined-up’ approach and are working towards realising the vision we have for our school - that has involved each of the specialisms working closely together.”</i>                           |
| Joint planning and delivery of curriculum                      | <i>“Increased collaboration has enhanced curriculum planning across the school, for example, our second specialism has enabled us to widen curriculum provision within Sport (our initial specialism).”</i> |
| Promoting efficiencies   | <i>“We have linked our training school with the [initial] specialism and have recruited a Director of Specialisms, who manages both.”</i>   |
| CPD and staff morale   | <i>“It has assisted in the training and development of staff who work in this school and staff from our school who work in partner schools.”</i>  |
| Enhanced collaboration with partners and within the HPS school | <i>“The [HPSS] applied specialism has enabled us to create a combined community plan and has allowed us to engage in outreach activities in a broader sense.”</i>   |
| Enhanced provision and impact on pupils                        | <i>“Taking on a vocational [Applied Learning] option has enabled us to increase the range of vocational [Applied learning] courses we provide in the initial specialism.”</i>                               |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

2.11 Headteachers were also asked if they perceived any negative impacts for staff as a result of the two specialisms working together. Of those who responded, 63% stated that there were no negative impacts, whilst one-tenth of headteachers cited workload and resourcing as negative impacts. The remaining respondents identified a number of additional issues; for example, the change in culture required to make collaboration work more effectively.

2.12 The findings from the ten schools visited indicate that staff in each of the specialisms were willing to collaborate across the specialisms to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Interviewees were almost unanimously positive about the benefits of working in this way, although one of the schools visited noted a tension between collaboration and competition (e.g. in terms of two specialisms promoting different subject choices). The following quotations from the school visits provide evidence of the extent to which staff across a number of specialisms are working together to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning for pupils:



**The HPSS option(s) and the initial specialism working together to improve teaching and learning**

*“There have been some whole school development sessions. The second specialism has enriched our provision and has taken us beyond what we were able to do previously.” (Class-based teacher)*

- 2.13 The case study overleaf illustrates how staff across the specialisms are working together to increase curricular options, improve teaching and learning and to offer technological improvements for their pupils across the whole school.

**Case Study: Specialism staff working together to improve curricular provision and the standard of teaching and learning**

**Background:** The school is a large co-educational school where learners arrive with attainment at the national average. The proportion of pupils with Free School Meals is largely in line with the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Approximately one-quarter of students in the school are from ethnic minorities, which rises to 40% in the sixth form. The school has sought to align its specialisms more closely to focus on the improvement of teaching and learning for all students.

**Benefits derived from specialism staff working together**

- **Delivery of more appropriate curriculum for pupils:** *“We’ve increased options by putting on human biology A-level, prompted by conversations with PE specialism staff, who teach a lot of physiology in sports science. They thought kids would not want to take biology with sport, because they were not interested in plant biology.” (Class-based teacher)*
- **Implementation of revised teaching and learning methods:** *“We had to work closely with the sports department to change the way we were teaching. We put funding and staff training and time into improving the delivery of Science A-level to meet the needs of the changed client base. We share good practice particularly with sport and other subjects, to make the delivery of lessons suit more learning styles.” (Class-based teacher)*
- **School wide impact through enhanced ICT systems:** *“We developed a MOODLE site for human biology initially...from there we were able to get other departments on board with the VLE. We have persuaded the head of ICT to ditch [the old VLE] and use MOODLE for the whole school. I and the director of PE launched a programme to help all of the other departments get courses on. From September we had 30 courses on MOODLE. The practice is spreading throughout the school and to all year groups.” (Class-based teacher)*

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

**The HPSS programme and the wider educational agenda in the LA**

- 2.14 Schools are also expected to work alongside Local Authorities in the implementation of their HPSS option. In addition, the HPSS programme is also intended to work in harmony with other key government initiatives and to contribute to the wider educational agenda.
- 2.15 During the school visits, interviewees were asked how embedded they felt their HPSS option was in terms of driving forward collaboration across the Local Authority. Table 2.5 provides evidence of how schools and Local Authorities can work in partnership to deliver the HPSS programme, alongside other education initiatives, such as 14-19, Extended Schools and Every Child Matters.

**Table 2.5: Impact of HPSS on wider Government agendas**

| <b>Area of impact</b>  | <b>Supporting evidence</b>  |
|--|---|
| <b>The 14-19 agenda</b>  |   |
| The HPS school is a major driver for 14-19 reform within the Local Authority   | <i>“My role is to strategically manage 14-19 reforms. I am line managed by (the head) and based at (the school). I do a lot of work in and around the HPS school. It is of great benefit to me to be line managed by (the head). He volunteered to line manage me, because this is not a school that pays lip service to collaboration. It is hard in this borough to work collaboratively because of the diverse types of school there are.” (14-19 Federation Strategy Manager)</i>   |
| <b>Extended Schools provision</b>  |   |
| The HPS school is working with the Local Authority to link collaborative work with Extended Schools provision borough wide             | <i>“...What I can tell you is that all of our high schools have a specialism and it is highly recognised as being an excellent status to hold at LA level. I know that the aim is to raise the profile of the specialism and link this with how Extended Schools provision works. The LA has been very supportive, highly engaged and excellent. There is representation from the LA. We want to know that the specialisms are working in a co-ordinated way.” (Extended Schools Co-ordinator)</i>  |
| <b>Every Child Matters - SEN provision</b>   |   |
| The HPS school is working with the Local Authority to tailor and monitor SEN provision, to ensure consistency and appropriate coverage | <i>“Our role in the Local Authority has made significant impact, for example last year’s conference on ASD was run in conjunction with the LA. They are very supportive of the school’s role and actively seek to extend this, for example, they have a representative on the management board. Our SEN representative is part of the LA outreach strategy group for SEN - meaning that the school has a leading role in the LA.” (Director of Specialism)</i>  |
| <b>Collaboration and partnership</b>   |   |
| Local authorities need to work to create cohesive clusters that work across a range of initiatives                                     | <i>“We work with different groups of schools – because of the different initiatives - e.g. our school is part of Extended Schools cluster and the primary cluster through our initial specialism and also we have a school sports partnership for which we are the hub school. So what we would like to do is to be in a position where we are working with all of these separate initiatives but with the same group of schools. It makes it difficult for us to sustain what we are doing because we are working with different schools much of the time.” (Head of Specialism)</i> |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

# Key achievements and challenges

## Key achievements

2.16 Data on the achievements of the programme are more fully discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, where we present findings on the internal and external impacts of the specialism. Table 2.6 is a summary of what interviewees identified as their overall achievements this year. Overall, the profile of HPS schools has been raised both locally and, in some cases, nationally as a result of being part of the HPS programme.

**Table 2.6: Key achievements in embedding the HPSS option**

| Key achievements  | Supporting evidence  |
|---|--|
| The school is now a model of good practice                | <b>The school is being held up as a model of good practice nationally:</b> “[An organisation] wanted to use the school as a pilot. We feel we are ahead of other schools in terms of implementation and we feel it is because of the expertise we bought with our funding - we spent a lot of our funding on our staffing structure. Also, we were invited as a high performing secondary school to some DCSF seminars in relation to National Challenge.” (Deputy head) |
| High quality staff and a high quality learning experience | <b>The specialism has helped the school to focus its recruitment policies on facilitating a high quality learning experience for students:</b> “Our recruitment procedures have come on massively – and we are getting the right people now to work in our school and we ask ‘what are you going to bring to our aim of delivering a high quality learning experience?’” (Headteacher)   |

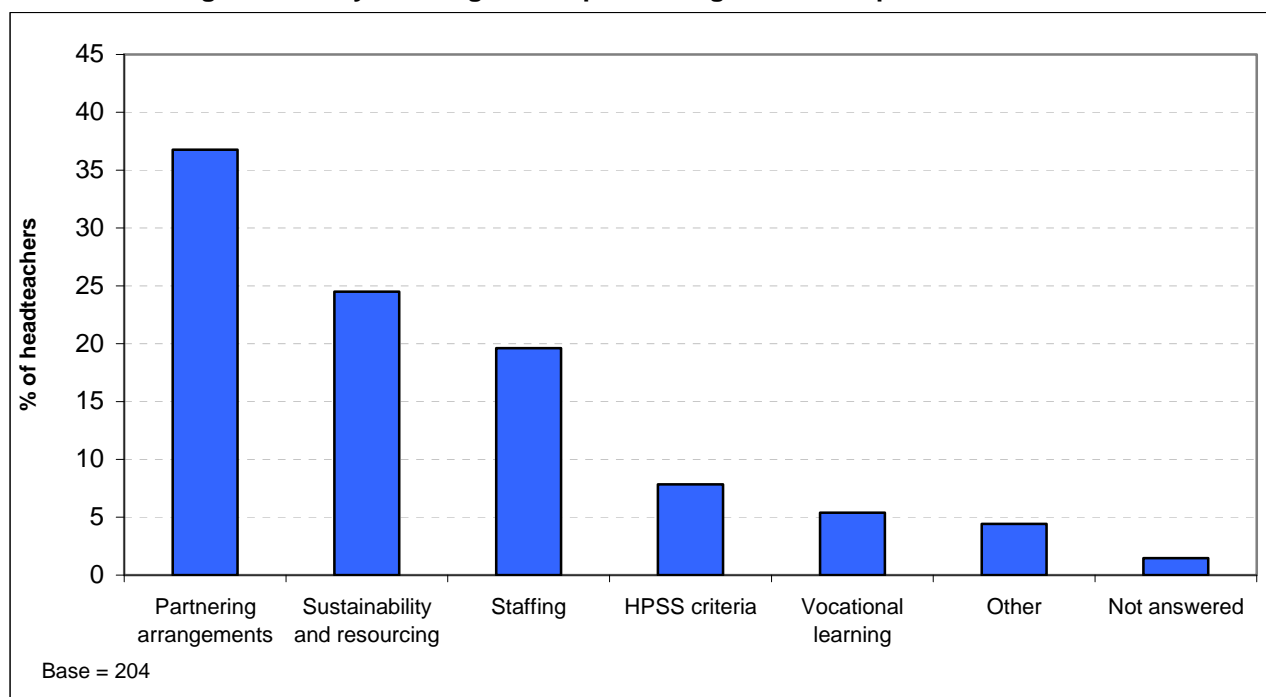
Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

## Challenges

2.17 A number of schools continue to face challenges in implementing their HPSS option(s). Figure 2.2 presents data from the headteacher survey. Key findings include:

- **Sustainability and resourcing** is the most frequently identified challenge, with over one-third (37%) of schools who responded to this question reporting this as a challenge which they face. Sustainability in terms of funding is an area of concern for headteachers, along with concerns in relation to the schools’ ability to meet HPSS criteria on a continuing basis in order to maintain funding;
- The second most important challenge identified by headteachers centres on **partnership and collaboration**. One-fifth (20%) of schools cited issues such as balancing outreach needs with internal pressures and demands and making and sustaining links with partners; and
- A small proportion of schools (4%) indicated that **meeting the requirements of vocational [Applied Learning] courses**, for example enrolment costs and staff training, presents a challenge to progress. There were also challenges around **HPSS criteria for remaining in the programme** (5%).

**Figure 2.2: Key challenges in implementing the HPSS option**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Total may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

2.18 The survey data, as illustrated in Table 2.7, also provided specific examples of the challenges schools have faced in implementing their HPSS option.

**Table 2.7: Challenges in implementation of the HPSS option: headteacher comments**

| Areas of challenge            | Supporting evidence  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Partnering arrangements       | <b>Developing mutual understanding between schools:</b> <i>“Persuading schools that a grammar school such as ours can have an awareness of the needs of an inner-city comprehensive and the strategies to be able to address them is a challenge.”</i>   |
|                               | <b>Prioritising outreach versus internal focus:</b> <i>“Balancing demands of our own school in a fragile staffing environment with the benefits of collaborating with others is a continuing challenge.”</i>   |
| Sustainability and resourcing | <b>Funding continuity:</b> <i>“We need to maintain the targets to achieve and secure the funding. The government raises the bar without taking into account the context. Three-years is not adequate enough to secure and sustain improvement once the initial target is met.”</i>   |
|                               | <b>Available physical space:</b> <i>“Our premises are a challenge. We are not scheduled for BSF for the near future. We’re working with old rooms and equipment.”</i>  |
| Staffing                      | <b>Maintaining a focus on teaching and learning:</b> <i>“Managing the ‘time’ factor. Our staff must not be distracted from their core job of teaching and learning in our school.”</i>   |
|                               | <b>Staffing vocational [Applied Learning] courses:</b> <i>“It is difficult to recruit and retain high calibre staff to ensure the subjects offered are providing the necessary skills and qualifications to secure our young people with lifelong opportunities.”</i>  |
| HPSS criteria                 | <b>Changes to criteria will result in loss of status:</b> <i>“Having achieved 64% A*-C with English and Maths, we will lose the HPSS status because we don’t meet the revised target. Therefore all work will cease and staff will be made redundant. We are very disappointed that there is no account taken of what the HPSS option is achieving in our school.”</i> |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

- 2.19 Nine of the ten schools visited stated they had faced a small number of challenges in embedding their HPSS specialism, with only one school stating it had faced a large number of challenges. The majority of the schools acknowledged that meeting the HPSS criteria had either proved challenging for them, or could prove challenging for other schools wishing to enter or remain in the programme.
- 2.20 This finding is broadly consistent with the findings from the headteacher survey (illustrated above) where sustainability (and resourcing) was rated as the single most important challenge facing schools. In addition, over one-half of the schools visited expressed concerns about meeting the HPSS criteria and three out of ten indicated they are likely to lose their status in the forthcoming year. This challenge was presenting long term strategic and budgetary difficulties for the HPS schools visited, and were likely to impact on staff and student motivation.
- 2.21 In addition to the challenge of sustainability, personnel continuity, collaboration and partnership, and available time were also cited as key challenges to further embedding their HPSS option(s). Table 2.8 outlines the challenges faced.

**Table 2.8: Challenges faced by the ten schools visited**

| <b>Theme</b>                  | <b>Supporting evidence</b>  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| HPSS criteria                 | <b>Good practice is not recognised by the criteria for HPSS, resulting in loss of funding:</b> <i>“It has been so disappointing to find out we have lost our funding, we got 61% [5A*-C GCSE], but they have upped it to 65% this year. We have fought for exceptional circumstances but the loss of status has gutted us. We have to save £90k next year, and year on year. On one hand we are invited up to seminars on how you make it work, and on the other hand the same department is taking your money away.”</i> (Headteacher) |
| Resourcing                    | <b>Finding available time to implement plans is difficult:</b> <i>“I have a big job... I am in charge of personnel, recruitment, salaries, CPD, INSET, Extended Schools, international links, and the specialism. I just don’t have the time to do it all.”</i> (Head of specialism)  |
| Resourcing                    | <b>Progress is being hampered by the BSF process, but it will add value to collaboration when completed:</b> <i>“We are part of BSF and at the moment we have projects on hold because we need to develop the site. We want to launch more community courses and have identified in addition to ICT, cookery, but at the moment we don’t physically have the space – so once we are in the building we feel we will be able to fly.”</i> (Head of specialism)   |
| Resourcing                    | <b>There are challenges around the physical space in the HPS School and this has delayed collaboration with other schools:</b> <i>“The biggest challenge for us is that we are an oversubscribed school with no physical space so finding space has been the major challenge – the space to deliver the plan really is the issue.”</i> (Director of specialism)   |
| Partnership and collaboration | <b>Collaboration with schools in special measures is difficult due to staffing and competition:</b> <i>“We’ve had real problems. The initial link was with a school down the road that is in special measures. After a couple of years of trying, it stopped. We find primaries and businesses easier [to collaborate with.]”</i> (Acting headteacher)  |
| Staffing                      | <b>Lack of personnel impacts on the ability to implement the HPSS programme:</b> <i>“My biggest problem is always personnel – I need a read and recovery teacher and I can’t find one. The problem is that it is not a full time post.”</i> (Coordinator of HPSS option, SLT)   |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

## Summary

2.22 The purpose of this chapter was to examine how well the HPSS programme is embedded nationally. The chapter addressed a number of key issues: stage of implementation; integration with initial specialism; HPSS and the wider educational agenda in the LA; and key challenges and achievements of the programme to date.

2.23 The key findings of this Chapter are as follows:

- Overall, schools have made **good progress towards embedding** their HPSS option(s), with one-half of all schools surveyed having made either significant progress towards achieving this goal or had finished implementing their three-year plan. On balance, schools that re-designated earlier on in the programme have almost finished implementation, although schools describe progress as ongoing. Schools which have a Non-curricular option (68%) have made most progress in terms of embedding their HPSS option. The findings from the school site visits suggests that all schools have as much or more progress than expected - six out of ten schools have reported making significant progress since Year 1, whilst the remaining four schools have almost completed implementation of their 3-year plan;
- Initial specialism staff and HPSS specialism(s) staff are working together in almost all schools (93% or more) to deliver **integrated provision** at some level. This integrated approach takes the form of planning, sharing of ideas and best practice, training opportunities and curriculum delivery, all of which are achieving positive outcomes for both staff and pupils. Almost two-thirds (63%) stated that there were no negative impacts as a result of staff from the initial specialism and HPSS option working together. In terms of negative impacts, one-tenth of headteachers who responded to this question cited workload and resourcing. Evidence from the schools site visits suggests that interviewees were almost unanimously positive about the benefits of the two specialisms working together;
- The HPSS programme is impacting **wider government agendas** through the **collaborative frameworks** within which some schools operate. Where collaboration is well established, the 14-19 reform agenda, the Extended Schools programme and Every Child Matters are all being driven forward across schools, businesses and the wider community. Some of this work is being coordinated at local authority level, with strategic planning and delivery of HPSS taking place alongside other initiatives;
- Schools have recorded many key achievements as a result of the implementation of the HPSS Programme. An overarching achievement of Year 2 has been the **increasing local and national recognition** of HPS schools as centres of excellence and best practice by their local authorities and more widely at a national level; and
- The findings from the headteacher survey suggest that **sustainability and resourcing** (37%) is the most frequently identified **challenge**. One-fifth of headteachers suggested that balancing outreach needs with internal pressures and demands and making and sustaining links with partners was a challenge. A small proportion (5%) of headteachers suggested that the HPSS criteria for remaining in the programme posed an ongoing challenge. The findings from the school site visits are broadly consistent with the findings of the headteacher survey; however, the majority of interviewees expressed concerns about meeting the HPSS criteria.

### 3 Internal impact

#### Introduction

3.1 Our interim report provided strong evidence that schools were benefitting from being part of the HPSS programme. One year on, this section of the report provides further evidence of the positive impact of the programme. This section is structured as follows:

- Raising aspirations, achievement and attainment;
- Curricular choice and personalised learning;
- Impact on staff;
- Teaching and learning; and
- Summary.

#### Raising aspirations, achievement and attainment

3.2 A central aim of the HPSS Programme is to raise standards. Last year approximately two-thirds of headteachers stated that the HPSS programme had contributed to improved pupil attainment and achievement. However, the findings also suggested that it was difficult for schools to isolate the impact (whether positive or negative) of a particular initiative on attainment. This year, a number of HPS schools had collected statistical data which indicated a positive link between the HPSS option and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and raised attainment, as shown in table 3.1. For example, one HPS school had utilised HPSS resources to train up mentors to work with trainee teachers, resulting in measurable improvements in attainment across the school, whilst in another HPS school, Ofsted reports confirmed improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, linked to the training school specialism.

**Table 3.1: Impact of HPSS option on attainment**

| <b>Tracking data confirms direct impact of the HPSS option on attainment - evidence from training schools</b> |  |
|---|--|
| Classes with trained mentors are performing consistently better across the school                             | <i>“Our 2008 exam results were very positive and our CVA improved to 1,013... and the vast majority of teaching groups have positive value added. Classes with the trained mentors perform consistently better in terms of student outcomes than classes of other members of staff.” (Director of training school)</i>   |
| A whole school approach to monitoring the impact  | <i>“We try to take a whole school approach. In science we have done some work to get the numbers up... six trainees a year in science and they work in three groups... they do paired training with certain groups... we try to work out the impact on different groups. In science, there is a value added of +0.4 and without training the value added was +0.26. They support lessons and take lessons and they are also supporting teachers and taking groups out to work on particular areas of the curriculum. Now we are pushing to get trainees into exam classes.” (Director of training school)</i>  |
| Ofsted confirms improvements in the quality of teaching and learning  | <i>“I have statistics relating to the improvements in the quality of teaching... the number of good and outstanding lessons have risen by 14%. We had 72% of lessons good or outstanding and we have done a lot of work to create a database and to use the data. We made sure that the quality of our assessment was rigorous and I have been on Ofsted training and I train middle leaders as well. Ofsted have now rubber stamped that as well. So I can confidently say that the specialism is impacting positively on the quality of teaching and learning. We have made changes in light of evaluations and it will be seen this year in a dramatic way.” (Director of specialism)</i> |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

3.3 Almost two-thirds (64%) of the schools surveyed indicated that the attainment profile of their school had improved since the introduction of HPSS<sup>12</sup>; however, a large proportion of headteachers found it difficult to comment on the direct impact of HPSS status. In summary, Table 3.2 below indicates that:

- The highest proportion (39%) of headteachers who responded to this question believed that less than 25% of the improvement in pupil attainment profile could be attributed to the introduction of the HPSS option;
- Approximately one-quarter (23% and 25%, respectively) of headteachers believed that 'between 50% and 74%' and 'between 25% and 49%' of the improvement in pupil attainment between the time their school re-designated with their first HPSS option and the last school year (2007-08) could be attributed to HPSS; and
- Just over one-tenth (13%) of all headteachers who responded to this question stated that '75% or more' of the improvement in pupil attainment between the time their school re-designated with their first HPSS option and the last school year (2007-08) could be attributed to HPSS.

**Table 3.2: Impact of HPSS status on school attainment profile in 2007-2008**

|                                  | <b>75% or more</b> | <b>Between 50% and 74%</b> | <b>Between 25% and 49%</b> | <b>24% or less</b> | <b>Totals</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>HPSS option</b>               |                    |                            |                            |                    |               |
| Curricular                       | 11%                | 24%                        | 27%                        | 38%                | 100%          |
| SEN                              | 0%                 | 0%                         | 0%                         | 100%               | 100%          |
| Leading                          | 25%                | 25%                        | 13%                        | 38%                | 100%          |
| <b>Year of redesignation</b>     |                    |                            |                            |                    |               |
| 2006 or earlier                  | 16%                | 28%                        | 19%                        | 37%                | 100%          |
| Post 2006                        | 5%                 | 14%                        | 38%                        | 43%                | 100%          |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                    | 13%                | 23%                        | 25%                        | 39%                | 100%          |
| Listed Response Base:            | 8                  | 15                         | 16                         | 25                 | 64            |
| <b>Total Response Base = 109</b> |                    |                            |                            |                    |               |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding

3.4 Schools with two or more HPSS options attributed a greater proportion of their improvement in pupil attainment since re-designation to the impact of their HPSS options. One-third of schools with two or more HPSS options attributed 50% or more of the improvement in their whole school attainment profile to the impact of HPSS, demonstrating the widespread impact of multiple HPSS options at whole school level. This was in comparison with just over 10% of schools with only one HPSS option. It is important to note that half (109) of the schools surveyed responded to this question, with 45 of those indicating that they were unable to comment in relation to this question.

<sup>12</sup> A total of 170 headteachers responded to this question. This excludes those headteachers who responded by stating 'I am unable to comment on this area.'



3.5 Interviewees from the school visits emphasised the joined up approach to improvements in whole school attainment, with most taking the view that all initiatives or programmes fed into overall progress. In addition, some interviewees stated that they were already high achieving by definition and did not expect to see further significant improvements in their attainment profile as a result of their HPSS option. However, other schools, particularly those with a curricular option, reported a measurable impact on pupil attainment as a direct result of the HPSS option. Table 3.3 illustrates a range of views expressed by interviewees:

**Table 3.3: Contribution of the HPSS Programme to raising attainment**

| <b>Key issue</b>  | <b>Supporting evidence</b>   |
|---|--|
| HPS schools are already high achieving by definition                            | <i>"You have to realise that we have always been a very high achieving school and the girls are already extremely motivated to do well."</i> (Headteacher, HPS school)   |
| Attainment is improving in the specialist subject                               | <i>"I can only comment for French and our exam results have shot up - from 65% Grade A at AS level to 85% and, at A Level have improved from 61% to 81%. Languages have such a high profile because of the specialism and because of the kind of girls we get."</i> (Class-based teacher)  |
| A targeted approach to raising attainment with wider benefits across the school | <i>"More generally, maths went up by 10% last year as a direct impact of the specialism. What we have done in Year 10 and Year 11, we have an extra maths teacher to assist disaffected kids... kids who get a [grade] D when you think they could get a [grade] C. We have a young teacher who is a PE teacher with an A level in maths. On the Sunday before the GCSE that group came into school with him and spent the day with him revising. Nine of the group got a higher grade than they would have perhaps otherwise got. Not one of them would have done this well in previous years. And the reports back from the other maths teachers were that their lessons were so much more teachable without that group. So the wider group of pupils also benefited."</i> (Headteacher)   |
| There is pressure on pupils to perform well in the HPSS option                  | <i>"There are increased pressures on us to get top grades and we are expected to do the same or better than last year. There is pressure on us to do well in languages."</i> (Year 10 pupil)   |
| A reluctance to attribute success solely to HPSS status                         | <i>"It has helped... results in both science and maths have gone up; maths more than science. We do a lot of work on collecting data, but then we have to stand back and make qualitative judgements about improvements in attainment and achievement. In education, there are too many variables to think about, which might have an impact on attainment."</i> (Headteacher, HPS school)<br><br><i>"The attainment across the school has improved. This year, 87% of pupils achieved 5 A*-C (including English and maths). Last year, it was in the high 70s. It is difficult to ascertain how much is due to the SEN option specialism, although if we look at the numeracy recovery scheme... students last year started with an average score of 76.4% and moved by end of the year to an average of 84.8% after support had been provided to them."</i> (Director of specialism, HPS school) |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

3.6 Findings from the headteacher survey indicate that the attainment profile in schools with curricular options has measurably improved. Of those who responded to the question, over three-fifths (62%) of respondents from within curricular HPSS option schools indicated that the attainment profile for subjects covered by the specialism has improved greatly or improved slightly. Notably, curricular schools are able to isolate the impact of the specialism more easily than Non-curricular or SEN option schools, where the specialism more often operates at a whole school level, and consequently impact occurs more often at whole school level. A much higher proportion of schools (79%) which re-designated in 2006 or earlier indicated that the attainment profile of the subjects covered by the specialism had either improved greatly or improved slightly, in comparison to 42% of schools which had re-designated post 2006. This suggests a link between the length of time in the programme and improvements in pupil attainment. The above findings are illustrated in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4: Impact of HPSS status on the attainment profile of subjects covered by the HPSS option in 2007-2008**

|                                  | Yes, it has improved greatly | Yes, it has improved slightly | It has broadly stayed the same | No, it has got slightly worse | No, it has got a lot worse | Totals |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| <b>HPSS option</b>               |                              |                               |                                |                               |                            |        |
| Curricular                       | 23%                          | 39%                           | 33%                            | 4%                            | 1%                         | 100%   |
| SEN                              | n/a                          | n/a                           | n/a                            | n/a                           | n/a                        | n/a    |
| Non-curricular                   | 20%                          | 30%                           | 50%                            | 0%                            | 0%                         | 100%   |
| <b>Year of redesignation</b>     |                              |                               |                                |                               |                            |        |
| 2006 or earlier                  | 33%                          | 46%                           | 18%                            | 3%                            | 0%                         | 100%   |
| Post 2006                        | 12%                          | 30%                           | 52%                            | 5%                            | 2%                         | 100%   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                    | 23%                          | 38%                           | 34%                            | 4%                            | 1%                         | 100%   |
| Listed Response Base:            | 29                           | 48                            | 43                             | 5                             | 1                          | 126    |
| <b>Total Response Base = 126</b> |                              |                               |                                |                               |                            |        |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

3.7 A further finding to emerge from the school visits suggests that HPS schools with a SEN option may experience a change in the profile of their pupil intake, directly linked to their HPSS status. The following example in table 3.5 illustrates the benefits and challenges associated with moving towards a more comprehensive pupil intake, linked to the specialism.

**Table 3.5: Impact of HPSS on SEN option HPS schools**

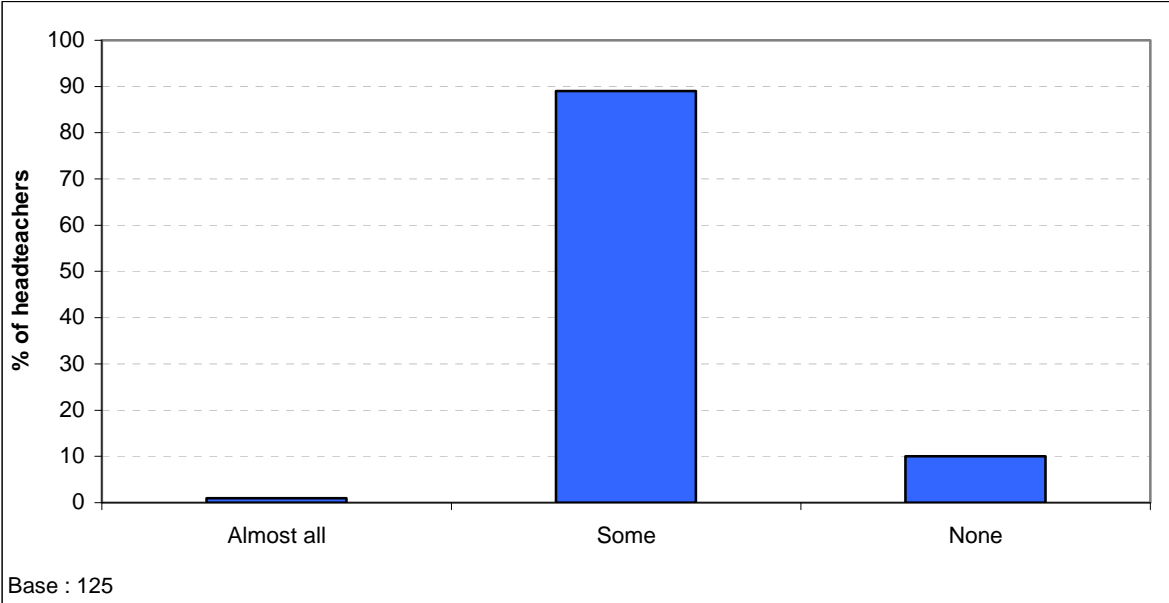
| <b>Broadening the intake of pupils through the HPSS option – a mixed blessing</b> |   |
|---|---|
| A more comprehensive intake   | <i>“One of the things that has happened to us as a school is that we have become more comprehensive as a school. In the current Year 11 cohort, two kids arrived. Both were non-attendees in their previous schools and one had been permanently excluded from another school they had attended. By providing support and the necessary facilities, parents are telling me that we are really good with kids that have special needs and our reputation is growing in this area.” (Headteacher)</i> |
| A ‘what works best’ approach to SEN   | <i>“For SEN kids there has been some changes in the way we work. Previously, all the support for pupils was out of the classrooms. Now we look at what is the best way of supporting the pupil... sometimes it is in the classroom with a TA but in other cases the best way is to have a one-to-one or one-to-three support. So the systems of working have changed and widened.” (Headteacher)</i>  |
| Raised aspirations for disaffected pupils   | <i>“[The HPSS option] has had an impact on aspirations... and I can talk about this... two would have been permanently excluded in previous years... one came back and told us he can’t believe the turn around in his life. We paid him into the RAISE project (a local centre... not the high pressure environment of school) and that worked for him personally.” (Headteacher)</i>  |
| Success with SEN options may signal ‘failure’                                     | <i>“Probably the big impact is that success with our specialism (drawing a wider range of SEN pupils) dooms us to failure really. We will lose our funding in August next year because we didn’t hit an attainment indicator. The more successful we get with the SEN kids, the more it will impact negatively on our results.” (Director of specialism)</i>  |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

**Motivation and behaviour**

3.8 Strong pupil aspirations are a key feature of school improvement. The evidence from HPS school visits indicates that the implementation of the specialist option is impacting positively on pupil motivation and behaviour. For schools where improvements in motivation and behaviour were identified, the headteacher survey asked how much of that improvement could be attributed to the programme. Figure 3.1 illustrates that the vast majority of schools (89%) attributed some of the improvement in behaviour and motivation to the introduction of the HPSS option, with 10% of respondents attributing all of the improvement to the introduction of HPSS option. As with questions about changes in pupil attainment profiles, it is important to note that only 125 schools out of 206 chose to respond. This suggests schools may find it difficult to attribute positive outcomes solely to the HPSS option.

**Figure 3.1: Attribution of improvements in pupils’ motivation and behaviour to the HPSS programme**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.  
Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

3.9 In some cases, the data suggests that improved motivation is linked to pupils being exposed to a greater range of opportunities, both inside and outside school, as these can positively influence attitudes and create a feeling of anticipation and enthusiasm. In other cases, interviewees suggested that there is simply a sense of pride in being part of a HPS school. The data also points to some positive spin-offs for pupil behaviour directly linked to the HPSS option, described in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6: Impact of HPSS on pupil motivation and behaviour**

| <b>Key finding</b>                  | <b>Supporting evidence</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Increased enthusiasm and confidence | <i>“Certainly enthusiasm has increased and the activities [we provide as part of the HPSS option] help this... the additional funding has facilitated this and this has made a difference.”</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
| Improved behaviour                  | <i>“The science results have always been brilliant here, but you can also look at behaviour logs and examine whether pupils are taken out of lessons, for example, which we do. Pupils like their science lessons... they talk about science... the issue of lack of motivation does not come through in science. If they have enrichment opportunities, it allows a relationship to develop, and that is bound to have an impact. This is a positive bonus in the classroom.”</i> (Deputy headteacher) |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

3.10 Responses from the headteacher survey reinforce the evidence from school visits. This points to a broader range of positive spin-offs linked to the range of HPSS options. These include personalised learning, improved teaching and learning and improved facilities as illustrated in Table 3.7.

**Table 3.7: Other positive spin-offs of the HPSS option contributing to improved motivation and / or behaviour**

| <b>HPSS Option</b>                      | <b>Supporting evidence</b>  |
|---|---|
| Curricular                              | <b>Personalised learning:</b> <i>“Differentiation and personalisation in English have increased, improving students' motivation, enjoyment and behaviour. In citizenship, the active learning has promoted students' sense of urgency.”</i>                     |
|   | <b>Extra and cross curricular opportunities:</b> <i>“Cross-curricular and curriculum enrichment opportunities have focused the pupils' learning and they are showing signs of greater independence and social skills.”</i>                                      |
|   | <b>Gifted and talented challenge:</b> <i>“The awarding of languages as a second specialism increases confidence in these subjects and the creditability of the school to support high achievement.”</i>   |
| Curricular (applied)                    | <b>Personalised curriculum:</b> <i>“The increased offer of applied qualifications (e.g. BTEC) has significantly impacted on student skill level, motivation and achievement... there has been a larger take up of BTEC Acting (Drama) than at GCSE.”</i>        |
| Non-curricular option - training school | <b>Improved teaching and learning:</b> <i>“The role of training teachers in the school, combined with strengthened professional development, has improved students' experiences.”</i>   |
|   | <b>Pupil leadership development:</b> <i>“The impact of leadership development is considerable. Pupils are assuming more responsibility in school... they are more independent and more motivated to develop leadership skills in themselves and in others.”</i> |
| SEN                                     | <b>Behaviour policy:</b> <i>“A new behaviour policy has been introduced, and students have been given leadership opportunities.”</i>  |
|   | <b>Improved facilities:</b> <i>“Better facilities, accreditation options and enrichment activities funded through HPSS have all added to improvements in motivation.”</i>   |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

**Enhancing career options**

3.11 Schools are using their HPSS option to enhance pupils’ future career opportunities. This is being achieved through raising awareness of alternative career pathways, stimulating staff to focus their teaching on wider career pathways, and enabling pupils to progress to university who might not have otherwise done so. Over two-thirds (67%) of headteachers who responded to the question indicated that career options were improving for *some* pupils, with 10% of those indicating that career opportunities had improved for *all* pupils in their own school. Additional evidence from the school site visits is provided in Table 3.8.

**Table 3.8: The impact of the HPSS option on career opportunities for pupils**

| Key finding  | Supporting evidence  |
|--|--|
| Encouraging pupils to explore a teaching career                              | “...we have a few initiatives where students explore the teaching career. Last year, we had a group of six Year 9 students observing lessons and they have been really inspired by that. We are starting that again this year... they volunteer and apply for it. This year, two of the six pupils from last year will lead sessions this year... they are student learning partners.” (Director of training school) |
| Stimulating staff to think in more detail about career pathways for students | “The fact that we are a specialist college gets us to think about careers for girls and university courses and the girls will ask what are my career options? Also we are looking at work experience abroad linked to languages. In French, one of our girls is doing work experience and we are also in the process of looking at an exchange partner for this subject.” (Class-based teacher, HPSS)                |
| Enabling pupils to progress to university                                    | “Several parents came and said their daughters didn’t want to leave, so we put on two applied A levels in health and social care and early years. Each of these has a huge law and psychology component which brings an academic strength to the courses. These girls came with very few GCSEs, and four of them progressed through to AS and A level. Two went on to university.” (Class-based teacher)             |
| Raising awareness of wider career options                                    | “We are currently involved in the Investors in Careers award; it is an IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) health check, to recognise the good quality work we do to support students’ aspirations and career choices.” (Assistant headteacher)   |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

**Broadening opportunities for pupils outside the classroom**

3.12 Building partnerships beyond the school is key to supporting learning in the classroom and enhancing pupil well-being. A number of HPS schools are utilising the specialism to increase opportunities for the personal development of pupils, which extends to activities and experiences outside the classroom. The following case study provides an example of how future leadership skills are being nurtured as a direct result of the HPSS option.

### **Case Study: Training pupils as future leaders beyond the classroom**

**School background:** The school is a mixed foundation school for students aged 11-18. It is over-subscribed with 1613 on roll and is bigger than most secondary schools nationally. The school has a large sixth-form of just over 500 students, about a third of whom join from other schools at the start of Year 12. The socio-economic background of most of the school's population is below average; the proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (at around 25 per cent) is above the national average.

**The school is undertaking a number of initiatives through its HPSS option to increase leadership training opportunities for pupils, who go onto to become training ambassadors:**

**A hub school for student voice:** *"Pupils visited Australia and delivered a training session to the Australian Council for Education Leaders in Melbourne. All year groups are involved and the junior leadership team in the school is represented."* (Head of specialism)

*"Our student voice project won an award. We have some great academic students who get lots of opportunities to go on trips."* (Class-based teacher)

**Pupils involved in training internationally and in the UK:** *"...Pupils have also been to Rome and trained headteachers there. They led a video conferencing training session in USA, and a series of workshops in Birmingham. They also led our international conference here and people from all over the world attended."* (Head of specialism)

**Pupils exposed to a range of environments and teaching methods:** *"... We took pupils to visit another school and their task was what we could learn from that school. We took pupils to an independent school last year where they observed lessons and were able to comment on the different styles of teaching. Speakers from a wide range of backgrounds talked about running a school. On Friday evening there was a session on the ethics of leadership... the person who led the training on ethics and leadership was so blown away he wants to do more work with us."* (Head of specialism)

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

- 3.13 HPSS pupils are continuing to benefit positively from partnerships with schools and from increased opportunities for school trips and work experience, linked to the HPSS option.

### **Enhancing and broadening the learning experience of pupils**

*"We learn how to cope with little kids. You have to practise your own science before you go, and there is a big difference between what we have learned in secondary and what they do in primary. The primary kids listened which was really nice. We had 4 or 5 year olds and we had to get them involved, so we picked sound as a topic and played games with them."* (Year 10 pupil)

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

## Curricular choice and personalised learning

### Curricular choice

- 3.14 Last year, over 90% of headteachers who were interviewed as part of the school site visits believed that the curricular choice available to pupils had improved as a result of the HPSS option and a similar proportion (90%) agreed that it had provided more personalised learning opportunities. This year, the research provides further examples of how the HPSS programme is enabling schools to offer a wider range of curricular options to pupils that better fit with their learning style and needs.
- 3.15 This year, the headteacher survey indicates that the curricular offer has diversified, with new vocational [Applied Learning] courses, advanced interest subjects, such as Law and Psychology, and a breadth of non-traditional languages such as Japanese and Mandarin, being offered.
- 3.16 In addition, of those who responded to the question, over three-quarters (81%) of headteachers indicated that the HPSS programme has enabled them to provide a more personalised curriculum for pupils ‘to some extent’ or ‘to a large extent’ for pupils in their own school. Examples of curriculum breadth and personalisation that emerged from the school site visits are provided in Table 3.9.

**Table 3.9: Impact of HPSS on personalization**

| <b>Widening curricular options for pupils in HPS schools</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| Meeting the needs of EAL pupils                                | <i>“We encourage any students with EAL to take their native language to get a qualification in it. A number of other secondary schools are now doing this as a result. We encourage pupils to find a teacher in the community, and pay for the exam entry.” (Headteacher)</i>   |
| Broadening the range of subjects taught through staff training | <i>“The NQT programme is brilliant. If you put effort into teachers, the payback for the curriculum and students is excellent.. You can’t pull training away from the curriculum.” (Class-based teacher)</i>  |
| Offering more appropriate courses for all pupils at GCSE       | <i>“At KS4 we now offer six GCSEs instead of four. Pupils who did a core GCSE in Year 10 might have got an E or a D; then they did the applied course in their second year and got a C or a B, some even got an A. The applied course is more vocational for kids who don’t want to go on to traditional science A level courses.” (Director of specialism)</i> |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

- 3.17 Offering a broader and more personalised curriculum targets both Gifted and Talented and SEN students. Almost all headteachers (96%) that responded to survey questions indicated some overall improvement in the provision for Gifted and Talented pupils, with just under one-quarter (23%) of those indicating a large overall improvement in provision. In terms of provision for pupils with SEN, 92% of headteachers, indicated some improvement in the level of provision for these pupils, with one-fifth (20%) of headteachers indicating that provision has improved to ‘a large extent.’ Table 3.10 provides some of the specific examples generated by the survey.



**Table 3.10: The impact of the HPSS option on the provision for Gifted and Talented pupils and pupils with Special Educational Needs**

| Gifted and talented  | SEN   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“There is a fast track route to GCSE at KS4, and the opportunity for students to design primary outreach programmes.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“There is a Gifted and Talented summer school, curriculum enrichment programme, KS3 accelerated learning curriculum, and we also have a STEM club.”</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“This year we have been able to offer Level 1 vocational [Applied Learning] courses with appropriate integrated support for SEN pupils.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Under RAP, we are trialling a new focus on literacy within the school before offering it to other schools. This will have a beneficial effect on many pupils, including those with SEN.”</i></li> </ul> |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

### Uptake of curricular options

3.18 In addition, there is evidence of a positive impact on the uptake of particular curricular options in some HPS schools which, in some instances, may have previously struggled to get buy-in from pupils. The headteacher survey revealed that almost three-quarters (74%) of curricular option schools reported increased uptake in subjects covered by the option. The impact of this was seen far less by schools with a SEN or Non-curricular option, as their options tend not to have subject specific impact. In a number of schools with a strong focus on pupil voice, pupils are directly involved in re-designing particular aspects of the curriculum. The examples in table 3.11 emerged from the school visits:

**Table 3.11: Impact of HPSS on curricular uptake**

| Increased uptake and breadth of choice        |  |
|---|--|
| Increasing the uptake of less popular options | <i>“We have tried to increase Biology uptake in 6th form. It has been helped by the specialism in that there is greater awareness amongst the school community of the importance of science. We are a leading department in the school, and it has encouraged more pupils to take science options.”</i> (Head of department, HPS school) |
| Re-designing the curriculum                   | <i>“With our work on pupil voice and directive learning and our questionnaires in history and citizenship, pupils have almost re-designed the curriculum.”</i> (Class-based teacher)   |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

### Personalised learning

3.19 Personalised learning is a key Government priority. Personalised learning involves high quality teaching that is responsive to the different ways students achieve their best. There is an acknowledgement that in order to build a successful system of personalised learning, every single child must be given the opportunity to reach their full potential, whatever their talent or background<sup>13</sup>. Both the quantitative and qualitative evidence confirm that the HPSS programme is enabling schools to contribute effectively to this in a range of ways.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/personalisedlearning/about/>

3.20 For example, the following case study describes how one school has used its funding to create a purpose-built room to encourage and enable a personalised approach to learning for all pupils in the school.

**A purpose built room for all pupils**  
*"We now have a purpose built resource room which is a fantastic - it has already made a difference. It contributes to personalised learning for everyone, including gifted and talented pupils. At lunch time it is used for homework and is there for an extra resource."* (Class-based teacher)

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

3.21 In addition, some HPS schools are using their resources to specifically target individual pupils in order to improve their learning experience, as the example in table 3.13 illustrates from one HPS school with a SEN option:

**Table 3.13 Improved learning experiences**

| <b>Reaping the rewards of a targeted approach – evidence from a school with a SEN option</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Increasing the confidence of individual pupils   | <i>"One of my pupils is dyslexic, and he has SEN support, and another girl we are working with has EAL. We were talking about poetry, and I asked them to pick two poems, one they liked and one they disliked. It was magical as the dyslexic child put his hand up to read, and the other EAL pupil did the same, and then a pupil who is a good reader also offered to read. It was lovely to hear them as they talked about the words... it was a precious moment for me and the TA. It is the work with individual pupils that makes a real difference."</i> (Class teacher)   |
| A strategic approach to addressing the needs of individual pupils                            | <i>"Another TA and I work with a GCSE pupil in our group who has specific needs. He has a problem following instructions, and he can't break down targets. The TA and I have worked very closely together. We looked at his Year 9 SATS results and talked about his targets and how we would highlight the problems with his work, for example not using red pens for corrections. We informed his parents of our strategy and his coursework went from a low D grade to a C grade and this was a direct result of our work. It is just great to have the resources to be able to make a difference to individual pupils."</i> (Class-based teacher) |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

**Impact on staff**

3.22 This year's research provides additional evidence that the HPSS programme is impacting positively in the areas of CPD, staff workload, recruitment and retention.

**Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

3.23 Last year's research highlighted that schools were positive about the opportunities that the programme had provided to enhance and extend training and development opportunities for school staff. Approximately four-fifths of headteachers indicated that training and development opportunities had improved as a direct result of involvement in the programme.

3.24 One year on, staff are continuing to benefit from a range of CPD opportunities directly linked to the HPSS option. Figure 3.2 shows that as well as providing increased funding, benefits include a more focused approach to CPD, increased career opportunities and training staff to be leaders in their field.

**Figure 3.2: The impact of HPSS on CPD**



3.25 In addition, almost all (95%) schools that responded to the headteacher survey indicated that HPSS status had directly led to enhanced CPD provision for staff and that this was effective or very effective in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in their school. The examples in table 3.14 were cited by headteachers in the survey:

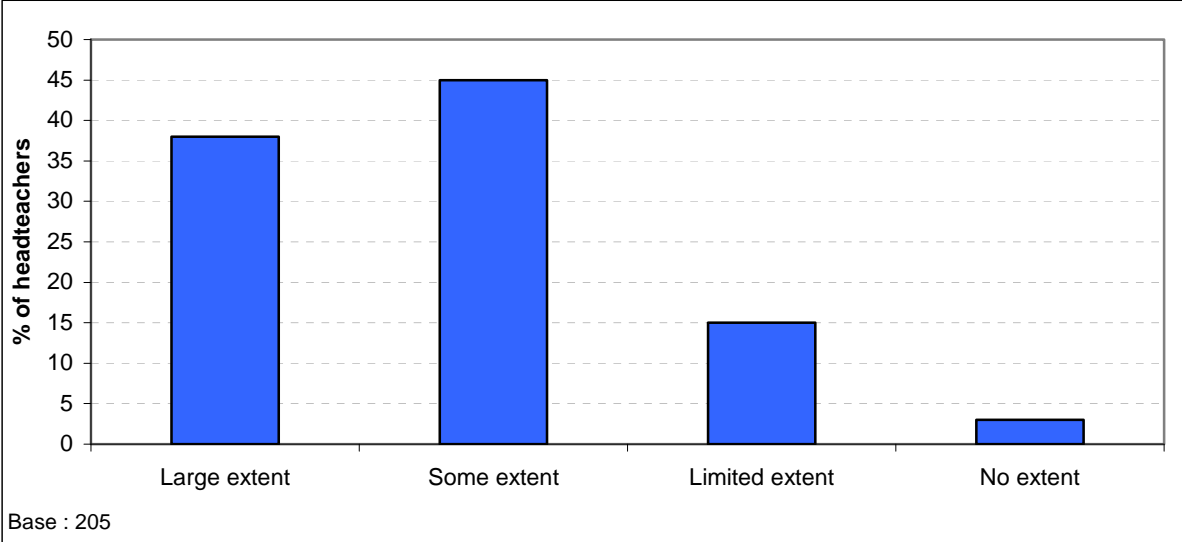
**Table 3.14: Impact of improved CPD**

| <b>Improved quality of lesson delivery</b>       |   |
|--|---|
| Tangible impact on attainment and lesson quality | <i>"There have been improved levels of attainment in the specialist subjects within school, and also an improved number of 'good' or 'outstanding' lesson observations as a result of CPD."</i>   |
| Whole school impact of enhanced CPD              | <i>"CPD experiences have been shared through four strategic development groups to involve all staff looking at improving teaching and learning."</i>  |
| Clear impact on pupil engagement and skills      | <i>"Pupils have been more practically engaged in their learning." Staff are now trained in the practice of identifying and encouraging leadership and learning skills amongst pupils. This has led to a student cohort which is more self-reliant."</i> |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

3.26 Of those who responded, 75% of headteachers in schools with an SEN option and 69% of schools with a Non-curricular option agreed 'to a large extent' that HPSS had led directly to enhanced CPD opportunities. In contrast, just over one quarter (28%) of headteachers in schools with curricular options shared this sentiment, thus demonstrating whole school impact on training and development is less evident in schools with a curricular HPSS option. Figure 3.3 shows the impact of CPD on staff in HPS schools.

**Figure 3.3: Impact of CPD on staff in HPS schools**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.  
 Note: Total may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

**Staff workload**

3.27 Last year’s findings indicated that whilst workload appeared to have increased in around two-thirds of the schools visited, enhanced job satisfaction more than offset the challenges this provided.

3.28 This year’s findings from school site visits provide a mixed picture about the impact of the HPSS programme on staff workload. For some HPSS staff there has been an increase in workload as a direct result of the responsibilities associated with the specialism. For others, whilst workload has increased, similar to last year’s findings, it is manageable due to the support provided, and it is not generally resented by staff. In addition, some staff suggested that their workload had actually decreased linked to the HPSS option, as a result of CPD, additional support from Teaching Assistants and the recruitment of additional staff. Table 3.15 outlines the impact on staff workload.

**Table 3.15: Impact of HPSS on staff workload within the HPSS school**

| <b>Theme</b>   | <b>Qualitative evidence</b>   |
|--|---|
| <b>Workload has increased as a direct result of the HPSS specialism</b>            |   |
| The additional work falls to the head of specialism                                | <i>"The Director of Specialism does the bulk of the work, so he may say differently, but across specific staff, increased workload is limited because they do so much within their subject area anyway, and always have."</i> (Headteacher)   |
| More generally staff workload has increased  | <i>"Yes I am in a difficult position as I am the only one teaching my subject and trying to manage my language within the language specialism as well. I have an assistant... but there is no team teaching... I teach four lessons but plan five lessons. It is tough."</i> (Class-based teacher)  |
| A lack of time and cover to implement the specialism                               | <i>"Workload has increased to a large extent... there's not enough free time to organise activities to do with the specialism. More money needs to be released to pay for more cover lessons, and to give time to those in charge. There is so much more that could be done."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
| HPSS has brought additional responsibilities                                       | <i>"The HPSS option brings responsibility, if you have a conscience. As a specialist department you need to organise things. Every lunchtime there is something on; it's a big impact on your life. It is a direct result of wanting to do our best."</i> (Head of department)  |
| <b>Increased workload is not resented and is generally manageable with support</b> |   |
| Positive feedback  | <i>"Workload has increased, but the pressure is ok...it is enjoyable. My workload is huge... I line manage 12 people. It is stressful but it is manageable and I am really well supported. 'Person A' is fantastic and is so lovely and I always get positive feedback."</i> (Class-based teacher with responsibility for training)   |
| Appropriate CPD  | <i>"It has increased the NQT workload compared to other schools but we are given a 10% reduction in their timetable by law already... so not in comparison to other teachers. We do after school INSET and dedicate an hour each week to this, so they don't see it as a big sacrifice, rather supporting their career."</i> (Class-based teacher)  |
| <b>Workload has decreased for some HPSS staff as a result of the specialism</b>    |   |
| Support from well trained TAs  | <i>"I don't think it has increased my workload. If your TA is doing worksheets your workload is actually reduced. The impact on the whole class is that when you do guided work with all of your pupils your TA is more competent and the pupils know this... the class is confident to talk to me or to them and I can have my time with my specific group of pupils."</i> (Class-based teacher) |
| Additional staff; reduced workload.  | <i>"I think we have worked hard to ensure that workload hasn't increased... our outreach worker has taken on the load of work... and there is good admin support as well. The deputy director of specialism... she was deputy SENCO... and she extended her role to take on this, just before the conference last year."</i> (Director of specialism)   |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

### **Recruitment and retention of staff**

- 3.29 Last year, there was a mixed response from research participants in the school visits as to whether involvement with the HPSS programme had improved the recruitment and retention of staff. Approximately one-half of interviewees stated that it had improved and the other one-half stated that it had stayed the same.
- 3.30 This year's findings from the school site visits provide clear evidence of direct positive impact on recruitment and retention. However, as was suggested by some interviewees, HPSS is not as big a factor as it could be in terms of recruitment, due to a general lack of information about the HPSS programme and the benefits that staff can derive from working in HPS schools. In addition, whilst there is clear evidence that the

programme provides additional resources for training staff, this may have the unintended outcome of enabling staff to move on and take up higher paid posts in other schools, thereby negatively impacting on retention. Table 3.16 outlines the impact on recruitment and retention.

**Table 3.16: Impact of HPSS on recruitment and retention**

| <b>Theme</b>   | <b>Qualitative evidence</b>   |
|--|---|
| Some direct impact on recruitment and retention                  | <b>The specialist status is a strong motivator for staying at school:</b> <i>"From my point of view, it (specialist status) keeps me here, I know there are opportunities in business but specialist status is a strong motivator. It makes work more interesting and the courses are more suitable."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
|  | <b>The SEN specialism attracts and retains staff who want to work in that area:</b> <i>"In terms of TAs, only one left last year who went on to ITT. We advertised and had over 80 applications, so I would say it has had a massive impact on recruitment. They know about the specialism...and if they have an interest in Aspergers, that's why they are applying."</i> (Deputy director of specialism)  |
|  | <b>HPSS has provided funding for promotions:</b> <i>"HPSS has enabled staff to stay if they want to. There are more posts... the AST post has just been created. We have a teacher doing primary school links, that's a motivational factor for her development. Other people could have left, but they knew opportunities were coming, for example, coordinator roles."</i> (Class-based teacher)  |
|  | <b>Training opportunities for staff has had an impact on retention:</b> <i>"It has helped retention. We recruit a lot of our trainees... every year for the last eight to nine years up to three trainees have been recruited. I have a list of 15 people who are in their second to fifth year... they are still here and in promoted posts. We can't think of a single person who has left teaching who was here or has had a side-ways move elsewhere."</i> (Director of specialism) |
| Potential for more impact if wider knowledge about the programme | <b>HPSS could be more of a drawing factor:</b> <i>"Personally, having just come to the school that was one of the factors I was looking for. I wouldn't have been so keen to relocate. If you know what the specialism is about, and you have worked within it, it is definitely a draw, but not everybody knows this."</i> (Director of specialism)  |
| Retention of staff – mixed outcomes                              | <b>Staff are developed and then they move on:</b> <i>"It has provided staff with career opportunities to move on, but there are staff who want to stay here as we have had the chance to put AST posts in science. HPSS is a double-edged sword."</i> (Deputy head)   |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

3.31 Findings from the headteacher survey reveal a more consistent picture of positive impact on recruitment and retention:

- Just over three-fifths (61%) of all respondents agree or agree strongly that HPSS status has led to improvements in staff recruitment;
- Just under three-fifths (59%) agree or strongly agree that HPSS status has led to improvements in staff retention; and
- Positive responses – in relation to retention were highest from non-curricular option schools (76%), compared to 55% for schools with curricular options.

- 3.32 The case study overleaf provides evidence from one school of the potential of the programme to impact positively on recruitment and retention, especially when there is awareness amongst staff of the direct benefits of being part of a HPS school.

### **Case Study: HPSS a key driver in recruiting and retaining high quality staff**

#### **Background**

The school is a larger than average selective school with a sixth form. Students come to the school from around 40 primary schools in the area. Students are predominantly of White British heritage and there are very few for whom English is not their first language. The proportion of students entitled to Free School Meals is low. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also low. The school has a curricular HPSS option.

#### **Increased recruitment and retention**

- *“For shorter initiatives we use recruitment and retention points... up to a maximum of three-years. What is missing from structure of pay is the ability to be flexible in awarding money. The government need to look at how you use money flexibly.”* (Headteacher)
- *“We can give staff points to develop initiatives whereas in the past we couldn’t do this. It was difficult to get people to organise things... now others can take it on and get recognised for that.”* (Class-based teacher)
- *“If you look at the profile of the quality of staff we have recruited it is amazing. They are excited by the projects they are involved in.”* (Line manager for specialism)

#### **The retention of good quality younger staff linked to support and development**

- *“My department are fairly young and enthusiastic and they know that the money is there to develop them if they want to do something.”* (Class-based teacher)
- *“People in science realise that in comparison to schools without a specialism, we are in a good position, as within the first year every science lab had an IWB linked to a networked computer.”* (Assistant headteacher)

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

## **Teaching and learning**

- 3.33 One of the key aims of HPSS is to strengthen and develop the quality of teaching and learning. As discussed above, the programme is enabling schools to raise the aspirations of pupils, broaden the curriculum they offer, allow teachers to focus more on personalised learning and improve the CPD opportunities they can afford to staff. All of this is contributing positively to improving the quality of teaching and learning, as demonstrated in Table 3.17.

**Table 3.17: The impact of HPSS on teaching and learning**

| <b>Factors contributing to teaching and learning</b> | <b>Qualitative evidence</b>   |
|--|---|
| <b>Improved staff aspirations resulting in...</b>    |   |
| Greater pupils' enthusiasm                           | <i>"In a sense we try to harness pupils' enthusiasm and enable them to do better... their quality of learning increases. Classroom observations by students is an amazing programme and it is having great results."</i> (Class-based teacher)  |
| Better relationships between staff and pupils        | <i>"I think it is a challenging school and has challenging behaviour and it pushes your teaching on as you have to make it more engaging and the relationship with pupils is key. You have to work with that... even eye contact and remembering things about them is important."</i> (Newly Qualified Teacher) |
| <b>A broader curriculum resulting in...</b>          |   |
| Improved attendance                                  | <i>"...fewer students are opting out of school because they have access to more appropriate courses and subjects..."</i> (Headteacher)  |
| Wider options, more buy-in, and better results       | <i>"Their options have opened up immensely, with the new curriculum at KS4. We now have so many pupils doing three separate sciences and all but one got A's or A*."</i> (Head of department)   |
| <b>More personalised learning, resulting in...</b>   |   |
| A sense of ownership                                 | <i>"I think it is about giving the child ownership of their learning... they want to have an input in what they are taught and it has a great impact... they are more confident."</i> (Class-based teacher, former TA)  |
| A range of learning styles                           | <i>"There are good learning styles in operation. In an earlier Ofsted, they questioned the quality of teaching in large parts of the school, and now it has been improved."</i> (Headteacher)   |
| A strategic approach to learning                     | <i>"We have a strategic approach to learning and the learning environment. Our vision is for a high quality learning environment and everything we do should emanate from that. HPSS has given us the opportunity to do this."</i> (Headteacher)  |
| <b>Effective CPD resulting in...</b>                 |   |
| Alternative and flexible teaching methods            | <i>"We were told very early on what a 'dyslexia-friendly' classroom should look like through training, and we know how to deliver for different teaching and learning styles and the use of laptops... it is a flexible provision."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
| More motivated staff                                 | <i>"Yes... we now have more motivated and better trained staff and learning is more enjoyable as a result."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
| Outstanding teachers                                 | <i>"The number of teachers assessed as good or outstanding has increased from 62% to 68% The whole idea is to improve learning and teaching... a lot is going on in terms of learning..."</i> (Head of specialism)  |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

- 3.34 Evidence from the headteacher's survey reinforces the findings from school visits, with 95% of headteachers stating that the impact of CPD on the quality of teaching and learning in schools is effective or very effective. In addition, of those headteachers who responded, in excess of three-quarters (78%) stated that teachers use a greater range of teaching methods to some extent or to a large extent as a result of the HPSS option. Good practice examples from the survey are provided in table 3.18:



**Table 3.18: Impact of HPSS option on teaching and learning**

| <b>Positive impacts on staff leading to improved practice</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Focus on teaching and learning methods and delivery           | <i>"There is a deep focus on learning due to the new diversity of the curriculum. New teaching styles have been introduced as a consequence of the widening curriculum offer."</i>          |
| Collaborative working encourages self-reflection              | <i>"Work done as a result of their mentoring role helps staff become more reflective about their own practice."</i>   |
| Increased resources for planning and delivery                 | <i>"We have increased resources in the specialisms. Interactive whiteboards allow staff to be more creative in their teaching."</i>   |
| Sharing of good practice both locally and nationally          | <i>"We spent time preparing for the option which enabled maths staff to work with arts staff. This enabled sharing of good practice to take place and led to improvements in practice."</i> |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

3.35 Given the enhanced CPD and career opportunities, and improvements in teaching and learning, the overall impact on staff in schools is largely positive, as indicated by the response to the survey questions:

- Almost four-fifths (79%) of schools indicated that HPSS has boosted the morale and motivation of all staff;
- Nine-tenths of schools (90%) indicated that HPSS had boosted the morale of staff within areas associated with the specialism; and
- 92% of headteachers that responded from schools with Non-curricular options (e.g. RAPP) and all headteachers from schools with a SEN HPSS option strongly agreed or agreed that staff morale and motivation had improved across the whole school as a result of the HPSS option. This compared to three-quarters (75%) of headteacher from schools with a curricular option. However, almost all (95%) of headteachers from schools with a curricular option agreed or strongly agreed that the HPSS option had boosted the morale of subject specialism staff.

## Summary

3.36 The purpose of this chapter was to examine the impact of the HPSS programme on pupils and staff in the HPS school, in relation to: attainment and achievement; curricular choice and personalised learning; staffing issues; and teaching and learning. The following is a summary of the key findings:

- Almost two-thirds (64%) of the headteachers who responded to the survey indicated that the **attainment** profile of their school had improved since the introduction of the HPSS. However, a large proportion of headteachers found it difficult to comment on the direct impact of HPSS status. A much higher proportion of schools (79%) which re-designated in 2006 or earlier indicated that the attainment profile of the subjects covered by the specialism had either improved greatly or improved slightly in comparison to 42% of schools which re-designated post-2006;

- Interviewees from the school site visits provided a range of views on the impact of the programme on **raising attainment**; for example, some suggested that attainment was improving in the specialist subject(s) and there is a more targeted approach to raising attainment. However, similar to the headteacher survey, there was a general reluctance to attribute success to the HPSS status;
- Evidence from HPS school visits indicates that the implementation of the specialist option is impacting positively on **pupil motivation and behaviour**. For schools where improvements in motivation and behaviour were identified, the headteacher survey asked how much of that improvement could be attributed to the programme; 89% attributed some of the improvement in behaviour and motivation to the introduction of HPSS options. The data (from both the headteacher and school site visits) suggests that the HPSS option is impacting on the motivation and behaviour of pupils through more personalised learning; extra and cross-curricular opportunities; improved teaching and learning; pupil leadership and development; and improved facilities;
- 77% of headteachers who responded indicated that **career opportunities** had improved for some or all pupils. Data from school visits suggest that the HPSS option is encouraging pupils who are involved in monitoring trainee teachers to explore a career in teaching, enabling pupils to progress to university and raising awareness of wider career options;
- The HPSS option is also enabling schools to broaden opportunities for pupils outside of the **classroom** (e.g. through collaboration with primary schools, work experience and visiting other countries);
- 81% of headteachers surveyed had indicated that the HPSS option had enabled them to provide a **personalised curriculum** for pupils in their own school 'to some extent' or 'to a large extent'. Almost all headteachers (96%) indicated some overall improvement in the provision for Gifted and Talented pupils and for pupils with SEN (92%). Data from the school site visits provide examples of widening curricular options for pupils such as more appropriate courses at GCSE (or equivalent) and meeting the needs of EAL pupils. There are also specific positive spin-offs for pupils with SEN. Almost three-quarters (74%) of headteachers who responded reported increased **uptake of subjects** covered by the HPSS option. The impact of this was less for schools with a SEN or Non-curricular option;
- The vast majority (95%) of schools which responded to the headteacher survey indicated that HPSS status had directly led to **enhanced CPD provision** for staff and that this was effective or very effective in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in their school. Interviewees from the school site visits suggested that HPSS had impacted on CPD through additional funding enabling a more focused approach, producing leaders and enhancing career opportunities;
- Findings from the school site visits provide a mixed picture about the impact of the HPSS programme on staff **workload** - some schools reported increased workload, whilst others suggested a decrease in workload as a result of the introduction of the HPSS option. Overall, where workload had increased, schools were providing adequate support to meet increased demands on staff's time;

- Findings from the headteacher survey suggest that over three-fifths (61%) of headteachers who responded agree or agree strongly that HPSS status has led to improvements in **staff recruitment**, with just under three-fifths (59%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that HPSS status has led to improvements in **staff retention**. Findings from the school site visits provide clear evidence of direct positive impact on recruitment and retention. Almost four-fifths (79%) of headteachers who responded indicated that HPSS has boosted the **morale and motivation** of all staff; and
- The HPSS option is impacting positively on **teaching and learning** through improved staff aspirations, a broader curriculum, more personalised learning and effective CPD. The headteacher survey reinforces the findings from schools site visits, with 95% of headteachers stating that the impact of CPD on the quality of teaching and learning is effective or very effective. In addition, in excess of three-quarters (78%) of headteachers who responded stated that teachers use a greater range of teaching methods 'to some extent' or 'to a large extent' as a result of the HPSS option.

## **4 External impact**

### **Introduction**

4.1 In addition to the range of benefits to HPS schools, the HPSS programme is focused on enabling schools to collaborate more effectively with partner primary and secondary schools, businesses and the wider community.

4.2 The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows:

- Overall progress since last year;
- Collaboration with partner primary schools;
- Collaboration with partner secondary schools;
- Collaboration with businesses;
- Collaboration with the wider community; and
- Summary.

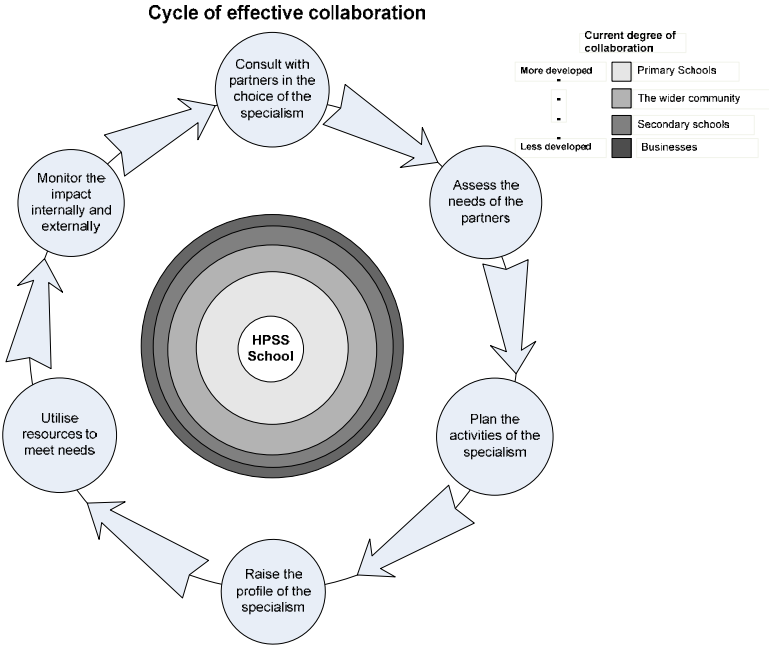
### **Overall progress since last year**

4.3 The Interim Report provided evidence that collaboration can only be effective when it is viewed as a two-way process and that a number of factors are necessary to maximise the impact, including:

- Choosing an appropriate specialism;
- Developing relationships with individuals;
- Raising the profile of the specialism;
- Assessing the needs of the partner;
- Utilising resources to meet needs; and
- Monitoring the impact internally.

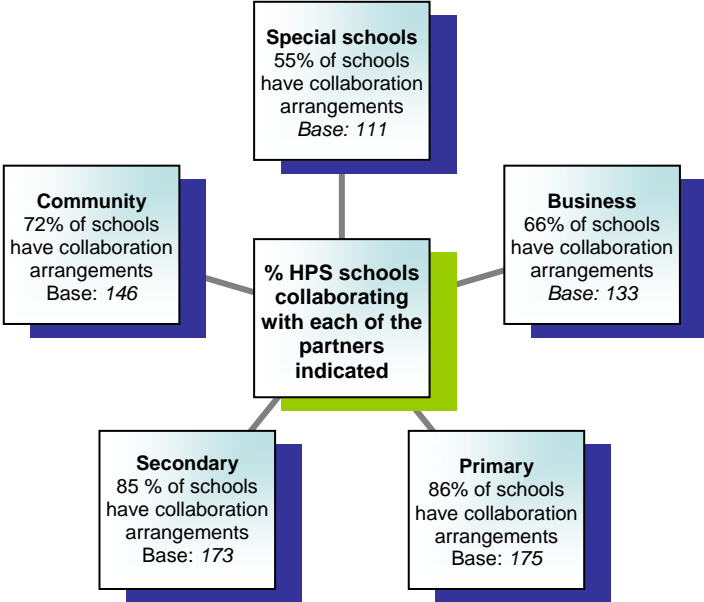
4.4 Last year's findings suggested that collaboration was most progressed with primary schools and least progressed with business, as demonstrated by Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Cycle of effective collaboration**



4.5 This year, a similar picture has emerged. HPS schools continue to have the strongest collaboration links with primary schools, however collaboration with secondary schools has improved as the programme has progressed. Figure 4.2 illustrates findings from the headteachers’ survey on their collaboration arrangements with a range of partners.

**Figure 4.2: Collaboration taking place between HPS schools and partners**



4.6 Schools were asked which type of partners they have collaboration arrangements with through the headteachers’ survey. Of the number of schools that responded to this question (indicated by the base) the percentages in figure 4.2 indicate what proportion of those schools have collaboration arrangements with each type of partner. Figure 4.2 illustrates that the majority of schools who responded to this question collaborate with primary and secondary schools, 86% and 85% of HPS schools respectively,

demonstrating progress based on last years' findings, which indicated that two-thirds of the 25 schools visited found collaboration with secondary schools challenging. Collaboration with Business continues to be a problematic area for schools, though over two thirds of schools who responded to the survey question indicated that they do collaborate with businesses. Just over half (55%) of HPS schools have collaborative arrangements with special schools, suggesting that partnerships with special schools are the least well developed of all possible partnerships within the programme.

- 4.7 Headteachers were asked about the **extent of collaboration**, i.e. in terms of how well it was developed with each of the above partners. 64% of respondents indicated that they collaborated most with primary schools, compared to 31% who ranked secondary schools as their most developed collaborative arrangements. In contrast, only 2% of respondents indicated that their collaborative arrangements were most developed with businesses and the wider community. **The number of partner organisations** that schools collaborate with varies widely, particularly between schools that focus their collaboration in one area and those that target a greater range of partners. The mean number of partners that HPS schools collaborate with is provided in brackets in Table 4.1 overleaf. This also includes the percentage of HPS schools who ranked the partner type as their top collaborator; i.e. 64% ranked primary schools as their most frequent collaborator.

**Table 4.1: Extent of HPS school collaboration with partners**

|  |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Primary</b><br>64% (Ranked 1)<br><i>(Mean number of schools= 8)</i> | <b>Secondary</b><br>31% (Ranked 1)<br><i>(Mean number of schools= 5)</i> | <b>Special</b><br>4% (Ranked 1)<br><i>(Data not requested)</i> | <b>Business</b><br>2% (Ranked 1)<br><i>(Mean number of businesses=5 local and 3 national)</i> | <b>Community</b><br>2% (Ranked 1)<br><i>(Mean number of partners= 4)</i> |
|--|--|--|---|--|

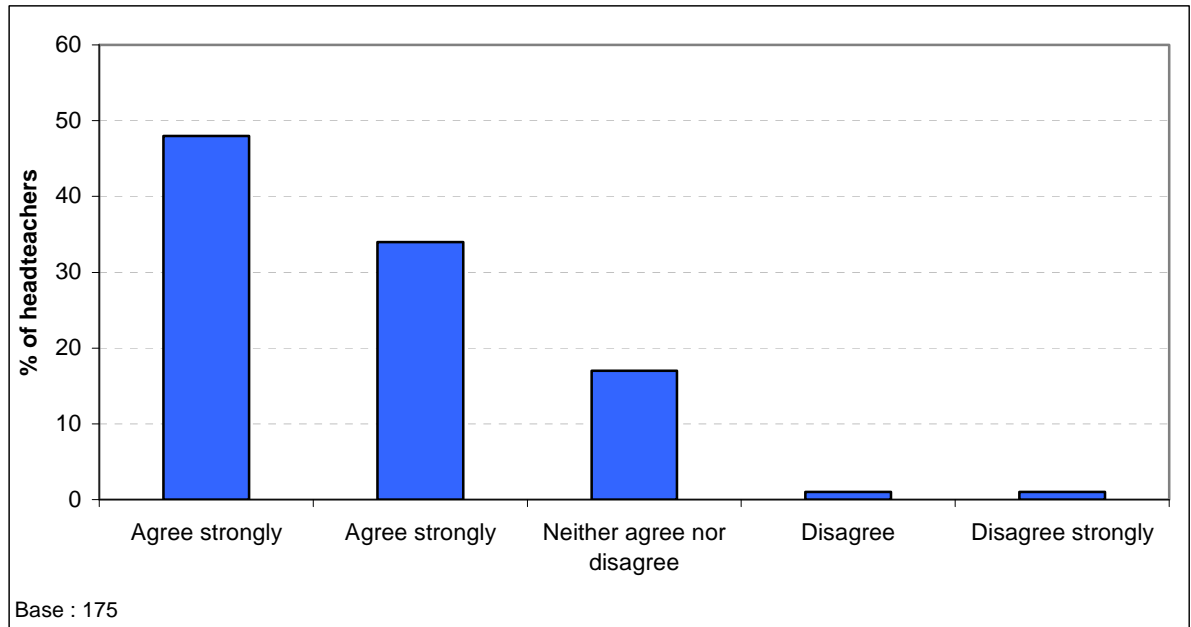
- 4.8 The potential and realised benefits to schools, businesses and the wider community are many and varied as discussed below.

### **Collaboration with Partner primary Schools**

- 4.9 Last year's report indicated that collaboration with primary schools was more progressed than with partner secondary schools. Overall, in approximately three-quarters of the HPS schools visited, collaborative arrangements were in place, and the findings suggested that these were working well. A number of schools had worked hard to develop strong collaborative links with partner primary schools over time and consequently this was well embedded within the ethos of the second specialism.
- 4.10 Generally, this year's findings from school visits paint a similar picture. The interview data suggest that schools with SEN, training school and curricular HPSS options are most effective in collaborating with partner primary schools and, in some cases, collaboration is more progressed than last year. This is impacting positively on both pupils and staff in both sets of schools in a range of ways. In addition, this year there is evidence that some schools are more focused on ensuring needs-matched provision.
- 4.11 Over four-fifths (82%) of respondents in the headteacher survey agree or strongly agree that collaboration arrangements with primary schools have improved over the past year, as indicated by Figure 4.3 below. Almost all option types (except for those schools with a SEN HPSS option) report similar improvements in primary school collaboration. In excess of three-quarters (78%) of all headteachers who responded

agree or strongly agree that there is a positive impact on standards for pupils in partner primary schools as a result of collaboration.

**Figure 4.3: Improvements in collaboration arrangements with primary schools since last year**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

4.12 Survey findings suggest that improved collaboration is due to number of positive impacts.

- **The involvement of primary schools in planning outreach activities:** nine out of ten (90%) of headteachers who responded agree or strongly agree that this is the case. This should ensure a more needs-matched provision;
- **The adequate provision of suitable resources to primary schools:** three-quarters (75%) of schools agree or strongly agree that they have provided enough resources to meet the outreach needs of primary schools, whilst 84% of headteachers who responded indicated that the resources they provided were of the right kind; and
- **Improvements in transition arrangements:** almost three-quarters (73%) of schools surveyed agree or strongly agree that collaboration has improved transition arrangements, indicating the longer term impact of collaborative work for pupils transitioning to secondary school.

4.13 The data from the school visits support these findings. Listed benefits to pupils in primary schools are described in Table 4.2 and include raising aspirations and attainment, improving motivation and behaviour, developing a more positive learning experience and aiding the transition to secondary school.

**Table 4.2: Benefits for pupils in partner primary schools**

| <b>Impact of collaboration on pupils in partner primary schools</b> | <b>Qualitative evidence</b>  |
|---|--|
| <b>Raising aspirations and attainment...</b>                        |  |
| Improving attainment through targeted intervention                  | “The primary liaison worker comes into class and does a science lesson with the children, hoping to raise their SATs levels and increase level 5s overall. Science is an area we are focussing on, so it is great. At the moment they are working on the BA award to get them going, a lot of work is linked to the SATs.” (Partner primary school teacher)  |
| Developing the reading age of pupils                                | “The impact we have had on raising pupils’ reading age in primary schools has been enormous. The Reading Recovery Scheme has been amazing... as the Headteacher said the ability to raise kids’ reading ages in the wider community has built up enormous good will in the community.” (Line manager for specialism)   |
| Enhancing emotional development                                     | “The children are more emotionally literate... I mean going to the Imperial War Museum...it is having a direct impact on them when they come back to school, and they have increased aspirations... they used to say they wanted to be a cleaner...” (Class-based teacher, partner primary school)   |
| <b>Improving motivation and behaviour...</b>                        |  |
| Creating a positive learning environment                            | “We have changed the learning environment as a result of the HPS school input. We are looking at what they’re doing here and what we can do at our school and transferring the learning. It has helped to motivate those who are directly affected, and like any good school you make sure that a wider group of kids get the benefit and support, so yes the pupils have benefited significantly.” (Headteacher, partner primary school)  |
| <b>Enhancing the learning experience...</b>                         |  |
| Extending the curriculum  | “We would have been paying lip service to the 2010 Language initiative, but now we are delivering a high quality language curriculum and enrichment activities as well, as a result of the HPS school input.” (Headteacher, partner primary school)  |
| Exposing pupils to additional technology, equipment and resources   | “INSET for D&T staff is now provided here [HPS school] and they have a CAD CAM course and basically the kids design programmes... and primary schools will suggest through the staff what they would like to produce. The staff liked learning how to do this and we hope to allow staff from primary schools to come in with pupils and work themselves.” (Head of specialism)  |
| <b>Aiding the transition to secondary school...</b>                 |  |
| Identifying needs ahead of transition                               | “There is value in identifying pupils before they come to secondary school and I knew it was lack of specialist time and attention and resources at primary level. We use our time to go out and assess pupils before we get them.” (SENCO)  |
| Training HPSS staff to meet the needs of transitioning pupils       | “We are looking to identify the pupils who are going to struggle, and what new things they are going to face at high school. We have a transition through Key Stages 6-7. We have significant numbers of ASD pupils in school... up until now we had no real problems but now we’ve noticed we need to be aware of that massive leap... homework, teaching groups... it’s a massive transition. Now we will take that on through working with the [HPS school] outreach worker.” (Partner middle school teacher) |

Source: PwC HPS Schools Site Visits, 2008.



## Impact on staff

4.14 Almost three-quarters (72%) of HPS schools surveyed agree or strongly agree that training opportunities have improved for staff in partner primary schools as a result of collaborative working. Staff in primary schools continue to reap the benefits of collaboration with HPS schools. These include greater opportunities for CPD, access to support and guidance and more effective networking, as detailed in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Benefits for staff in partner primary schools**

| <b>Impact of collaboration on staff in partner primary schools</b> | <b>Qualitative evidence</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>Opportunities for CPD</b>                                       |  |
| A co-ordinated approach to INSET                                   | <i>“One of the things they want is more INSET and this is where the training school comes into it. Previously we focused on going and delivering a programme and then moving to another school. Now we have organised a consultant to come in and the primary science co-ordinator came here and we provided supply for her through the training specialism. The staff have now gone away to plan and the feedback is very positive indeed.”</i><br>(Head of specialism) |
| Participation in organised events at the HPS school                | <i>“A conference was held here and it was really well attended. So we have identified key personnel in schools other than the head, and it has empowered primary schools as well.”</i> (Extended Schools co-ordinator)   |
| Additional funding for training                                    | <i>“Staff are invited to language up-skilling courses at their level. The school has also paid for courses for teaching staff in our school and they have got qualifications as well.”</i> (Headteacher, partner primary school).  |
| <b>Practical support and guidance</b>                              |  |
| Provision of resources, including schemes of work                  | <i>“Through history work in primary schools... staff write schemes of work and provide resources and take pupils on trips. This has an enormous impact on humanities teaching in primary schools.”</i> (Line Manger for specialism)  |
| Collaborating in early intervention strategies                     | <i>“Currently we get an allocated amount of time where [person G] comes and does supportive intervention work with our year 6 pupils and it is about extending the relationship and it is about additionality. She is a SEN link... she has spent several weeks with us and she does genuine intervention strategies with the pupils at my school.”</i> (Headteacher, partner primary school)  |
| Assistance with developing policies, procedures and practices      | <i>“Equipment is on loan from the school which we don't have to purchase ourselves. Also, in addition to teaching exchange... I have a new SEN co-ordinator who has had development work in terms of policies, procedures and practices. We have to adapt it but it has been invaluable...”</i><br>(Headteacher, partner primary school)   |

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

## ‘Needs matched’ provision

4.15 The data from school visits provides evidence that HPS schools are building their relationships and partnerships with primary schools in order to ensure needs match provision. This is reinforced by findings from the headteacher survey. Almost all (94%) of headteachers who responded to the survey agree or agree strongly that they consult with primary partners on a yearly basis to ensure they have a good understanding of their needs.

4.16 Figure 4.4 describes the steps one HPS school has taken towards achieving this. Each of the components listed is important in and of itself in ensuring a needs-led approach to collaboration, but when operating together they are an effective strategy. This year's findings from school visits suggest again that collaboration is most effective for all stakeholders when there is an appointment by the HPS school of a dedicated person with responsibility for driving collaboration forward.

**Figure 4.4: Components of 'needs matched' provision\***



\*Note: Figure 4.4 is an example of good practice in relation to 'needs matched' provision

**Collaboration with partner secondary Schools**

4.17 Last year's report highlighted that collaboration with partner secondary schools had progressed relatively slowly in comparison to collaboration with partner primary schools. Many of the schools visited reported low levels of engagement on the part of the partner secondary school(s) and stated that this was despite having invested proportionately more time to developing these links than the time invested with partner primary schools.

4.18 This year, the findings from the school visits provide a broadly similar picture in terms of the challenges HPS schools face, although there is some additional evidence of emerging good practice. Collaboration is most progressed with partner secondary schools in HPS schools with a SEN option.

4.19 In contrast, however, the survey findings indicate that collaboration with secondary schools has improved more generally, with over three-quarters (78%) of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that their collaborative arrangements with secondary schools have improved over the last year. As indicated in Table 4.4, the most positive response (88%) came from schools with a Non-curricular option, reflecting their central focus of supporting secondary schools.

**Table 4.4: Improvements in collaboration with secondary schools**

|                                  | Agree strongly | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Disagree strongly | TOTALS |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------|
| <b>HPSS option</b>               |                |       |                            |          |                   |        |
| Curricular                       | 37%            | 38%   | 19%                        | 6%       | 1%                | 100%   |
| SEN                              | 33%            | 33%   | 0%                         | 0%       | 33%               | 100%   |
| Non-curricular                   | 44%            | 44%   | 10%                        | 3%       | 0%                | 100%   |
| <b>Year of redesignation</b>     |                |       |                            |          |                   |        |
| 2006 or earlier                  | 40%            | 40%   | 13%                        | 6%       | 1%                | 100%   |
| Post 2006                        | 37%            | 38%   | 19%                        | 4%       | 1%                | 100%   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                    | 39%            | 39%   | 17%                        | 5%       | 1%                | 100%   |
| Listed Response Base:            | 65             | 66    | 28                         | 8        | 2                 | 169    |
| <b>Total Response Base = 170</b> |                |       |                            |          |                   |        |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

- 4.20 A total of 87% of respondents indicated that they consulted with secondary school partners on a yearly basis to find out what they need from the HPS school, whilst three-quarters of headteachers who responded to the question indicated that they involve secondary partner schools in planning outreach activities. In addition, three-quarters of schools indicated that they have a designated outreach worker to facilitate collaboration. Overall, just in excess of two-thirds (68%) of headteachers who responded to the question, agree or strongly agree that standards in partner secondary schools are being impacted positively as a result of collaboration.
- 4.21 Last year's findings highlighted a number of barriers to successful collaboration with secondary schools. For example, lack of engagement, competition and geographical proximity. This year, geographical proximity was perceived to be a barrier by just over one-quarter (27%) of headteachers surveyed and competition was perceived to be a barrier by 36% of schools. Notwithstanding, two-thirds (66%) of schools surveyed agree or agree strongly that they had secured buy-in from leadership teams within the secondary schools.
- 4.22 The data from school site visits provide evidence of clear benefits for staff and pupils in secondary schools where collaboration is taking place. For pupils, these include improving motivation and behaviour and enhancing the learning experience. For staff in partner secondary schools, benefits include opportunities for CPD, practical support and guidance and effective networking, as shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Impact of collaboration on pupils in partner secondary schools**

| <b>Impact on pupils in partner secondary schools</b>   | <b>Qualitative evidence</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>Improving motivation and behaviour for pupils</b>   |  |
| Developing leadership skills                           | <i>"Student learning partners is an initiative we do where we work with two other schools in [the LA]. It is all about student leadership. We are a deep leadership hub school. [The LA] used this to run an emerging leadership course and 'person G' provided training and we helped to fund that as part of our outreach work."</i> (Director of specialism)  |
| <b>Enhancing the learning experience</b>               |  |
| Opportunities for extra curricular activities          | <i>"There is a SSAT initiative called interaction... where a school partners with a French college. The French schools are not keen to take a SEN school and so we partner with the HPS school which is mainstream. We went to a conference and we were talking about exchange visits and the other schools were saying 'we can't take you because of wheelchairs' but the HPS school doesn't see any barriers. They have a 'can-do' attitude."</i> (Class-based teacher special school) |
| <b>Practical support and guidance</b>                  |  |
| Provision of exam dispensation by qualified HPSS staff | <i>"I work closely with a local high school... and nobody within that school was qualified to do exam dispensation. They had to employ somebody in the past, so I went in and did half a week for their exam dispensation for KS2, KS4 and A levels. This took up a big chunk of time and then I had to write up the reports..."</i> (Director of specialism)  |
| <b>Effective networking</b>                            |  |
| Opportunities to build relationships                   | <i>"It's great... teacher to teacher is brilliant and we thrive on it... to come in and talk to other teachers who understand the difficulties, and to meet with other schools from the borough... it is like support groups."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |

Source: PwC HPS Schools Site Visits, 2008.

4.23 The headteacher's survey asked what impact collaboration with partner schools was having on standards within their own school. 65% of headteachers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that collaborative working with primary schools had had a positive impact on standards in their own schools, and 54% of headteachers indicated this in relation to standards in partner secondary schools. Findings for the school visits also point to a range of positive impacts from collaboration with partner schools.

**Impact of collaboration on standards in HPS schools**

- Increased confidence of HPS school staff who teach in partner schools.
- Opportunities for staff to develop themselves through delivering INSET.
- Improved understanding of different key stages or school profiles, for example grammar school teachers collaborating with comprehensive schools.
- Acquisition of new teaching and learning strategies, for example through the more interactive approach of primary school teaching.
- Improved transition and baseline attainment for Year 7 pupils.
- The development of the roles and responsibilities of HPS school students, for example through teaching in primary schools or working with other secondary school pupils.
- Broader range of courses and opportunities on offer for pupils at KS3, KS4 and KS5, facilitating the implementation of the 14-19 agenda.
- Increased extra-curricular opportunities for pupils.
- Enhanced profile of the HPS school, leading to increased applications for Year 7 entry.

Source: PwC HPS School Site Visits, 2008.

## Collaboration with businesses

- 4.24 The HPSS programme requires schools to engage and create partnerships with local and / or national businesses and a proportion of the funding provided for outreach work should contribute towards achieving these objectives. The focus is on creating mutually beneficial relationships, which should become developed as HPS schools strengthen and embed their areas of expertise.
- 4.25 Findings from Year 1 suggest that collaboration with businesses was the least progressed area, with the main barrier being effective marketing of schools. Additionally, a number of schools visited indicated that they did not have the time or funding to develop collaborative links with partner schools, businesses and the wider community, and therefore funds and effort were being directed where they were perceived to have most immediate impact. Potential areas of impact included: building skills of the local workforce; staff development; staff retention; and a better reputation for businesses<sup>14</sup>.
- 4.26 The general profile of business collaboration with HPS schools has improved slightly based on findings from school visits and the headteacher survey. Of those who responded to the question in the headteacher survey (n=121), over two-thirds (69%) agreed or strongly agreed that collaborative arrangements with businesses had improved over the last year. In addition, four out of ten of the schools visited indicated that collaboration arrangements have improved over the last year. Only one of the four schools provided examples of embedded progress demonstrated in the following case study.

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<sup>14</sup> Guidance for Specialist Schools on the capital grant at re-designation, ([www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools/))

## **Case Study: Mutually beneficial collaboration with businesses – a model of good practice**

### **Background**

The school is a non-selective single sex secondary school with around 1,200 pupils aged 11-18. The school has two specialisms: Performing Arts (initial specialism); and Applied learning (HPSS option). Students are from above average socio-economic backgrounds. Student attainment on entry is below average.

**Ofsted comments on community links:** *“The school’s links with the community, other schools and colleges are excellent.”* (Ofsted)

**Appoint a community and business manager and allocate funding in order to ensure strategic planning:** *“Businesses have said the single biggest difference working with this school is being able to pick up the phone and have an answer within 10 minutes.”* (Careers and business manager)

**Identify a key link person in the business community and effectively market the school:** *“The Careers and Business manager can come out of the school; we met him about 9 months ago through the Rotary Club. He suggested we speak to the Arts Director and get Years 10 and 11 to do some art work, that specifically fitted into that the genre and display it, close the shop for two days... Businesses need to speak to students. It was a huge success.”* (Local businessman)

**Communicate the purpose of collaboration to pupils:** *“Before they [local business] came in to do their talk, we spent a period talking about them [to students]. When they walked in, the pupils knew who they were, why they were here, and what they were going to talk about”.* (Careers and business manager)

**Identify mutual benefits for the school and the business and work together to make things happen:** *We advertised in the shop, we have a captive audience here, when people come in to sit down we can tell them, and they can’t move! Everyone is really interested in what we are doing with the school. We had the girls’ artwork up for a week before the event. We had the deputy mayor turn up, and there were pictures taken for local courier and a local community magazine. Coming up to the event we had advertised for about three months before the event, that was for free because it was community related. We sold quite a few of the bits of art work, it was great for them, they got a bit of cash.”* (Local businessman)

### **Involve business in maximising the benefit to pupils**

*“People who sit in our chairs, they own businesses; we ask them ‘what do you do for work experience? They say ‘we’ve never thought of that’, and I give them the careers and business manager’s name. A local restaurant, they want to get involved in the school now, take the kids to the restaurant, see how it is run and how healthy food is cooked.”* (Careers and business manager)

*“They (barbershop owners) put me in touch with a local garage, who wants to teach girls. He is going to come in and run a series of check your car workshops for the 6<sup>th</sup> form. It was the business peoples’ day off today. Neither of them have a car. I went to pick them up. It is little things like that you simply wouldn’t be able to do. They feel valued. Then the doors begin to open.”* (Career and business manager)

*“Lloyds bank is coming in...I sealed the deal when I said, you would of course bring your junior banking account details with you, every student will get a pack..”* (Careers and business manager)

**Be realistic about what can be achieved:** *“We have a lot on our plates, a lot of pressure, an autistic school we want to get involved with. To divide our time is hard. We have had a really good experience with the HPS school.”* (Local businessman)

- 4.27 Data from schools visited suggest that schools are aware of the potential benefits businesses can derive from collaboration with HPS schools. For example, SEN dyslexia training to enable businesses to comply with disability legislation, or mutually beneficial work placements for students undertaking applied learning courses.
- 4.28 Findings from the headteacher survey suggest that the benefits to schools from collaboration with businesses are perceived to be more holistic and less focused on improving standards. Just over half (53%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that business collaboration had positively impacted standards in the HPS school, and three-fifths (60%) of headteachers that responded indicated that teachers and pupils have benefited from collaboration with business,
- 4.29 Data from school visits provide some examples of positive impacts both for businesses and HPS schools, outlined in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Mutual benefits of collaboration with businesses**

| <b>Theme</b>                          | <b>Benefits for businesses</b>   | <b>Benefits for schools</b>  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Project based collaboration           | <i>“Our business gets free advertising in the newspapers, the right kind of advertising. We like to come across as approachable, rather than some big business....”</i> (Local business) | <i>“We’ve hired a theatre [from] our Performing Arts business partner, and all the films that are made by students are going to be shown in an Oscars style presentation afternoon... it is something for the pupils that is more tangible than the piece of paper they will get at the end of it.”</i> (Careers and business manager) |
| Collaboration through work experience | <i>“I can walk into a business and they ask ‘what is the student like’ and I can tell them; that’s what they want to know.”</i> (Careers and business manager)                           | <i>“...I have a database of 350 businesses that students can use for work experience...it doesn’t exist anywhere else. It’s a real benefit having these links with businesses.”</i> (Careers and business manager)   |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

- 4.30 Three of the ten schools visited indicated that they have a fairly good understanding of the needs of the businesses with which they collaborate, with the remaining majority indicating that this is not the case. The key barriers to collaboration remain similar to last year’s research, and are shown in table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Barriers to collaboration with business**

| <b>Challenges to effective partnership</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| A lack of interest and engagement from business   | <i>"A global science related firm provide an annual prize for a science project. But, we find it quite hard to develop their involvement any further to be honest. It seems that once they've ticked their box they don't want to go any further."</i> (Headteacher)   |
| A lack of awareness of what HPS schools could offer   | <i>"The challenge is that if you ask a business what their needs are they don't know, and we don't understand businesses well... we have offered them Aspergers' training on the basis that their customers may be affected, and in light of the disability discrimination legislation, etc. But, persuading them to take us up on it is hard work on our part and little progress is being made."</i> (Director of specialism)  |
| The importance of matching school's expertise to the needs of business                            | <i>"The nature of the specialism makes it quite difficult to have contact with businesses. We did put a few feelers out... and we are going to put on a session for local businesses, so we are writing to Tesco, Waitrose and another local businesses... and we're going to offer them, for free, one evening during the week to give them a basic understanding of Aspergers... the difficulty is getting them to take the offer up."</i> (Deputy director of specialism) |
| The key is to establishing stable business links which involves developing personal relationships | <i>"3-4 years ago we had strong links but they seem to be cyclical and depend much on personal relationships...we did offer ICT training to Yorkshire clinic, but they now have their own in-house training, so that stopped."</i> (Head of specialism)  |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

4.31 Respondents to the headteacher survey were asked to identify barriers to collaboration with businesses. Over two-fifths (42%) of respondents agree that they had sufficiently appropriate resources to offer to business and three-fifths (60%) of respondents stated that they consulted with businesses on a yearly basis in order to ascertain their needs. The following challenges to collaborating with businesses were cited by headteachers. Most of these are general to all schools and some relate to schools with specific HPSS options:

- Finding time for staff to leave school to liaise with business at times that were convenient to them;
- Finding common ground with what schools can offer or receive, particularly so with the curricular HPSS options;
- The geographical location of some schools in relation to the proximity of businesses with the necessary capacity to sustain collaboration; and
- The original remit of most Non-curricular schools in that their priority is seen to be supporting partner schools rather than collaboration with business.



4.32 The following points in tables 4.8 and 4.9 were highlighted as examples of good practice in relation to collaboration with business:

**Table 4.8: Effective partnership with business**

| <b>Examples of good practice in collaboration with businesses – school site visits</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Provide a direct point of contact to businesses outside of teaching hours              | <i>"It is having the time and space to make the difference. Businesses have said that the single biggest difference in working with this school is being able to pick up the phone and have an answer within 10 minutes."</i> (Careers and business manager)  |
| Speak to businesses directly   | <i>"...we asked some local businesses what skills they wanted and they said 'spoken English', so we have focused on that."</i> (Class-based teacher)  |
| Engage with businesses on a business level   | <i>"One of our trust partners is a housing company. They have a wing which is based around horticulture and the education of vulnerable students. We are in consultation with them about putting a nursery on our land, we are coming to a business arrangement with them. It will allow our students and other students to use it."</i> (Acting headteacher) |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008

**Table 4.9: Effective partnership with business**

| <b>Examples of good practice in collaboration with businesses – headteacher survey</b>      |   |
|---|---|
| The development of an education business partnership: training links for staff and students | <i>"We link with 40 businesses...we have our own school education business partnership. Businesses are involved in our annual Year 10 enterprise days (three times a year). We have worked with a number of businesses through the business partnership to place students in work placements. We use BAA plc, and Sky News... to provide training links for staff &amp; students."</i> (Headteacher survey) |
| Work placements within specialist courses: providing future skilled employees               | <i>"We use a number of businesses for placements within specialist courses. It is rather a one way benefit... but we are providing future skilled employees. 12-15 are regularly involved, but over 200 businesses take work experience students."</i> (Headteacher survey)   |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

## **Collaboration with the wider community**

4.33 Working to support and impact the wider community is a central part of the role of HPS schools. Year 1 findings indicated that schools' experiences were mixed, although the majority of respondents indicated that collaboration with the wider community was more progressed than with secondary schools or businesses. Year 2 findings show that in five out of the ten schools visited, collaboration with the wider community has improved, with the same number indicating that they have a fairly good understanding of the needs of community partners.

4.34 Similarly, over two-thirds (70%) of headteachers that responded indicated that arrangements with community partners have improved over the last 12 months. A number of schools identified challenges to progressing collaborative links, including:

- The ability to identify community groups, particularly in larger urban areas;
- A lack of understanding of the needs of the community; and
- The cost of providing support and accommodation for activities.

4.35 Table 4.10 provides examples of good practice and challenges across schools with a range of HPSS options in relation to collaboration with the wider community.

**Table 4.10: Good practice and challenges in collaborating with the local community**

| Type of specialism | Good practice   | Challenges   |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Curricular         | <p><b>Offering services to a local Children’s University in return for event facilitation:</b> <i>“I work a lot with the Children’s University... I’ve done workshops for other schools not in our area. I did a day for them. It was aimed at Year 6’s, and it was a forensic workshop. Whatever they want, I always get involved. Any event that is held at the Children’s University, I always take a team with feeder schools.”</i> (Schools liaison worker)</p>                      | <p><b>Adult learning provision is too expensive to provide:</b> <i>“We don’t really offer adult courses in terms of outreach... it would be really expensive to offer GCSE as it is offered in other places.”</i> (Class-based teacher)</p>  |
| Training           | <p><b>Literacy classes up-skill the parents:</b> <i>“...we have adult literacy classes... I think about 90% of our students are from ethnic backgrounds, and in a community that’s an awful lot and they are all from various nationalities. We have them all. If we didn’t tie into the community we would be fools, so we make sure we have strong links with local churches and mosques. We talk to them and communicate and tell them what is going on.”</i> (Community governor)</p> | <p><b>The local community is disparate and hard to engage:</b> <i>“There are real challenges in collaborating with the wider community in terms of identifying their training needs... it is such a diverse community and there is no one larger training need than others... also we suffer from a disengaged community, some are very self sufficient through no fault of their own.”</i> (Extended Schools co-ordinator)</p>                        |
| SEN                | <p><b>Broadening awareness of SEN in the local community:</b> <i>“Last year I offered parents of kids with SEN training on specific conditions that may be affecting their children like dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism... I offered this to parents from feeder schools and this school.”</i> (SENCO)</p>  | <p><b>Some parents not willing to embrace the SEN specialism:</b> <i>“I have been challenged by parents about why we have a SEN specialism, and I explain to them that it is about meeting the needs of all kids... it is about personalised learning. We’ve had parents that are coming here from the other side of the county, just to come to us, but then they are not local.”</i> (Headteacher)</p>   |
| Applied learning   | <p><b>Students provide a service to the community as part of BTEC courses:</b> <i>“We have got one student who comes to the youth club who is doing health and social care, and who is looking to do child care; she is able to have direct contact with the kids who have learning disabilities. Because of the standard the volunteers are at, we have increased the standard of challenging behaviour we are prepared to accept [at our youth club].”</i> (Youth worker)</p>           | <p><b>Out of hours community provision is expensive for Pfl schools:</b> <i>“If we want to be truly community driven we need not to charge people who come in for lessons. If we have to hire the building and pay for lighting and heating it will add to the cost. This is where the government needs to have a degree of joined up thinking around Pfl, Extended Schools and the implications for adult literacy.”</i> (Director of specialism)</p> |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

- 4.36 On average, two-thirds of all headteachers surveyed responded to questions relating to collaboration with the wider community. Of these, over three-fifths (62%) agreed or agreed strongly that the profile of their HPSS option had been raised within the wider community. Schools were asked what impact their HPSS related activities had on the wider community. In addition over half (55%) agreed or agreed strongly that the wider community had benefited greatly, and almost half (46%) thought that collaboration had positively impacted standards within the HPS school. Indirect benefits such as raising the profile of the HPS School, or improved parental engagement with children's learning as a result of evening classes were identified, although there was some indication that the benefits of community collaboration are not fully realised by HPS schools.
- 4.37 A number of schools visited indicated that they had difficulty engaging the wider community because they were not perceived as a community school, or because of their inability to understand the needs of the community. The following case study is an example of how one HPS school has coordinated the activities of the HPS specialism with Extended Schools provision to enable and develop effective engagement with the community.

**Case Study: Joined up provision: Extended Schools and HPSS working together to achieve collaboration**

**School background:** The school is a mixed foundation school for students aged 11-18. It is over-subscribed with 1613 on roll, and is bigger than most secondary schools nationally. The school has a large sixth-form of just over 500 students, about a third of whom join from other schools at the start of Year 12. The socio-economic background of most of the school's population is below average; the proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (at around 25 per cent) is above the national average. The school represents a rich diversity of cultures with two-thirds of the pupils having Asian or Asian British backgrounds, more than a tenth are of Black or Black British heritage.

**The specialism operates in conjunction with the Extended Schools agenda through the work of the Extended Schools co-ordinator:** *"A lot of it is about recognising what we have here in the school. We always think of training in terms of the Extended Schools agenda and one supports the other and vice versa. The work is being monitored and we continue to look at the needs of the local community."* (Extended Schools co-ordinator)

**The community links created by the Extended Schools co-ordinator has enabled the school to learn about the training needs of a diverse community:** *"I work with a Community and Voluntary Service agency... we link with them and understand what they have identified as needs... the diversity of the community is the big factor."* (Extended Schools co-ordinator)

**A survey revealed that there is a need for the local community to access training:** *"It is a big question from an Extended Schools point of view... we carried out a survey and included this school with other schools and one of the things that came to the fore was the clear need for local community to access training."* (Extended Schools co-ordinator)

**The HPSS funding has provided training to the pastoral team:** *"We have also worked with the pastoral team in the school... this involved training about the needs of families experiencing domestic violence and the impact of that on learning, and also getting support for families."* (Extended Schools co-ordinator)

**The structure of Specialist schools needs to be understood more widely by external agencies:** *"... people need to understand better the structure of Specialist schools... outside agencies need to understand this in order to be able to access the support they can provide."* (Extended Schools co-ordinator)

**There is a need to develop the HPSS programme alongside the Extended Schools agenda:** *"... the joint Extended Schools and specialist co-ordinator in the school is part of the senior leadership team. What we are looking at doing is broadening this slightly to a team of people that look at Extended Schools and Specialist schools. Community cohesion and adult learning is very much about Extended Schools."* (Extended Schools co-ordinator)

**LAs need to make the link between the Specialist Schools agenda and the Extended Schools agenda:** *"The key challenge for the borough is making the links at a strategic level before this can impact positively in terms of schools collaborating. So we need to ask does the person managing Specialist Schools at LA level interact with person managing Extended Schools... they need to make that connection."* (Extended Schools co-ordinator)

Source: PwC HPSS School visits 2008..

## Summary

4.38 The purpose of this chapter was to assess the nature and extent of collaborative arrangements with partner primary schools, partner secondary schools, partner businesses and partners within the wider community. The following is a summary of key findings:

- Similar to last year's findings, schools' collaborative arrangements are most progressed with **primary and secondary schools**. The extent and nature of collaborative arrangements is largely dependent on option type, with Applied Learning schools and Training Schools favouring secondary school collaboration, and schools with a curricular option focussing their efforts on primary collaboration. Similar to last year, collaboration is least progressed with businesses, with a large number of schools indicating that this remains a priority for the forthcoming year;
- Primary collaboration is **embedded and progressing well** in over four fifths (82%) of schools surveyed, facilitated by increased needs matched provision and improved communication and liaison, often in the form of a designated outreach worker or coordinator. Additionally, involving primary schools in planning outreach activities has led to more focussed provision of resources and improved transition routes for students. CPD opportunities for staff have increased across the board, both through shared experience and observation as well as more formalised sessions;
- The degree of **collaboration with secondary partners** continues to vary across all schools, however over three-quarters (78%) of headteachers surveyed indicated that arrangements have improved. Arrangements are most widespread amongst Non-curricular option schools reflecting their central focus on supporting secondary schools. Common barriers to secondary school collaboration continue to include geographical proximity, lack of engagement and competition, however a high proportion of schools indicate that they now have buy in from the leadership teams in the secondary schools with which they collaborate. As with primary school collaboration, schools indicated positive benefits for staff and students in schools with which they collaborate, including a broader curriculum offer, increased extra curricular opportunities and enhanced CPD provision;
- The profile of business collaboration across HPS schools remains largely unchanged from last year, with just over two thirds (69%) of all headteachers agreeing or strongly agreeing indicating that their **collaborative arrangements with business partners** have improved. A number of barriers prevent more widespread collaborative links, including identifying potential benefits for partners, marketing an 'offer' to businesses, sustainability of links, and geographical proximity. Those schools that do collaborate with businesses identified a range of holistic benefits for pupils and staff, including increased extra-curricular opportunities, and applied learning course support. The benefits to businesses include raising their profile in the community, advertising, and more focussed work experience programmes; and
- The headteacher survey reveals that collaboration with the **wider community** has improved for over two-thirds (70%) of schools in the past year. Benefits of collaboration for the wider community come in the form of resources and accommodation for activities, provision of adult and out of hours learning opportunities and student and staff involvement in the delivery of initiatives and projects. Barriers to community collaboration continue to centre on the cost of providing support and accommodation for community activities and identifying the needs of the wider community.

## 5 Monitoring and evaluation

### Introduction

5.1 There are detailed requirements for all HPS schools to put monitoring procedures in place to assess the impact of the programme on their own schools and on partner schools. Last year, each of the schools in the sample visited had undertaken either formal or informal monitoring of the specialism. These were well developed in terms of monitoring the impact of the specialism internally. However, systems for monitoring the impact of the HPSS option externally (i.e. the impact on and by partner schools) appeared to be less well developed. The remainder of this chapter will focus on how schools have progressed their monitoring and evaluation procedures, as well as providing additional evidence from the headteacher survey. The chapter is structured under the following headings:

- Internal monitoring procedures;
- Involvement of pupils and governors;
- Monitoring the outreach activities; and
- Summary

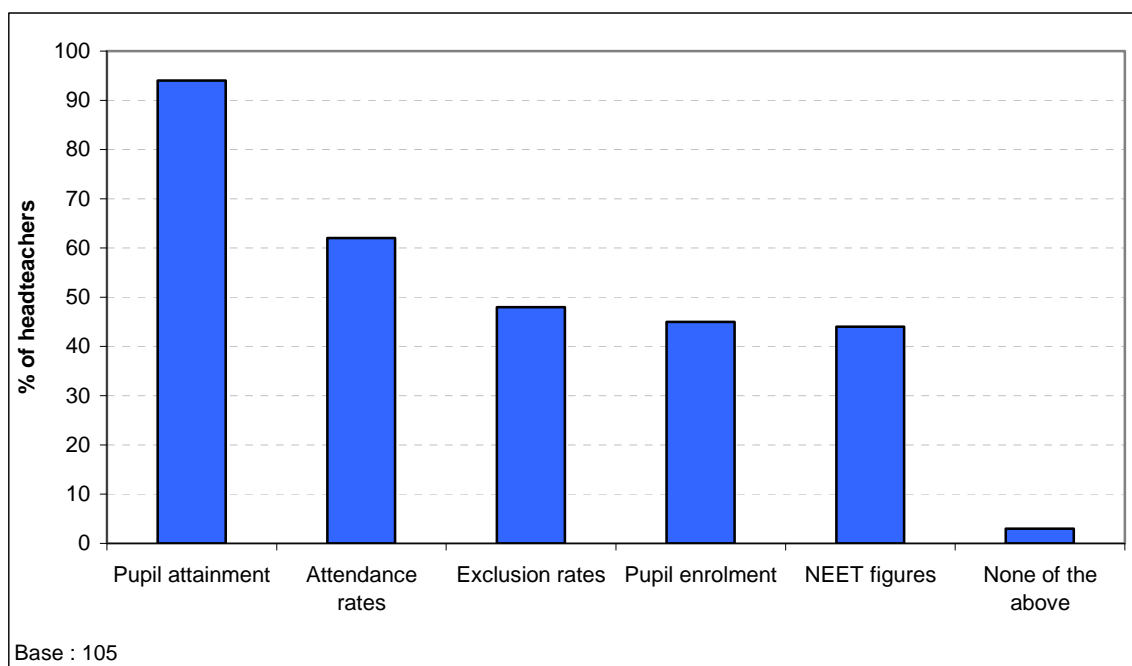
### Internal monitoring procedures

5.2 Last year, procedures for monitoring the specialism internally included the School Improvement Plan (SIP); Self Evaluation Form (SEF); progress reports; reviews of examination results and attainment targets; research activities, including surveys and feedback forms; and meetings and committees.

5.3 This year, the survey asked headteachers to identify which data they use to monitor the impact of the HPSS option within their school. Figure 5.1 overleaf provides details of the extent to which a range of data is being used in this way. Overall, a slightly higher percentage of schools that re-designated prior to 2006 are making use of the wide range of available data. In summary, the findings indicate:

- Almost all schools (94%), irrespective of the HPSS option, use pupil attainment data to monitor the impact of the HPSS option;
- All schools with a SEN option and over four-fifths (83%) of Non-curricular option schools use pupil attainment data to monitor the impact, in comparison with (97%) of curricular schools;
- Just less than one-half of all schools (48%) use exclusion data as part of their monitoring processes and 62% of all schools use attendance data. To a slightly lesser extent, NEET statistics are used as part of the monitoring process by 44% of schools surveyed; and
- A small proportion of schools (3%) reported using none of the data specified to monitor the impact of the specialism.

**Figure 5.1: Information used to monitor the specialism**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

- 5.4 The above findings are broadly in line with the findings from the school visits, where eight out of ten schools indicated that they use pupil attainment data to monitor impact; two of the ten schools visited use the full range of data indicated to monitor impact. In addition, a number of schools visited, particularly those who have implemented new courses as a result of the specialism, monitor the uptake of courses by pupils. Other types of monitoring to emerge from the school visits and the headteacher survey include feedback from lesson observation and feedback from collaborative partners.
- 5.5 Examples of the additional ways in which schools use pupil related data to monitor the impact of the specialism are given in table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Monitoring internal impact**

| <b>Schools' use of data to monitor the HPSS options</b> |   |
|---|---|
| KS4 attainment data                                     | <i>"We monitor the external impact on an annual basis... we have our evidence and we refresh it and our training school co-ordinator comes and reviews it from time to time. We have a benchmarking exercise using various key performance indicators we make sure we hit. We use Fisher Family Trust data."</i> (Director of training school)  |
| Data used in conjunction with less tangible indicators  | <i>"We've looked at the particular contribution of Applied Learning and other courses, as well as changes in the curriculum, to see what those have contributed to our overall results. What is harder to monitor is the less tangible part of the spill over, which you know has happened."</i> (Deputy head)  |
| Literacy and numeracy WRAT scores                       | <i>"Statistically, we monitor the specialism using A-C attainment and WRAT scores, which cover literacy and numeracy. We utilise these as our key ones."</i> (Deputy director of specialism)  |
| Course enrolment figures                                | <i>"We look at the numbers on courses... one sure sign that things are not well is if the numbers go down."</i> (Headteacher)   |
| Exclusion rates based on interventions                  | <i>"Our tracking systems are the normal ones... the group of youngsters we track are those we feel are not likely to achieve their targets and they are most likely to be the SEN youngsters. So we work with them and their parents and we ask what they need to improve. The drive into SEN was based on the fact that some kids got nothing at the end of Year 11... a zero... now not many, but when I asked why this was, no one could really tell me. That is not the case any more and every child does matter. There have been no permanent exclusions for 18 months now. And for a small group of kids this is important."</i> (Headteacher) |
| Lesson observation data and information                 | <i>"In terms of progress of student teachers, we monitor this largely through observations. I ask for a timetable for observations. Also there are feedback sheets, and I do joint observations with all subject mentors and someone observes me as well. A feedback sheet is filled in each week."</i> (Class based teacher with responsibility for training)  |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

- 5.6 Interviewees were asked during school visits to comment on the extent to which their monitoring arrangements had changed over the last 12 months. Only 3 of the 10 schools visited provided comments, with 2 reporting improved progress, and the third reporting that arrangements for monitoring have not changed. A number of interviewees indicated that the monitoring processes are less well developed because of constraints on the time of key personnel. Four of the schools visited indicated that the formalisation of monitoring procedures is a priority for the forthcoming year:

*"We have language specialism targets set for departments. We ask for feedback at the end of year and emailed everybody asking what they thought and what worked for you, but we need to make this formal."* (Class-based teacher)

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

- 5.7 Similar to last year's findings nine out of the ten schools visited indicated that they incorporate HPSS into formal school documents, such as the SIP and the SEF. Other forms of monitoring include yearly updates or reports, regular (termly) updates or reports and feedback forms or surveys, which one-third of schools visited reported undertaking. One of the schools visited has piloted a system using its VLE to monitor and evaluate the impact of HPSS Training School status on the whole school, as demonstrated in the following case study.



**Case Study: Standardised robust monitoring through the School's VLE**

**School background:** The school is a mixed foundation school for students aged 11-18. It is over-subscribed with 1613 on roll and is bigger than most secondary schools nationally. The school has a large sixth-form of just over 500 students, about a third of whom join from other schools at the start of Year 12. The socio-economic background of most of the school's population is below average; the proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (at around 25 per cent) is above the national average. There are slightly more boys than girls. The school represents a rich diversity of cultures, with two-thirds of the pupils having Asian or Asian British backgrounds and more than a tenth of Black or Black British heritage.

**The school uses an online system of INSET evaluation for internal and external provision:**  
*"Every single training event we do is evaluated... we had our new staff induction and this used to be paper based but now we use VLE... all our tick box responses are on VLE and are completed after every training event."* (Head of specialism)

*"It is done automatically... the moment they go on the home page for staff they are asked to complete their feedback for INSET. We all get the feedback from these, and we work on that. The training school manager keeps a file of all evaluations... When the TDA come in to do a consultation exercise we have a file of everything we have done and a complete programme of all the training we do."* (Head of specialism)

*"All of our outside work is monitored in the same way, in terms of quality... we found out that INSET for one session was not good and we won't use that person again."* (Head of specialism)

**The monitoring and evaluation system has enabled the school to design a personalised CPD programme for all staff:** *"All INSET is evaluated and based on this we change and re-assess... so we are constantly evolving. Based on last year's feedback, new personalised training has been brought in this year."* (Class-based teacher with responsibility for training)

**The school has presented to HPSS policy makers on its monitoring and evaluation systems:**  
*"A TDA consultant invited us to talk at HPSS on what we do in terms of monitoring and evaluation. They couldn't believe that we did it."* (Head of specialism)

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

- 5.8 All schools visited emphasised that their monitoring focused as much on softer data as on pupil attainment data and, similar to last year's findings, SEN option schools, in particular, emphasised the need to measure the holistic effect on students. The table 5.2 provides examples of the use of softer data to monitor impact.

**Table 5.2: Monitoring of internal impact**

| <b>The use of 'soft' data to monitor HPSS options</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Lesson observations                                   | <i>"In lesson observations... we follow a group of pupils around for the day and we do book trawls and talk to them. So sometimes it is informal and sometimes that is the best way it can be done right."</i> (SENCO)  |
| Online attitudes surveying                            | <i>"We bought 'PASS'... 'Pupils' Attitudes to School Survey'... this gives us a measure of motivation and attitudes, particularly if one of the team is going to support a student. We can compare where they are at the beginning of the support and at the end of it and it includes accessing the curriculum etc. We used to use it for SEN students only, but now we use it across the school to identify unmet need."</i> (Deputy headteacher) |
| Personalised target monitoring by class teachers      | <i>"As a classroom teacher, the way you monitor the impact is how they are responding in lessons as well as their grades at GCSE... when you mark their books you look at what is not happening and this informs your planning and provision. It is very much more personalised now, it's about monitoring each pupil."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

## Involvement of pupils and governors

### Pupils

5.9 This year's findings from school visits provide evidence that pupils are being given an increasing role in monitoring procedures. This is demonstrated by student voice activities and student observers, as well as pupil survey evaluation. Training schools, in particular, are involving pupils in observing the delivery of lessons, as a means of evaluating the impact of improved teaching and learning, and in some cases schools are working collaboratively with other schools to drive this forward. Pupils are also encouraged to provide feedback on both internal and external initiatives. Table 5.3 provides examples of pupil involvement in monitoring.

**Table 5.3: Internal monitoring of HPSS by pupils**

| <b>Effective monitoring and feedback by pupils involved in the specialism</b> |  |
|---|--|
| Student voice and lesson observations   | <i>"... departments are encouraged to use student voice and student lesson observations and that feeds back into department development plans. A lot of departments use questionnaires with students to evaluate how successful learning has been."</i> (Deputy headteacher)   |
| Curriculum evaluation   | <i>"We got some of the old Year 11 cohort in to talk through how the course had gone, to feed into this year; and we took on board some of their ideas."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
| Extra curricular opportunity evaluation:                                      | <i>"I get feedback from teachers, head teachers [in Germany], the feedback I had from them was phenomenal. Then I had two girls who went on the work experience last year coming to my parent meeting, and they ran a PowerPoint presentation and it was fantastic the feedback they gave... that's how you can see whether they really enjoyed it."</i> (Class-based teacher) |
| HPSS pupil feedback on external collaboration                                 | <i>"After the primary reading initiative, we meet with our girls and you get different stories from the girls than from the partner school."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

### Governors

5.10 Governors are expected to be involved in monitoring the activities of the specialism. In the headteacher survey, schools were asked to comment on the extent of Governor involvement. Almost all schools (92%) stated that governors are involved in monitoring HPSS options at some level. Those schools who re-designated prior to 2006 reported a slightly higher 'yes' response rate (1% higher) than those who have more recently joined the programme, reflecting the stage of implementation, as shown in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4: Governor involvement in monitoring the specialism**

|                                  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>TOTALS</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| <b>HPSS option</b>               |            |           |               |
| Curricular                       | 94%        | 6%        | 100%          |
| SEN                              | 100%       | 0%        | 100%          |
| Non-curricular                   | 84%        | 16%       | 100%          |
| <b>Year of redesignation</b>     |            |           |               |
| 2006 or earlier                  | 93%        | 7%        | 100%          |
| Post 2006                        | 92%        | 9%        | 100%          |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                    | 92%        | 8%        | 100%          |
| Listed Response Base:            | 173        | 15        | 188           |
| <b>Total Response Base = 199</b> |            |           |               |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

5.11 Headteachers were asked to comment on how schools were involving Governors in the monitoring of their specialism. The most frequently identified method was discussions at Governing body meetings, with almost all schools (90%) reporting this. In addition, over four-fifths (86%) of respondents indicated that regular papers or updates are provided to Governors. This evidence suggests that the monitoring of the HPSS options is being absorbed into generic monitoring activities in schools. Over half of all schools (56%) indicated that monitoring of the specialism included discussion of target achievement with the Chair of Governors. Less than one third (31%) of schools involved Governors in option choices and target setting at the outset. These findings are shown in Table 5.5.

5.12 In addition to the above, respondents to the headteacher survey stated that Governors are involved in monitoring HPSS through their involvement on Specialist Schools steering groups; in direct monitoring through observation of specialism related activities; and through 'link' roles in relation to the HPSS option areas.

**Table 5.5: How schools involve Governors in monitoring the specialism**

|                                  | Regular papers / updates | Discussion at Governing Body meetings | Discussions with Chair of Governors on achievement of targets | Governing body involved on option choice and setting of targets at outset | Other |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|-------|
| <b>HPSS option</b>               |                          |                                       |   |   |       |
| Curricular                       | 87%                      | 90%                                   | 58%   | 31%   | 10%   |
| SEN                              | 100%                     | 100%                                  | 50%   | 75%   | 50%   |
| Non-curricular                   | 82%                      | 87%                                   | 47%   | 21%   | 5%    |
| <b>Year of redesignation</b>     |                          |                                       |   |   |       |
| 2006 or earlier                  | 80%                      | 89%                                   | 59%   | 32%   | 12%   |
| Post 2006                        | 90%                      | 90%                                   | 53%   | 28%   | 8%    |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                    | 86%                      | 90%                                   | 56%   | 30%   | 10%   |
| Listed Response Base:            | 164                      | 171                                   | 106   | 57  | 19    |
| <b>Total Response Base = 195</b> |                          |                                       |   |   |       |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding. This is a multiple response question.

5.13 Findings from the 10 school visits reflect the trends discussed above, with all schools indicating that their Governing bodies are involved in monitoring at some level. Again, the most common level of involvement is through feedback at Governor's meetings. In addition, three out of ten schools visited reported that Governors are involved in initial target setting for the HPSS options. A number of interviewees indicated that, while Governors were involved in monitoring whole school activities, HPSS was not identified as a discrete strand within this. The quotes in Table 5.6 indicate the broad spectrum of Governor involvement in monitoring the specialisms.

**Table 5.6: Governor involvement in monitoring the HPSS option**

| <b>Area of involvement</b>   | <b>Supporting evidence</b>  |
|--|---|
| HPSS link Governors involved in planning for the specialism                            | <i>"We have two governors who are attached to 'Education Extra' and consequently attached to the specialism, so they are involved in the whole planning process."</i> (Deputy director of specialism)   |
| Regular reporting to Governors by SLT and presentations by staff                       | <i>"We provide a written report to governors once a term and that is incorporated into the school report. Also following that is a full governor's meeting where an aspect of that may be examined. There is an opportunity to discuss it... in addition once every half term a community and education sub-committee and I report at that meeting on the specialism, and I take a different strand."</i> (Director of specialism)  |
| Training Governors to understand HPSS to enable involvement in planning and monitoring | <i>"We did quite a bit of training in getting across what we see as the school's role in terms of preparing students for their futures, for employability. This has led governors to recognise that they have got a considerable amount of expertise to bring to that vision for the school. They were in school yesterday, going around subject areas with a particular remit. We have reorganised the way meetings work to make them feel more involved. We have explained the 14-19 and the ECM agenda. They have been excited, and felt they could get involved."</i> (Deputy Head) |
| Governor involvement in monitoring the impact of funding                               | <i>"When it comes to money I am the Chair of resources. In a sense we are not afraid to ask questions and we do ask questions about this at various times in the school year. When it comes to things like specialism... we have money from lots of different pots to use. We have loads of initiatives we apply for so it is important for us to know what is going on."</i> (Community governor)  |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

## **Monitoring the outreach activities**

### **Monitoring undertaken by HPS school**

- 5.14 Monitoring the impact of HPSS on partner schools, community organisations and businesses is viewed as integral to ensuring value for money and needs matched provision. As indicated above, many schools visited identified the need to focus on monitoring the internal impact of their specialism. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that monitoring of the outreach activities is less well developed. This is borne out by findings from the headteachers' survey.
- 5.15 Over two-thirds of schools agree or agree strongly that their monitoring arrangements for primary schools (68%) and secondary schools (62%) were effective. Just over half (54%) of schools agree or agree strongly that monitoring arrangements with the wider community were effective, and just over two-fifths (42%) of schools agree with this in relation to businesses. The school site visits suggest that while informal discussion is the most frequently used method of monitoring impact on partner schools and organisations, individual partners differ in terms of the most widespread method used.
- Partner primary schools are most frequently monitored through informal discussion, usually carried out by an outreach worker who visits schools regularly.
  - Partner secondary schools are most frequently monitored through formal discussion, usually through cluster group meetings.
  - Businesses are most frequently monitored through informal discussion, while the wider community most often take part in feedback sessions.

5.16 During school visits, staff were asked about the arrangements in place for monitoring the impact of the specialism on partner schools. Broadly speaking, monitoring arrangements were most comprehensive where schools had appointed an outreach worker or coordinator, or where staff had been appointed with responsibility for liaison. In keeping with the survey findings, monitoring arrangements with partner schools tend to focus on soft rather than hard data, with all partners expressing a preference for informal monitoring and feedback procedures. In some cases, however, schools were beginning to monitor the impact on reading scores and National curriculum levels, for example, as well as concentrating on less tangible impacts. Table 5.7 below indicates progress in monitoring the outreach activities and areas of challenge remaining.

**Table 5.7: Monitoring the impact of the specialism on partner schools**

| Analysis of monitoring procedures   | Supporting evidence   |
|---|---|
| Schools accountable at LA / Consortium level                                    | <p><i>“We have management board meetings twice a year with: a teacher, a TA, the head, a governor, the Director of specialism, a lady from the LA who is the SEN inspector, a member from a special school and the Aspergers base. We talk about the targets we set ourselves, and what we’ve done to meet those targets... and how we can move on, what can we do next?”</i> (Deputy director of specialism)</p>   |
| Outreach workers have a key role, and a light touch to monitoring is preferable | <p><i>“The best way to evaluate is personal contact... we have someone in my department who does community projects and she is the person who talks to the primary schools and they feed back to her.”</i> (Class-based teacher)</p> <p><i>“... we prefer monitoring to have a light touch... we prefer more informal ways and a link teacher will phone or text us and ask how it has gone and what did I notice about the pupils’ response for example.”</i> (Class-based teacher partner primary school)</p> |
| Evaluation forms and feedback sheets  | <p><i>“We send out evaluation forms to the primary schools, and we use minutes from meetings and letters we get from them. It is very difficult to measure progress from Year 6 to 7...”</i> (Class-based teacher)</p>  |
| Hard data not readily available   | <p><i>“We get feedback from each external training session we do, but we haven’t touched on measuring impact on their student attainment. That’s a difficult nut to crack really.”</i> (Director of Training school)</p>  |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

5.17 Little evidence emerged from the school visits in relation to systems for monitoring the impact of the specialism on businesses and the wider community; this may be due, in part, to the fact that some schools were struggling to develop strong links with these partners. For those schools that had developed collaborative links with business and/or the wider community, monitoring was at an incipient stage and centred mainly on informal discussion and relationship management. Interviews with representatives from business and the community indicated that developing open channels of communication, including discussions with pupils, were key to maintaining successful, useful collaborative links:

*“We were told to come in and speak to the girls, to tell them what we wanted, they produced what we wanted. Businesses need to speak to students.”* (Careers and business manager, HPS school)

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

**Monitoring undertaken by partner schools and organisations**

5.18 During school visits, interviewees were asked to comment on the arrangements partner schools have in place to monitor the impact of collaboration with the HPS school. There was general consensus amongst all interviewees that a more informal system of feedback is preferred by partner schools, based on dialogue rather than data. However, some formal monitoring procedures were operating in a small number of partner schools. These findings are illustrated in table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: Approaches to monitoring collaboration with schools**

| <b>Monitoring of partner schools</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| Informal discussion and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning interventions | <i>“More informal in terms of conversations... I don’t write things down if it is not essential. I’m much more a relationship based person, I have systems in place but I don’t have filing cabinets full of notes. My tracking system is based on my pupils. I monitor the quality of teaching and learning, but we formally talk about it at meetings and minute it but not in a formal way really.” (Headteacher, partner primary school)</i> |
| Monitoring through the School Development Plan  | <i>“The only thing we do which is formal for us relates to the SDP – we talk about targets in general – so we have a consensus on where languages are going” (Headteacher, partner primary school)</i>   |
| Provision mapping to monitor the impact of SEN intervention                           | <i>“We have also bought into a provision mapping package. We would like to see every child in the school on the provision map so that we can monitor them - through that you can monitor if they are staying on the system already. We have all the usual measurements like reading ages and spelling so if they are managing to function in class it will be a measurable impact.” (Middle school partner)</i>                                  |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

5.19 Responses to the headteacher survey suggest that little information exists about monitoring arrangements in partner schools. Of those that responded to the question, the following examples of monitoring procedures were provided:

- Participation in collaborative meetings with the HPS school and other partner schools;
- Self evaluation of the support provided, using questionnaires or feedback forms for staff and pupils;
- National survey instruments such as PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL); and
- Monitoring relevant data, including attainment and attendance data.

## Summary

5.20 The purpose of this chapter was to examine the progress HPS schools and their partners have made in relation to monitoring and evaluation. The following key findings emerged from the research:

### *Internal monitoring*

- The headteachers survey revealed that almost all schools that responded (94%) use pupil attainment data to **monitor** the impact of the HPSS option, just less than half (48%) of all schools use exclusions data and 62% use attendance data as part of their monitoring processes. In addition, some schools use lesson observations as well as monitoring the uptake of courses by pupils;
- These results are reflected in the findings from school visits, where eight out of ten schools use **pupil attainment** data to monitor impact. However, interviewees emphasised that their monitoring focused as much on softer data as on attainment data, including lesson observations, personalised target monitoring by class teachers and collaborative monitoring of whole class progress; and
- A small number of schools visited (two) indicated that their monitoring arrangements had improved over the past year; a number of interviewees suggested that monitoring processes were less well developed because of the constraints on time of key personnel. In a small number of schools, monitoring activities were robust and systematic, with one school having appointed a designated person with responsibility for this. Most schools stated that formalisation of their monitoring procedures was a priority for the incoming year. Similar to last year, HPSS is incorporated into formal school documents such as the SIP and the SEF.

### *Involvement of pupils and governors*

- The findings from school visits suggests that **pupils** are being given an increasing role in **monitoring** the activities of the specialism through, for example, student voice and student observation;
- 92% of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that **governors** are involved in **monitoring** the HPSS option to some level. This takes place through discussions at Governing body meetings (90% of respondents) and regular papers or updates (86% of respondents). Fewer schools involve governors in discussing target achievements (56%) and in options choices and target setting at the outset (31%); and
- The most common level of monitoring to emerge from the school visits is **feedback at governor meetings**. Three out of ten schools reported that governors are involved in initial target setting for HPSS options.

### *Monitoring the outreach activities*

- Similar to last year's findings, monitoring of the outreach activities is less well developed. 68% of respondents to the headteacher survey agree that their monitoring arrangements for **primary schools** were effective. This percentage dropped to 52% in relation to partner secondary schools and 54% for community organisations. Only 42% of respondents indicated that they have effective monitoring arrangements in place for businesses.

- Interviewees provided a range of examples of monitoring procedures in place for partner primary and secondary schools, including **attendance at consortiums, monitoring by outreach workers, evaluation feedback forms**. Hard data is generally not readily used to monitor outreach activities;
- The findings from school site visits suggest that partner schools prefer a more **informal** system of feedback and monitoring based on dialogue rather than data, although some formal systems for monitoring are in place, including provision mapping to monitor the impact of SEN intervention. The headteacher survey suggests that little information exists about monitoring arrangements in place in partner schools; and
- Collaborative links with **business** and the **wider community** are not sufficiently progressed to allow for monitoring and evaluation.



## 6 Value for money and sustainability

### Introduction

- 6.1 One of the objectives of the research was to consider (though not explicitly undertake) the value for money of the programme in terms of what the extra funding has provided and how this has impacted schools, and to consider the sustainability of the programme. Schools that are selected to take on an HPSS option attract funding at £60 per pupil per year (a minimum of £60,000 and maximum of £90,000 per school per year) until their next re-designation. An additional £30,000 per annum is available to schools taking up the Applied Learning option. Schools taking up a language option are funded at the level of £90 per pupil (minimum £90,000 and maximum £135,000 per year) to support the implementation of the National Languages Strategy.
- 6.2 The purpose of this chapter is to consider, from the perspective of the schools visited and those who responded to the headteacher survey, the perceived value for money achieved for the additional resources they receive as a result of their participation in the programme. As indicated above, this is not an explicit value for money exercise; however the findings from this evaluation could be used to inform such an exercise. The remainder of this chapter will address these issues under the following headings:
- Allocation of funding;
  - Overall impact of funding - effectiveness and efficiency;
  - Value for money;
  - Sustainability; and
  - Summary

### Allocation of funding

- 6.3 As part of the headteacher survey, schools were asked if they kept their HPSS funding in a separate pot. Over three-quarters of curricular and non-curricular HPS schools and all HPS schools with a SEN specialism indicated that they had a discrete and separate budget for HPSS, as shown in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1: HPSS budget as kept separate from whole school budget**

|                              | Yes  | No  | TOTALS |
|------------------------------|------|-----|--------|
| <b>HPSS option</b>           |      |     |        |
| Curricular                   | 78%  | 23% | 100%   |
| SEN                          | 100% | 0%  | 100%   |
| Non-curricular               | 78%  | 23% | 100%   |
| <b>Year of redesignation</b> |      |     |        |
| 2006 or earlier              | 77%  | 23% | 100%   |
| Post 2006                    | 79%  | 21% | 100%   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                | 78%  | 22% | 100%   |
| Listed Response Base:        | 152  | 43  | 195    |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

6.4 When asked if there was sufficient flexibility to determine how to allocate HPSS funding, almost all (94%) of schools agreed with this statement, as indicated by the Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2: Flexibility of funding**

|                                  | Yes  | No  | TOTALS |
|----------------------------------|------|-----|--------|
| <b>HPSS option</b>               |      |     |        |
| Curricular                       | 97%  | 3%  | 100%   |
| SEN                              | 100% | 0%  | 100%   |
| Non-curricular                   | 83%  | 17% | 100%   |
| <b>Year of redesignation</b>     |      |     |        |
| 2006 or earlier                  | 95%  | 5%  | 100%   |
| Post 2006                        | 93%  | 7%  | 100%   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>                    | 94%  | 6%  | 100%   |
| Listed Response Base:            | 182  | 12  | 194    |
| <b>Total Response Base = 201</b> |      |     |        |

Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.  
 Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

- 6.5 As part of the HPSS programme, schools are required to spend at least 50% of their funding on outreach work. This is achievable through, for example, the funding of outreach staff, direct financial grants to partner schools or organisations, providing equipment or resources, and through time and money spent on CPD or training.
- 6.6 The data from school visits indicates that the majority of schools split their funding equally between outreach and internal work, although a few schools indicated that they found it difficult to quantify how funding is allocated, as illustrated in table 6.3.

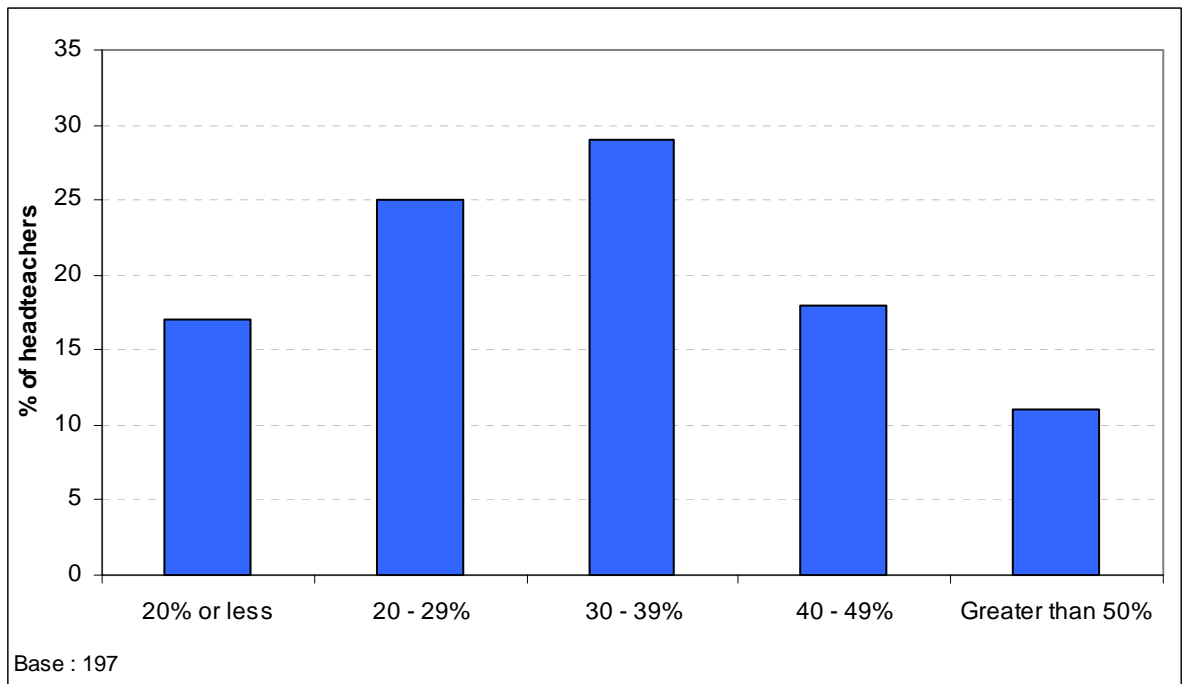
**Table 6.3 Allocation of funding**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| It is difficult to quantify how funding is allocated | <p><i>“It’s very hard to say how much is spent on outreach work – a full day a week for me on outreach and TA has two days a week and that is pure outreach work and I do the reports as well so there is about an equal split between internal and external.”</i> (AST teacher)</p> <p><i>“We are supposed to be spending 50% on outreach but how do you quantify that in a school context?”</i> (Head of specialism)</p> |
|--|--|

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

- 6.7 The headteachers survey asked schools to identify how much of their budget is spent on outreach work and, within that, how much is spent on each area of collaboration.
- 6.8 In summary, just over one-quarter (29%) of schools spend 30%-39% of their HPSS budget on outreach, with over half (58%) of headteachers who responded indicating that they spent at least this amount on outreach work. The data in Figure 6.1 overleaf suggests that Non-curricular schools are most likely to spend a greater amount of their budget on outreach work, with 30% of these schools spending greater than 50% of their budget on outreach. This is not surprising, given that their focus is primarily one of supporting and collaborating with other schools. The data suggest that schools with a curricular option spend least on outreach work (20% of HPSS schools that responded spend 20% or less on outreach work). This reflects the more inward focus of their specialist option.

**Figure 6.1: Proportion of HPSS funding spent on outreach work**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.  
 Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

6.9 The data from the school visits suggests that some schools are driving forward collaboration by focussing their funding on the appointment of an outreach worker. The data also suggest that the allocation of funding in schools correlates with the primary focus of the collaborative work, e.g. forging business links for applied options. In addition, data from the school visits in relation to schools with a curricular option does not concur with the headteacher survey in that it suggests that these schools spend at least half of their budget on collaboration with primary partners. Table 6.4 illustrates how schools are allocating funding towards outreach.

**Table 6.4: Allocation of HPSS funding towards outreach**

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| SEN option         | <i>"The majority [of the funding] is spent on our school's community outreach worker."</i> (Director of specialism)  |
| Applied option     | <i>"The majority of the money we get pays for our career and business manager post, the rest allows flexibility in our approach... to subsidise our less economic courses."</i> (Assistant headteacher)          |
| Curricular options | <i>"Half is spent on the community and half on the school... a lot of projects are joint... we try very hard to make sure the money is only spent on the projects it is intended for."</i> (Class-based teacher) |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

6.10 The headteacher survey asked schools to quantify what percentage of funding they spent on various aspects of their HPSS work.

6.11 The survey data shows that five HPS schools (2%) are spending *all* of their funding on additional staff to work within the HPSS option, with almost three-quarters (72%) of headteachers indicating that they allocated some funding for this purpose. Nearly three-fifths (59%) of the headteachers that responded indicated that they set aside *some* funding for additional resources, including staffing, for outreach work, with the highest proportion of these respondents (23%) spending between 11%-20% of their

total budget on this. These findings are in line with feedback from school visits, where schools identified staffing costs as using up the majority of their HPSS budget.

6.12 In addition to the options provided in the survey, schools identified other areas where funding was being utilised. These include:

- Logistical costs such as transport to events and course enrolment for vocational [Applied Learning] courses;
- TLRs and recruitment and retention points to staff the specialism; and
- Enhanced CPD for staff.

6.13 There was some disparity between the ten case study schools in their approach to the allocation of funding, in that some schools chose to merge their HPSS funding with the funding for initial specialism and to allocate to both on the basis of need, as shown in table 6.5. It was reported in one case that this approach had led to one specialism becoming marginalised with the priority being given to the specialism deemed to have most whole school impact. Other schools split their funding equally between both specialisms in order to afford each with equal profile and opportunity to impact within the school. The data from the school visits presented below highlight the different approaches of schools to the allocation of funding.

**Table 6.5: Allocation of funding towards outreach**

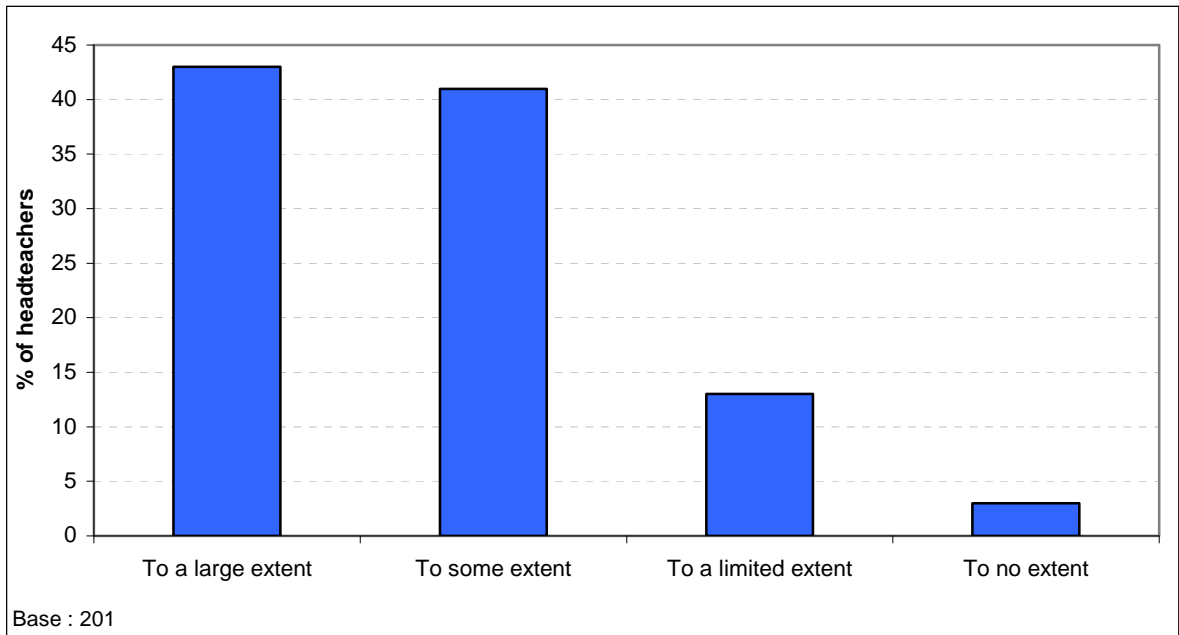
| <b>Disparity between funding approaches</b> |  |
|---|--|
| Equal funding between specialisms           | <i>"We have never treated the HPSS option as a second specialism, the two work together at a similar level of investment. Our investment in people, particularly people who are not teachers, has been modelled on our first specialism. If the second specialism is not funded to same extent as the first, it doesn't quite work out. It is extremely important that they have equal status, and that they are a whole school focus."</i> (Deputy head)                  |
| Allocation according to need                | <i>"Our policy has always been to put the funding for the specialisms together and to plan on the basis of what we need. So we look at what salaries we need to pay, and what we need for supporting core subjects. We allocate money on the basis of need and it is fully discussed. We keep spreadsheets that show how much is spent on community and on the different aspects of the specialism."</i> (Acting headteacher)  |
| Preferential allocation                     | <i>"I would say that the Arts specialism is a poor partner in the pool of specialisms... we always went into it knowing that the greatest need and impact would be with the SEN specialism and this has resulted in the outreach and learning support unit. So although they are equally funded, the SEN specialism has dragged some money from the Arts specialism and the Arts specialism is about eight months behind the SEN specialism."</i> (Director of specialism) |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

### **Overall impact of funding - effectiveness and efficiency**

6.14 Schools were asked to comment on the extent to which HPSS funding had enabled staff to do things more *efficiently*. Figure 6.2 overleaf indicates the response from the headteacher survey. In summary, over four-fifths (84%) agreed that the funding enabled things to be done more efficiently to at least some extent, with over two-fifths (43%) of respondents agreeing that this was being facilitated to a large extent.

**Figure 6.2: Impact of funding on efficiency**

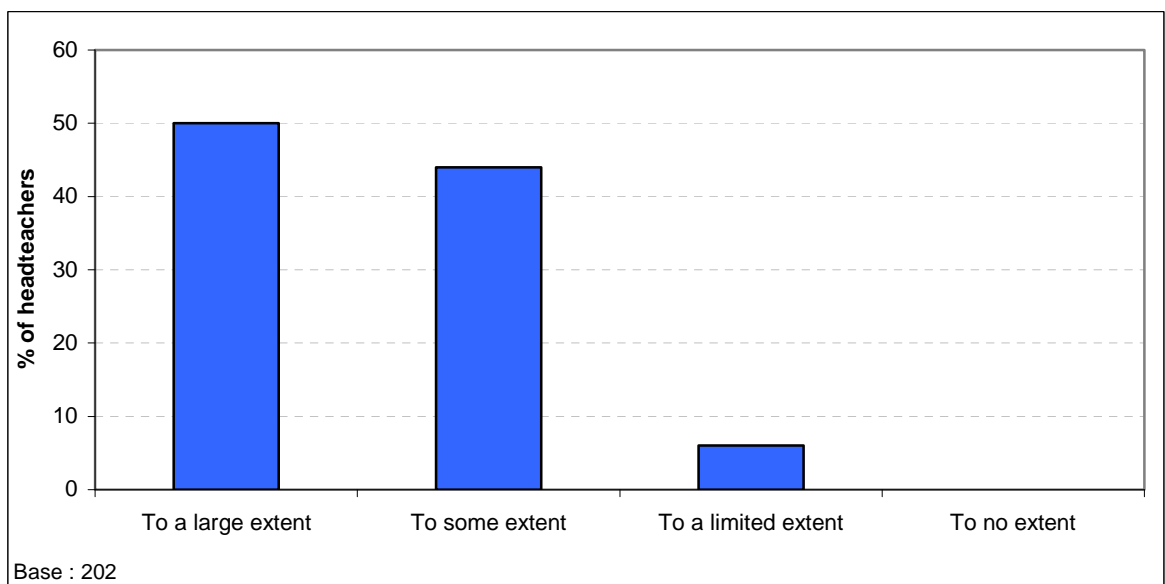


Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher Survey, 2008.

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

6.15 Similarly, when asked if HPSS funding had enabled staff to do things more *effectively*, 94% of all schools agreed that the funding had enabled staff to work more effectively at least to some extent, with half of the overall responses (50%) agreeing that this was to a large extent, as indicated by figure 6.3 below. Effectiveness centred on, for example, improvements in teaching and learning as a result of training, or improved resources.

**Figure 6.3: Impact of funding on effectiveness**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher survey, 2008

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

6.16 The findings from school visits reflect the findings from the headteacher survey, with all schools visited agreeing that the funding provided enabled staff to do certain things more efficiently *and* effectively. Five out of ten schools reported that funding enabled everything to be done much more efficiently and effectively. Examples are provided in Table 6.6.

**Table 6.6: Efficiency and effectiveness of funding**

| <b>Efficiency</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| Greater provision of ICT equipment for pupils and teachers | <i>“I was saying to the SEN department that a laptop might help particular pupils, and they said they would sort it out that afternoon. Three years ago they would have said ‘I’ll do my best but can’t promise’... so the money has been used very well.”</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
| Ring-fenced funding leads to efficiency                    | <i>“We don’t have to find the money from somewhere, which is so time consuming, it definitely means things can be done extremely quickly.”</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
| <b>Effectiveness</b>                                       |  |
| Increased and more effective CPD                           | <i>“We can afford better training and we know how to use it. And we also train other people in partner schools and in other departments in the school. We have been talking about providing support to train staff at partner schools.”</i> (Class-based teacher)  |
| Appointment of specialist staff                            | <i>“The majority (of the funding) is spent on our outreach worker. I really don’t think we could run the specialism without her, we just wouldn’t have the expertise and the workload would be too much. Her role is invaluable and she is very special. The impact she has had is enormous... she worked last year with 16 schools, all of whom had packages and programmes that are continuing.”</i> (Deputy director of specialism) |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

**Value for money**

6.17 Schools were asked to comment on the value for money aspect of the HPSS funding, both in its own right and compared to the funding for the initial specialism and other initiatives, for example Excellence in Cities (EiC). The majority of interviewees in the schools visited spoke positively about the outcomes and impacts of HPSS on their school and partner schools, indicating that the programme does represent value for money in terms of funding the initial stages of implementation. However, while schools on the whole believe that HPSS funding is worthwhile and beneficial, the majority of schools indicated that funding is not sufficient to sustain the activities they undertake, in line with the expectations of the programme. Indeed a number of schools highlighted that they already channel additional funds into the HPSS budget in order to fund the broader roll out of collaborative initiatives in particular. Of the ten schools visited, six thought that HPSS represented the same value for money as the initial specialism, while two out of ten thought it represented better value for money; notably, in these schools, the HPSS option is delivering greater whole school impact than their initial specialism. These findings are evidenced in Table 6.7.

**Table 6.7: Value for money of HPSS funding**

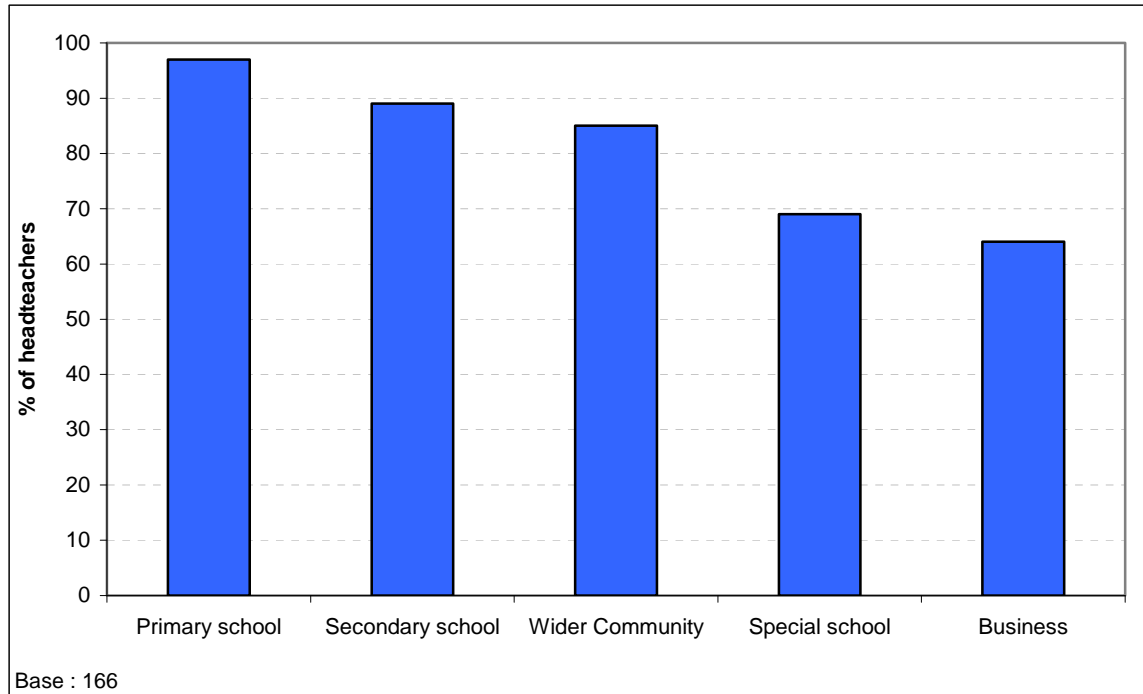
| <b>Theme</b>                                       | <b>Qualitative evidence</b>   |
|--|---|
| Excellent value for money                          | <p><i>“Our results are also evidence of value for money and we wouldn’t have done it without the focus from HPSS.” (Headteacher)</i></p> <p><i>“I do think it is good value for money... we have very tight financial systems here and we have a business manager who constantly discusses the idea of value for money. We get the right amount of money for the specialism, and we can do a lot with what we get and we don’t feel held back... but we also put our own resources in as well.” (Training school manager)</i></p> |
| Better value for money than the initial specialism | <p><i>“Yes we do more for the money and it is even more high profile in some ways than the language college.” (Head of specialism)</i></p>  |
| Inadequate funding                                 | <p><i>“We’ve got on our agenda this week, the cost of BTEC qualifications. In terms of whether the amount of funding we have had has covered the investment we have made, I would suggest it hasn’t, we’ve put in over and above.” (Headteacher)</i></p> <p><i>“... but if I ask for a training school manager we have to pay a manager salary... and I don’t pay that out of the budget. So £80,000 is not sufficient funding considering what we are doing.” (Head of specialism)</i></p>                                       |

Source: PwC HPSS visits, 2008.

- 6.18 The survey asked headteachers to comment on the value for money derived from expenditure on specific areas. As staffing costs have been highlighted as a major area for expenditure, it follows that this is an area upon which headteachers place emphasis in terms of the delivery and effectiveness of their specialism(s). On a scale of 1-10, 10 representing good value for money, over four-fifths (84%) of headteachers who responded to this question rated additional staff between 7-10 on the value for money scale. Three-fifths (60%) of all respondents to this question identified additional staff as delivering maximum value for money.
- 6.19 Overall, around three-quarters of all respondents rated the following between 7-10 (10 representing good value for money) on the value for money scale:
- Additional staff to work with outreach partners (76%);
  - Resources for the HPS school; (74%); and
  - Additional time for staff to work within the school (79%).
- 6.20 As identified above, during the school visits, a number of interviewees indicated that the funding they received from the HPSS programme was often supplemented or matched by funding from the general school budget. In spite of this, when asked if outreach work represented good value for money vis-à-vis the level of funding and the collaboration activities undertaken, respondents were generally positive.
- 6.21 The findings from the headteacher survey concur with this, as illustrated in Figure 6.4:
- Almost all schools (97%) agree that collaboration with primary schools represented good value for money, with a slightly smaller number saying the same about secondary schools (89%) and the wider community (85%); and

- In contrast, just over three-fifths (64%) of schools indicated that business collaboration represents good value for money; perhaps this is indicative of the lack of engagement between schools and businesses and the perceived smaller return for the school.

**Figure 6.4: Value for money of funding spent on outreach activities**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher survey, 2008

Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

6.22 Partner school interviewees shared the view that collaborative work provides good value for money and, whilst partners were often unable to specify the monetary value of the support they received from schools, they universally commented on the overall positive impact collaboration was having on their school, as evidenced in table 6.8.

**Table 6.8: Value for money from work with partner schools and organizations**

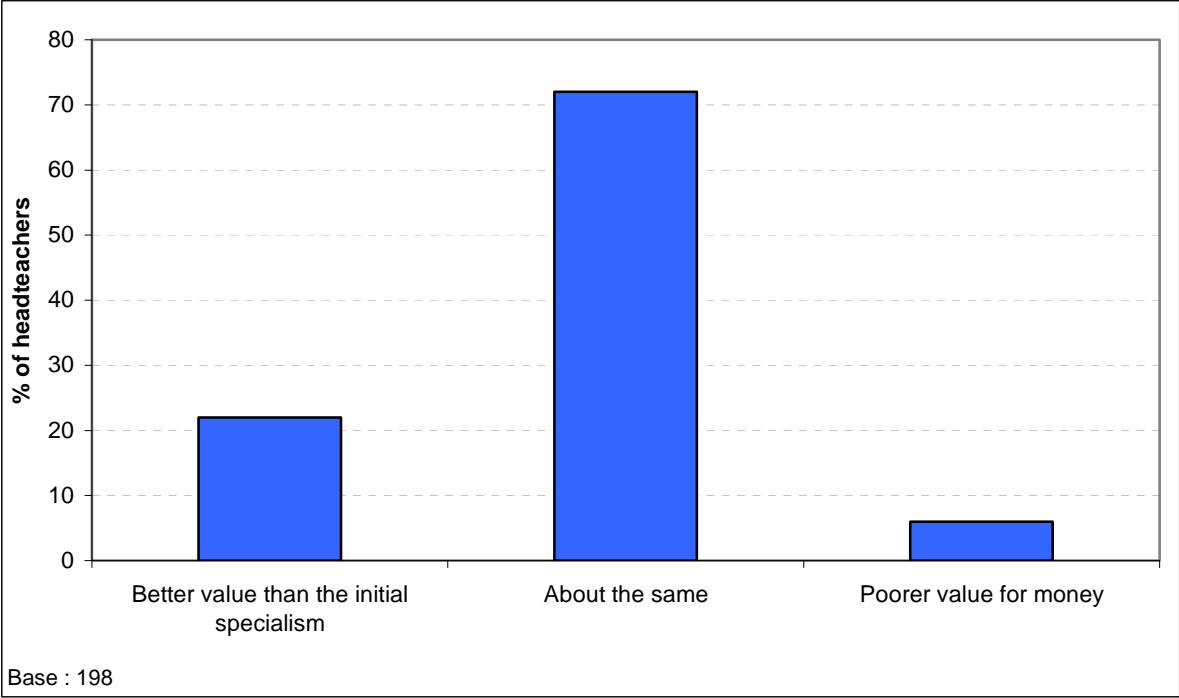
| <b>Good value for money overall</b> |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Business partners                   | <i>"His service [careers and business manager] is invaluable to our school and to the community. Without him how would we even know the school was here? He should be cloned."</i> (Local businessman)   |
| Community partners                  | <i>"We work out of [many schools]... this school is the only school that has ever given us a room. I just mentioned it to him [Careers and business manager] in passing and it was done... we have worked out of another school for 20 years and never received room space."</i> (Youth worker)  |
| Primary school partners             | <i>"If they stopped the money for HPSS it would be a disaster... we had Ofsted recently and it has made an enormous difference to what we achieved. A lot of our parents were struggling to exist even before the credit crunch. The kids are going on a trip in a few weeks and it is completely paid for... we couldn't offer it otherwise."</i> (Primary teacher) |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.



6.23 The overall findings from the school visits regarding HPSS value for money vis-à-vis the initial specialism is directly reflected in the headteacher survey data, where almost three-quarters (72%) of headteacher respondents indicated that HPSS represents *the same* value for money as their initial specialism, and almost a quarter (22%) of all schools stated that HPSS represents *better* value for money than their initial specialism. This is reflected in Figure 6.5.

**Figure 6.5: Value for money of HPSS funding compared to initial specialism**



Source: PwC HPSS Headteacher survey, 2008  
 Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to statistical rounding.

**Sustainability**

6.24 Sustainability of the HPSS programme was a concern expressed by interviewees in the schools visited, particularly in term of their ability to retain their funding. All of the schools indicated that some elements of the HPSS work they currently undertake would be sustainable after the two years of guaranteed funding came to an end. This was largely due to the importance placed by schools on the impact HPSS status is having on their pupils and staff. In some cases, schools cited HPSS as being the driving force behind their development over the coming years:

*“We have a strategic approach to learning and the learning environment, and this has been taken forward. Our vision is for a high quality learning environment and everything we do should emanate from that. HPSS has given us the opportunity to do this. This is a massive project for our school and the way we have led and managed that has impacted on the successes of it, both strategically and operationally.”*  
 (Headteacher)

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

6.25 However, some schools reported that a high proportion of the work linked to HPSS funding would be unsustainable if the funding did not continue beyond the guaranteed two years:

*“Some things are just not sustainable without it [HPSS funding]... In fact, some things like running the R&D Group and sustaining salaries and running things like ACE day, we would struggle to continue definitely.” (Director of training school)*

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

6.26 Table 6.9 overleaf highlights the two key concerns expressed by interviewees in relation to sustainability of their activities, namely the funding of key posts created by HPSS and the ability to progress the work commenced with partner schools.

**Table 6.9: Sustainability of activities linked to the HPSS programme**

| Areas of concern                          | Qualitative evidence   |
|---|--|
| Placing key posts at risk                 | <i>“What I do is fairly limited if I did not have the funding... I know that the HPSS money funds one of my colleagues directly...the provision of the speech and language base would drop.” (Teacher in speech and language base)</i>   |
| Halting the progress with partner schools | <i>“I think there is a limited sustainability... she [outreach worker] has imparted knowledge and training to staff, and those staff will continue... but to my mind it would only continue as long as she is there... in some schools she is at the end of the phone and in others she is more proactive... sometimes she does targeted work with schools. So without funding it would not be progressed and could not be maintained.” (Director of specialism)</i> |

**Summary**

6.27 The purpose of this chapter was to consider the value for money being achieved vis-à-vis the funding provided to HPS schools and to uncover how sustainable the activities are in the longer term.

- The headteacher survey revealed that all **SEN option schools** have a discrete budget set aside linked to their funding, compared to over three-quarters of schools (78%) with other specialist options. The majority of respondents (94%) agree that they had sufficient flexibility to determine how to allocate HPSS funding;
- The majority of the ten schools visited split their funding equally between **outreach** and **internal activities**. Over half (58%) of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that they spent at least 30-39% of their funding on outreach work;
- Some of the schools visited are driving forward **collaboration** by focusing their funding on the appointment of an outreach worker and the survey data suggest that HPS schools are spending a proportion of their funding on employing additional staff to drive forward the HPSS activities; 72% of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that they allocated some funding for additional staff to work on the HPSS option;

- Over four-fifths (84%) of respondents to the survey agreed that HPSS funding enabled things to be done **more efficiently**, at least to some extent, and 43% believed this was being achieved to a large extent. 94% of respondents agreed that funding enabled staff to work more effectively, at least to some extent, and all of the ten schools visited concurred that the funding was enabling things to be done more efficiently and effectively;
- In addition, most of the schools visited agreed that the funding was delivering **value for money**, but that the level of funding is not sufficient to sustain and progress the current activities. A number of interviewees indicated that the school supplemented or matched the HPSS funding;
- Respondents to the survey indicated that the money spent on **staffing** provided the best value for money, with over four-fifths (84%) of respondents rating additional staff between 7 and 10 (10 being good value for money). The vast majority of respondents to the headteacher survey agreed that collaboration with **primary schools** (97%), **secondary schools** (89%) and **community organisations** (85%) represented good value for money. Interviewees from partner schools concurred with this view, although they were often unable to specify the monetary value of the support they received from schools; and
- Overall, both interviewees and respondents to the survey agreed that what had been achieved as a result of HPSS funding represented the same value for money as the initial specialism and almost one-quarter (22%) of survey respondents agreed that HPSS represents better value for money.

6.28 Sustainability of activities was a concern for the ten schools visited, in terms of their ability to retain their funding. Due to the level of importance placed on activities linked to the specialism, most schools indicated that they would work to sustain these as much as possible. However, interviewees expressed concerns in relation to the sustainability of key posts created as a result of HPSS funding and about the ability to progress the work commenced with partner schools.

## **7 The programme moving forward**

### **Introduction**

7.1 This section of the report presents findings on schools' ongoing plans for the delivery of HPSS, and their suggestions for the programme as it moves forward. Based on the data, we will also report on the longer term impact of the HPSS Programme. The chapter is structured under the following headings:

- Ongoing plans for HPSS;
- Suggestions for the programme;
- Longer term impact of the programme; and
- Summary

### **Ongoing plans for HPSS**

7.2 Interviewees were asked to identify their ongoing and future plans for their HPSS option. Schools identified a range of plans for HPSS; this indicates that the programme is viewed as an integral part of schools. These include:

- Applying for an additional specialism;
- Transferring the benefits of the specialism more widely internally and externally;
- Forging new partnerships;
- Integrating the HPSS option with the initial specialism; and
- Appointing a key person with responsibility for driving forward collaboration.

7.3 Table 7.1 details a range of plans for the future surrounding HPSS from the 10 school visits undertaken.

**Table 7.1: Moving forward with HPSS status**

| <b>Plans for HPSS</b>   | <b>Qualitative evidence</b>  |
|---|--|
| Apply for an additional specialism  | <i>"Certainly, we're looking at a third specialism, we have done it before and we can learn from that as well. So we have a lot of expertise and experience rooted in our school."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
| Transfer the benefits of the specialism to pupils throughout the school         | <i>"What we have done with maths...I find myself wondering how we can work on our curriculum to make it work across the board. What I know I want to do is to make it work for a wider group of pupils..."</i> (Headteacher)   |
| Collaborate with partners on both core and wider issues                         | <i>"I work on behaviour and we are looking for a common behaviour referral route. The SENCOs and the Heads of Year are coming together to look for a common set of paperwork and procedures so that if they do managed moves then the paperwork is exactly the same, and each child is assessed using the same materials... so that they can slot more easily into the appropriate school."</i> (Director of specialism) |
| Integrate the HPSS option more fully with the initial specialism                | <i>"We are a Performing Arts specialist college and that is going to be such a huge part of the [Creative and Media] diploma. It is work related learning, performing arts with the media, which will give them a vocational experience. Once that is set up it will show really clear links between the specialisms."</i> (Class-based teacher)   |
| Impact more on attainment and standards   | <i>"We would like to use science more as a vehicle for improving standards across the school... with the new KS3 we're looking at doing an environment day..."</i> (Director of specialism)  |
| Appoint a key person/team with responsibility for driving forward collaboration | <i>"Logistics is always a problem, getting a time that suits both schools, so a dedicated outreach team would be fantastic. It is always a challenge and I guess the more demanding we become the more challenging this will be."</i> (Headteacher, partner primary school)  |
| Share best practice with the wider education community                          | <i>"Teachfirst has asked if we can share middle leader development, so we have thought of publishing our NQT programme and selling it on. People are commenting that it is a real shame that we have not written up what we are doing."</i> (Director of specialism)   |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

7.4 Almost three-quarters of respondents to the headteachers survey provided an indication of their ongoing plans for the future development of HPSS status in their school. The majority of those schools that responded highlighted cementing and extending wider collaborative networks as their main priority areas. Other common areas for focus shown in Table 7.2 were:

- Further integration of existing specialisms;
- Improving monitoring arrangements;
- Enhancing the curriculum offer; and
- Aligning HPSS with the wider government agenda and initiatives.

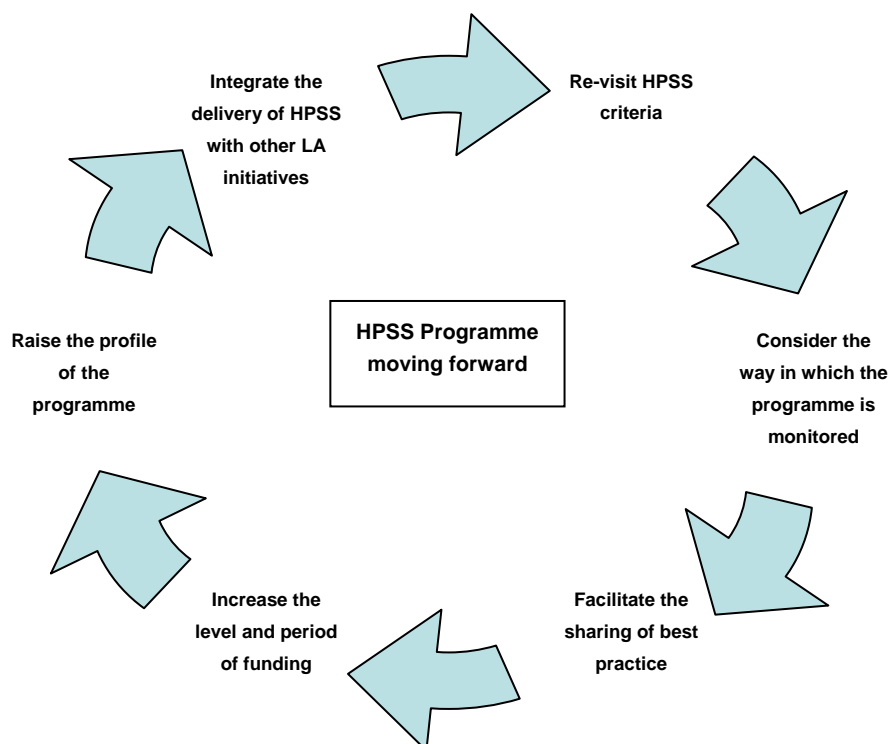
**Table 7.2: Planning for the future**

| <b>Plans for HPSS</b>   | <b>Qualitative evidence from headteacher survey</b>   |
|---|---|
| Further integration of existing specialisms                   | <i>“Our aim is to use the period of the HPSS second specialism to alter substantive structures, and to look at ways of working and pathways for the future... we want to identify limits and parameters of sustainability and integration to assist future decision making and overall strategy.”</i> (Headteacher)   |
| Improve monitoring  | <i>“Develop key performance indicators for all specialisms in relation to the school’s three-year plan”</i> (Headteacher)<br><br><i>“Ensure quality provision across all partner organisations, through strict quality control procedures.”</i> (Outreach worker)   |
| Cement wider collaborative networks                           | <i>“Build on the federation with our main partner special school. Enabling the 15 Special Schools’ network to become an even stronger force in Applied Learning and show mainstream schools what an innovative and imaginative curriculum can look like”.</i> (Director of specialism)  |
| Enhance curriculum offer                                      | <i>“Working with the local BSF school has been very successful and can be maintained / improved. Ideally providing the new Diploma in Business will be a vehicle for further development with local schools.”</i> (Headteacher)<br><br><i>“We seek to develop and embed powerful partnerships with local and feeder schools and to support the delivery of a rich and varied curriculum in primary School language delivery”.</i> (Director of specialism)  |
| Align HPSS work with wider government agendas and initiatives | <i>“Apart from further developing the initiatives we have already begun, we have a vision of an eco-school status and widespread sustainable development at environmental and community levels.”</i> (Headteacher)<br><br><i>“We will work to tie the specialism more securely with our Trust status.”</i> (Director of specialism)<br><br><i>“We want to work closely with the schools facing challenging circumstances in our areas, two of which are National Challenge schools.”</i> (Director of specialism) |

### **Suggestions for the programme**

7.5 Interviewees were asked to provide suggestions for the programme as it moves forward. The majority of comments focussed on the criteria for entering/re-designating to the programme, and monitoring the progress of HPS schools. In addition, respondents identified issues around the level and period of funding; local and national awareness of the programme; sharing of best practice; and strategic planning at local authority level. These can be summarised in Figure 7.1.

**Figure 7.1: Suggestions for the programme**



**Table 7.3: Suggestions for HPSS moving forward**

| Theme   | Qualitative evidence from school visits   |
|---|---|
| <b>Re-visit HPSS criteria</b>   |   |
| Don't just focus on attainment  | <i>"If they want [HPSS] to be successful, they are losing a great deal by not recognising what this school and others like it are contributing to their agenda, in a way that other schools are not. They've got to have a better way of assessing whether they are spending money on specialisms effectively." (Headteacher)</i>   |
| Look at the context of the school   | <i>"They need to look at us in context, rather than the same as every other school in the county. We need better recognition of the constraints in certain types of schools in certain areas." (Deputy head)</i>  |
| Judge on the performance in the specialist area                                   | <i>"We should be judged on our performance in the specialist area [Applied Learning] which is not just about on performance in English and Maths, but on the impact across the rest of the school. We've moved up from 45% to 62% A*-C including English and Maths... and to get to that has made an impact, and for that not to be credited, well... you make that huge amount of progress but you don't meet the bar, because they've moved the bar."</i> |
| Remove SEN pupils from attainment statistics                                      | <i>"So something to pass on to the Department would be if they could take those kids with SEN out of the statistics and assess the school on the remainder of its pupils... ironically, we would then retain the status. Or, alternatively, they could look at the CVA for those kids and take it away from that of the rest of the school." (SENCO)</i>  |
| <b>Consider alternative ways of monitoring the effectiveness of the programme</b> |   |
| Encourage Ofsted to take account of HPSS status                                   | <i>"Ofsted did not look at our training school status when they were in the school... they didn't touch on it at all. They spoke to the Director of Specialism on my insistence, and the only line in the report linked to the specialism is that provision for NQTs is outstanding." (Headteacher)</i>   |

| <b>Theme</b>   | <b>Qualitative evidence from school visits</b>   |
|--|--|
| Introduce more effective monitoring and evaluation procedures          | <i>"Also the other side is to introduce a monitoring process... perhaps a national co-ordinator would come in, and ask us about what we have done. The SSAT have my plan which they agreed is reasonable and that is what would be measured and monitored and they would see that this is happening."</i> (Headteacher)  |
| <b>Increase the level and period of funding</b>                        |  |
| Guarantee funding for a longer period                                  | <i>"What they should do is to introduce a four year commitment... because for a school like this to get further improvements when we are already performing well, is difficult in the short term... so we need a longer run at it."</i> (Headteacher)  |
| Provide equal funding for HPSS and the original specialism(s)          | <i>"I think because we are in a school where we are one of three specialisms... and more money went to first specialism... I don't understand why it is not shared more equally especially as we are meant to link with the other specialisms."</i> (Communication and Interaction coordinator)  |
| <b>Raise the profile of the programme (and of particular options)</b>  |  |
| Promote the SEN HPSS option more widely                                | <i>"Schools simply do not see SEN as a viable option for a specialism and the DCSF and even the SSAT are making a significant error in not promoting this."</i> (Headteacher)  |
| <b>Facilitate the sharing of best practice</b>                         |  |
| Set up effective communication networks for sharing best practice      | <i>"You need to have a bit more communication with the other SEN specialism schools... when there were four of us... in the first year we had a morning here, and they came and had a look around the school, and talked about what we were doing... it was useful to hear how other people were spending the money... getting fresh ideas... and what worked well was that we met another school, it was a showcase."</i> (Deputy director of specialism) |
| <b>Integrate the delivery of HPSS with other initiatives in the LA</b> |  |
| Encourage a more joined up approach to planning and delivery in the LA | <i>"The key challenge for the borough is making the links at a strategic level before this can impact positively in terms of schools collaborating. Does the person managing Specialist Schools at LA level interact with person managing Extended Schools? They need to make that connection really, at that level."</i> (Extended Schools co-ordinator)  |

Source: PwC HPS Schools visits 2008.

## Longer term impact of the programme

7.6 One of the objectives of the evaluation is to consider the longer term impact of the programme. The above data suggest that the potential for the programme to impact long term is linked to a number of factors:

- An extension to the period of guaranteed funding to enable more strategic long term planning alongside the assurance that funding will be sufficient;
- Adapted re-designation criteria to ensure that best practice and progress is rewarded;
- Increased dissemination and sharing of best practice nationwide to enable effective sustainable partnerships and collaboration, particularly with secondary schools, business and the wider community; and
- Raising the profile of the HPSS Programme generally, and of particular options (e.g. SEN).



7.7 If these measures are in place, the programme has the potential to enable schools to:

- Establish themselves as centres of excellence rooted firmly at the heart of the educational community, the business community and wider communities.
- Effectively collaborate at both local and borough level;
- Feed into wider government agendas; and
- Generate experience and provide platforms for schools to demonstrate a commitment to innovation and autonomy.<sup>15</sup>

7.8 Successful long term impact of the programme relies on the continued effective monitoring and evaluation of the HPSS programme as a whole. Based on findings from both the headteacher survey and the school site visits, there are a number of ways in which future monitoring and evaluation of the programme could increase impact on both HPS schools and the partners with which they work. Table 7.9 illustrates the three key areas of effective monitoring and evaluation.

**Table 7.4: Potential for future monitoring and evaluation of the HPSS programme**

| Area of monitoring and evaluation  | Potential approaches  | Supporting findings   |
|--|---|---|
| Self evaluation by schools   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued inclusion of HPSS programme plans in SEF, incorporating regular evaluation of progress.</li> <li>• Self selection of monitoring data based on HPSS option type.</li> </ul> | <p>Headteacher survey findings indicated that just over half of the 204 schools that responded to the survey were prepared to comment on impact HPSS had on their attainment profile. However, those schools visited who had effective hard data monitoring systems in place had tailored these to their individual option, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom observation data in Training schools;</li> <li>• Inclusion rates in HPSS SEN option schools;</li> <li>• Attainment data in primary schools in Curricular option schools.</li> </ul> |
| Qualitative and quantitative assessment of both internal and external impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HPSS programme focus during Ofsted inspections.</li> <li>• Qualitative assessments of progress fed back to DCSF using 'soft' data.</li> </ul>  | <p>Findings from the school visits indicated that most schools welcomed a two-pronged approach to monitoring and evaluation - soft and hard data, as well as the chance to demonstrate progress and impact during Ofsted inspections.</p>   |
| Continued sharing of good practice examples                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated by the existing work of the SSAT, TDA and YST.</li> </ul>  | <p>Findings from the school site visits indicated that at least 3 schools would welcome further opportunities to share and gain from good practice examples, particularly within the SEN HPSS options.</p>  |

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/specialistschools/guidance2008/>

7.9 Monitoring and evaluation could be further enhanced through guidance issued in relation to the specific data schools could choose to collect and collate in order to enable effective monitoring and evaluation of the programme, including, for example:

- Impact on achievement and attainment on key subject areas
- Impact on achievement and attainment on SEN and Gifted and Talented pupils
- Impact on uptake of subjects
- Impact on training and CPD
- Impact on behaviour and exclusions
- Provide specific examples of data collection tools used by schools

## Summary

7.10 **Schools** were asked to identify their ongoing and future plans for the programme and there was evidence that schools were planning to progress their efforts both internally and externally. The following is a summary of plans identified by interviewees during the school visits:

- Apply for an additional specialism;
- Transfer the benefits of the specialism more widely to pupils throughout the school;
- Forge new partnerships;
- Collaborate with partners on wider issues;
- Increase the benefits to partner schools;
- Integrate the HPSS option more effectively with the initial specialism;
- Increase the impact on attainment;
- Appoint a key person to drive forward collaboration; and
- Share best practice with the wider education community.

7.11 Similarly, **headteachers** provided an indication of their future plans for the delivery of HPSS. These focused on:

- Further integration of existing specialisms;
- Improving monitoring arrangements;
- Cementing wider collaborative networks;
- Enhancing the curriculum offer; and
- Aligning HPSS with the wider government agenda and initiatives.

7.12 During the school visits, interviewees made a number of suggestions for the programme as it moves forward in terms of how it could be tailored to better suit their needs and those of their partners. Most suggestions centred on reassessing the **criteria** for awarding and re-designation of HPSS status, particularly for Training schools and SEN option schools. Some schools indicated a system of inspection would be a more equitable approach than the current focus on attainment. Other suggestions included:

- Consider the way in which the programme is monitored;
- Facilitate the sharing of best practice;
- Increase the level and period of funding;
- Raise the profile of the programme; and
- Integrate the delivery and planning of HPSS more closely with other LA initiatives.

7.13 The HPSS Programme has the potential to enable schools to become centres of excellence, collaborate effectively locally and more widely, feed into wider government initiatives and provide schools with a platform to demonstrate a commitment to innovation and autonomy. However, in order for long term and sustained impact to be realised, a number of factors should be addressed: current funding arrangements; criteria for re-designation; sharing of best practice and raising the profile of the programme.

## 8 Conclusions and Good Practice

### Embedding the programme

#### Stage of implementation

- Overall, schools have made progress towards embedding their HPSS options with over half of all schools making some progress towards this goal.
- Based on self evaluation and evidence of whole school impact and increased collaboration, non-curricular HPS schools have made the most progress in embedding their options as opposed to SEN option HPS schools and Curricular HPS schools.

#### Achievements and challenges

- The HPSS programme is impacting the wider government agenda through effective collaborative frameworks. Where collaboration is well established and co-ordinated, and where schools are working in partnership with local authorities, 14-19 reforms, Extended Schools and ECM are being driven forward in conjunction with HPSS.
- Schools have recorded many achievements as a result of their HPSS activities. An overarching achievement in year two for a number of schools visited is the local, and sometimes national, recognition of their school as a centre of excellence and best practice.
- Key challenges identified by HPS schools centred on sustainability and resourcing linked to funding criteria and on forging and maintaining effective collaborative partnerships.

#### Integration with initial specialism

- Overall, the data suggest that HPS schools are focused on integrating the planning and provision of the HPS option with the original specialism(s), with the aim of maximising the benefits to pupils and staff. SEN option schools and Non-curricular schools provide the best examples of good practice in integration and joint planning.

##### **Good practice note 1**

Some schools in the latter stages of embedding their HPSS option(s) were found to be effectively sharing good practice with schools that were in the earlier stages of implementation. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT), the Training and Development Agency (TDA) and the Youth Sport Trust (YST) should continue to facilitate the sharing of good practice between schools with an emphasis placed on face-to-face visits where this is practical and/ or feasible.

##### **Good practice note 2**

Schools should strategically plan the ongoing development of their HPSS options with existing HPSS or initial specialisms, in line with whole school development priorities. HPSS option choices should promote breadth of choice and opportunity for staff and pupils, both within the HPS school and within their collaborative partners. Local Authorities should continue to take responsibility for ensuring an even spread of specialisms across their LA area.

##### **Good practice note 3**

The national profile of HPSS status and the individual merits of each option type, with particular reference to SEN HPSS options, should be raised by the DCSF/SSAT/TDA/YST. This is in order to create increased awareness of the programme, and, what it can offer to potential HPS schools, as well as partner schools, business and community organisations.

## **Internal Impact**

### **Raising aspirations, and attainment**

- Similar to last year's findings, the majority of schools visited found it difficult to isolate the impact of the specialist option on pupil attainment, although most are confident that there is a positive impact. The headteacher survey revealed that almost two-thirds (64%) of schools surveyed indicated the attainment profile had improved, although a large proportion found it difficult to comment on the direct impact of HPSS.
- Interviewees in the school visits suggested that the benefits to pupils included increased enthusiasm and confidence and improved behaviour.
- Survey questions focusing on attainment, motivation and behaviour received relatively low responses, indicating reluctance by schools to attribute a single factor such as HPSS status to whole school improvement. Of those who responded, 89% attributed some of the improvement in behaviour and motivation to the introduction of the HPSS option.

### **Curricular choice and personalised learning**

- Over three-quarters (81%) of respondents to the survey attributed improvements in personalised learning directly to HPSS status.
- Interviewees suggested that improvements in personalised learning are linked to schools being able to offer a broader curriculum, including increased applied learning options and more targeted provision for Gifted and Talented pupils, EAL and SEN pupils.

### **Impact on staff**

- Overall, school site visits suggest that HPSS status has enabled the majority of schools to develop a more focused approach to CPD. This has enabled schools to enhance career opportunities and produce future leaders.
- The headteacher survey data suggests that HPSS is having less effect on CPD in schools with a curricular option. 28% of respondents in schools with a curricular option, compared to 75% in schools with a SEN option, indicated that HPSS had directly enhanced CPD opportunities.
- Workload of staff directly affected by the specialism in HPS schools is perceived to be generally greater as a result of the HPS status, although, similar to last year's findings, this is not resented by the majority of staff, given the benefits achieved.
- Where schools have been able to create promotions linked to staff progression, retention of staff has improved. However, where this is not possible, a number of high calibre staff move on to other schools. The data from ten school site visits suggests that HPSS status continues not to be a relevant factor for most schools in the recruitment of staff.
- However, 61% of respondents to the headteacher survey agree or agree strongly that HPSS status has led to improvement in staff recruitment and 59% of headteacher respondents agree or agree strongly that HPSS status has led to improvements in staff retention.
- Almost four-fifths of headteacher respondents indicated that HPSS has boosted the morale and motivation of all staff.

## Teaching and Learning

- The vast majority of schools visited agree that being part of the programme has had a positive impact on the standard of teaching and learning in their school. Coupled with enhanced CPD programmes and improved career pathways, staff morale has increased in almost all schools.
- 95% of headteacher respondents stated that the impact of CPD on the quality of teaching and learning in schools is effective or very effective.

### Good practice note 4

Schools should be encouraged to raise the profile of their HPSS status internally and to parents, clearly signposting the opportunities and benefits that the HPSS programme presents to staff and pupils.

## External Impact

### Overall success

- In keeping with last year's findings from the school site visits, collaborative arrangements with primary schools continue to be well progressed. Over four-fifths of respondents to the headteacher survey agree or strongly agree that collaboration arrangements have improved over the past year. There is also some evidence of improved collaborative arrangements with secondary school partners. 78% of respondents to the headteacher survey agree or strongly agree that the collaborative arrangements with secondary schools have improved.
- The extent and nature of collaborative arrangements is largely dependent on the HPSS option type, with Applied Learning schools and Training Schools being more focused on secondary school collaboration and curricular option schools focussing their efforts more on primary collaboration. Similar to last year, the school site visits suggest collaboration is least progressed with businesses, with a large number of schools indicating that this remains a priority for the forthcoming year.

### Collaboration with partner primary schools

- Collaboration with primary schools is being facilitated by a focus from HPS schools on needs matched provision. Similar to last year's findings, the data from school site visits suggests that collaboration is most progressed in schools where there is an appointment of a dedicated outreach worker.
- Involving primary schools in the planning of outreach work brings about more needs-matched provision and leads to improvements in the transition routes for students.
- The data from school site visits suggests that CPD opportunities for staff in primary schools have increased. These take the form of shared experiences and observation, as well as more formalised sessions. In addition, 72% of respondents to the headteacher survey agree or strongly agree that training opportunities have improved for staff in partner primary schools as a result of collaborative working.

### **Collaboration with partner secondary schools**

- Whilst data from the school visits suggest that the degree of collaboration with secondary partners varies, most schools now have buy-in from their secondary school partners.
- Over three-quarters of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that arrangements for collaborating with secondary partners have improved. Non-curricular schools are most focused on collaborating with secondary schools linked to their central purpose.
- Common barriers to collaboration include geographical proximity, lack of engagement by secondary schools and competition. When these are overcome, a range of benefits ensue to staff and pupils, including a broader curriculum, extra curricular opportunities and enhanced CPD.

### **Collaboration with wider community**

- During the past year, collaboration with the wider community has improved for well over half of all schools surveyed. Over two-thirds (70%) of the headteachers that responded indicated that arrangements with community partners have improved over the last 12 months.
- Data from school site visits suggest that the benefits being derived from collaboration include: access to resources and facilities; provision of adult and out of hours learning; and opportunities for students and staff to be involved in delivering community projects.
- Barriers to collaboration include identifying the needs of the wider community and the cost involved in providing support and facilities.

### **Collaboration with business**

- 69% of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that their collaboration arrangements with businesses have improved over the last year.
- Data from the school site visits suggest that barriers to collaborating with business are similar to last year and include a lack of interest and engagement from businesses, identifying and marketing what the HPS school can offer to business and convincing schools of the potential gains they can derive from business partnerships.
- Only a small number of schools visited had developed strong collaborative links with businesses. These links have resulted in: increased extra-curricular opportunities for pupils; raising the profile of local business in the community; promotion of business opportunities; and more focused work experience activities.

**Good practice note 5**

Schools should be encouraged and, where possible, supported to build capacity amongst staff within their institutions, to facilitate effective annual strategic planning and collaboration with partner schools and organisations. Examples of good practice should be used to highlight effective strategies for managing the interface between internal priorities and external collaboration.

**Good practice note 6**

Schools should continue to find ways of involving partners in planning outreach activities. The benefits of collaborating with business and the wider community should be clearly articulated to schools involved in the programme.

**Good practice note 7**

Schools which have established and effective collaborative arrangements with businesses should continue to be encouraged and enabled to share good practice with all schools involved in the programme.

**Good practice note 8**

Strategic planning and cooperation should be further encouraged by DCSF at Local Authority level between the HPSS programme and wider government initiatives, such as Extended Schools and the 14-19 reforms. This would better synthesise common themes between initiatives, in order to improve effective joined up provision.

## Monitoring and evaluation

### Internal monitoring procedures

- 94% of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that they use pupil attainment data to monitor the impact of the specialism and around half to three-fifths also use pastoral data, for example attendance and exclusion rates (62% and 48%, respectively).
- The data from the school site visits emphasise the importance placed on monitoring less tangible data, such as lesson observation and personalised target monitoring and pupil survey data.
- The data schools rely on for monitoring varies according to option types, with Training Schools, for example, monitoring lesson observation data and Applied Learning option schools analysing uptake of courses. SEN option schools, in particular, emphasised the importance of a more holistic view of monitoring to evaluate impact.
- While there is some evidence of robust and well developed monitoring systems and procedures in some schools, progress has been relatively slow in most schools, with only two of the ten schools visited reporting improved progress. Most schools visited highlighted this as an area for development for the coming year.

### Involvement of pupils and governors

- The data from school site visits suggest that pupils have an increasing role to play in the monitoring of HPSS specialisms in their schools, primarily through feedback from student voice forums, but increasingly as lesson observers within schools.
- Almost all schools (92% of respondents to the headteacher survey) report that Governors are involved in monitoring the specialisms at some level, typically through documents such as the SEF.



- Over half of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that monitoring the specialism included discussion of target achievement with the chair of governors.
- There is evidence in some schools visited that governors are being involved strategically in the work of the specialisms, with the creation of link governor posts. Additionally, those schools that report to governors on HPSS as a specific strand of school activity indicate greater engagement in the monitoring processes.

### **Monitoring the outreach activities**

- Monitoring arrangements with partner schools and organisations broadly reflect the extent to which schools most frequently collaborate with each of these groups.
- In line with internal monitoring processes, external systems are less well developed, with informal monitoring taking place most commonly with primary schools, while secondary school monitoring and feedback tends to take place during cluster or partnership meetings.
- Monitoring appears to be most consistent where an outreach coordinator has been appointed in line with the specialism, or where technical staff are available to support systems and procedures.
- Any monitoring of business and wider community is on an informal basis, focussed on relationship management.
- Broadly speaking, schools are not yet aligning their monitoring arrangements with those of their partner schools or organisations, although a small number of schools visited did show some understanding of how partner schools monitor the impact on themselves.

#### **Good practice note 9**

Schools should be further encouraged and supported to build capacity within their institutions to establish and sustain robust systems for monitoring the effectiveness of their specialism(s), at middle manager and senior manager level. Measures should be put in place by DCSF/SSAT/TDA/YST to assist schools with strategies for benchmarking and monitoring the impact of HPSS status on pupils, in terms of attainment, achievement and enjoyment.

#### **Good practice note 10**

Schools should build on established practice of involving governors in the monitoring and evaluation of their initial specialism by further involving them in the monitoring of their HPSS option(s) and schools should be encouraged to appoint link specialism governors.

#### **Good practice note 11**

Schools and partners should establish clear monitoring procedures at the planning stage of outreach activities, and establish the mutual benefits of this. Clear guidelines on how feedback will be facilitated should be drawn up between HPS schools and their HPSS partners. This approach has already been adopted by some programmes.

#### **Good practice note 12**

Schools should ensure that their monitoring activities are achievable, effective and sustainable.

## **Funding, value for money and sustainability**

### **Allocation of funding**

- Headteacher survey data suggests that all schools with a SEN specialism operate their funding through a discrete budget, compared to over three-quarters of schools with other specialist options.
- 90% of headteacher respondents agree that they had sufficient flexibility to allocate HPSS funding.
- The majority of the ten schools visited split their funding equally between outreach work and internal activities, whereas 58% of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that they spent at least 30-39% of their funding on outreach work.
- A high percentage of the funding received by HPS schools goes towards providing additional staff to drive forward the HPSS activities. 72% of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that they allocated some funding for additional staff to work on the HPSS option.

### **Overall impact of funding**

- 84% of headteacher respondents to the survey agree that HPSS funding enables things to be done more efficiently, at least to some extent, and 94% of respondents agreed that the funding enabled staff to work more effectively, at least to some extent. This view was shared by all ten schools visited.

### **Value for money**

- All of the schools visited agreed that the HPSS funding was delivering value for money, even though, in the view of most schools, the level of funding was not sufficient to sustain and progress the activities.
- A number of schools visited indicated that they supplement or match HPSS funding.
- Three-fifths (60%) of respondents to the survey indicated that the proportion of the funding spent on staffing provided the best value for money.
- The vast majority of respondents to the headteacher survey agree that collaboration with primary schools (97% of respondents), secondary schools (89%) and community partners (85%) represented good value for money. The majority of interviewees in the school visits concurred with these views.
- 72% of respondents to the headteacher survey indicated that what has been achieved to date as a result of the HPSS funding represents the same value for money than what has been achieved as a result of the initial specialism. Almost one-quarter stated that HPSS represents better value for money than the initial specialism.

## Sustainability

- Sustaining the activities of HPSS was an expressed concern for all of the 10 schools visited, linked to schools retaining their funding.
- Most schools visited place a high level of importance on the activities associated with the HPSS option and indicated that they would work to sustain these, even if funding was removed. However, schools suggested that the ability to retain key posts linked to the specialism and progress work commenced with partner schools would be threatened if funding was removed.

### **Good practice note 13**

DCSF should reconsider the level of funding for the HPSS programme vis-à-vis the funding for the Specialist School Programme, as some concerns have been raised by HPS schools about their ability to sustain the level of activities linked to the amount of funding received.

### **Good practice note 14**

DCSF should consider extending the guaranteed minimum period of HPSS funding beyond two years to enable schools in the programme to put in place strategic longer term plans for creating and delivering meaningful impacts.

### **Good practice note 15**

DCSF should consider reviewing the type of criteria employed at re-designation to take account of the following:

- The context of schools; and
- The impact of their chosen HPSS option on their ability to meet the existing criteria.

At the point of a school's re-designation, DCSF could consider undertaking an assessment of the extent of good practice demonstrated by schools in relation to their HPSS option, as well as employing the existing criteria. This would be welcomed by a number of schools, particularly those with SEN or Applied Learning HPSS options.

## The Programme moving forward

### Ongoing plans for HPSS

- Schools have a range of plans in place to drive forward the specialism in the coming year. These include: applying for an additional specialism; further integration of the existing specialisms; transferring the benefits of the specialism more widely to pupils throughout the HPS school; cementing wider collaboration networks; improving monitoring arrangements; and sharing best practice.

### Suggestions for the programme

- Interviewees provided a number of more strategic suggestions for the programme as it moves forward. These include: considering the way in which the programme is monitored; facilitating the sharing of best practice; increasing the level and period of funding; raising the profile of the HPSS programme; and integrating the delivery and planning of HPSS more closely with other Local Authority initiatives.

## Longer term impact

- The research suggests that the HPSS Programme has the potential to enable schools to become centres of excellence, collaborate effectively locally and more widely, feed into wider government initiatives and provide schools with a platform to demonstrate a commitment to innovation and autonomy.

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