



# Putting the World into World-Class Education

An international strategy for education, skills and children's services

## Action Plan – Update 2007



# Foreword

The DfES International Strategy was published in 2004. Since then it has impacted on, and is embedded in, the development of new policies and planning for the future. The Strategy is a key element in achieving the goals of the Government's five-year Strategy for children and learners, and it will be a component in meeting the challenges flowing from the Leitch report on skills. The goals of the 2004 International Strategy remain current: how these will be delivered is changing over time. This document updates on actions taken to deliver the strategy and summarises some of the key developments over the last three years.

Delivering the three goals of the Strategy remains the overall objective. We will succeed by engaging with bilateral partners as well as with the EU and wider multilateral systems to strengthen the delivery of domestic policy, as well as using education, training and skills to support the achievement of the UK's objectives abroad. The Strategy Update shows how we are enabling schools to benefit from international contact and engagement and also how we are promoting trade in educational goods and services as well as the positioning of our HE and FE sectors in an international globalised environment.

The Strategy Update demonstrates how the UK: contributes to the global society and economy, is playing a part in making Europe the world's leading knowledge economy by 2010, and how we use our bilateral relations as well as the multilateral system to identify and learn from best practice abroad and share our experiences. We also need to contribute to tackling the unacceptable inequalities across the planet: education is a vital tool in the battle against poverty in developing countries in Africa and elsewhere. The G8 meeting in June 2007 recommitted to its aims in Africa, and our work in Africa will proceed against this backdrop. These are some of the key aspects of the Strategy described in this document.

We would like to thank our stakeholders and partners who contributed to this document and encourage them to continue to work with us to deliver actions to achieve the goals of the International Strategy.

Department for Education and Skills – June 2007

# Introduction

**The Government's five year strategy for children and learners** commits us to developing a world-class system for education, skills and children's services. It is a strategy about raising standards for all across the education system while at the same time tackling the disadvantages leading to gaps in educational attainment in our own society between those who suffer from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and those who do not.

To achieve this, we need to educate everyone to understand and be part of the global community, we need to equip people with the skills to compete in the global economy, and we need to work in strategic partnership with other countries to raise our own performance at the same time as they develop theirs. By participating in the international educational community, we can benchmark our own performance against that of our competitors as well as learning from each other. That is why this International Strategy is an essential tool in taking forward our domestic ambitions for education, skills and children's services.

The recent report, ***Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills, December 2006***, has highlighted the need to tackle urgently the shortcomings in the skills of our workforce if we are to compete internationally. Our productivity levels are below those of our competitors in the G7 countries, and our qualification and skill levels are lower. The global economy demands ever greater skills from those who want to compete in the global marketplace. Countries like China and India are developing rapidly as major economic forces. Employers increasingly exercise their freedom to choose their workforces from a global labour pool according to the skills available.

In 2004, Lord Leitch was asked by Government to identify what the UK's optimal skills mix would need to be in 2020 in order to maximise economic growth, productivity and social inclusion, and to consider the policy implications of achieving the level of change required. The Government has accepted the analysis and committed to achieving the ambitions for 2020.

Lord Leitch's analysis shows that achieving world class skills will require the UK to commit to achieve the following by 2020:

- 95% of adults to have functional literacy and numeracy (basic skills) up from 85% literacy and 79% numeracy in 2005. This would more than treble projected rates of improvement to achieve a total of 7.4 million adult attainments over the period compared to the current Skills for Life target of 2.25 million attainments between 2001 and 2010;
- Exceeding 90% of the adult population qualified to at least Level 2, with a commitment to achieving world class levels as soon as feasible, currently projected to be 95%. An increase from 69% in 2005; a total of 1.6 million additional achievements over the period compared to current projections;

- Shifting the balance of intermediate skills from Level 2 to Level 3. Improving the esteem, quantity and quality of intermediate skills. Boosting the number of Apprentices to 500,000 by 2020; a total of 1.9 million adult Level 3 attainments over the period compared to current projections; and
- Exceeding 40% of the adult population qualified to Level 4 and above, up from 29% in 2005, with a commitment to continue progression. Widening the drive to improve the UK's high skills to encompass the whole working-age population, including 18-30 year olds; a total of 5.5 million attainments over the period. Increase focus on Level 5 and above skills.

The children now in our schools will be in the adult workforce by 2020, so achieving these goals has implications not only for Further Education and adult training but also for the way we prepare the next generation through the education system. Hence the importance of our policies to drive up school standards, to introduce new vocational diplomas for 14-19 year olds, and to renew the mission of the Further Education system so that it equips young people and adults with productive and sustainable skills in a global economy. It is without a doubt that developing our skills base is a key to Britain's future economic performance.

Launched in 2004, DfES's **Putting the World into World-Class Education – An international strategy for education, skills and children's services** recognised that developing and maintaining a world-class system begins with understanding the world in which we live. It means equipping all our children, young people and adults, with the means to communicate with others across the world, and to understand cultures other than our own. It also means knowing what constitutes world-class standards, and it means being a global partner. That message from 2004 was a powerful energiser for many partners across the UK who have developed a wide range of activities to drive the strategy forward. Chief of these is British Council which is working closely with the DfES to take forward several strands of the strategy.<sup>1</sup> The principles underlying the strategy resound more strongly today as the pressures of globalisation become ever more apparent.

As well as responding to global competition, children and young people need to see themselves as **confident global citizens** in a world where the limits on natural resources will become more tangible, and the science of climate change more apparent. They need to be able to communicate with people across the globe, and to be equipped to work abroad as well as at home if they choose to do so. The migration of workers – out of, as well as into, the UK – is an important feature of the world economy, bringing much-needed skills to the places where they are needed. As members of the European Union and of the Commonwealth, we have welcomed this process, so that our cities now reflect many different cultures and religions from across the world. But we need to manage this process so that the new communities become active participants in British society, as well as maintaining their own identities.

To support this process, our children and young people need to understand the international dimension if they are to make sense of their own society. Better cohesion within our own communities, and a sense of common purpose, will grow from a better understanding of the backgrounds of our fellow-citizens and of the values which they hold dear. Continuing

1 Sustainable Schools for Pupils, Communities and the Environment; an Action Plan for the DfES, April 2007=

international tensions remind us of the urgent need to do all we can through the education system to build community cohesion nationally and locally. Young people who grow up with an understanding of the values that bind us together as a nation, and of the nature of the global, community are far more likely to succeed.

**The International Strategy is also about our engagement with other countries:** our trade in educational goods and services, our ability to learn from good practice abroad, our active participation in the education strategies of international organisations, and our support for other countries' development. In this, we have much to offer. The UK plays a very active part as a member of the European Union, and through its Presidency in 2005 has helped to shape the European agenda. The EU's Lisbon strategy is very much in line with our own domestic objectives, seeking to raise Europe's overall performance in the global economy as well as that of individual Member States by raising skill levels and tackling weaknesses in education and training. The Hampton Court agenda, flowing from a speech by the Prime Minister during the 2005 UK Presidency, includes the modernisation of European higher education. We also play an active part in the Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development (OECD) whose comparative studies of national education and training performance are an essential tool in identifying where we need to improve and pinpointing the countries who have developed the approaches from which we can learn.

**And the UK Government is tackling the unacceptable inequalities between the developed world and the poorer countries of Africa and elsewhere.** As the recent publication *The World Classroom: Developing global partnerships in education*<sup>2</sup> explained, the Government is committed to the goal of ensuring that all children, everywhere, have the opportunity to go to school. It is contributing in a number of practical ways to the enhancement of education and training in these countries. It is entering for the first time into agreements with developing countries to help finance their education plans and will spend at least £8.5 billion on aid for education over the next ten years.

But the international dimension is not only about duties, responsibilities and obligations. **It is also about the opportunities now within the reach of both learners and teachers.** No previous generation could have conceived the freedom with which all of us, from primary school pupil to education professional, can communicate through the internet with our peers across the world. Equipped with what are essential 21st century skills, we are able to use these advances in communication to learn, to find out about best practice wherever it takes place, to make links with our counterparts abroad, and to establish international comparisons. We can use them to compare ourselves with our competitors and to learn how to perform better.

**Universities and higher education perhaps demonstrate best the possibilities offered by a ground-breaking international strategy.** For centuries, the academic community has not allowed itself to be confined by national boundaries. The ability to share ideas among an international community and the courage to think the unthinkable have been powerful drivers in the flowering of science, culture and the arts in our East, West and European civilisations. Universities have nurtured these values, sometimes in spite of the wishes of the regimes in the countries where they have been located. We take it for granted now

2 The World Classroom: Developing global partnerships in education (HM Treasury/DfID 2006)

that our universities will be international communities, whose academic staff are drawn from across the world, whose students have opportunities to study abroad, and whose research will be shared in international journals and conferences.

Because British universities have been at the forefront of the growth of a world-wide academic movement, they are well-placed to take advantage of the opportunities now available internationally. Our trained academics are welcomed as faculty staff across the globe, our universities are able to attract many paying students from abroad, and, allied to business, British higher education can drive British trade by selling its ideas and inventions overseas. In a knowledge-based economy, universities can be at the centre of the growth of international trade.

Increasingly colleges and training providers are recognising the benefit of an international focus, both in terms of benefit learners, and also in terms of the business opportunities associated with delivering provisions abroad, supporting the development of education systems overseas, and in the recruitment of overseas students. Our ambition is that in future other branches of education and vocational training should equally see their international role as an intrinsic part of what they do.

# The Strategy

The 2004 International Strategy set three goals:

- ***Equipping our children, young people and adults for life in a global society and work in a global economy***
- ***Engaging with our international partners to achieve their goals and ours***
- ***Maximising the contribution of our education and training sector, and university research to overseas trade and inward investment***

Though much has happened since 2004, these three goals remain central to our purpose, and continue to shape our International Strategy today. We discuss each in turn below, and outline the activities which are being pursued under each heading.

## Goal 1: Equipping our children, young people and adults for life in a global society and work in a global economy

**We want to instil a strong global dimension into the learning experience of all children and young people.** All who live in a global society need an understanding of eight key concepts: citizenship, social justice, sustainable development, diversity, values and perceptions, interdependence, conflict resolution, and human rights. These concepts were set out in the 2004 document. The continuing international tensions over the past two years, the 7 July 2005 London bombings, and the continuing debate about migration and asylum all reinforce the need for a deeper understanding of these concepts by all who live in the UK. They are rightly a part of the National Curriculum.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has responsibility for advice and guidance on the National Curriculum. Following publication of the White Paper on 14–19 Education and Skills (Cm 6476, February 2005) the QCA was asked by the Government to review Key Stage 3. The aims of the review are to make the curriculum less prescriptive and to give schools more flexibility to meet individual pupils' needs. This is providing an opportunity to ensure that the role of young people, as global citizens and the concepts listed above, are integrated more fully into the curriculum. The QCA is liaising with a range of organisations and schools to provide case studies to illustrate how this global dimension can be included in the curriculum. The QCA will establish networks of schools which will work together on this. The work of these networks and case studies will be published on the QCA website.

## Case Study 1: Global Interconnectedness

Although Goal 1 has implications right across the whole curriculum, Geography is a subject which lies at its heart. The goal of the DfES Action Plan for Geography ([www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk](http://www.geographyteachingtoday.org.uk)) is to “provide everyone – opinion formers, policy makers, schools, parents and pupils – with a clear vision of geography as a relevant 21st century subject; and to equip teachers with the professional skills and support that they need so that pupils enjoy and succeed in geography.” Geography helps the learner to understand how their locality exists in a regional, national, international and global context. It is the key to understanding human societies, economic production, distribution and consumption. The Geographical Association, the Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of Geographers have therefore been active in helping bring an increased global perspective to children’s learning.

The Department for International Development has funded the Association’s Valuing Places, which is now in its dissemination phase. This project engaged over 100 primary and secondary teachers and several thousand pupils in exploring the question – “Can you teach about places so as to develop a sense of global interconnectedness?” The *Valuing Places* project encouraged geography teachers to think about what it really means to live in a globally interconnected world, and to see the importance of geography in the development of informed global citizens.

The Geographical Association will continue to disseminate this project until 2008. During 2005 and 2006, the Geographical Association involved over 600 teachers in professional development events about the project. They are now in the process of developing a website and a teachers’ handbook to share classroom activities that were informed by the project’s ideas.

By: The GEOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION

We will also work closely with other agencies and representatives of civil society, in particular with the UK National Commission for UNESCO and the Development Education Association. The Development Education Association (DEA) promotes education that puts learning in a global context. It is a national network of 250 member organizations, and works on 3 areas: policy, profile and practice. DEA is working on a major review of the policy barriers and opportunities for good global learning and will publish a series of recommendations in 2008. DEA also raises the profile of good global learning in the media, and puts teachers in touch with teaching resources. The Institute of Education in London established a new research centre on development education last autumn which aims to embed development education within mainstream education policy and research.

**The principles underlying global citizenship fit well with the Olympic ideals of sporting excellence combined with a spirit of fair play, community cohesion and global exchange.** Because of Britain’s success in winning competitions to host major international events, the next six years will offer once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to drive forward the strategy. We intend to use the power of the **London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games** to improve education and skills outcomes for children, young people and adults, providing a long term sustainable legacy, throughout the UK and beyond 2012.

In preparation for the 2012 Olympiad, we are working with the London 2012 Organising Committee to use the Games to encourage young people and learners to be culturally and globally aware, to increase the number of educational institutions with international links, and to help change attitudes to language learning and increase participation in language learning programmes. Our objectives for the education strand of the delivery programme include:

- boosting the interest and active participation of children and young people in sport, and supporting them making healthy living choices;
- addressing young people's under-achievement and disaffection; and
- equipping young people and learners for life in a global society by transforming the nation's capability in language learning and ensuring that young people take a more outward-looking approach to other countries.

The UK has also been successful, against stiff competition, in winning the bid to host the **Worldskills** competition in 2011. The Government is now working with its partners to run the five-year skills campaign linked to the 2012 Olympic Games to promote and showcase world class skills, with a view to changing the public attitude towards skills positively and permanently.

## Case Study 2: Worldskills 2011

In May last year the UK was successful in its bid to host the 2011 WorldSkills (WS2011) competition in London. We intend to take this opportunity to run a five-year skills campaign linked to the 2012 Olympic Games, which will associate world class achievement in sport with world class achievement in skills. Our ambition is to change British attitudes to vocational education and training fundamentally, once and for all, to raise aspirations, and to improve permanently the supply of and demand for world class skills in the UK.

Using London's position as an international media capital, we also aim to bring about a step change in the profile and reach of WorldSkills. This will enable WS2011 to leave an international legacy by working with developing countries to draw them into the WorldSkills family and to share UK expertise with them. The preparations will involve all of the United Kingdom and a range of partner organisations. In this way we will leave a lasting legacy both for the UK and for the world.

Our developing plans for the lead-up to the 2011 competition include:

- sending the largest ever UK teams to WorldSkills Japan in 2007 and to WorldSkills Canada in 2009 with the aim of coming in the top 10 in each event.
- organising skills competitions in key sectors of the UK economy, quality assured to national standards set by UK Skills
- fielding a full team of UK competitors in the 2011 event with the intention of coming in the top 5
- engaging developing countries with WorldSkills2011

UK skills exports will benefit enormously from the profile of WorldSkills 2011 to benchmark their skills against those of international competitors.

**One important means of giving teachers and learners an understanding of the wider world is through partnerships and exchanges.** These can, and do, operate at every level from school and college partnerships through to student exchanges between universities. A great deal has been achieved through the efforts of individual institutions, but national bodies are working to extend this concept. For example:

- The work of the Department for International Development (DFID) in supporting North-South school linking and development education programmes was described in the publication *The World Classroom: Developing global partnerships in education*, launched in December 2006. It will be collaborating with the DfES to raise the standards of these North-South partnerships.
- The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) is one of four providers of the Teachers International Professional Development (TIPD) Study Visit Programme, and is sole manager of the school-determined programme which enables classroom teachers to visit a partner school abroad to work with them in depth. It also manages a partnership programme linking Language Colleges and other types of specialist school with schools in France with sections européennes. It has developed a postgraduate course in Learning through International Partnerships. Through its international arm, iNet, the SSAT facilitates an international network of schools, organisations and individuals who are committed to transforming learning through innovation. And the Trust works to support specialist schools in developing and maintaining an outward-looking, global perspective and ethos.
- British Council delivers a wide range of government-funded school linking activity, including DFID Global School Partnerships and DfES funded programmes with France, Germany, Spain, India, China, Russia and others. They administer the Foreign Language Assistants programme on behalf of the UK Education Departments and manage both the DfES International School Award and the DfES Global Gateway website. The Global Gateway aims to be a one-stop-shop for all aspects of the international dimension in education. It provides an easy-to-use facility for teachers to find their own partner schools in other countries free of charge.

**If higher education students want to improve their career prospects, it is increasingly important that they can demonstrate their ability to work in an international context.**

To this end, the DfES is:

- working with the HE sector to encourage institutions to play a stronger role in promoting awareness of and interest in study abroad;
- via the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) supporting languages as strategic and vulnerable subjects. HEFCE is funding the Routes into Language programme, which comprises three strands, three research projects; networks for interpreting and translating; and four regional consortia. The aim of which is to stimulate demand for language learning in HE through outreach to schools and FE colleagues;
- using the launch of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme to promote the importance of mobility and particularly the Erasmus scheme; and
- continuing to work with other participants in the Bologna Process to secure an emphasis on mobility at the Bologna Summit which was held in London in May 2007.

### Case Study 3: The Bologna Process

The Bologna Process is working towards a world class European Higher Education Area by 2010. The Process is intergovernmental, outside the framework of the European Union, based on a common agreement to act among Ministers of the 45 signatory countries. It encourages European countries to reform their higher education systems and make them more competitive. It promotes close collaboration between higher education institutions (HEIs) across Europe and increased mobility for students, researchers and staff. It is about greater compatibility and comparability: it does not seek to harmonise. Ministerial summits are held every two years to review progress and plan the next steps. This Process is making an important contribution towards the Lisbon goal of making the EU the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, and of helping to prepare all learners, for life in a global society and work in a global economy. It has led to widespread simplification of degree structures, based on three cycles (Bachelors, Masters and Doctorates), and has been the catalyst for agreement on a set of European standards, guidelines on quality assurance, and an overarching European framework for higher education qualifications.

The DfES will host the next Ministerial conference of the Bologna Process in London in May 2007. This important conference will consider the progress on higher education structural reform across Europe and will set priorities for the work programme for the Process over the following two years. It will be an opportunity for the UK to assess how far the Process continues to reflect our own goals, and how far progress in the UK matches the Bologna objectives.

The DfES is working with the UK HE sector:

- to widen and deepen their involvement in, and understanding of, the Process
- to encourage close links with European partners and greater exchange of students, researchers and staff
- to promote the design of courses that have an increasingly European and international outlook.

By: DfES

**Language learning and the ability to communicate with speakers of other languages across the world is an essential component of our International Strategy.** The capacity to understand and communicate in another language has a crucial role in raising awareness and understanding other cultures. And our capacity to speak other languages is hugely important to the expansion of trade with other parts of the world. That is why the Government is taking action to reverse the decline in modern foreign language learning in secondary schools and in higher education.

Our intention to transform our language capability was set out in detail in the **National Languages Strategy, 'Languages for All: Languages for Life, a strategy for England'**, published in 2002. The three overarching objectives of the strategy are:

- to improve the teaching and learning of languages, with an entitlement to language learning for all primary school pupils by 2010;
- to introduce a new national recognition scheme; and
- to increase the number of people studying languages.

Progress towards the 2010 primary entitlement is encouraging, with over 71% of schools now offering or planning to offer primary language learning programmes. We are developing additional capacity in the primary workforce through a range of training and professional development opportunities, including placements abroad as part of initial teacher training. Much has been achieved since the launch of the strategy:

- Over 2,000 new primary teachers with a languages specialism have been trained. 6,000 will have been trained by 2010.
- A new national recognition scheme, the *Languages Ladder*, has been developed for learners of all ages and abilities.
- Intercultural understanding is an important part of the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages, which was launched in 2005 to provide practical support to teachers and school leaders developing and delivering primary languages.
- We have extended the role specialist language colleges play in supporting local primary and secondary schools, including a £30k additional grant available to every school with languages as either an initial or second specialism to support primary languages or language teaching at Key Stage 4.
- We have worked with British Council to develop the primary *Foreign Language Assistant* programme, and to deliver a range of international bilateral programmes.
- Language learning modules will be included in the first five lines of the new vocational diplomas for 14 –19 year olds.

**Those who have continued with languages through secondary education are in fact achieving impressive results. But the continuing decline in the number of pupils studying languages at Key Stage 4, means that we clearly need to do more.** Consequently, the Secretary of State asked Lord Dearing to carry out a review of language learning at Key Stage 4, focusing in particular on innovative ways to encourage language take-up post-14. The Languages Review was published in March 2007 and recommended a package of measures to increase the take-up of languages at KS4 and beyond, including making the secondary curriculum more relevant and engaging. It also recommended that languages are made a statutory part of the primary curriculum when it is next reviewed. The Secretary of State accepted this recommendation and welcomed the Review. The Department is considering how to take forward Lord Dearing's recommendations.

The *National Languages Strategy* commits the Government to encourage demand for languages and to improve the standards of teaching and learning. We have recently published a new range of teaching materials geared to those over the age of 16. In 2006 a survey by the Oxford University Press showed that 27% of people in the UK are using or learning a language other than English. For adults, learning a language does not necessarily mean a publicly funded course. People can learn through the internet, for example, and a flourishing private sector is geared to meeting the specialist needs of both employers and individuals.

### Case Study 4: CILT Workplacement Language Tool-kit

CILT, the National Centre for Languages, has worked with the UK Leonardo da Vinci mobility unit at British Council and Education Business Partnerships to design a language tool-kit for young people undertaking work placements abroad or in the UK. With the tool-kit they can develop and record their international communication skills for their future careers. It includes guidelines for students, work placement coordinators, language teachers and in-company mentors, a “Work Placement Language Learning Framework” and suggested resources. The Work Placement Language Toolkit will support the new EU Lifelong Learning programme introduced in 2007, in particular in the proposed increase in mobility work placements. CILT intends to disseminate the Work Placement Language Toolkit to schools, colleges and others concerned, and will help embed the Toolkit in the management and delivery of student work placements.

By: CILT, the National Centre for Languages

**Above all, it is vital that every adult has the skills and qualifications he or she needs to compete and succeed, whether they choose to work at home or abroad.** We remain committed to delivering the *Skills Strategy*, which is now stretched by the ambitions set out in the Leitch Report. Ensuring that employers are firmly in the driving seat, giving them a strong voice through reformed and re-licensed Sector Skills Councils, and routing training through the *Train to Gain* programme, will produce a truly demand-led system, helping to create the world class skills base that we need. Expanding the supply of Foundation Degrees from the present 60,000 to 100,000 in three years’ time, and giving some further education colleagues the power to award them, will help to deliver the 2020 target for adults with higher level skills.

The skills advocated by the Leitch Review include generic skills, such as team-working and communication. These need to be developed from an early stage in initial education. As part of its Key Stage 3 review, the QCA has developed a framework for “Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills” which will contribute to this. Combined with a new curriculum on personal and economic well-being, this will help the development of children’s non-cognitive skills. The ECM reforms are also targeting the children who need additional support in developing their social and emotional skills.

## Goal 2: Engaging with our international partners to achieve their goals and ours

The International Strategy is also about the way we interact with others around the world on policies for education, skills and children’s services. Our ambition for a transformation of our own system into a truly world-class system can only be realised if we know what world-class standards look like, and if we are willing to learn from others. We also have obligations to our international partners. We want to help drive forward the reform of education and training across Europe as a whole. We are committed to the development of education in developing countries as a weapon in the war on poverty. And we have developed a range of strategic relationships with other countries on a bilateral basis. We are active participants in international conferences and comparative studies, and we seek to disseminate widely within the UK the findings from these events.

**An important partnership on education and skills is with the European Union.** Although responsibility rests largely with individual national governments, we are committed with other Member States to strengthen Europe's skill base so that the EU is the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. This flows from the agenda originally set out in Lisbon in March 2000, and was reinforced during the UK Presidency in 2005. Our discussions during the Presidency were expressed formally in Conclusions on the development of skills and competitiveness. A focus on the Lisbon agenda continues to be an important driver for the UK's engagement in the EU, reflecting the vital role which education needs to play in developing the European economy as a whole, and the skills and employability of its citizens.

The aspirations of the Lisbon agenda are ambitious but, as the Leitch report brings out, they are absolutely essential if Europe is not to be left behind in the development of the global knowledge economy. The specific goals are that by 2010:

- at least 85% of 22 year olds should have completed "upper secondary" education (Level 2 and above);
- no more than 10% of young people should leave school early (out of education at age 18-24 without at least a Level 2 qualification);
- the percentage of 15 year olds with poor literacy should have decreased by at least 20% compared with 2000;
- the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology should have increased by at least 15%; and
- at least 12.5% of the adult working population should participate in lifelong learning.

The UK will be working closely with its EU partners to secure progress towards these goals across Europe. The UK will continue to be actively involved in EU *Peer Learning Clusters*, which support Member States reform programmes through the sharing of good practice, and is encouraging all EU partners to engage closely with the results. Initiatives such as the development of a *European Qualifications Framework (EQF)* represent how the EU can directly facilitate the mobility of learners and workers between Member States. We will work with partners across the UK to relate our national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework by 2010.

**Two EU Programmes – *Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action* – have been introduced across the EU this year.** They succeed the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth Programmes which, in the period 2000 to 2006, made it possible for many thousands in this country to take part in projects with a European dimension. For example, over 60,000 UK Erasmus students spent up to a year at a university in another country as part of their degree and over 20,000 Leonardo trainees went on a work placement elsewhere in Europe to enhance their skills and learn new techniques and competencies.

The *Lifelong Learning Programme* continues to contribute towards the Lisbon goals by raising the knowledge-base and skill level of participants. The *Youth in Action Programme* aims to include all young people but specifically targets those with least opportunity, to raise their social awareness and to increase their employability. In our engagement with the European Commission on these programmes, we have emphasised the need for:

- effective performance targets to measure their impact;
- greater engagement of under-represented groups; and
- simplification of bureaucracy.

With some £49 million of EU funds available in 2007 to support UK projects, both programmes should be a valuable means of driving forward the EU's capability as a knowledge-based economy. To secure effective implementation in the UK, the DfES has worked with, among others, the Devolved Administrations, the Learning and Skills Council and employers' representatives to guide the appointed National Agencies for the UK (British Council and ECOTEC) in taking forward the Programmes. New procedures will simplify the application process, and we will be looking to give a greater role to employers, and to encourage business involvement. We are introducing specific indicators to measure the impact of the programmes. Consistent with the emphasis in its Five Year Strategy, the DfES is working with the National Agencies to widen participation among those from marginalised, socially disadvantaged and minority groups.

The National Agencies are involved in promoting the *Lifelong Learning* and *Youth in Action* programmes widely across the UK, with a focus on inclusiveness and the involvement of different cultures. We are looking to increase recognition of the Programmes and participation in their activities throughout the UK, particularly in the target groups.

The UK also supports the EU Pact for Youth. Our programme of reforms launched by the Green Paper, *Youth Matters*, in July 2005 seeks to ensure young people's social and economic integration as set out in the pact. *Youth Matters* ensures that young people are actively involved in their communities and have a central role in shaping the services they need. It supports them through the transition from school and vocational training through to employment.

We welcome the education work of UNESCO and the Commonwealth, and will continue to engage proactively with them to exchange ideas on policy and examples of best practice.

**Through working with other countries on benchmarking our performance, we can judge the strengths and weaknesses of education in the UK; and learn from best practice elsewhere.** This two-way dialogue is a vital means of raising standards both at home and abroad. It highlights the areas, such as adult skills and young people's participation in learning, where we face a considerable challenge in our quest for world-class standards. It also identifies areas, such as higher education, where aspects of our performance are already world-class. International benchmarking is crucial now because of accelerating global competition in high-added-value markets.

The UK helps to produce:

- a picture of how education and training contribute to competitiveness and social cohesion in the European Union;
- comparisons of educational performance, including participation and attainment, in industrialised countries across the world; and
- evidence on the relative educational achievement of all UN member countries, to help drive forward international development.

This work poses technical challenges regarding comparability, over time and between countries. Meeting these requires open and rigorous work alongside the comparator countries.

**Our membership of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is perhaps our best source of comparative data on many aspects of the performance of our education and training system.** Evidence from OECD studies has guided our policies in the UK for many years. Examples of current studies include:

- **The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).** This study has been running every three years since 2000 and measures the performance of 15 year olds (Yr 11) in reading, mathematics and science. The 2006 study focused on science attainment.
- **The Improving School Leadership study** is a follow-up to an earlier three year comparative study, "Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers". It is being undertaken in two parts: an analytical review, and three case studies on innovative approaches to school leadership. The case studies will focus on system leadership; and the roles and responsibilities of school leaders in leading change in the wider school system. England, the USA and Sweden have a case study on system leadership.
- **The Thematic Review of Tertiary Education** provides an opportunity to showcase UK higher education and to gain comparative information about the higher education systems of the 24 participating countries. As part of this work, the UK published a Country Background Report in June 2006 which highlighted a number of strengths: the research output of our universities and colleges; the diversity of the sector; the high quality of teaching and learning as evidenced by national satisfaction surveys and other performance measures; the flexibility of provision; and the high completion rates. The OECD synthesis report drawing together the various strands of the thematic review is due to be published in early 2008.

**The programme of systematic reform to children's services launched by the Every Child Matters (ECM) Green Paper in 2003 has benefitted from overseas experience and has led to our becoming an acknowledged world-leader in this area.**

If children and young people are to be well-equipped as adults for life in a global society and work in a global economy, then they need solid foundations including:

- good physical and mental health;
- strong, safe support networks;
- levels of economic well-being that encourage development; and a fair society presenting opportunities for social mobility;
- a rounded set of personal skills that build resilience, self-belief and aspiration; *and*
- stronger universal services – extended schools, children's centres and integrated youth services, and swift access to extra help when needed.

The ECM programme is driving the reforms that will improve these outcomes for all children, including the most vulnerable, and thereby contributes directly to the EU's Lisbon agenda.

In delivering these reforms, we have worked closely with international colleagues to identify and share good practice, and to develop our evidence base for policy making. We actively participate in a number of European forums, such as “L’Europe de L’Enfance”, to learn from the experiences of other Member States. These pan-European networks have created good working relationships between Member States, contributing to domestic policies and improving outcomes for children throughout Europe. In addition to this, Ministers and senior officials have undertaken a range of visits to other countries including the USA and the Netherlands.

The ECM reforms draw heavily on international experience and evidence. Research from the US on extended schools and on encouraging young people’s participation in positive activities has contributed robust evidence on the benefits to individuals and communities. In particular, US studies have provided quantifiable evidence of impacts on drug use, teenage pregnancy, and anti-social behaviour.

**The Green Paper *Care Matters* set out proposals in October 2006 for transforming the outcomes for one of the most vulnerable groups of children – children in care.** In taking this work forward, we intend to continue drawing on effective practice from other European countries, in particular looking at the “Social Pedagogical” approaches in Germany and Denmark. We are also piloting a range of evidence-based interventions that have been developed in other countries to support children in care and their families.

**Our international cooperation is by no means confined to participation in international organisations.** We have developed a range of bilateral strategic partnerships with other countries which offer mutual benefit with tangible outcomes. We are developing a support framework for these partnerships. This includes the Global Gateway, a major international website for exchanging and sharing information on education and children’s services.

### Case Study 5: Global Gateway

The DfES Global Gateway is an international website ([www.globalgateway.org](http://www.globalgateway.org)) which helps schools find international partners and provides information on international education issues. The aim is to develop it as a global one-stop-shop for linking between educational establishments across the world. In the coming year we will work with our delivery partner, British Council, to:

- agree a programme of action for strategic international partners, targeting those countries and regions which are DfES priorities
- widen participation of harder-to-reach groups through editorial, promotional and monitoring activities
- develop, deepen and widen partnerships with other organisations in the areas of editorial content, user services and promotion
- enrich the school-linking facility, back up for schools and tracking of partnerships.

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The Offender Learning Strategy (OLS) provides a good example of working with international partners. We are working in partnership with Directors of Prison Education throughout Europe to share our policy and practice and learn from other European partners. We have also

worked with the USA and Australia, and have plans to work with Norway and Sweden where we can learn from their implementation of ICT; and where they can learn from our focus on improving offenders' skills. We also have worked to establish the education needs of school-age offenders and will be benchmarking our practice during 2007 against that of our European partners.

**The UK and India have a long history of collaboration in education and research.**

Recently, this has been boosted through **the UK/India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI)**. Launched in 2006, the initiative aims to increase substantially educational links and collaboration between India and the UK, so that in the longer term the two countries become each other's partner of choice in education. UKIERI is a five year £17 million initiative and has been cited already as an example of good practice in partnership working between UK government departments, the education sector, business, British Council and the Government of India. The programme has three strands: higher education, schools, and professional and technical skills. Although still in its infancy, it has generated considerable support and buy-in from the education sector both in the UK and in India. For example, over 100 applications were submitted for just five of the UKIERI major research awards and over 250 applications for the 25 standard awards on offer.

**Educational collaboration between the UK and China** is already quite extensive. Links with universities and other higher education institutions are thriving, with over 160 separate partnerships in place ranging from campuses abroad to exchanges of students and academic staff. The DfES aims to create a framework within which institutions are able to strengthen their educational links with China. Encouraging universities to develop partnerships, joint delivery and shared research projects will enhance international understanding as well as opening up new social and economic opportunities. Through the *Scholarships for Excellence Scheme* we provide opportunities for exceptional Chinese scholars and researchers to study at UK universities.

Since 2006, we have launched a *Graduate Work Experience programme* which enables Chinese university graduates to gain work experience with companies in the UK. Both programmes include a reciprocal element, with UK graduates/ scholars being given the chance to experience working and living in China. This year, we launched the *China HE Summer School programme*. This will allow 200 UK students to experience three weeks of language, business and cultural exposure in China. This year the scheme will be expanded to allow UK scholars to conduct research in China. There is also a need to increase links between education and business.

Over the past couple of years the number of schools teaching Chinese and developing partnerships with China has increased significantly. Our aim for the next five years is to develop this further by increasing the number and diversity of schools offering Mandarin and promoting educational cooperation and exchanges between the UK and China. Dialogue has already started on how the UK and China can share experience and expertise on the development of vocational education and training systems. An example of collaborative activity is the *London Beijing World City Links project* which seeks to build a strategic partnership between colleges in London and Beijing.

## Case Study 6: China School Links

In July 2006, DfES signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), to co-fund activities that will promote Chinese learning and teaching in UK schools, and educational co-operation and exchanges between the two countries.

As part of the government's aim to instil a global dimension in UK schools, DfES, British Council and HSBC are also working in partnership to deliver a programme which helps schools and colleges to establish sustainable links. The programme supports the professional development of staff, enrich their curriculum, improve cultural awareness and promote language learning. The programme is part-funded by HSBC who have also contributed one-off payments for selected activities, such as the development of a Mandarin GCSE exam by Edexcel and the Chinese Speaking Competition described below.

The main activities of the programme include:

- **Joint Curriculum Projects** – involving a range of subjects including sport, geography, art and citizenship and must be of mutual benefit to both schools and built into the curriculum. 1 student and 92 teachers from 34 schools took part in visits during 2006/07.
- **Mandarin Immersion Courses** – offering a mixture of intensive language tuition, cultural activities and plenty of contact with Chinese secondary school students. 309 students and 70 teachers from 41 schools in England and Scotland went to China in summer 2006.
- **Chinese Language Assistants** – coming to work in their partner school for the year to further strengthen the link. 62 teachers from China arrived in September 2006 to teach at schools across England and Scotland.
- **Chinese Speaking Competition** – 2006 was the fourth year of this competition, which is supported by HSBC. The competition is divided into two parts; an individual language ability round and a group performance competition. The nine winning students and one teacher will visit Beijing as their prize.
- **Annual China Conference** – hosted by HSBC and attended by over 150 delegates, mainly from schools working with China.
- **School Linking and Area Links** – Over 120 schools in England were linked with schools in China in 2006/07. Increasingly, area links are being developed to help clusters of schools or local authorities link with their equivalents in China. These links offer a more strategic link with China which can be extended to other schools, business and the local community. 11 Area links were created in 2006/07.
- **Professional Development Days** – In conjunction with HSBC and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, the British Council organise professional development days for teachers of Chinese consisting of workshops on using ICT to teach Chinese, interactive teaching techniques and a materials *swap shop*. The last professional development day was held in February this year.

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**The DfES is also committed to sharing expertise and resources in support of the improvement of education and children's services in developing countries, particularly in Africa.** In 2005 the Commission for Africa and the G8 summit at Gleneagles highlighted the importance of the whole education sector to Africa's development. Access to good quality

education and training at all levels is essential to equip people with the skills necessary for social and economic growth.

Since 2005 the DfES has sought to promote this message. Our aim is to complement the wider Government commitment to ensuring that all children in Africa have access to free primary education, by supporting the improvement of college and university education in Africa. In particular, we aim to encourage international collaboration by promoting and supporting partnerships with education institutions in Africa. This not only helps to build capacity in African education but also enriches learning, teaching and research here in the UK.

### Case Study 7: Support for Africa

The DfES is providing £3 million until March 2008 for the England-Africa Partnerships scheme (EAP). EAP funds partnership projects between higher education institutions in England and sub-Saharan Africa, designed to strengthen capacity in African tertiary education. The scheme supports 33 innovative capacity building projects, covering a range of topics including health, open and distance learning, entrepreneurial skills, agriculture, and teacher training. More information is at [www.britishcouncil.org/learning-eap](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-eap)

The DfES is also providing funding for the establishment of an Africa Unit at the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The Unit's role is to promote and facilitate sustainable higher education partnerships between the UK and Africa. See [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk)

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### Case Study 8: PMI Partnerships

#### Greenwich Community College (GCC)

The project in 2006/7 has a specific focus on the tourist industry. In Ghana, the general tourist industry is an emerging one. The project overall will enable Africa-based students to have access to UK-based qualifications which will provide a pathway to further vocational studies at the two institutions or at any other UK Higher or Further education colleges. The intention is that GCC through working together with their Ghanaian partners, will develop a shared framework for progression for students that starts with 'core' or foundation component built around industry-relevant short courses through to Foundation Degree level – and beyond. It is envisaged that this kind of pathway may also require some support/additional elements to assist in study skills and key skills for example.

## Goal 3: Maximising the contribution of our education and training sector, and university research to overseas trade and inward investment.

The third goal of the International Strategy is about the benefits to British trade that can flow from our national expertise in education and training – our ability to sell educational goods and services to overseas learners and agencies. It is an important strand of activity, one in which British universities have for long been active, and where there is scope for involving other education and training sectors.

Goals 2 and 3 are in many ways complementary. When we enter into strategic relationships with our international partners, we take on a range of activities and roles. We may be learning from them: they may be learning from us. We may be co-operating in an activity of mutual benefit. We may be competing, or we may be entering into a commercial trading relationship. A valuable trading relationship, or inward investment, may well flow from a strategic partnership whose original purpose was non commercial cooperation. Thus, for example, the co-operation with India and China described in the previous section is relevant here since both China and India are significant sources of overseas students at UK universities.

**A central strand of this third goal is the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) for International Education, phase 2 of which was launched by the Prime Minister in April 2006.** This latest phase of the PMI focuses on the internationalisation of UK education at all levels and in all ways rather than exclusively on trying to increase the number of foreign students who choose to come to study in the UK. This is a five year pump-priming programme with the objective of marketing Education UK abroad to 25 countries identified as priority markets; commissioning research to help the sector identify trends and opportunities; and brokering partnerships in a variety of ways between UK HE and FE institutions and overseas universities and colleges. Its targets are to:

- increase the number of international (non-EU) students to the UK by 100,000;
- diversify into less developed markets;
- improve the experience of students coming to the UK;
- increase partnership activity and delivery in country of UK education, thereby improving relations with other countries who are concerned about the brain drain and who want to reform and capacity build their own education systems.

As in the UK, the creation of a system of **vocational education and training (VET)** – responsive to the changing needs of employers, and serving both young people and adults – is a priority for many countries. It is a vital requirement, alongside higher education, if they are to have the intermediate skills to compete in the global economy. For this reason, many countries are looking for outside expertise to develop their approach to VET, and the UK – its colleges, its awarding bodies and other partners – has much experience to offer. The DfES is currently working with partners in the VET sector, and particularly further education colleges and learning providers, to develop a strategy to secure effective engagement in the international agenda based upon a responsive and high performing further education system.

UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) published their strategy document *Prosperity in a Changing World*, in July setting out its priority countries and plans for action. UKTI's priority countries largely match those of the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education. Although PMI has more participating countries, UKTI promotes UK education broadly to individuals, higher and further education and to education suppliers of equipment. We are working together to coordinate UKTI and DfES activities, in relation to UK marketing, Ministerial and senior officials' visits to priority countries.