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Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: Outcomes for the First Cohort

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National Foundation for Educational Research

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*Please note that changes have been made to the Departmental analysis
presented on pages 40-41, due to an error in the original report.*

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education and Skills.

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Executive summary

Introduction

The Increased Flexibility for 14-16 year olds Programme (IFP) was introduced in 2002 by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to provide vocational learning opportunities at key stage 4 for those young people who would benefit most. The programme, which entailed FE colleges and training providers working in partnership with schools to offer GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQs, other vocational qualifications and GNVQs to students, was subsequently extended to three further cohorts of young people.

The DfES commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake an evaluation of the first cohort of participants. This summary presents selected key findings relating to the attainment, progression, attendance and attitudes of the first cohort of IFP students (2002-2004).

Key Findings

- The majority of young people who took new GCSEs and GNVQs attained their qualifications (91 per cent and 80 per cent respectively). In addition, the majority of the sample of young people who had undertaken NVQs and other vocational qualifications had achieved the qualification at the end of Year 11 (66 per cent and 67 per cent respectively).
- In addition, the GNVQs and NVQs achieved by these young people contributed to them gaining higher total point scores than would have been expected given their prior attainment and background characteristics. However, those who took GCSEs in vocational subjects attained levels commensurate with their prior attainment and those who took other vocational qualifications achieved fewer points than might be expected compared to similar students who did not participate.
- Students who studied GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs, but did not participate in IFP, also attained better outcomes than might be expected and, indeed, gained higher points still than young people who had taken these qualifications through IFP.
- Overall, the transition target for IFP partnerships had been successfully met, as schools reported that around 90 per cent of young people who had been involved in the first cohort of IFP had continued into further education or training post-16. Analysis of the cohort as a whole, using matched participation and attainment datasets, indicated a post-16 participation rate of 80 per cent. Two-fifths (42 per cent) of young people said that their participation in IFP had influenced their decision about their post-16 destination.

- The majority of young people who were undertaking a course post-16 were pursuing a qualification that was at a higher level than the level of the course they had undertaken through IFP.

Background

The Increased Flexibility for 14-16 year olds Programme is delivered by means of partnerships between a Lead Partner, which is usually a college of Further Education, partner schools and sometimes other providers, such as training providers and employers. The partnerships are working towards a number of targets relating to achievement of qualifications, progression after Year 11 and attendance during the programme.

The IFP was introduced in 2002 and subsequently expanded to second, third and fourth cohorts commencing in the autumn term of each of the years of 2003, 2004 and 2005. For each cohort, about 300 partnerships have supported the learning of around 40,000 young people in Years 10 and 11. The IFP was therefore reasonably well established as one of the key means for providing curriculum flexibility by the time of the publication of the Tomlinson Report in 2004 (*14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform: Final Report of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform*) and the subsequent White Paper: *14-19 Education and Skills* (2005).

The DfES commissioned the NFER to undertake an evaluation of the first cohort of IFP using a range of data collection methods. Four previous reports of the evaluation have explored the nature of the cohort and partnerships, the outcomes in terms of development of skills, and changes in attitudes at the end of the second year, and the experience for partnerships and students of implementing and participating in IFP.

This summary presents selected key findings relating to the attainment, progression, attendance and attitudes of the first cohort of IFP students (2002-2004). These findings reflect the outcomes for young people who participated in the development and implementation of a new mechanism for increasing flexibility in the curriculum through working in partnership across education providers which has become increasingly established in successive years.

Outcomes for the First IFP Cohort: Achievement of qualifications

The research examined the extent to which the IFP met its objectives in relation to the attainment of young people who participated in the programme using multi-level model analysis. This explored their attainment, compared with similar students who had not participated, in terms of their total points score at key stage 4, their eight highest grades achieved and their achievement of five A* to C grades. (Section 2.1.1)

The majority of students who participated in the first cohort achieved the qualifications that they had undertaken. Nearly all (91 per cent) of those who had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects had attained passes at grades A* to G and 36 per cent achieved grades A* to C. Among the students who had taken GNVQs, 80 per cent had achieved the qualification. Within this group of students, 84 per cent of those who took an intermediate GNVQ achieved the qualification and 68 per cent of those who took a GNVQ at foundation level achieved the award. Around two-thirds of those in the sample who had taken NVQs and other vocational qualifications achieved their qualification (66 per cent and 67 per cent respectively). (Section 2.2)

The qualifications achieved by these students contributed to the total points that they achieved at the end of key stage 4. Students who participated in IFP attained slightly higher total points overall at key stage 4 than students who were similar in terms of their prior attainment and other background characteristics who had not participated in the programme. However, for students who had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs, the total numbers of points based on their eight highest achievements were lower than might be expected.¹ (Section 2.4.1)

Although overall students who participated in IFP gained more points than similar students who did not participate, the total points scored by students differed in relation to the qualification that they were studying. Students who had taken GNVQs and NVQs through IFP gained more points than might be expected. The total points scores of those who took GCSEs in vocational subjects did not differ significantly from the outcomes that would be expected, and those who had taken other vocational qualifications attained fewer points than might be expected. Moreover, students who had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs, and were similar to IFP participants in terms of their prior attainment and other background characteristics, but had not participated in IFP, gained more points than IFP participants. (Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2)

Students with lower attainment at key stage 3 who took GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQs and other vocational qualifications, gained more in terms of their total points achieved at key stage 4 than those with higher attainment at key stage 3. In addition, male students who undertook NVQs through IFP gained more points than similar students taking these qualifications who were female. (Sections 2.4.2, 2.4.3 and 2.7.2)

Around 15 per cent of the sample of students appeared to have discontinued their involvement in IFP in so far as they had embarked on a GCSE in a vocational subject or a GNVQ but were not entered for these qualifications on

¹ Students who had taken NVQs and other vocational qualifications were excluded because of difficulties in ascertaining how such qualifications contribute to their eight highest achievements.

DfES's National Pupil Database (NPD). Further exploration of this group indicated that they gained significantly fewer points at key stage 4 than similar students who had not participated in IFP, or students who had continued their involvement in IFP to the end of Year 11. (Section 2.4.3)

Having a positive attitude was associated with gaining higher total points at key stage 4, while poor punctuality and truancy was associated with gaining lower points. Evidence from the surveys of IFP participants indicated that IFP students' attitudes improved between Years 10 and 11, and around half said that participation in IFP had made them more aware of the importance of qualifications and learning. This may have contributed to this improved outcome at key stage 4. (Section 2.7.1)

Partnerships where some of the delivery of IFP qualifications was shared between schools and external providers were associated with higher outcomes in the IFP qualifications. Partnerships which were smaller (for example working with five schools or fewer) were associated with higher outcomes in IFP qualifications. Involving employers in the partnership, through using them as visiting speakers, was associated with higher outcomes in qualifications taken through IFP. (Section 2.7.3)

Outcomes for the First IFP Cohort: Post-16 Destinations

The majority (90 per cent) of the sample of young people were reported by their schools to have continued into further education or training after finishing Year 11. Analysis of the cohort as a whole, using matched participation and attainment datasets, indicated a post-16 participation rate of 80 per cent. Most of those in the sample had embarked on a course-based route (in a school sixth form or at an FE college or training provider), while a notable minority were following a work-based route, in an Apprenticeship, or other job with training. Students who had taken their IFP course away from school, and those who had undertaken an NVQ pre-16 were significantly more likely to have continued into further education at an FE college or training provider than elsewhere. (Section 3.2)

Two-thirds (66 per cent) of young people undertaking a course post-16 were pursuing a qualification that was at a higher level than the level of the course they had undertaken through IFP. Some young people appeared to have a continuing commitment to the vocational area they studied through IFP. This is reflected in the finding that around two-fifths (41 per cent) of those taking a qualification post-16 were taking a course that was in the same subject area as their IFP course. (Section 3.3)

Eight per cent of respondents felt that they would have been employed, rather than in further education and training, if they had not participated in IFP. This

suggests that IFP may have encouraged these young people to consider further education, rather than employment, post-16. (Section 3.4)

A range of variables emerged as influencing these young people's post-16 destination, including their experience pre-16, through IFP. Just over two-fifths (42 per cent) of young people reported that the IFP had been an influence on their choice of post-16 destination and, indeed, eight per cent felt that their IFP course had been the most influential factor on their post-16 choice. Those who had taken an NVQ or GNVQ through IFP, and those with lower levels of attainment at key stage 3, were significantly more likely to have found IFP influential. Young people who had not continued into further learning after Year 11 were less likely to have talked to a school teacher or college tutor about their plans for the future than respondents overall. (Section 3.4)

The majority of young people, particularly those who had continued into further education or training, were positive about what they were doing post-16. However, nearly half of young people would have liked more help and guidance in deciding what to do after Year 11, particularly in relation to exploring which careers might suit their skills, abilities and interests. Just over a third of young people stated that they were considering continuing into higher education. Although students who were taking NVQs, GNVQs and other VQs post-16 were less likely to state that they were intending to continue into higher education, a notable minority were considering this option. (Section 3.4).

Outcomes for the First IFP Cohort: Attitudes and Attendance

The evaluation also aimed to assess the impact of the IFP on participants' attitudes and attendance. Young people who participated in IFP and were surveyed in Years 10 and 11 were significantly more positive about school and its usefulness for their future in the second year of the programme. A positive change in attitude towards school was associated with having talked to an informed person about their progress towards the qualification that they were studying. (Section 4.2)

There was evidence that students who participated in IFP improved in their confidence in their ability between Years 10 and 11. Improved confidence was associated with discussing progress on the course with an informed adult and finding the course interesting. (Section 4.2)

The sample of students for whom details of their overall attendance was provided had missed around ten per cent of their curriculum time across Years 10 and 11 due to authorised and unauthorised attendance. The proportion of days missed was slightly greater for this sample of students in Year 11 (11 per cent) than Year 10 (nine per cent). (Section 4.3)

A comparison of the attendance of students who participated in IFP with their peers in Years 7 to 11 in the same schools suggested that IFP participants had slightly more authorised and unauthorised absences than their peers. Among the IFP cohort, the students had missed two per cent of time due to unauthorised absence while in their schools on average, students missed one per cent of their curriculum time due to unauthorised absences. Within the IFP cohort sample, students who had taken NVQs and other VQs through the programme had significantly more absences than those who had taken GCSE and GNVQ qualifications. (Section 4.3)

Conclusions

Overall, the evaluation of the first cohort of IFP has found that the majority of students who participated had benefited in so far as the majority achieved their qualifications at the end of the programme and nearly all had progressed onto further education and training. Overall, students gained more points at key stage 4 than similar students who did not participate in IFP although, in the case of GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs, students who took these qualifications through the programme gained fewer points than similar students taking these qualifications who did not participate.

These findings, together with the findings reported previously in the evaluation² which indicated that there was evidence that IFP participants had developed their social skills and confidence in their employability skills, including interpersonal, communication and problem solving skills, and their attitude towards school, suggest that, on the whole, the IFP made a valuable contribution to the education of the first cohort of participants.

The evidence indicates that, where students had benefited from participation in IFP in terms of their key stage 4 attainment, those with certain characteristics appeared to have benefited more than their peers. For example, young people in the first cohort who had lower attainment (level 5 or below) at key stage 3, and who studied GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQs and other vocational qualifications, benefited more in terms of their total points achieved at the end of key stage 4 than students with higher attainment.

In terms of the achievement of the qualifications that students were undertaking through IFP, students who found the course ‘interesting’ had better outcomes than those who had found it ‘boring’. Students who had a positive attitude towards school gained more in terms of the points they achieved through their IFP qualification than other students. One aspect of IFP delivery that appeared to contribute to the development of a positive

² GOLDEN, S., O’DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2005). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Second Year* (DfES Research Report 609). London: DfES.

attitude towards school was providing the opportunity for students to have discussions with a teacher or tutor about their progress on the programme.

With regard to the delivery approach, it emerged that young people who attended partnerships where the approach to delivery was shared between a school and an external provider, achieved better outcomes in terms of the points achieved through IFP qualifications than those where delivery was through other approaches, such as an external provider only, or a school only, teaching the qualification.

Certain aspects of IFP partnership working also appeared to be related to achievement outcomes for young people. Students in partnerships that were larger (working with more than five schools) achieved less well than similar students in smaller partnerships. Moreover, those where EBPs had been involved in steering groups, and those where employers provided visiting speakers, experienced better student outcomes than those where this was not the case.

The IFP had been an influence on the post-16 choice of two in five IFP participants, and, for eight per cent, the IFP had been the most influential factor on their post-16 destination. There appeared to be some continuity of routes from pre-16 to post-16, as students who had taken NVQs or other VQs through IFP were more likely to be taking these types of qualifications post-16. This suggests that participation in IFP, therefore, may have given young people the opportunity to find out more about the qualification pathways they could follow post-16. There was some indication that this transition into further education and training would be sustained, as most young people planned to remain in education and training for two years or more, and around a third were considering continuing on to higher education.

Policy Implications

The experience of the first cohort of IFP participants may be helpful for informing the future development of the IFP and similar programmes. The findings point to a number of possible implications for policy:

- **Targeting students** The evidence indicates that there were particular outcome benefits for students with lower attainment at key stage 3. This suggests that, if such a programme is to be targeted at a sub-group of students within school, it may be worth considering targeting it at lower attaining students who would potentially benefit more from the experience.
- **Further guidance** Around half of the IFP participants surveyed indicated that they would have liked more information and guidance about their post-16 choices. In particular, it appears that young people who wished or chose to pursue a work-based route post-16 had a particular need for guidance. This suggests that, while many students would benefit from

enhanced information, advice and guidance relating to their destinations after Year 11, those who intend to pursue a work-based route post-16 would particularly benefit from guidance about that route.

- **Engagement of students** Higher attainment at key stage 4 was associated with students having a positive attitude towards school. Finding the course interesting, and having helpful discussions with teachers and tutors about progress on the course, in turn, were associated with having a positive attitude towards school. There would be value, therefore, in ensuring that teachers and tutors are able to incorporate these discussions into their delivery of the programme and to ensure that their delivery is engaging for participants. One mechanism for achieving this might be to encourage opportunities for providers to share experience and good practice.
- **Shared delivery approaches** The evidence indicated that partnerships were more effective in terms of higher attainment where they included some element of delivery by school staff, either shared teaching with an external provider, or through delivery in the school. Shared teaching approaches were used in a minority of partnerships, so there may be value in exploring how best to support partnerships in further developing this shared delivery aspect of IFP.
- **Partnership organisation and communication** The findings from this report indicated that smaller partnerships were more effective in terms of attainment outcomes than those which worked with larger numbers of schools. This may be related to the time required to liaise with, and coordinate provision with, a large number of schools. While this suggests that encouraging partnerships to work more effectively with a smaller number of schools may be worthwhile, this would need to be balanced by the need to continue to enable as many schools to participate as wish to do so. Identifying creative and more effective approaches to working in partnership with a large number of schools may usefully inform the further development of partnerships.

Summary of research methods

The evaluation of the progress of the first cohort of IFP students drew on a range of research methods, including the following:

- A baseline data collection exercise which identified the schools and individual students who were participating in the first cohort of IFP. This data was matched to the NFER's Register of Schools and the DfES's National Pupil Database (NPD) which contain background information on schools and pupils.
- Baseline and follow-up surveys of a representative sample of around 11,500 students and their associated 450 schools and 130 providers of vocational courses, including Lead Partners.
- A further follow-up survey of a sample of IFP participants in the autumn after leaving Year 11.

- Data on the attendance, achievements and post-16 destinations of the student sample, collected from their schools.
- A programme of case studies in nine partnerships which entailed interviews with Lead Partners, tutors, school staff and students, undertaken in spring 2003 and spring 2004.
- Programmes of telephone interviews conducted with 100 parents of IFP participants, with 26 employers who had supported the delivery of IFP, and with staff in nine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Throughout the 1990s, there was a growing recognition in government that the standard educational interventions adopted in schools were not meeting the needs of all young people. The Green Paper: *14-19: extending opportunities, raising standards* (2002)³ set out a proposal to further increase curriculum flexibility in order to enable pupils to learn at a pace which is appropriate to them and pursue individually focused programmes to help them meet their potential. The Green Paper also announced the introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects. These are intended to provide the opportunity for young people, whose needs have not fully been met by the National Curriculum, to achieve vocational qualifications which have parity of esteem with existing 'academic' qualifications.

In response to the Green Paper, the Increased Flexibility for 14-16 year olds Programme (IFP) was introduced in 2002. This was a £120 million programme which aimed to '*create enhanced vocational and work-related learning opportunities for 14-16 year olds of all abilities who can benefit most*' – including provision of the GCSEs in vocational subjects. A total of 269 partnerships were established to achieve this aim. Each of these had a 'Lead Partner', the majority of which were Further Education (FE) colleges. The partnerships involved links with schools and, in some instances, other training providers and employers. Funding to support these partnerships was channelled through Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) who also had responsibility for monitoring the process.

In November 2002, it was announced that further funding would be made available to the IFP in 2003 to 2005 and subsequently for 2004 to 2006 and 2005 to 2007. This funding enabled second, third and fourth cohorts of 14-16 year olds to become involved in the programme from September 2003 onwards.

This expansion of the IFP took place in the context of a continuing focus on improving the curriculum and qualification routes for 14-16 year olds and integrating these into a 14-19 framework. The Tomlinson Report (*14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform: Final Report of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform*), published in October 2004 recommended a '*strengthening of the vocational offer*' and called for '*better vocational programmes*' and

³ DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS (2002). *14-19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards. Consultation Document* (Cm. 5342). London: The Stationery Office.

'rationalised vocational pathways'.⁴ The 2005 White Paper; *14-19 Education and Skills*, makes several mentions of the Increased Flexibility Programme, stressing its role in creating greater curriculum choice and offering a different location of study.⁵

In order to implement the IFP, the partnerships established links with around 2000 schools and provided courses to meet the needs of about 40,000 Year 10 students in each cohort who then continued into Year 11. The partnerships aimed to fulfill the objectives of the IFP. These were to:

- raise the attainment in national qualifications of participating pupils
- increase young people's skills and knowledge
- improve social learning and development
- increase retention in education and training after 16.

In meeting these objectives, the partnerships are working towards a set of targets that are as follows:

- one-third of the young people involved in IFP should gain at least one GCSE in a vocational subject at Level 2 (over and above their predicted GCSEs)
- one-third of students should gain at least one NVQ at Level 1 (over and above their predicted GCSEs)
- three-quarters of IFP participants should progress into further education or training
- attendance rates of the young people involved should match those of the average key stage 4 cohort.

The DfES has commissioned the NFER to undertake a national evaluation of the first and second cohorts of IFP students, in order to examine the extent to which the aims and objectives of the IFP are being met. This report focuses on the outcomes for the first cohort of participants who completed the programme in summer 2004.

⁴ WORKING GROUP ON 14-19 REFORM (2004). *14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform: Report of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform*. London: DfES. Chapter 8 and p.8.

⁵ GREAT BRITAIN. PARLIAMENT. HOUSE OF COMMONS (2005). *14-19 Education and Skills* (Cm.6476). London: The Stationery Office.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The evaluation of the first cohort aims to:

- assess the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of the implementation of the IFP, and identify those delivery models and implementation practices and strategies that appear to be most and least successful
- evaluate the extent to which the IFP has fulfilled its national aims, objectives and targets
- assess the impact of vocational qualifications and new work-related learning opportunities on young people's skills, knowledge, attitudes, attendance, attainment and post-16 progression.

Details of the research methods used for the evaluation are outlined below.

1.3 Research methods

In order to achieve the aims and objectives detailed above, the evaluation drew on a range of research methods. These included:

- A baseline data collection exercise which identified the schools and individual students who were participating in the first cohort of IFP. The data collection was undertaken in the autumn term of 2002 when the students were in Year 10 and the data was matched to NFER's Register of Schools and the DfES's National Pupil Database (NPD) which contain background information on schools and pupils.
- Surveys of a representative sample of around 11,500 students in Year 10 (2003) followed up in Year 11 (2004) with around 6,000 students who responded to the initial survey. These were supplemented with surveys of their associated 450 schools and 130 providers of vocational courses, including Lead Partners.
- A further follow-up survey of a sample of IFP participants in the autumn term after leaving Year 11
- Data on the attendance, achievements and post-16 destinations of the sample of students, collected from their schools
- A programme of case studies in nine partnerships which entailed interviews with Lead Partners, tutors, school staff and students, undertaken in the spring terms 2003 and 2004.
- Programmes of telephone interviews conducted with 100 parents of IFP participants, 26 employers who had supported the delivery of IFP and staff in nine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

This report presents the findings from the final follow-up surveys of students and the data collected from schools relating to achievements and destinations

of the sample of students at the end of Year 11. Findings relating to the attendance of this sample throughout Years 10 and 11 are also presented.

In addition, it draws on the findings of the evaluation thus far which include analyses of the baseline data,⁶ the case-study visits,⁷ the baseline surveys⁸ and the follow-up surveys of young people, schools and colleges and training providers.⁹

1.3.1 Follow-up surveys of students

A sample of 11,438 students was drawn to represent the population of 29,990 Year 10 students who were identified by their schools in autumn 2002 as participating in IFP. These students were sent a questionnaire in spring 2003 and a total of 5,824 student questionnaires were returned. In spring 2004, a follow-up questionnaire was dispatched to the students who had replied to the baseline questionnaire and 2,616 students responded. In autumn 2004, 3,729 students who responded to the survey in Year 10, and were still participating in IFP, were sent a questionnaire to ascertain their post-16 destinations and the influences on these choices. A total of 1,268 responded, representing 34 per cent of the sample. Of these, 92 indicated that they had discontinued their participation in the IFP before the end of Year 11 and these were consequently excluded from the analysis of outcomes for IFP participants. The students who responded to the survey were broadly representative of all participants, as illustrated in Appendix C, but differed in some key respects. More specifically, a greater proportion of the respondents were female than was the case in the sample and fewer were eligible for free schools meals or had been recognised on the register of SEN while at school. In addition, a smaller proportion had attained below level 4 in their key stage 3 assessments than was the case in the sample as a whole.

The survey contained questions that related to:

- the qualifications that students had taken through IFP
- their post-16 destination and the qualifications they were pursuing post-16, where relevant
- the reasons for their choice of post-16 destination, including the influence of IFP on that choice

⁶ GOLDEN, S., NELSON, J., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2004). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibilities for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: Profile of Partnerships and Students 2002 and 2003* (DfES Research Report 558). London: DfES.

⁷ GOLDEN, S., NELSON, J., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2004). *Implementing the Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Experience of Partnerships and Students* (DfES Research Report 562). London: DfES.

⁸ GOLDEN, S., NELSON, J., O'DONNELL, L. and MORRIS, M. (2004). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibilities for 14-16 Year Olds: the First Year* (DfES Research Report 511). London: DfES.

⁹ GOLDEN, S., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2005). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Second Year* (DfES Research Report 609). London: DfES.

- their satisfaction with their choice of destination
- their longer-term plans regarding education, employment and training.

Students' responses to the questionnaire were linked to their responses in Year 10 and 11, the details of the IFP course provided by their schools in autumn 2002, and background details held on the DfES's National Pupil Database.

1.3.2 Data on students' achievements, destinations and attendance

Details of students' achievements in this report are drawn from two sources of data:

- The DfES's National Pupil Database (NPD) that contains details of all students' attainment in their key stage 3 assessments and the achievement of GCSEs, including GCSEs in vocational subjects, and GNVQs at key stage 4.
- Data provided by schools on the achievement of NVQs and other vocational qualifications for a sample of IFP participants.

As the NPD contains details for all students nationally relating to their GCSE and GNVQ attainment, it is possible to compare the outcomes for IFP participants with the outcomes in the same type of qualifications for students who did not attend schools that participated in IFP.

In order to explore the outcomes for students who had undertaken NVQs and other vocational qualifications through IFP in the autumn term of 2004, a sample of schools were sent a form which listed all the students who participated in the IFP and the qualifications that they were undertaking. School staff were asked to indicate whether each student had achieved, or not achieved, the qualification that school staff had indicated in the autumn of 2002 that the student was undertaking. It is worth noting that the data provided by schools is, therefore, based on the understanding and interpretation of school staff of the qualifications that students were undertaking and whether they had achieved these qualifications.

Details of students' achievements were provided by 205 schools representing a total of 4,594 qualifications taken through IFP. The majority of these were GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs. Consequently, the analysis of the achievements of NVQs and other vocational qualifications in this report is based on the outcomes for 514 students who were taking NVQs and 374 who were taking other vocational qualifications. In order to equate these students' achievements with those of students undertaking GCSEs, the NVQs and other vocational qualifications were 'scored' by the research team using the QCA's scoring system (see Appendix B for details). It is worth noting that the number of points assigned to the qualifications vary according to the qualification type, level achieved and, indeed subject studied. In their

guidance in relation to the use of the equivalence scores, QCA point out that higher points relate to the size of the qualification being studied and do not necessarily reflect a 'better' qualification.¹⁰

In addition to indicating the achievements of students, school staff were asked to identify the destinations of students post-16, using a list of pre-coded options which were as follows:

- School sixth form
- FE college
- Training provider
- Apprenticeship
- Other job with training
- Job without training
- Looking after home / family
- Not in work
- Something else
- Destination unknown.

A total of 197 schools responded, representing 5,147 IFP participants. However, school staff were not always able to provide details of students' destinations, consequently the destinations analysis is based on details for 3,469 individuals.

In order to explore the attendance of IFP participants throughout Years 10 and 11 of the first cohort of IFP, the sample schools were sent a form each term and asked to provide details of each student's authorised and unauthorised absences in the previous term. A total of 79 of the sample of schools provided details for all of the six terms for a total of 1,771 students.

1.4 Structure of the report

This introduction has provided an outline of the aims and objectives, research methods and data sources drawn upon for the research. The remainder of the report is structured as follows.

Chapter 2 presents the achievements at the end of the programme for young people who participated in IFP. It presents the proportions of students who had achieved their qualifications at the end of the programme and their overall attainment at key stage 4. Through multi-level model

¹⁰ QUALIFICATIONS AND CURRICULUM AUTHORITY (2005). *FAQs about Figures for the School and College Performance Indicators* [online]. Available: http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19/developments/downloads/FAQs_school_and_college.pdf [3 August, 2005].

analysis it explores the main influences on their attainment at key stage 4 and investigates the extent to which participation in IFP appears to have contributed to their outcomes through comparisons with similar students who did not participate. The second part of the chapter explores the relationship between the outcomes for young people, in terms of their overall achievement and their achievement of their IFP qualification, and the characteristics and attitudes of the students and the way in which IFP was delivered.

Chapter 3 explores the destinations of the young people post-16. Drawing on information provided by a sample of schools, and through the surveys of a sample of students, it presents the destinations of the young people and the factors that appeared to influence their decisions. The chapter examines the relationship between the courses studied through IFP and participants' subsequent destinations and concludes by exploring students' longer-term plans for education, employment and training.

Chapter 4 examines the other outcomes for young people who participated in the IFP in relation to the objectives of the programme. The extent to which students' attitudes changed in the course of the programme, and the main influences on any change, are examined. The attendance of a sample of students throughout key stage 4 is explored and compared to the attendance of students in their school as a whole.

Finally, Chapter 5 presents the main conclusions from the evaluation of the first cohort of IFP participants and examines the emerging **policy implications**.

2. Achievements of young people who participated in the IFP

Key findings:

- The outcomes for young people who participated in the first cohort of IFP summarised below are based on statistical analyses of their attainment which take into account the effect of prior attainment and other background characteristics by comparing their outcomes with students who were similar in these respects. (Section 2.1.1)
- The majority of the students who participated in IFP gained the qualification that they had been working towards through the programme. A total of 91 per cent of those who took GCSEs in vocational subjects achieved a pass at grades A* to G, and 36 per cent gained a pass at grades A* to C. Eighty per cent of those who took GNVQs achieved the qualification. Two-thirds (66 per cent) of the sample of students who worked towards an NVQ, and 67 per cent of those who worked towards an other vocational qualification, achieved the qualification. (Section 2.2)
- The achievement of these qualifications by students contributed to their overall attainment in terms of the total points achieved at key stage 4. Overall, students who participated in IFP gained more points at the end of Year 11 than similar students who did not participate in IFP. (Section 2.4.1)
- Within the first cohort of IFP, young people who had undertaken GNVQs and NVQs gained significantly more points overall than similar students who had not participated in IFP. (Section 2.4.1)
- While those taking GCSEs in vocational subjects achieved the points that might be expected at key stage 4, given their ability and other characteristics, those who had undertaken other vocational qualifications through the programme achieved fewer points than would be expected. (Section 2.4.1)
- Students who undertook GNVQs and GCSEs in vocational subjects, but did not participate in IFP, achieved more points overall than similar students who had not taken these qualifications and did not participate in IFP. However, students who took these qualifications outside of IFP also gained more points than similar students taking these qualifications through IFP. (Section 2.4.2)
- Within the IFP cohort, young people with lower attainment at key stage 3 who took GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQs and other vocational qualifications benefited more in terms of the points achieved than those with higher attainment. IFP students with higher attainment at key stage 3 who took other vocational qualifications gained fewer points than similar students who did not take these qualifications. (Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.4)
- Young people who appeared to have discontinued their participation in IFP before the end of Year 11 gained significantly fewer points overall

than similar students who had not embarked on IFP and those who had continued their involvement in the programme. (Section 2.4.3)

- While in general IFP participants who took NVQs gained more points than similar students who did not take these qualifications, male students who took NVQs gained even more points than similar students who were female. (Section 2.7.2)
- Whether students had missed lessons to participate in IFP did not appear to be associated with a decrease in their overall achievement at key stage 4. (Section 2.7.1)
- The amount of curriculum time to deliver GCSEs in vocational subjects affected outcomes in the achievement of the GCSE and students' wider attainment. An increase in the amount of curriculum time to undertake GCSEs in vocational subjects led to an increase in the points achieved in that qualification. However, such an increase in curriculum time was associated with a decrease in the overall achievement of students. (Sections 2.7.1 and 2.7.3)
- Shared delivery between schools and external providers was related to improved attainment. Students in partnerships that included an element of shared delivery gained more points in their IFP qualification than similar students in partnerships where this was not the case. (Section 2.7.3)
- The size of the partnership appeared to influence outcomes. Partnerships that were smaller, which typically meant that they comprised five schools or fewer, were associated with higher outcomes for the students in their IFP qualification. (Section 2.7.3)
- Involvement of the employer community emerged as an influential factor. Students in partnerships that involved Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) on their steering groups, and those that had engaged employers as visiting speakers, gained more points in the qualifications that they were taking through IFP than similar students in partnerships where this was not the case. (Section 2.7.3)

This chapter focuses on the extent to which the IFP met its objectives in relation to the attainment of young people who participated in the programme. It examines their attainment in terms of their total points score at key stage 4, their eight highest grades achieved and their achievement of five A* to C grades. It explores the factors that appear to influence outcomes including students' background characteristics, school and census level characteristics and, for a sample of students, the influence of their attitudes and experiences of the IFP on their attainment.

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Background

In the autumn term of 2002, young people who participated in the first cohort of the IFP (Year 10 students) were identified by their schools. Schools also provided information relating to the qualifications the students were pursuing,

and the location of study for undertaking these qualifications. The information on this cohort of students was individually matched to information about their background characteristics and attainment at key stage 3 contained in the DfES' National Pupil Database (NPD).

The analysis of the initial baseline data provided in autumn 2002¹¹ revealed that 58 per cent of the students who participated in the first cohort of IFP were working towards GCSEs in vocational subjects, 16 per cent were undertaking NVQs and 19 per cent were working towards other vocational qualifications. Seven per cent were taking GNVQs. The students who participated in IFP differed from their peers in Year 10 in certain key respects. Compared to all Year 10 students in the schools that were participating in the Programme, a greater proportion of IFP participants:

- were male
- were white
- received free school meals
- were recognised for action on the register of Special Educational Needs (SEN).

In addition, compared with their peers in Year 10, a smaller proportion:

- had attained level 5 or above in their key stage 3 assessments
- had English as an additional language.

The extent to which the students achieved the qualifications that they had undertaken through IFP is explored in this chapter in two ways. Firstly, the proportion of students who had achieved their qualifications at the end of Year 11 is explored. This analysis reflects the outcomes for the young people who participated in terms of whether they achieved the qualification that they had embarked on which, in turn, could contribute to their future progression in education and employment at the end of their compulsory education. In this respect, the outcomes for the IFP participants at the end of the programme are represented, regardless of the extent to which this achievement was over and above what might have been expected.

Secondly, the chapter examines the outcomes for young people in relation to the total number of points they achieved at key stage 4. These multi-level model analyses enable an exploration of the extent to which students who had participated in IFP achieved more points at the end of key stage 4 than might have been expected given their prior attainment, other key background

¹¹ GOLDEN, S., NELSON, J., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2004). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibilities for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: Profile of Partnerships and Students 2002 and 2003* (DfES Research Report 558). London: DfES.

characteristics, and a range of factors relating to their school and the area in which they lived, all of which could influence their attainment. The analysis examines their outcomes in terms of their total points achieved at key stage 4, their best eight grades achieved at key stage 4 and their achievement of the qualifications they took through IFP.

Multi-level model analysis enables a range of factors to be controlled for statistically, thereby accounting for their influence. This enables a comparison of outcomes for students who participated in IFP, with the outcomes for similar students (in terms of the characteristics included in the model) who did not participate in IFP. Through such analysis, the relative influence of a variety of factors can be explored and it is possible to identify the factors that influenced the outcomes over and above other factors. For example, an association exists between attainment at key stage 4 and prior attainment at key stage 3 – students with higher attainment at key stage 3 achieve more highly at key stage 4. The analysis controls for this statistically and so, where a statistically significant difference is reported, this difference is over and above what might be expected given the students' prior attainment. Where any statistically significant differences emerged that related to a specific characteristic or background factor, this is reported.

The factors accounted for in the model are set out in detail in Appendix A and included:

- Pupil level variables – such as participation in IFP, prior attainment at key stage 3 and background characteristics.
- School-level variables – such as whether the school was involved in IFP, school type and whether the school participated in Excellence in Cities.
- Census variables – these were derived from census data at pupil-level and included characteristics of the local area such as levels of employment and ownership of homes.

In order to illustrate the findings, and to provide examples of the effect of participation in IFP on young people, the chapter sometimes refers to a 'typical student' and compares their outcomes with a student who is the same in all respects but did not participate in IFP. A 'typical' student reflects a student made up of the majority of characteristics for the sample. In relation to an IFP participant, the typical student is male, white, not recognised as having SEN, not eligible for free school meals and with a key stage 3 average level of 5. In addition, the typical student attended an 11-18, non-specialist comprehensive school. Although the typical student is used as an illustrative example of the effect of IFP, the differences reported would not be significantly different for other students, unless otherwise stated. However, it is worth noting that the number of points achieved may be different. For example, IFP students may achieve 24 points more than other similar students who did not participate in IFP. For a 'typical' male student this may be the

difference between achieving 124 points instead of 100 points, for a female it may be the difference between achieving 134 points instead of 110.

In exploring the outcomes for young people who participated in IFP, this chapter focuses particularly on variables which had a significant effect on outcomes, and were relevant to the aims and objectives of IFP, as outlined in Chapter 1.

2.1.2 Sources of data

This chapter draws on data from a range of sources as follows:

- Details of students who participated in cohort 1 of IFP, the qualifications they studied, and their location of study. These students were identified by around 75 per cent of participating schools in the autumn term of 2002, when the students were in Year 10.
- Data for individual pupils held on the DfES's National Pupil Database which includes details of students' background characteristics, their attainment at key stage 3 and their achievements of GCSEs and GNVQs at key stage 4.
- Details of the achievements of NVQs and other vocational qualifications for a sample of students gathered from schools during the autumn term of 2004 once the students had completed their IFP course.
- Details of approaches to delivery gathered through surveys in the spring terms of 2003 and 2004 of the sampled students' associated schools, colleges and training providers.
- Details of students' attitudes and behaviour gathered through surveys of students when they were in Year 10 (spring 2003) and Year 11 (spring 2004).

Each of these datasets is used as appropriate in the analysis and, therefore, the datasets differ according to the analysis being conducted. More specifically, the analysis of the outcomes for GCSEs in vocational subjects, and GNVQs, includes all students who had been entered for these types of qualifications and were recorded on the NPD. This analysis includes a comparison with students who attended schools that did not participate in IFP, but who may have taken the same type of qualifications. In addition, students who attended schools that were participating in IFP, but were not identified by these schools as participating in the programme, were included in the comparison group.¹² The analysis is based on a total of 16,654 students who participated in IFP, 14,509 of whom entered a new GCSE through IFP and 1,477 of whom entered

¹² Students in schools that were said by Lead Partners to be participating in IFP, but did not respond to the baseline exercise identifying the IFP participants (around 25 per cent of participating schools), were excluded from the analysis. There were sufficient students in the comparison group to form a robust statistical comparison once IFP schools that had not provided details of their participating students were excluded. The possibility of including students in the analytical comparison group who attended IFP schools and had in fact experienced IFP was thus minimised.

a GNVQ. The comparison group comprises 453,699 students and represents all Year 10 students in the UK.

Analysis of the outcomes for students taking NVQs and other vocational qualifications draws on the data gathered from schools for a sample of students. No comprehensive national data was available which allowed an analysis of whether an individual pupil was entered for and achieved or did not achieve an NVQ or other vocational qualification. In order to recognise these students' attainment in their total point scores, NVQ and other vocational qualification achievements were scored using the QCA equivalence scores. Details are provided in Appendix B. This analysis is based on the outcomes for 514 students who were taking NVQs and 374 who were taking other vocational qualifications.

The analysis of the influence on outcomes of IFP delivery approaches, and of the attitudes, behaviour and experience of students, uses data from the surveys of schools, colleges and training providers and students' responses to surveys in Year 10 or Year 11.

2.2 Overall attainment of IFP students at key stage 4

Overall, the majority of students who participated in IFP appeared to have achieved the qualifications that they had been working towards through IFP at the end of Year 11. More specifically:

- 91 per cent of those who had worked towards a GCSE in a vocational subject through IFP achieved the qualification, 36 per cent at grades A* to C and 55 per cent at grades D-G
- 80 per cent of those who were engaged in a GNVQ through IFP achieved the qualification
- 66 per cent of those in the sample of students who were working towards an NVQ through IFP achieved their qualification
- 67 per cent of those in the sample of students who had undertaken an other vocational qualification through IFP had achieved their qualification.

Comparisons of the achievement of GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs among students who participated in IFP, and their peers nationally, indicated that slightly higher proportions of young people who participated in IFP had achieved the GCSE in a vocational subject compared with all students nationally. Table 2.1 shows that a slightly higher proportion of students who participated in IFP achieved GCSEs in vocational subjects, compared to their peers in the same schools and in all schools nationally, and that this difference was more marked among those achieving passes at grades A and A*.

Table 2.1 Proportions of students achieving GCSEs in vocational subjects: IFP participants and other students in IFP schools and nationally

	Known IFP students	Non-IFP students at IFP schools	All students at IFP schools	All students nationally
Total number of applied GCSE entries	14,718	53,089	67,807	104,631
% A/A*	5.3%	4.0%	4.3%	4.4%
% A*-C	36.1%	33.1%	33.8%	34.6%
% A*-G	90.9%	90.2%	90.4%	90.5%

Source: NPD and NFER baseline data

The table indicates students' raw scores and does not take into account prior attainment

The outcomes for IFP students in the GCSEs in vocational subjects broadly reflect the grades they achieved in their other GCSEs. Just over a third (36 per cent) of the IFP cohort had achieved grades A* to C in their GCSEs and 5.6 per cent had achieved grades A* and A. The majority (94.9 per cent) had achieved grades A* to G in their other GCSEs. Whilst IFP students' performance was therefore relatively consistent, they were nevertheless found to have attained less well than their peers in the same schools (52.7 per cent of whom achieved grades A* to C) and than their peers nationally (58.7 per cent). However, these figures do not take into account the influence of prior attainment at key stage 3 which is taken into account in the analysis of total points achieved at key stage 4 presented later in this chapter. The IFP cohort overall had significantly lower attainment in their key stage 3 assessments than their peers.¹³

Among students who had taken GNVQs at either foundation and intermediate level, a greater proportion of those who undertook the qualifications through IFP achieved them at the end of Year 11, compared with those who took these qualifications but did not participate in IFP, as illustrated in Table 2.2 below.

¹³ GOLDEN, S., NELSON, J., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2004). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibilities for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: Profile of Partnerships and Students 2002 and 2003* (DfES Research Report 558). London: DfES.

Table 2.2 Proportions of students achieving GNVQs: IFP participants and other students in IFP schools and nationally

	Known IFP students	Non-IFP students in IFP schools	All students nationally
Total number of Intermediate level GNVQ entries	1019.5	32523	61938
% pass	83.9%	78.6%	77.7%
Total number of Foundation level GNVQ entries	226	2703	4952.5
% pass	67.7%	56.4%	55.6%

Source: NPD and NFER baseline data

The table indicates students' raw scores and does not take into account prior attainment

Young people who achieved a Part 1 GNVQ were said to have achieved 0.5 of a GNVQ

While it appears, therefore, that a greater proportion of young people who had undertaken GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs through IFP had achieved their qualifications compared with their peers, as noted above, this analysis does not take into account the prior attainment of the students or other influential factors. Further analysis revealed that the differences indicated in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 are largely explained by the prior attainment and school-level factors. Once these factors are controlled for statistically, no significant difference in the achievement of these qualifications is evident between young people who took GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs through IFP and their peers who did not participate in the programme.

Nevertheless, these achievements indicate that the majority of students had achieved the qualifications that they had taken through their participation in IFP. In addition to the achievement of a qualification at key stage 4 that contributed to the number and range of qualifications that these students achieved, the points assigned to these qualifications, together with their other achievements such as their GCSEs, contributed to students' total point scores at key stage 4. The analysis presented in the remainder of this chapter details the main factors which appeared to influence attainment at key stage 4, and explores in details the extent to which IFP, and specific elements of IFP, appear to be associated with increased attainment at key stage 4.

2.3 Main factors which influence attainment at key stage 4

The analysis of students' attainment took into account a wide range of factors which are associated with students' attainment at key stage 4. The main focus of this section is to explore the extent to which participation in IFP appeared to effect attainment once the influence of these other factors had been taken into consideration. In other words, it identifies factors which were significantly associated with students' attainment, over and above the influence of other factors.

A summary of some of the factors which were most significantly associated with students' attainment in general, including both those who participated in IFP and those who did not, is presented below.

In terms of both the total number of points achieved by students at key stage 4, and in terms of the eight highest grades achieved,¹⁴ the following factors were those which were found to have the most effect, either positively or negatively, on the national picture of attainment:

- **Key stage 3 attainment** – higher attainment at key stage 3 was associated with higher attainment at key stage 4. For example, an increase in a student's attainment in their key stage 3 science assessments of one level was significantly associated with an increase of 25 points in the attainment of their eight highest grades at key stage 4.
- **Recognition for action on the register of SEN** – there was a negative association between recognition for action on the register of SEN and attainment at key stage 4. For example, a typical student who was recognised for action attained 29 points fewer in their eight highest grades at key stage 4 than similar students who were not recognised for action.
- **Student mobility** – students who changed schools between key stage 3 and key stage 4 attained significantly fewer points at key stage 4 than similar students who had not changed school. For example, students who changed school attained 33 points fewer in their eight highest grades at key stage 4 than similar students who had not changed school.
- **Gender** – there was a positive association between being female and attainment at key stage 4. For example, female students achieved 15 points more in their eight highest grades at key stage 4 than similar students who were male.
- **English as an additional language (EAL)** – Having a language other than English as a first language was positively associated with attainment at key stage 4. Students whose first language was not English gained 17 points more in their eight highest grades than similar students with English as their first language.

A range of other school-level variables emerged as being influential. For example, whether a school was a specialist school, a faith school, a City Technology College or in a rural ward were all positively associated with attainment at key stage 4 in terms of total GCSE scores. Whether a school was situated in an EIC area was not significantly associated with higher or lower levels of attainment.

¹⁴ The 'best eight' measure is, in some respects, fairer than using the total number of GCSEs that students have been entered for, as it does not favour students who have been entered for more than eight GCSEs. Where a student did not achieve eight GCSEs, their total score for the number of GCSEs they had achieved was calculated.

The evidence shows that students' achievement at key stage 4 is significantly influenced by a range of factors. The extent to which attainment appeared to be influenced by involvement in IFP, taking into account these influences, is discussed in the next section.

2.4 The effect of participation in IFP on students' attainment at key stage 4

2.4.1 Overall attainment at key stage 4 of students who participated in IFP

When compared with students nationally, students who had participated in IFP differed significantly from similar students who had not participated in the programme in relation to the number of points they gained at key stage 4. Students who participated in IFP achieved slightly more points in total achievement than would be expected given their prior attainment and other background characteristics. For example, a student who did not participate in IFP achieved 334 points whereas a student with the same characteristics who participated in IFP, gained 338 points. However, students who participated in IFP achieved slightly fewer points in their eight highest grades achieved than would be expected given their prior attainment and other background characteristics. For example, a student who did not participate in IFP achieved 286 points whereas a student with the same characteristics who participated in IFP, gained 281 points. This indicates that, whilst IFP students may be achieving a greater number of qualifications, the grades that they achieve are lower than those of students who were not participating in IFP.

The type of qualifications that a young person had pursued through IFP appeared to be related to the extent to which they attained more or fewer points than might be expected. More specifically:

- Students who had engaged in **GNVQs** through their IFP participation attained an average of 24 **more** points than students who were similar in their prior attainment and other background characteristics who had not participated in IFP who may or may not have taken GNVQs.
- Students who had worked towards **NVQs** through IFP gained an average of 48 **more** points than similar students who had not participated in the programme but were similar in terms of their prior attainment and other background characteristics.
- Students who had taken **other vocational qualifications** gained an average of nine fewer points than students who had not participated in the programme but were similar in terms of their prior attainment and other background characteristics.

Students who had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects through IFP did not differ significantly, in terms of the points they attained at key stage 4, from

similar students who had not participated in IFP and who may or may not have taken new GCSEs. However, in terms of their eight highest grades, students who had taken new GCSEs through IFP gained fewer points at key stage 4 than similar students who had not participated in IFP.

2.4.2 The effect of qualification type on students' attainment at key stage 4: new GCSEs and GNVQs

Although IFP emerged as one influential factor on students' attainment, as noted above, a further significant influence was the type of qualification which they studied. Indeed, further analysis revealed that, students who were entered for a GNVQ (but did not participate in IFP) attained 97 points more in their total points scored than would be expected given their prior attainment and background characteristics and students who were entered for GCSEs in vocational subjects achieved 30 points more than would be expected. When the influence of taking these qualifications is taken into account in the models (in other words IFP participants who were entered for GNVQs are compared with other students who were entered for GNVQs), it emerges that:

- Students who took GCSEs in vocational subjects through IFP achieved significantly fewer points in their **total points** than students who were similar in terms of their prior attainment and other background characteristics and who entered GCSEs in vocational subjects but did not participate in the programme. For example, on average students who took GCSEs in vocational subjects gained 21 points fewer than similar students who did not participate in IFP and took these qualifications. Moreover, students who took GNVQs through IFP achieved 30 points fewer in total than similar students who entered GNVQs outside the programme.
- Students who took GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs through IFP achieved significantly fewer points in their **best eight grades** than students who entered GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs but did not participate in the programme. For example, students who took GCSEs in vocational subjects through IFP achieved seven points fewer than students who were similar in terms of their prior attainment and other background characteristics who took this type of qualification but did not participate in IFP. Students who took GNVQs through IFP achieved an average of 12 fewer points in their best eight grades than similar students who took GNVQs but did not participate in IFP.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 illustrate these outcomes for young people who participated in IFP and did not discontinue, compared with young people who were similar and entered GNVQs and GCSEs in vocational subjects but did not participate in IFP. In addition, the outcomes for similar young people who did not take these qualifications and did not participate in IFP are shown. In summary, the charts examine three groups of students as follows:

- **Non-vocational** – Students who did not participate in IFP and did not undertake the type of qualification identified (either GCSEs in vocational subjects or GNVQ).
- **Non-IF** – Students who were not known to participate in IFP but who undertook the type of qualification identified (either GCSEs in vocational subjects or GNVQ)
- **IF** – Students who participated in IFP and undertook the type of qualification identified (either GCSEs in vocational subjects or GNVQ).

These figures indicate that young people who had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs, and who had **participated in IFP** had gained significantly higher points at key stage 4 than similar students who had **not participated in IFP** and not taken these qualifications. However, students who had taken these types of qualifications, but had not participated in IFP, attained slightly but significantly higher levels at key stage 4 than similar students who had taken these qualifications through IFP.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show that within the IFP cohort higher attainment at key stage 3 is associated with higher attainment at key stage 4 for students who took new GCSEs and GNVQs. Figure 2.1 indicates that students who had lower attainment at key stage 3 and took a new GCSE benefited more in terms of the total points achieved than those with higher attainment. In contrast, Figure 2.2 shows that students with higher attainment at key stage 3 who took a GNVQ benefited more than those with lower attainment.

Figure 2.1 Attainment at key stage 4 of young people who achieved GCSEs in vocational subjects and all students nationally: excluding IFP students who may have discontinued

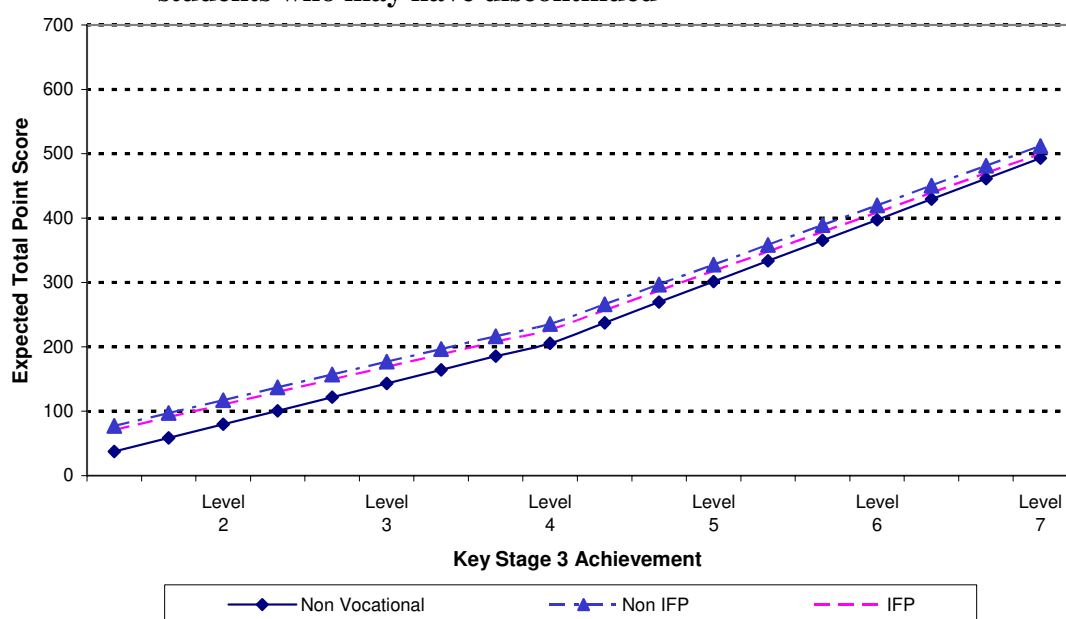
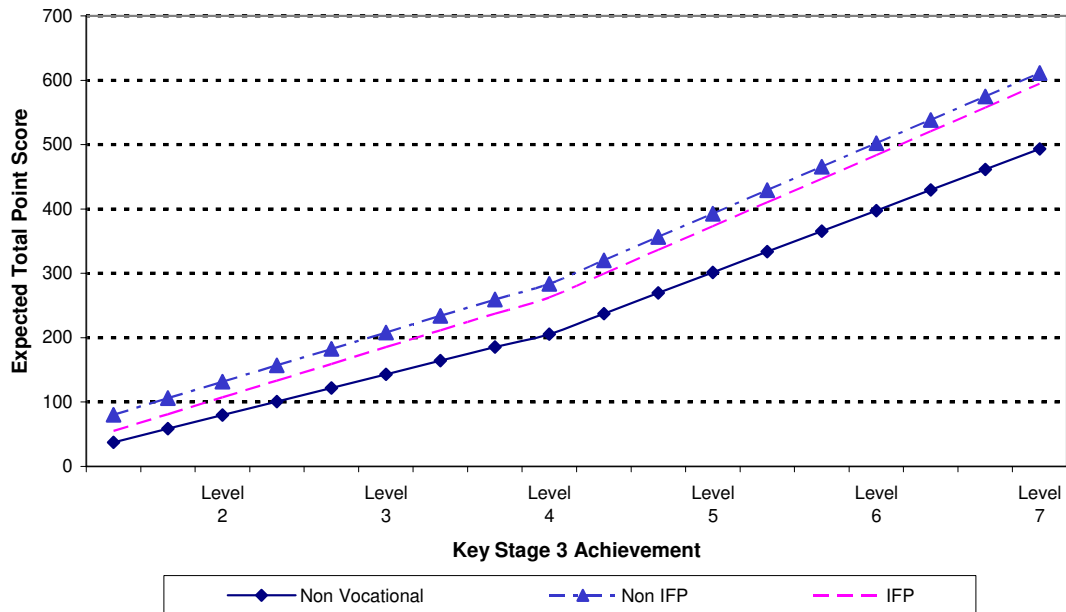


Figure 2.2 Attainment at key stage 4 of young people who achieved GNVQs and all students nationally: excluding IFP students who may have discontinued



Overall, the findings presented in this section suggest that, to a great extent, any higher attainment noted among IFP participants, who undertook GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs, in terms of their total achievement at GCSE, can be explained by the effect of their success in achieving their GCSEs in vocational subjects or GNVQs. In other words, these students attained higher outcomes than they might have achieved had they not participated in IFP, and not taken a vocational qualification, because they had the opportunity to pursue GNVQs and GCSEs in vocational subjects. Although around 90,000 GCSEs in vocational subjects, and 66,000 GNVQs were taken outside of IFP, the programme provides one route for entering these qualifications, and students who took these qualifications through IFP achieved more points overall than would be expected. Nevertheless, as the figures illustrate, students who took these qualifications outside IFP gained even more points (over and above expectations) than IFP students. Reasons for these differences in outcomes (not including the pupil-related and school-related background factors which have been explored through the models) are unclear. However, the influence on these outcomes of some of the attitudes and behaviour of the students who participated in IFP, and of the delivery approaches adopted, will be considered later in the chapter.

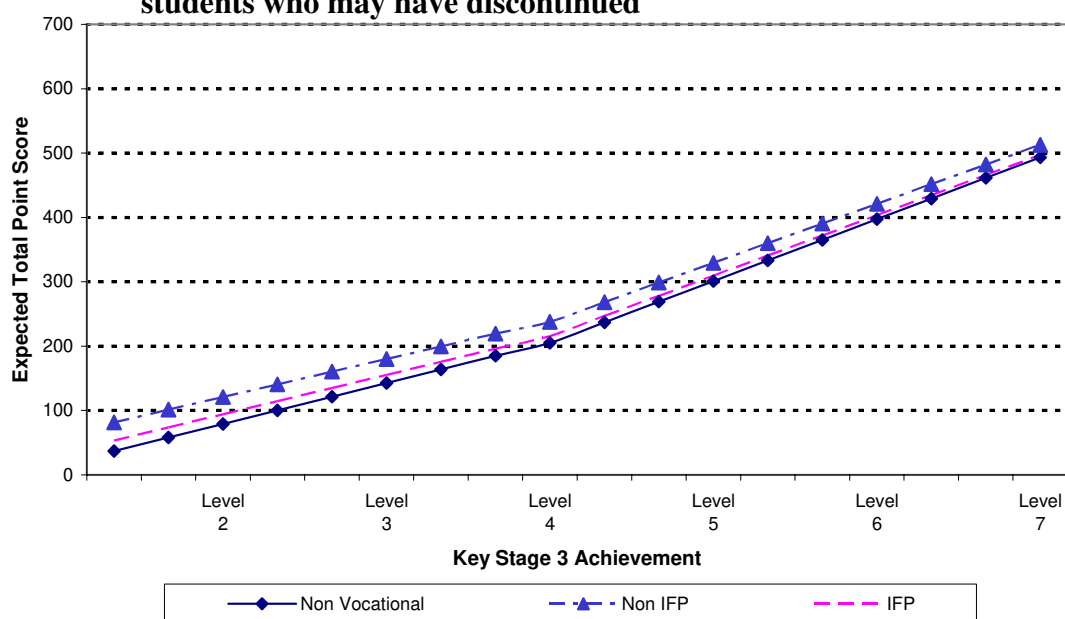
2.4.3 Students who discontinued their involvement in IFP

In addition to exploring the outcomes for young people who participated in IFP and continued their involvement throughout the two years of the programme, the analysis examined the outcomes for any students who embarked on the programme, including those who discontinued. These findings, which reflect the potential key stage 4 outcomes for a student who

had embarked on the IFP in Year 10, regardless of whether they continued on the programme to its completion or not, are illustrated in Figures 2.3 and 2.4.

Figure 2.3 presents the outcomes at key stage 4 for **all students who embarked on IFP and took GCSEs in vocational subjects, including those who subsequently discontinued.**

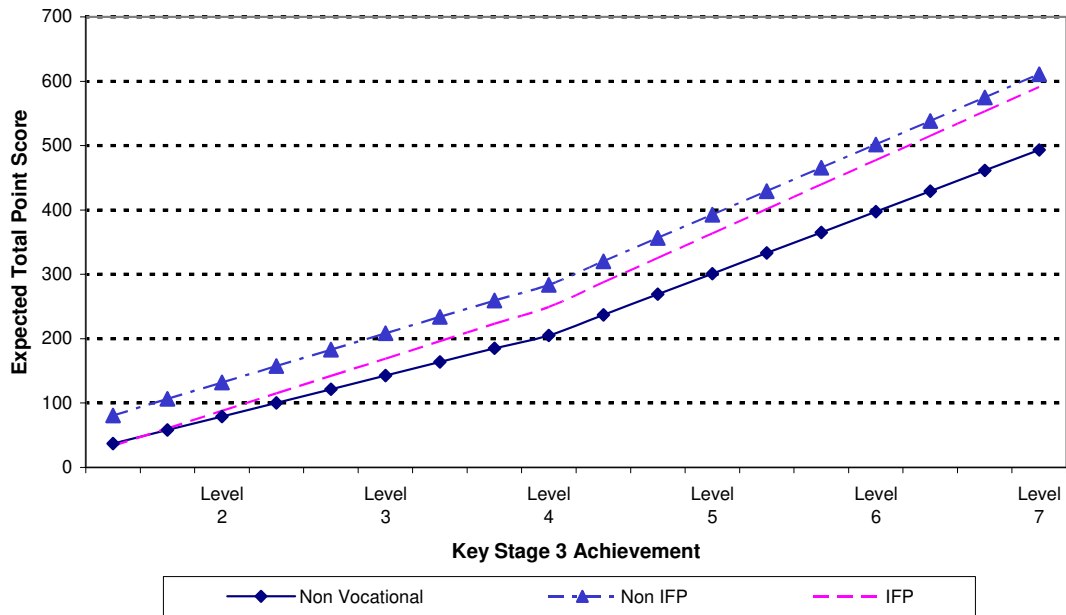
Figure 2.3 Attainment at key stage 4 of young people who achieved GCSEs in vocational subjects and all students nationally: including IFP students who may have discontinued



As can be seen in Figure 2.3, when other background factors were taken into account, young people’s attainment at key stage 4 increased in relation to their prior attainment at key stage 3. As was the case when students who discontinued were excluded from the analysis (Figure 2.1), young people who had studied a GCSE in a vocational subject either through IFP, or not through IFP, attained higher points at key stage 4 than similar students who had not taken such qualifications.

Figure 2.4 presents the outcomes for **young people who had embarked on IFP and had taken GNVQs, including those who had not remained on the programme to its completion.**

Figure 2.4 Attainment at key stage 4 of young people who attained GNVQs and all students nationally: including IFP students who may have discontinued



As figure 2.4 reveals, when the outcomes for students who undertook GNVQs, whether this was through IFP or not, are compared with the attainment of students who did not take such qualifications, it emerges that students who undertook a GNVQ had significantly higher attainment at key stage 4 than those who did not take a GNVQ.

It appears that overall, students who embarked on IFP and undertook GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs gained more points than might be expected given their prior attainment and background characteristics. Similar students who had not taken such qualifications but were the same in all other respects, gained fewer points than those who had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects or GNVQs through IFP. However, Figures 2.3 and 2.4 also indicate that, when students who discontinued their involvement in IFP are included in the analysis, the outcomes for the cohort as a whole are lower than when they are excluded. This appears to be explained by the noticeably lower attainment of this sub-group of students in terms of their total points achieved at key stage 4. This is discussed in more detail below.

Around fifteen per cent of the IFP cohort used in this analysis (2,366 individuals) who were identified by schools in Autumn 2002 as participating in IFP, and taking GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs, were not entered for these qualifications on the NPD. Students in this group had attained significantly less well at key stage 4 than might have been expected, given their prior attainment and other background characteristics. More specifically:

- young people who embarked on new GCSEs through IFP, and discontinued before the end of Year 11 attained significantly lower at key stage 4 (54 points less) than might be expected given their prior attainment and other background characteristics.
- students who embarked on IFP and discontinued a GNVQ before the end of Year 11 attained 32 points less than similar students who had not participated in IFP.

This suggests that, embarking on an IFP course and discontinuing is associated with significantly lower attainment than a student might have achieved had they either continued on the programme, or not participated in IFP.

Further exploration of the characteristics of these IFP participants who discontinued their involvement revealed that they had slightly lower attainment at key stage 3 than their peers who took GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs. For example, 52 per cent had achieved level 5 and above in English at key stage 3 compared with 67 per cent of those taking GCSEs in vocational subjects and 71 per cent of those who took GNVQs. In addition, a greater proportion were recognised for action on the register of SEN. Among those who had discontinued, 26 per cent were recognised for action while 14 per cent of those who were entered for GCSEs in vocational subjects through IFP, and 16 per cent of those who were entered for GNVQs, were recognised for action.

Whilst the reasons for a student having discontinued their participation cannot be inferred from the available data, previous analysis of the extent of discontinuation among the first cohort of IFP participants¹⁵ showed that location of study did not appear to be related to discontinuation and there was no evidence of drop-out clustered in particular partnerships. Nevertheless, discontinuation was greater among young people who had embarked on NVQs and other vocational qualifications and it appeared that the students' attainment at key stage 3, and whether they had SEN recognition was influential. Visits to nine partnerships¹⁶ conducted in 2004 revealed a variety of reported explanations for students discontinuing their involvement. Those which related to IFP included inappropriate selection of students, lack of motivation and commitment from the students, inability of the young people to cope in an adult environment and students missing lessons in order to participate. Staff also cited issues that were not directly related to IFP including wider problems within school, exclusion from school and personal reasons. In addition, staff in two schools noted the challenge of re-integrating

¹⁵ GOLDEN, S., NELSON, J., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2004). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibilities for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: Profile of Partnerships and Students 2002 and 2003* (DfES Research Report 558). London: DfES.

¹⁶ GOLDEN, S., NELSON, J., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2004). *Implementing the Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Experience of Partnerships and Students* (DfES Research Report 562). London: DfES.

students who discontinued their involvement in IFP into the school curriculum.

2.4.4 The effect of qualification type on students' attainment at key stage 4: NVQs and other vocational qualifications

For students who were taking NVQs and other vocational qualifications through IFP,¹⁷ comparisons can be made with similar students in terms of their background characteristics. However, a comparison group of young people who did not participate in IFP but who took NVQs and other vocational qualifications, cannot be identified.¹⁸ Consequently, this analysis explores the extent of any differences between young people who took NVQs and other vocational qualifications through IFP and students who were similar in all other respects but did not participate in IFP and were not known to be taking NVQs or other vocational qualifications. The analysis focuses on the total points achieved by students as it is not possible to include their vocational achievements in their eight highest grades awarded as, in general, NVQs and other vocational qualifications are not graded in this way.

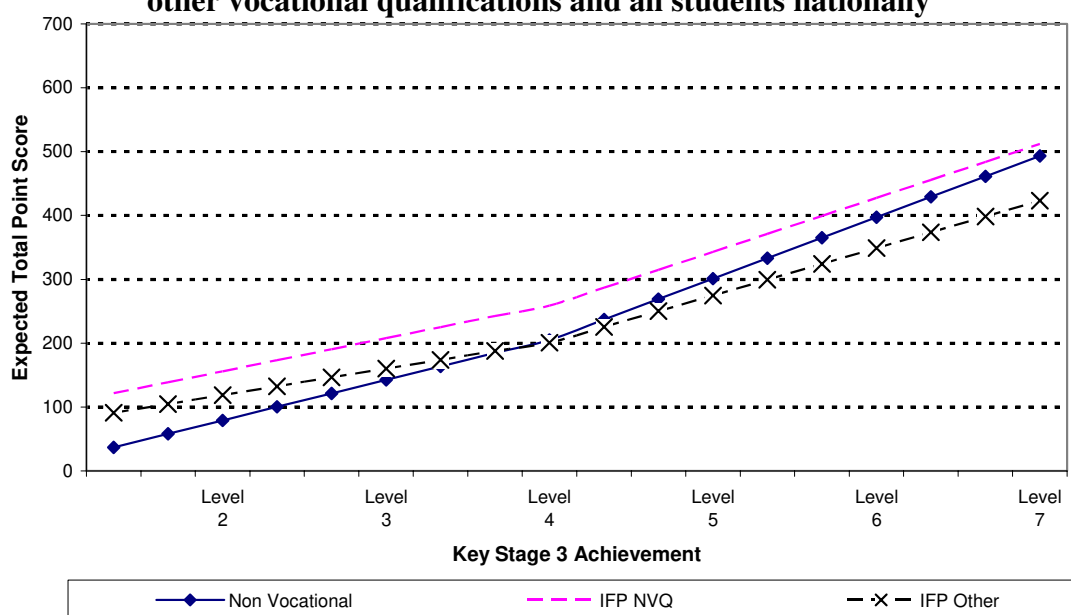
Among the young people who were said to be taking NVQs and other vocational qualifications through IFP, a varied pattern of attainment emerged. Young people who had undertaken an NVQ through IFP gained 48 points **more** than might be expected given their prior attainment and other background characteristics. However, young people who had undertaken an other vocational qualification through IFP attained nine points **fewer** than might be expected given their prior attainment and other background characteristics. Figure 2.5 illustrates the outcomes for these two groups of young people compared with the outcomes for all students nationally. The three groups represented in Figure 2.5 are:

- **IFP NVQ** – Students who participated in IFP and undertook an NVQ through the programme.
- **IFP Other** – Students who participated in IFP and undertook an other vocational qualification through the programme.
- **Non-vocational** – Students who did not participate in IFP and did not take any vocational qualifications (including new GCSEs, GNVQs, NVQs and other vocational qualifications).

¹⁷ This analysis is based on the outcomes for 514 students who were taking NVQs and 374 students who were taking other vocational qualifications.

¹⁸ An appropriate comparison group of students would be those who took NVQs and other VQs and attended schools that did not participate in IFP. It was not possible to identify a comparison group of similar students who had taken these qualifications but had not participated in IFP in national datasets. The achievements for a sample of the IFP cohort were gathered directly from schools by NFER.

Figure 2.5 Attainment at key stage 4 of young people who attained NVQs and other vocational qualifications and all students nationally



As can be seen in Figure 2.5, students who had undertaken an NVQ through the IFP attained more points at key stage 4 than might be expected. Moreover, this difference was more marked among students with lower attainment at key stage 3 (below level 5). In other words, while all students who take NVQs are advantaged in terms of points achieved at key stage 4, the positive effect of taking an NVQ was greater for young people who attained less than level 5 at key stage 3.

The outcomes for young people who had taken other vocational qualifications through IFP reveal a different pattern. As can be seen in Figure 2.5, young people who had taken other vocational qualifications, and had attained less than level 4 at key stage 3, gained more points at key stage 4 than might be expected. However, those who had attained level 4 or above at key stage 3 gained significantly fewer points than might be expected at key stage 4. This suggests that, in terms of the points achieved at the end of key stage 4, students with higher attainment did not benefit as much as similar students with lower attainment. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the majority of students in the sample gained a qualification to complement the suite of qualifications that they achieved at the end of Year 11.

In order to provide a further illustration, Table 2.3 gives examples of the number of points a young person might be expected to achieve at key stage 4, given their attainment at key stage 3, and the difference for those who took an NVQ or other vocational qualifications through IFP compared with similar students who did not participate in IFP. As can be seen, the difference is more marked for students who attained level 3 at key stage 3 and is greater both for young people who took NVQs and for those who took other vocational qualifications. However, for those who attained level 6 at key stage 3, the difference is less notable for those who took NVQs through IFP while those

who took other vocational qualifications gained fewer points than similar students who did not participate in IFP.

Table 2.3 Number of points achieved by students at key stage 4: comparison of IFP participants who took NVQs and other vocational qualifications and students who did not participate in IFP

Type of student	Expected point score
Typical ¹⁹ student who did not participate in IFP and attained level 3 at key stage 3	144
IFP participant who took an NVQ and attained level 3 at key stage 3	208
IFP participant who took an other vocational qualification and attained level 3 at key stage 3	160
Typical student who did not participate in IFP and attained level 6 at key stage 3	399
IFP participant who took an NVQ and attained level 6 at key stage 3	428
IFP participant who took an other vocational qualification and attained level 6 at key stage 3	349

The additional 64 points achieved by a student who attained level 3 at key stage 3, participated in IFP and gained an NVQ, compared with a similar student who did not take an NVQ through IFP broadly equates to gaining an additional A* grade at GCSE (58 points). The additional 16 points achieved by a student who took an other vocational qualification, and had attained level 3 at key stage 3, equates to an additional G grade at GCSE. However, the 50 fewer points achieved by a higher attaining student who participated in IFP and took an other vocational qualification broadly equates to gaining one less GCSE pass at grade A (52 points).

2.5 Attainment of five A* to C grades or equivalent (Level 2)

Another way of looking at outcomes is to make an assessment of progress towards the national target relating to Level 2 achievement. The attainment of young people who had participated in IFP can be expressed in terms of the proportions who had achieved level 2 at key stage 4 which equates to five A* to C GCSE passes. This analysis revealed that, taking into account the effect of prior attainment and other background and school characteristics, students in schools that were participating in IFP had a similar probability of achieving Level 2 at key stage 4 to similar students in schools that were not participating in IFP. For example, a 'typical' student who attained Level 5 at key stage 3 and did not attend a school that was participating in IFP had a 47 per cent

¹⁹ The typical student was male, white, not recognised as having SEN, not eligible for free school meals and attended an 11-18, non-specialist comprehensive school.

probability of achieving Level 2 at key stage 4. A similar student, who was not participating in IFP but attended a school that was participating in IFP had a 46 per cent probability of attaining Level 2 at key stage 4. In comparison, students who were similar in all respects, including in their prior attainment, but had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQs or other vocational qualifications through IFP, had a lower probability of attaining Level 2. More specifically, to illustrate this finding:

- a typical student who had participated in IFP, and had had taken a GCSE in a vocational subject, had a 40 per cent probability of attaining Level 2
- a typical student who had participated in IFP, and had taken an NVQ, had a 24 per cent probability of attaining Level 2
- a typical student who had participated in IFP and had taken an other vocational qualification had a 19 per cent probability of attaining Level 2
- in contrast, a typical student who had taken a GNVQ through IFP had a higher probability (60 per cent) of attaining Level 2.

Although students whose key stage 3 levels were higher than those of the 'typical' student (level 5) had an increased probability of attaining Level 2, the difference between IFP participants who took NVQs, other vocational qualifications and GCSEs in vocational subjects, and their peers who did not participate in IFP, or those who took GNVQs through IFP, remain. In other words, students who took these qualifications through IFP had a decreased probability of attaining Level 2 at key stage 4, regardless of their prior attainment.

In considering these findings, it is worth noting that the majority of students who engaged with NVQs and other vocational qualifications through IFP were pursuing level 1 qualifications which could not, therefore, contribute to their overall achievement of Level 2. For such students, the possibility of attaining Level 2 overall would be dependent upon their achievements in their GCSEs where they would need to achieve five or more passes at grades A* to C to attain Level 2. Furthermore, as attaining Level 2 entails the achievement of passes in GCSEs at grades A* to C, the lower probability of students gaining Level 2 who had studied GCSEs in vocational subjects through IFP may reflect the finding that a minority of these students (36 per cent) attained A* to C grades in their GCSEs in vocational subjects. In addition, these qualifications account for two GCSEs and those students who attained D to G grades would be dependent on having achieved A* to C in the majority of their remaining GCSEs to attain Level 2 overall.

Among the students taking GNVQs, those who gained an intermediate level GNVQ achieved a qualification that contributed to Level 2 while those who gained a foundation GNVQ achieved a level 1 qualification that would not contribute to their overall Level 2 achievement. The majority of IFP students

who had taken a GNVQ had taken an intermediate level qualification. The size of the GNVQ qualification may also influence this finding. Successful completion of a GNVQ at intermediate level broadly equates to passing four GCSEs at A* to C. Consequently, students who took this type of qualification, and passed, could achieve Level 2 through gaining a GNVQ and one other GCSE at A* to C as distinct from achieving A* to C in five separate qualifications.

2.6 In summary

It appears that, overall, students who participated in IFP, and took GCSEs in vocational subjects, GNVQs and NVQs attained higher points at key stage 4 than similar students who did not undertake any vocational qualifications and did not participate in IFP. In addition, students who had lower attainment at key stage 3, and participated in IFP, benefited more in terms of the points achieved at key stage 4 than IFP participants who were similar but had higher prior attainment. However, those who had taken other vocational qualifications through IFP did not perform as well at key stage 4 as a whole, as might be expected, given their prior attainment and other background characteristics. Moreover, although IFP students who had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs gained more points than might have been expected had they not taken these qualifications, they attained fewer points at key stage 4 than similar students, who took the same types of qualifications, but did not participate in IFP. While the reasons for this are unclear, these findings suggest that there may be some aspect of the nature of IFP, or the young people's attitudes, that influences the outcomes for those who participate in the programme. This will be explored in the remainder of the chapter.

2.7 Influences on attainment at key stage 4

In order to examine whether the delivery approach adopted by IFP partnerships, or the attitudes of the young people participating in the programme, appeared to influence the outcomes for young people in terms of their attainment, data gathered through the surveys of young people, schools and colleges and training providers was incorporated into the statistical models of outcomes. As such data was only available for a sample of students (and their associated partnerships) this analysis is based on the outcomes for this sample of young people, around 1,800 young people and 180 schools. Furthermore, it is worth noting that, this analysis was only able to draw on the aspects of approaches to delivery, and the attitudes of young people, that had been gathered through the surveys, together with the background characteristics relating to students, schools and their neighbourhoods held on

the NPD and from other public data sources.²⁰ There may be a range of other factors for which data is not available that may also influence the outcomes for these young people.

2.7.1 Influence of the attitudes of young people and approaches to delivery on total scores at key stage 4

In terms of the effect on the total point scores achieved by young people, there was evidence that students' attitudes and behaviour could influence their outcomes at key stage 4. More specifically:

- Students who had a positive attitude towards school and its usefulness for the future as indicated in their response to the questionnaire in Year 11, attained more points in total at key stage 4 than students who were similar in terms of their prior attainment and other background characteristics, but who had a negative attitude. For example, on average a student who had a positive attitude gained 32 points more than a similar student who was not positive.
- Students who reported that they truanted or were often late attained fewer points at key stage 4 than students who were similar in terms of their prior attainment and other background characteristics but who indicated that they always attended on time. On average students who truanted or were often late attained 26 points less than similar students who were not late.

While these attitudes may be unrelated to students' participation in IFP, comparisons of students' responses to surveys in Year 10 and again in Year 11²¹ revealed that students who participated in IFP were significantly more positive in Year 11 about school and its usefulness to their future than they had been in Year 10. It may be, therefore, that their participation in IFP contributed to the development of this positive attitude which was then associated with higher attainment at key stage 4. Indeed, the surveys of students in Year 11 found that 59 per cent of students said that participating in IFP had helped them to realise the importance of getting qualifications, and 50 per cent said that it had helped them to realise the importance of what they were learning in school.

There was limited evidence of an influence of IFP delivery-related factors on overall outcomes for this sample of young people. For example, the following factors did not emerge as influencing the outcomes for students in terms of their total attainment at key stage 4:

- whether the qualification was taught by the school only, an external provider only, or a shared teaching approach was adopted

²⁰ Full details of the variables included in the analysis are provided in Appendix A.

²¹ GOLDEN, S., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2005). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Second Year* (DfES Research Report 609). London: DfES.

- whether a student participated because they were told to by the school, rather than it being an active choice
- the support provided for students by the school or external provider.

Moreover, whether a student said that they had missed other lessons due to their participation in IFP did not emerge as a significant influence on their attainment at key stage 4. The surveys of students in Year 11 revealed that the majority of those who missed lessons considered that they were successful in catching up the work that they missed and this appears to be substantiated by their achievements at key stage 4.²²

The amount of curriculum time dedicated to the IFP emerged as significantly associated with students' outcomes at key stage 4. More specifically, it emerged that, students' overall attainment at key stage 4 decreased where the amount of curriculum time to undertake a new GCSE increased. This will be discussed further in Section 2.7.3.

It appears that, on the whole, the approach to delivery of IFP did not significantly influence students' overall outcomes, which includes their wider GCSEs. Nevertheless, the approaches adopted to delivering IFP might be expected to have a greater effect on students' achievement of their IFP qualification, on which it has more direct impact. This will be explored in the next section.

2.7.2 Influence of young people's characteristics and attitudes on achievement of the qualification they took through IFP

This analysis explores the influence of a range of student characteristics, attitudes and behaviour, and delivery approaches adopted by partnerships, on the attainment of students' IFP qualification only. As might be expected, given the differences in the possible points that can be achieved with different types of qualifications (see Appendix B for details), the type of qualification that a student was taking was significantly associated with the number of points they attained in their IFP qualification.

More specifically, students who were taking an NVQ gained 86 points more than a similar student who had not taken an NVQ, while students who took an other vocational qualification gained 49 points more than a student who did not take this type of qualification. Students who had pursued a GNVQ gained 19 more points than similar students who had not undertaken a GNVQ.

However, an examination of the relationship between key stage 3 attainment and achievement of NVQs revealed that higher attainment at key stage 3 was not significantly associated with attaining higher points through achieving an

²² GOLDEN, S., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2005). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Second Year* (DfES Research Report 609). London: DfES.

NVQ. In other words, in this sample of students, those who had higher prior attainment were not at an advantage in terms of achieving an NVQ compared with those with lower prior attainment. For example, a typical student who had attained level 6 in their key stage 3 assessments would be expected to gain 129 points and a student who had attained level 3 would be expected to gain a similar number (125 points).

A student's gender emerged as a key influential factor associated with attainment of a qualification through IFP. In general terms, female students gained significantly more points than male students (six points more). However, this differed in relation to the type of qualification that a student was working towards. Male students who were taking NVQs gained significantly more points than similar students taking these qualifications who were female. For example, a male student taking an NVQ might be expected to achieve 128 points whereas a female student, who was similar in other respects and was taking an NVQ, might be expected to achieve 108 points. This may suggest that students who are male are at an advantage when they take NVQs, or that they particularly benefit from undertaking these type of qualifications, compared with similar female students.

Some aspects of students' attitudes and behaviour appeared to influence their attainment of the qualification they were taking through IFP. As was the case in relation to their overall attainment at key stage 4, students who indicated that they tranted or were late for lessons gained five less points in their IFP qualification than similar students who did not indicate that this was the case. Moreover, students who had indicated that they found their IFP course interesting gained six more points than similar students who did not feel this while, conversely, students who had said that they found the course boring attained six points less. Students' overall attitudes towards school, college and learning styles were more peripherally associated with their attainment of their IFP qualifications. Students who indicated that they preferred college to school attained five points more than similar students who did not have this view. Young people who indicated a preference for a practical style of learning gained three points less than similar students who did not indicate this.

2.7.3 Influence of delivery approach on achievement of the qualification taken through IFP

It appears, therefore, that the type of qualification pursued, and the gender of the individual student, influenced the outcomes for IFP participants in terms of their achievement of their IFP qualification. Aspects of the mode of delivery were also associated with the achievement of qualifications undertaken through the IFP. Whether a student had any employer involvement in their programme, whether they discussed their progress with an informed adult and the nature of support offered to the student did not emerge as being associated with more positive or negative outcomes for young people. Nevertheless, the

features of the delivery approach that emerged as having a significant effect on young people's attainment related to the teaching approach, the curriculum time allocated and the location of study. These are discussed in more detail below.

Where a partnership indicated that they had only used a teaching approach where **delivery was shared** between the external provider and the school, as distinct from delivery wholly by an external provider or wholly by a school, students attained 20 points more than similar students where an alternative approach was used. This equates to achieving an additional GCSE at grade G, for which students would gain 16 points.

Where a young person had pursued their **course principally at school**, as distinct from at an external provider, they attained ten points more than a similar student who pursued their course away from school. It is worth noting that such delivery may include shared delivery on the school site.

An increase in the **curriculum time** that was dedicated to delivering the IFP qualification was associated with an increase in the points gained in the IFP qualification. For each additional one per cent of curriculum time dedicated to GCSEs in vocational subjects, students gained around two points. For example, where students were pursuing GCSEs in vocational subjects in ten per cent of their curriculum time, they might be expected to attain 30 points (or around a GG grade pass in a double award GCSE) however, students who were similar in all respects but undertook their new GCSE in 20 per cent of curriculum time might be expected to attain 50 points (or around a FF grade pass in a double award GCSE). It therefore appears that more curriculum time is associated with better outcomes in the new GCSE. However, as was noted earlier, there was a negative relationship between an increase in the amount of curriculum time to deliver a new GCSE and the overall points achieved at key stage 4. This suggests that there is a need to balance the curriculum time dedicated to the new GCSE, which can lead to a better grade, and the impact on the students' wider achievement.

In order to deliver the IFP programme, partnerships had the flexibility to choose to adopt a range of approaches. Although it is worth noting that the approaches were often found to vary within partnerships, and between and within schools within partnerships,²³ it is possible to characterise some of the approaches adopted in relation to:

- the structure of the partnership
- the extent of shared teaching
- the curriculum time dedicated to the IFP qualifications

²³ GOLDEN, S., NELSON, J., O'DONNELL, L. and MORRIS, M. (2004). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibilities for 14-16 Year Olds: the First Year* (DfES Research Report 511). London: DfES.

- whether students missed lessons
- the support provided for students
- the extent to which employers were involved in the partnership.

To explore further the relationship between the achievement of qualifications taken through IFP, and the models of provision adopted by the partnerships, an analysis was conducted which ‘ranked’ each Lead Partner in terms of the points achieved by students in their IFP qualifications.²⁴ The extent to which these outcomes varied in relation to the nature of provision was then examined.

This analysis revealed that higher outcomes in terms of the points achieved in IFP qualifications were significantly associated with:

- smaller partnerships – the outcomes for students increased as the number of schools participating in the partnership decreased
- partnerships where the school and external provider had shared the teaching of practical work
- partnerships where employers had provided visiting speakers
- partnerships where employers and EBPs were represented on the steering group.

While this analysis does not explain these associations, it provides an indication of some features of delivery that might be worth taking into consideration as partnerships develop. For example, working with a smaller number of schools may be a more effective approach. In this sample of partnerships, those which had up to five participating schools had higher outcomes. There are a range of factors that may influence this but it may be that the time required to liaise with partner organisations, which emerged as a challenge to partnerships in the first cohort of IFP,²⁵ would be a greater challenge with a larger number of schools.

The surveys of partnerships in the second year of the first cohort found that a minority of partnerships (20 per cent) used only a shared teaching approach, which emerged in this analysis as contributing to higher outcomes for students.²⁶ Qualitative visits to partnerships revealed that such a shared teaching approach entailed identifying the strengths and expertise of each partner and using them to best effect. It may be that working in partnership to deliver a shared teaching approach adds value to the partnership as a whole although this cannot be easily identified and quantified. Moreover, students may benefit from a broader experience due to being taught by more than one

²⁴ Fifty-five partnerships for whom relevant data was available, were included in this analysis
²⁵ GOLDEN, S., O’DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2005). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Second Year* (DfES Research Report 609). London: DfES.
²⁶ *ibid.*

teacher. While this approach may not be appropriate for all partnerships, or indeed all types of qualifications, the evidence suggests that it may be worth considering extending the use of a shared teaching approach.

Although the majority of partnerships had not engaged employers in the delivery of IFP for the first cohort there was evidence from the surveys that the number of partnerships engaging with employers was increasing.²⁷ The value of partnerships continuing to develop links with employers in some respects appears to be supported by the finding that students in partnership where employers had acted as visiting speakers had higher points. Moreover, higher outcomes were associated with partnerships where employers and EBPs were said to be represented on the steering group. While this may reflect the value of employer involvement, it may also reflect a more proactive partnership that engaged a range of partners to support the delivery of IFP.

2.8 Conclusion

In summary, it appears that the majority of young people who participated in IFP, and for whom data was available, had achieved the qualification that they had embarked on in Year 10. The target of at least one third of young people achieving a GCSE in a vocational subject at level 2, and one third achieving an NVQ at level 1, was achieved and, overall, students in the IFP cohort gained more points than might have been expected given their prior attainment and other background characteristics. However, while students who had undertaken NVQs and GNVQs had achieved more highly than similar students who had not taken these qualifications, those who had undertaken GCSEs in vocational subjects had attained a level at key stage 4 that was commensurate with expectations, and those who had studied other vocational qualifications gained fewer points than might be expected. The higher attainment among students who had taken NVQs and GNVQs appears to be largely explained by the higher number of points assigned to these qualifications.

The findings in this chapter have indicated that participation in IFP appeared to particularly benefit those with lower attainment at key stage 3 and that male students who took NVQs benefited more than similar students who were female and took NVQs. In relation to the delivery approaches adopted, many aspects of the delivery of IFP, such as whether students had missed lessons, did not appear to influence their outcomes. However, an increase in the amount of curriculum time dedicated to studying GCSEs in vocational subjects was associated with an increase in the points attained from the qualification, although this was also associated with a decrease in the total points achieved by students. Including some element of school provision in the delivery appeared to be associated with higher attainment. This was

²⁷ GOLDEN, S., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2005). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Second Year* (DfES Research Report 609). London: DfES.

evident in partnerships where delivery was shared between the school and an external provider and where students pursued their course only at school. In addition, certain elements of partnership organisation were associated with higher attainment, including where partnerships worked with fewer schools and where they included employers and EBPs in their steering group.

3. Post-16 destinations of young people who participated in the IFP

Key Findings:

- The majority (90 per cent) of young people who participated in IFP were reported by their schools to have continued into further education or training after finishing Year 11, which exceeds the target for IFP partnerships of 75 per cent. Most had embarked on a course-based route (in a school sixth form or at an FE college or training provider), while a notable minority were following a work-based route, in an Apprenticeship, or other job with training. (Section 3.2)
- Two-thirds of young people undertaking a course post-16 were pursuing a qualification that was at a higher level than the level of the course they had undertaken through IFP. (Section 3.3.6)
- Some young people appeared to have a continuing commitment to the vocational area they studied through IFP. This is reflected in the finding that around two-fifths of those taking a qualification post-16 were taking a course that was in the same subject area as their IFP course. Furthermore, just over one fifth of young people who were in full-time employment post-16 were currently employed in the vocational area that they had studied through the IFP. (Sections 3.3.6 and 3.2)
- A range of variables emerged as being influential on young people's post-16 destination, including their experience pre-16, through IFP. Students who had taken a GCSE in a vocational subject through the IFP had an increased probability of continuing into further education or training post-16, while those who had taken a GNVQ had a decreased probability. Furthermore, students who had taken their IFP course out of school, and those who had undertaken an NVQ pre-16, were significantly more likely to have continued into further education at an FE college or training provider. (Section 3.4.4)
- Just over two-fifths of young people reported that the IFP had influenced their choice of post-16 destination and, indeed, eight per cent felt that their IFP course had been the most influential factor on their post-16 choice. Those who had taken an NVQ or GNVQ through IFP, and those with lower levels of attainment at key stage 3, were significantly more likely to have found IFP influential. Those young people who had not continued into further learning after Year 11 were less likely to have talked to a school teacher or college tutor about their post-16 plans than respondents overall. (Section 3.4.3)
- A notable minority of young people felt that they would have made an alternative post-16 choice if they had not participated in IFP. Eight per cent felt that they would have been employed, rather than in further education or training, if they had not been involved in IFP, which suggests that IFP might have encouraged these young people to consider further education, rather than employment post-16. (Section 3.4.3)

- The majority of young people, particularly those who had continued into further education or training, were positive about what they were doing post-16. However, nearly half of young people would have liked more help and guidance in deciding what to do after Year 11, particularly in relation to exploring which careers might suit their skills, abilities and interests. (Sections 3.2.1 and 3.4.3)
- Young people who were in further education or training, particularly those in an Apprenticeship post-16, were more positive about their post-16 destination than those who were in alternative destinations. Young people who were not satisfied with their post-16 destination were more likely to be in a job without training. (Section 3.2.1)
- Just over a third of young people stated that they were considering continuing into higher education. Although students currently taking NVQs, GNVQs and other vocational qualifications were less likely to report continuing into higher education (HE), a notable minority were considering this option. (Section 3.5)

3.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1, one of the targets of the IFP is that three-quarters of participants should progress into further education or training. This chapter examines the extent to which this objective has been achieved for the first cohort of IFP, and presents findings relating to:

- the main types of post-16 destinations for a sample of students as reported by schools, and the factors which appeared to influence these destinations
- the relationship between students' pre-16 IFP courses and their post-16 destinations, for a sample of students who responded to the post-16 survey
- the longer-term plans of the sample of students who responded to the post-16 survey.

This chapter draws on data provided by schools on individual students' destinations after finishing Year 11, collected in autumn 2004, and responses from a sample of young people to a post-16 survey, carried out in December 2004. It is important to note that the young people in the two datasets are not matched, therefore, these findings from each are reported separately.

3.2 Location and type of destination post-16

Table 3.1 summarises the post-16 destinations information provided by 197 schools in autumn 2004. These schools provided information on the post-16 destinations of 2,831 young people who were involved in the first cohort of IFP. In addition, there were a further 638 young people, for whom schools reported that their post-16 destinations were 'unknown'. There were also 1,678 young people who had participated in IFP in these schools, for whom

schools did not provide any details of their post-16 destinations, which represented 33 per cent of 5,147 young people in the responding schools. These young people were, therefore, not included in the analysis of post-16 destinations.

As can be seen in the table below, the majority of young people who participated in IFP were said to have continued in education or training post-16. More than half of the young people (51 per cent) were reported to be taking a course at a FE college, while a quarter were taking a course at a school sixth form. Six per cent of young people (166 individuals) were said to have embarked on an Apprenticeship, while the same proportion were in the category ‘other job with training’, and three per cent were taking a course at a training provider. Only a small proportion of young people were not in work (four per cent) or looking after their home or family (less than one per cent).

Table 3.1 Young people’s destinations post-16: reported by schools

Destination	%
FE college	51
School sixth form	25
Apprenticeship	6
Other job with training	6
Training provider	3
Job without training	5
Not in work	4
Looking after family/home	<1
Something else	1
N=	2831

A single response item

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: data provided by schools, Autumn 2004

Aggregation of the above data revealed that, overall, 90 per cent of the IFP participants had continued into further education or training after finishing Year 11.²⁸ As mentioned earlier, there were a further 638 young people for whom schools reported ‘unknown’ post-16 destinations. Exploration of the characteristics of this sub-sample of young people revealed that those whose post-16 destination was unknown by schools were slightly more likely than those whose post-16 destination was provided by schools to:

- be male
- have lower attainment at key stage 3
- be eligible for free school meals

²⁸ Further education and training included the following destinations: FE college, school sixth form, Apprenticeship, other job with training, training provider.

- be recognised as having some form of special educational need.

These characteristics appear to be associated with a lower probability of continuing into further education and training post-16 (see Section 3.4.4). Therefore, this suggests that, if data on the post-16 destinations of these young people were available, and they were included in the analysis, the overall proportion of IFP participants who had continued into further education and training might be slightly lower than the 90 per cent reported above. Nevertheless, this would still be noticeably higher than the target for partnerships of 75 per cent of students progressing into further education and training, outlined in Chapter 1.

Comparison with the national figures on participation in education and training post-16 in 2003,²⁹ which are based on data from the Schools' Census and the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), revealed that a higher proportion of young people who had been involved in IFP had continued in further learning at an FE college, compared with the proportion of young people aged 16-17 who had done so nationally (27 per cent). Similarly, a slightly higher proportion of IFP students had gone onto work-based learning (Apprenticeship or other job with training) – 12 per cent of IFP participants compared with seven per cent nationally. In contrast, a lower proportion were attending a school sixth form (25 per cent of IFP participants, compared with 35 per cent nationally)

To explore further the extent to which the transitions of these young people at 16 compared with those for other young people, DfES conducted an analysis of the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC). This analysis of matched participation and attainment national datasets indicated that around 80 per cent of the young people who had participated in IFP had progressed onto further learning. As noted previously, the information provided by schools was slightly unrepresentative of the IFP cohort as a whole. More specifically, students whose destinations were unknown by schools were more likely to have lower levels of attainment at key stage 3, which suggests that the figure of 90 per cent of students progressing into further learning may be slightly higher than would be the case for all IFP participants. These findings suggest, therefore, that the proportion of young people who progressed into further learning following their participation in the first cohort of IFP would be between 80 and 90 per cent.

The post-16 survey of young people, undertaken in December 2004, also gave an indication of the progression of IFP participants for a sample of young people, and is consistent with the information provided by schools. A total of

²⁹ DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS (2005). *Participation in Education and Training by 16 and 17 Year Olds in Each Local Area in England: 2002 and 2003* (Statistical First Release 11/2005). London: DfES.

1,268 young people responded to the post-16 survey, however, 92 of these respondents indicated that they had discontinued their IFP course at some point before the end of Year 11. These young people were, therefore, excluded from subsequent analysis.³⁰

Table 3.2 illustrates the self-reported post-16 destinations of the 1,176 young people who responded to the post-16 survey. More than half (57 per cent) of these respondents reported that they were currently taking a course at a college or sixth form college, while 19 per cent were on a course in a school sixth form. Nine per cent of respondents were in an Apprenticeship, while five per cent were in another job with training.

Table 3.2 Young people’s destinations post-16: self-reported

Destination	%
On a course at college/ sixth form college	57
On a course in a school sixth form	19
In an Apprenticeship	9
In a full-time job without training	6
In another job with training	5
Taking a break from work/study	3
On a course at a training provider	2
Doing something else	2
Looking after home/family	1
No response	1
N=	1176

More than one answer could be given, so percentages do not sum to 100

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

Aggregation of the above data revealed that 90 per cent of respondents to the survey had continued into further education or training after finishing Year 11,³¹ while nine per cent had gone onto alternative routes such as another job with training, or taking a break from work or study. Of those 1,055 young people who had continued into further learning, 87 per cent were following a course-based route (at a college or school sixth form, or training provider), while 13 per cent were following a work-based route (in an Apprenticeship, or another job with training). Although there was no difference between male and female students in whether they continued into further education or not, female students were significantly more likely than males to have followed a course-based route post-16, rather than a work-based route.

³⁰ See Appendix C for details of the representativeness of the sample of young people.

³¹ Further education and training included the following destinations: FE college/sixth form college, school sixth form, Apprenticeship, job with training or course at a training provider.

The sample of young people that returned questionnaires was broadly representative of all IFP students. However, there were some differences in terms of the qualifications they studied, their location of study for IFP, and certain background characteristics, such as gender and prior attainment (further details are provided in Appendix C). Compared with all IFP students in the first cohort (N=29,990), and IFP students in the cohort 1 sample (N=11,438), higher proportions of young people who responded to the post-16 survey:

- had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects through IFP
- had studied their IFP course at school
- were female
- had attained higher levels at key stage 3.

In addition, lower proportions of respondents to the post-16 survey:

- had taken NVQs through IFP
- were eligible for free school meals
- were recognised as having some form of special educational need.

Overall, therefore, the data provided by the schools, and from the young people themselves, on their destinations post-16 suggests that around 90 per cent continued into further education or training post-16. This is a higher proportion than the 82 per cent of young people who indicated, when they were in Year 11, that they intended to continue into further learning after finishing Year 11.³² The two sources of data on young people's destinations that are presented each have limitations. For example, the information provided by schools only reflects schools' knowledge of the young people's destinations after finishing Year 11, and may not be an accurate reflection of young people's actual post-16 destinations. Although the information provided by the young people who responded to the survey is likely to be more accurate, the sample of respondents is slightly unrepresentative of the full sample of IFP participants (see Appendix C), and this may mean that the post-16 destinations are also slightly unrepresentative of all young people who were involved in the programme. However, given that both sources of data indicate that 90 per cent continued into further learning suggests that this reflects the outcomes for young people who participated in the IFP.

Of the 224 young people who responded to the post-16 survey, and indicated that they were currently in full-time employment (either in an Apprenticeship, another job with training, or in a full-time job without training), around three-quarters gave details of the type of job they were working in. Table 3.3 shows

³² GOLDEN, S., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2005). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Second Year* (DfES Research Report 609). London: DfES.

that the young people were working in a range of occupational areas, but the most common occupational areas in which they were employed were hair and beauty, retail, and engineering and motor industry sectors.

Table 3.3 Type of job young people were working in

Type of job	%
Hair and beauty	12
Retail	11
Engineering and motor	10
Administration/ business	8
Construction	8
Catering	8
Manufacturing	4
Land-based	3
Care and childcare	3
Animal related	2
ICT	1
Arts	<1
Sport, leisure and tourism	<1
Armed Forces	1
Other	<1
No response	28
N=	224

An open-ended, single response question

All those who were currently in employment

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

In order to explore whether young people were working in an occupation that was in the same subject area as their IFP course, the information provided by each respondent was compared with the baseline data provided by schools, which identified their IFP qualification.

Just over one fifth (22 per cent) of the young people who were in employment post-16, either with or without training, were currently employed in the vocational area they had studied through their IFP course. Forty-four per cent of young people were working in a job that was in a different vocational area to their IFP course. The remaining 34 per cent of young people in full-time employment had either not provided details of their current job, or it was not possible to determine whether they were employed in the same area as their IFP course.

3.2.1 Young people's views of their post-16 destination

The majority of young people who responded to the post-16 survey were positive about what they were doing post-16. As Table 3.4 shows, 82 per cent

reported that they enjoyed what they were doing, 84 per cent felt that they were learning new skills, and a similar proportion (83 per cent) felt that what they were doing would help them in the future. Furthermore, just under three-quarters of young people (72 per cent) indicated that what they were doing was related to a career they were interested in. While most of the young people (73 per cent) felt that their post-16 destination had been the right choice for them, a minority were less contented – 11 per cent stated that they wished they could change what they were doing and eight per cent were considering leaving their current course or job. Further analysis revealed that the young people who were not satisfied with their post-16 destination were more likely than young people overall to be in a job without training post-16, and were less likely to be on a course in a school sixth form, at a college or in an Apprenticeship.

Table 3.4 Young people’s views of their post-16 destination

Views of post-16 destination	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	No response
	%	%	%	%
I enjoy what I am doing	82	9	6	2
It is related to a career I am interested in	72	15	9	3
I feel comfortable at the college or training provider or employer	80	11	6	4
I feel nervous at the college or training provider or employer	5	11	80	5
I find it easier to learn now than I did at school	56	25	16	3
I made the right choice	73	20	5	3
I like the tutors/ my work colleagues	82	10	4	4
I am thinking of leaving	8	9	78	4
I find what I am doing mostly interesting	74	16	6	4
I find what I am doing mostly difficult	11	27	57	5
It is worse than I expected	8	11	77	4
I am usually on time	87	6	4	3
I wish I could change what I am doing	11	14	71	4
I like the other people on the course	82	9	4	4
I feel I am learning new skills	84	8	4	3
It will help me in the future	83	12	3	3
N= 1176				

A series of single response items

A total of 1,160 respondents answered at least one item in this question

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

Grouping the responses that young people gave on their views of their post-16 destination, it was possible to score how positive a young person felt about their current destination. This revealed that those young people who had continued into further education or training were significantly more **positive** about their current post-16 destination than those who were in an alternative post-16 destination (such as a job without training or looking after the home or family). Furthermore, respondents who were in an Apprenticeship post-16 were significantly more **positive** about what they were doing than young people overall who had continued into further learning, while those on a course in a school sixth form or at a training provider, and those in a job with training were significantly less positive than all young people in further learning.

3.3 Qualifications studied post-16

The range and type of qualifications that young people were following post-16 were explored through the survey that was undertaken in autumn 2004 after they had completed Year 11. The respondents were taking a range of qualifications post-16, suggesting that taking a vocational qualification through IFP had not limited their qualification options in further education. The qualifications being studied, and respondents' locations of study post-16, are discussed in the following section. It is worth noting that findings presented regarding qualifications were self-reported by the young people, and reflected their understanding of the qualification they undertaking.

At the time of the survey (December 2004), 84 per cent of respondents to the post-16 questionnaire reported that they were working towards a qualification. As Table 3.5 illustrates, of these 988 young people, just over a third (34 per cent) reported that they were working towards an AS level,³³ and 21 per cent were working towards an A2 level. A total of 27 per cent were pursuing another vocational qualification, while just under one quarter (24 per cent) of the young people were taking an NVQ course. Lower proportions of young people were undertaking an Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) (ten per cent) or GNVQ course (eight per cent).

A total of 28 per cent of young people indicated that they were taking more than one type of qualification. Most commonly, young people who were pursuing more than one type of qualification were taking both an AS level and an A2 level (11 per cent, or 111 individuals). Smaller proportions of young people were undertaking an AS level and an AVCE (three per cent), an A2 level and an AVCE (two per cent), and an NVQ and another vocational qualification (two per cent). Other combinations of qualifications were

³³ Respondents could tick any qualification that they were pursuing. Although all students were in Year 12 or equivalent, some of those who indicated that they were currently taking an AS level may in future extend this to A2 level.

undertaken by very small numbers of young people. Aggregation of this data revealed that 45 per cent of the 988 young people taking a qualification were studying A2/AS levels and AVCEs, while 55 per cent were studying other vocational qualifications, such as NVQs and other vocational qualifications only.

Table 3.5 Qualifications studied post-16

Qualification	%
AS level	34
Other vocational qualification	27
NVQ	24
A2 level	21
AVCE	10
GNVQ	8
GCSE	7
No response	1
N=	988

More than one answer could be given, so percentages do not sum to 100

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

The findings suggest that there was some continuity of progression within a qualification type. A comparison of the qualifications³⁴ that these students had undertaken through IFP, with their post-16 qualification choices, reveals that more than half (57 per cent) of those who had taken an NVQ through IFP, had also taken at least one NVQ post-16 and 24 per cent had taken at least one other vocational qualification post-16. Similarly, 40 per cent of those who worked towards an other vocational qualification through IFP, embarked on at least one other vocational qualification post-16 and 30 per cent had chosen at least one NVQ post-16. In comparison, six per cent of those who had taken an NVQ through IFP were taking at least one AS level post-16 and 15 per cent of those who took an other vocational qualification through IFP had embarked on at least one AS level course. In contrast, students who had undertaken a GCSE in a vocational subject through IFP were more likely to have embarked on at least one AS level (42 per cent) or A2 level course (25 per cent).

Analysis of the locations where young people were studying for these qualifications revealed that students who were on a course in a school sixth form were significantly more likely than respondents overall to be working towards an A2/AS level or AVCE and were less likely to be taking an NVQ or other vocational qualification. In contrast, those young people at college were significantly more likely than respondents overall to be pursuing an NVQ or other vocational qualification. Young people in an Apprenticeship or on a

³⁴ Students could be taking more than one type of qualification, percentages should not, therefore, be totalled.

course at a training provider were also significantly more likely than all respondents to be undertaking an NVQ course.

The young people were asked to provide detailed information about the qualifications they were taking post-16, in order to explore whether their choice represented a progression from their IFP course and whether it was in the same subject area. A total of 941 respondents gave details of the qualifications they were pursuing. The self-reported information provided by each young person was compared with the baseline data which identified the qualification they were working towards through IFP, to assess the extent of progression. It is worth noting that, when providing information about the level of the qualification they were undertaking, some of the young people indicated the level of their current qualification, as well as the qualification they would be progressing to (for example, a person in an Apprenticeship may be currently working towards a Level 2 qualification, but may progress in future onto a Level 3 qualification).

Of the 392 young people who gave information about the A2/AS level courses they were undertaking, half (50 per cent) reported that they were taking four subjects. Just over one fifth (23 per cent) were working towards three A2/AS level subjects, while 12 per cent were pursuing two subjects and 15 per cent were taking one subject.

The majority of young people who indicated that they were pursuing AVCEs, NVQs, GNVQs or other vocational qualifications reported that they were working towards only one subject. For example, of the 121 respondents who gave details about the AVCE courses they were taking, 92 per cent indicated that they were taking only one AVCE subject.

Details of the qualification level and subject area that students were taking are discussed for each of the qualifications (A2/AS levels, AVCEs, NVQs, GNVQs and other vocational qualifications) in turn below.

3.3.1 A2/AS levels

Table 3.6 summarises the A2/AS level subject areas that young people reported they were studying post-16. It reveals that the most popular subjects that young people were pursuing at A2/AS level were social science subjects (such as sociology or psychology), English, arts subjects (such as drama, or art and design), humanities (such as philosophy or history), and science subjects. In other words, although these young people had pursued a vocational course pre-16, they were, in most cases, taking academic courses post-16.

Table 3.6 A2/AS level subjects young people were taking

A2/AS level subjects	%
Social Science	43
English	35
Arts	33
Humanities	32
Science	31
Mathematics	20
Business	19
ICT	17
Technology	11
Modern Foreign Languages	7
Sports and Leisure	6
Health and Social Care-related	6
General Studies	6
Engineering	<1
No details of the subject provided	0
N=	392

More than one answer could be given, so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they were taking an A2/AS level

In addition, three per cent of young people indicated that they were taking Key Skills

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

3.3.2 AVCEs

As shown in Table 3.7, the most common AVCE subjects that young people were studying were health and social care, ICT, business studies and travel and tourism.

Table 3.7 AVCE subjects young people were taking

AVCE subjects	%
Health and Social Care	39
ICT	26
Business	16
Travel and Tourism	11
Art and Design	4
Engineering	3
Leisure and Recreation	3
Media (Communication and Production)	2
Science	2
Construction and the Built Environment	1
No details of the subject provided	1
N=	121

More than one answer could be given, so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they were taking an AVCE

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

Although more than a quarter of the young people who were taking AVCEs did not know the details of the level of qualification they were taking, just over a third (34 per cent) reported that they were undertaking a 12 unit AVCE, 21 per cent were pursuing a 6 unit qualification, and 12 per cent indicated that they were working towards a 3 unit AVCE.

Table 3.8 AVCEs: Levels students were taking

Level	%
3 unit	12
6 unit	21
12 unit	34
Don't know	27
No details of the level provided	12
N=	121

Respondents could be taking qualifications at more than one level, so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they were taking an AVCE

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

3.3.3 NVQs

Table 3.9 outlines the NVQ subjects that young people reported they were taking post-16. The most common NVQ courses that young people were working towards were in the vocational areas of hair and beauty, care and childcare and catering.

Table 3.9 NVQ subjects young people were taking

NVQ subjects	%
Hair and Beauty	36
Care and Childcare	15
Catering	13
Engineering and Motor	10
Administration/ Business	9
Construction	9
ICT	2
Sport, Leisure and Tourism	2
Land-based	1
Animal-related	1
Arts	1
Retail	1
No details of the subject provided	3
N=	213

More than one answer could be given, so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they were taking an NVQ

Individual NVQ titles were grouped into broad sectors for this analysis

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

As Table 3.10 illustrates, of the 213 young people who reported that they were working towards an NVQ post-16, just under half (47 per cent) stated that this was a Level 2 qualification, while 30 per cent indicated that they were working towards a Level 1 NVQ. As would be expected, given the age and attainment profile of the IFP respondents, only small proportions of young people reported that they were working towards a Level 3 or Level 4 NVQ.

Table 3.10 NVQs: Levels students were taking

Level	%
Level 1	30
Level 2	47
Level 3	7
Level 4	1
Don't know	17
No details of the level provided	7
N=	213

Respondents could be taking qualifications at more than one level, so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they were taking an NVQ

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

3.3.4 GNVQs

More than half (51 per cent) of the young people who indicated that they were undertaking a GNVQ post-16 reported that this was in the area of health and social care, while just under one third (31 per cent) were taking a GNVQ in engineering (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11 GNVQ subjects young people were taking

GNVQ subjects	%
Health and Social Care	51
Engineering	31
Land and Environment	18
Business Studies	15
Construction and the Built Environment	15
Hospitality and Catering	13
Art and Design	11
ICT	10
Performing Arts	10
Retail and Distributive Services	9
Leisure and Tourism	9
Media: Communication and Production	2
No details of the subject provided	5
N=	88

More than one answer could be given, so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they were taking a GNVQ

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

As Table 3.12 reveals, more than half of the 88 young people who indicated that they were working towards a GNVQ reported that were taking an Intermediate GNVQ, while 35 per cent were undertaking a Foundation GNVQ.

Table 3.12 GNVQs: Levels students were taking

Level	%
Foundation	35
Intermediate	52
Don't know	16
No details of the level provided	0
N=	88

Respondents could be taking qualifications at more than one level, so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they were taking a GNVQ

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

3.3.5 Other vocational qualifications

Those young people who indicated that they were taking another vocational qualification post-16 were asked to provide details of the qualification type as well as the subject and level. The main qualification types reported by these 300 students were:

- BTEC/ Edexcel National Diploma/ Certificate (32 per cent)
- BTEC/ Edexcel First Diploma/ Certificate (12 per cent)
- CACHE Care Award (nine per cent)
- BTEC (no further details) (seven per cent)
- City and Guilds (no further details) (six per cent).³⁵

As can be seen in Table 3.13, a quarter of the young people who indicated that they were taking another vocational qualification post-16 reported that this was in the vocational area of care and childcare, while 11 per cent were working towards a qualification in sport, leisure and tourism, and ten per cent were following an arts course (such as art and design or performing arts).

Table 3.13 Other vocational qualification subjects young people were taking

Other vocational qualification subjects	%
Care and Childcare	25
Sport, Leisure and Tourism	11
Arts	10
Administration/Business	8
Engineering and Motor	8
Construction	7
ICT	5
Hair and Beauty	4
Land-based	2
Animal-related	2
Key Skills	2
Catering	1
Science	1
Retail	<1
Other vocational subjects	<1
No details of the subject provided	7
N=	300

More than one answer could be given, so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they were taking another vocational qualification

Individual qualification titles were grouped into broad sectors for this analysis

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

³⁵ A further eight per cent of respondents indicated that they were taking GCSEs post-16, in subjects such as mathematics, English and biology.

Nineteen per cent of the young people who reported that they were taking another vocational qualification post-16 did not provide details of the level of this qualification. A further 46 per cent indicated that they did not know the level of the qualification they were working towards. However, as Table 3.14 shows, 17 per cent reported that they were undertaking a Level 2 qualification, 14 per cent were taking a Level 1 qualification and a similar proportion (13 per cent) were pursuing another vocational qualification at Level 3.

Table 3.14 Other vocational qualifications: Levels students were taking

Level	%
Level 1	14
Level 2	17
Level 3	13
Level 4	2
Don't know	46
No details of the level provided	19
N=	300

Respondents could be taking qualifications at more than one level, so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they were taking another vocational qualification

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

3.3.6 Extent of progression

The extent to which young people's post-16 qualifications represented a progression from their IFP course was assessed for each of the qualifications that students indicated they were taking. As reported earlier this assessment was based on a comparison of the qualification reported by each student in the questionnaire and the baseline data provided by schools on each student's IFP qualification in Year 10 and 11. It is important to note that if a young person indicated that they were undertaking a qualification at more than one level, the highest level will have been taken to assess the extent of their progression. However, both levels will have been reported in the previous tables detailing the level of the qualification they were undertaking.

Table 3.15 shows the overall progression of students, looking across all the qualifications that young people reported they were taking post-16. Aggregation of this data revealed that, overall, two-thirds (66 per cent) of the young people who gave details of the qualifications they were taking post-16 were pursuing a qualification that was at a higher level than that which they had studied through the IFP. Only seven per cent of respondents were taking a qualification that was not a progression from their IFP course because it was at the same level. For 27 per cent of responding young people, it was not possible to assess the extent of their progression because they did not provide full information on the level of the qualification they were pursuing post-16,

or, in a few cases, because the baseline data on their IFP course was not provided.

Around two-fifths (41 per cent) of the young people who were taking a qualification post-16 were taking a course that was in the same subject area as their IFP course, while 53 per cent were following a course in a different subject area. For the remaining six per cent, it was not possible to assess whether their current course was in the same vocational area as their IFP course.

Table 3.15 Overall progression of young people taking qualifications post-16

Overall progression	%
Same subject area and progression	30
Same subject area and no progression (same level as IFP course)	3
Same subject area but progression unclear	8
Different subject area and progression	36
Different subject area and no progression (same level as IFP course)	4
Different subject area but progression unclear	13
No judgement possible	6
No response	<1
N=	941

A single response item

All those who gave details of the qualifications they were taking

Categories were assigned by comparing students' responses with qualifications they were taking through IFP

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004 and baseline data 2002

3.4 Factors which appeared to influence post-16 destinations

It is clear that a range of factors might have influenced young people's choice of post-16 destinations. This section explores the influence of some of these, such as student background characteristics, (for example, gender or prior attainment), the type of school they attended, the extent of guidance they received in Year 11, and their IFP course.

3.4.1 Reasons for decisions

The factors which appeared to influence IFP participants' choice of post-16 destination were explored in depth through the post-16 survey of young people.

Table 3.16 shows young people's reasons for choosing the course or job they were undertaking post-16. More than three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they had made their post-16 choice because they found the area interesting (81 per cent) and because they thought they would be good at the course or job (76 per cent). A slightly lower proportion (72 per cent) felt that their choice offered them good career opportunities. For more than half the young people (57 per cent), their post-16 choice reflected a long-term interest in a particular area. Furthermore, 41 per cent of respondents reported that their post-16 course or job was in the same subject area as a course they studied at school.

Table 3.16 Young people's reasons for choosing their post-16 destination

Reasons for choice	True for me %	Not sure %	Not true for me %	No response %
I find it interesting	81	9	3	8
I thought I would be good at it	76	13	3	8
It offers good career opportunities	72	14	6	8
I have always wanted to do it	57	20	16	8
I like working with my hands	44	24	23	10
It is in the same subject area as a course I studied at school	41	9	40	11
The job offers good pay	28	30	30	12
Someone in my family did this course/ works in this career	19	7	63	11
N= 1176				

A series of single response items

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

A total of 1,142 respondents answered at least one item in this question

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

Further analysis revealed that young people in different post-16 destinations gave different reasons for choosing their destination. Respondents who reported that they were in an Apprenticeship post-16 or on a course at college were significantly more likely than respondents overall, to indicate that they had chosen their post-16 destination because they had always wanted to do it. In contrast, those who were in a job with training, or not in learning post-16 were significantly less likely than all respondents to report this. Young people who were on a course in a school sixth form or at college post-16 were significantly more likely than respondents overall to report that this was in the same subject area as a course they studied at school. Those respondents who were on a course in a school sixth form were also significantly less likely than all respondents to indicate that they chose their course because they like working with their hands. In contrast, those on a course at college or a training provider or in an Apprenticeship were significantly more likely than young people overall to cite this as a reason for their post-16 choice.

3.4.2 Changes to choices

For the majority of young people (82 per cent), their current post-16 destination was what they had planned to do when they were in Year 11. However, 16 per cent of the young people (188 individuals) reported that they had changed their original plans after finishing Year 11. The main reasons given for this by these young people were that they:

- had subsequently changed their mind (49 per cent)
- were not accepted onto the college course they had planned to do (23 per cent)
- did not enjoy the course they were doing (15 per cent)
- had experienced personal problems (nine per cent)
- could not find employment (five per cent)
- could not find an Apprenticeship (four per cent).

As well as some young people reporting that their current post-16 destination was not what they had planned to do when they were in Year 11, a minority had changed their initial post-16 destination since September 2004. Ten per cent of respondents to the survey indicated that they had changed or stopped doing a course or training programme, while two per cent stated that they had changed or stopped a full-time job, since September 2004.

Just under one third (31 per cent) of the 143 respondents who reported that they had changed their post-16 destination since September 2004 indicated that they had changed their course subject, but had continued to take the same type of qualification. Other young people had changed their qualification type and subject (ten per cent), or their qualification type, course subject and location of study (four per cent). Sixteen per cent of the young people (23 individuals) who reported that they had changed their post-16 destination indicated that they had stopped a course and started a job instead, while eight per cent (11 individuals) had stopped a course, but had not started an alternative route.

The main reasons young people gave for changing their courses, training programmes or jobs are shown in Table 3.17 below. Nearly three-fifths (59 per cent) of the young people who had changed their post-16 destination since September 2004 had done so because they did not enjoy what they were doing, while 42 per cent reported that it was not what they expected. Thirty per cent of these young people indicated that they had become bored with their initial post-16 destination.

Table 3.17 Reasons for young people changing post-16 course, training programme or job

Reasons for changing	%
I did not enjoy what I was doing	59
It was not what I expected	42
I got bored with it	30
I found what I was doing too difficult	22
The work was not practical enough	17
There was too much work to do	16
I preferred to be employed	13
I fell behind with the coursework	11
I had personal/family problems	10
I did not get on with the people	10
I had problems travelling to my course/training/job	9
I found what I was doing too easy	8
I had financial problems	8
The job was no longer available	6
I had finished the course	4
Other reasons	4
No response	5
N=	143

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they had changed their initial post-16 destination since September 2004

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

While for a minority of young people, personal, practical and logistical reasons had led to their decision to change, the most frequently-mentioned reasons related to the content of the course or job itself. This suggests that the young people might have benefited from further advice and guidance on their future plans when they were in Year 11, so that they were better informed about the choices they were making.

3.4.3 Influences on choices – survey of young people

Table 3.18 illustrates the factors that had influenced young people's post-16 choices, and reveals that most of the respondents indicated that they had spoken to someone to help them decide what to do after finishing Year 11. Although young people's IFP course did not appear to be the most influential factor on their choices post-16, a total of 42 per cent of respondents reported that it had been influential on their choice of post-16 destination, with 20 per cent stating that it had been very influential. This finding is broadly similar to the responses from IFP participants when they were in Year 11, when 49 per cent indicated that their IFP course had been an influential factor in helping them to decide what to do post-16. There was also some evidence, from the case-study visits of nine IFP partnerships, that the IFP had influenced young

people's future choices. For example, one school senior school manager commented that most of her IFP cohort would previously have left school at 16 and tried to get a job immediately or 'drifted'. In contrast, at the time of the visits, in spring 2004, many students were said to be researching college and Apprenticeship options.

The main influences on young people's post-16 choices had been their family and friends (81 per cent and 63 per cent of young people respectively reported that these two influences had been very or quite influential). Just over half of the young people indicated that school teachers (55 per cent), college/training provider tutors (51 per cent) and Careers Service/Connexions Personal Advisers (52 per cent) had been very or quite influential on their choice of post-16 destination. It is also worth noting that for one fifth or more of young people, their IFP course, a Careers Service/Connexions Personal Adviser, their friends or their family had been **very influential** on their post-16 choice.

Table 3.18 Influential factors on young people's post-16 choice

Influential factors	Very influential %	Quite influential %	Not influential %	Not sure %	Not applicable %	No response %
School teachers	13	42	33	6	4	3
College/training provider tutor	18	33	22	8	14	5
Careers Service/Connexions Personal Adviser	22	30	29	6	9	4
Mentor	8	14	25	13	35	7
Careers databases on computer	6	17	37	12	22	6
Employer(s)/ other people in work	9	20	27	10	28	6
Their IFP course (indicated earlier in the questionnaire)	20	22	24	12	12	10
Friends	23	40	26	5	3	4
Family	41	40	11	3	1	5
TV/ the media	7	18	42	12	15	7
Other adult(s) in school	9	20	39	13	14	6
N= 1176						

A series of single response items

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

A total of 1,167 respondents answered at least one item in this question

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

Those young people who had not continued into further learning after finishing Year 11 were less likely to have talked to a school teacher or college tutor about their post-16 plans than respondents overall, and they were less

likely to indicate that these people had been influential on their post-16 choice. They were also less likely to report that their IFP course had been influential on their choice of post-16 destination. However, those young people who had not continued into further education or training were more likely to have spoken to an employer, or another person in work, and were more likely to say that these people had been influential on their post-16 choice. Given that those not in further education or training post-16 were more likely to be unsatisfied with their current activity, it may be that, in some cases, the advice they received was not appropriate for them.

When asked what was the most influential factor on their decision, 31 per cent of respondents to the survey indicated that it was their family (as shown in Table 3.19). Thirteen per cent stated that speaking to a Careers Service/Connexions Personal Adviser had been the most influential factor on their post-16 choice, while ten per cent indicated their school teachers. Eight per cent of young people (98 individuals) felt that their IFP course had been the most influential factor on their post-16 destination.

Table 3.19 Most influential factor on young people's post-16 choice

Most influential factor	%
Family	31
Careers Service/ Connexions Personal Adviser	13
School teachers	10
College/training provider tutor	8
Their IFP course (indicated earlier in the questionnaire)	8
Friends	6
Employer(s)/ other people in work	4
TV/ the media	3
Mentor	2
Careers databases on computer	2
Other adult(s) in school	1
No response	13
N=	1176

A single response item

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

As reported above (Table 3.18), more than two-fifths of young people indicated that their choice of post-16 destination had been influenced by their IFP course. More specifically, as Table 3.20 shows, 42 per cent of young people reported that their IFP course had helped them decide what they wanted to do in the future, and indeed, young people who were on a course at college were significantly more likely to report this than respondents overall (47 per cent compared with 42 per cent). Young people who did not continue

into further learning and those in a job with training were significantly less likely to indicate that their IFP course had helped them decide what to do in the future. It is worth noting, as reported in Section 3.2, that 22 per cent of the young people in full-time employment post-16, either with or without training, were employed in the vocational area they had studied through IFP, while 44 per cent were working in a job that was in a different vocational area. (The remaining 34 per cent did not provide sufficient detail.)

A total of 38 per cent of all respondents to the survey said that their IFP course had helped them choose what qualifications to study post-16, and those on a course in a school sixth form or at college were significantly more likely to report this than respondents overall. Thirty five per cent indicated that their IFP course had helped them decide where to study after finishing Year 11, and those on a course at college were significantly more likely to state this than young people overall. Just over one fifth (22 per cent) of young people reported that the IFP had helped them decide what job to get after leaving school, and those in an Apprenticeship post-16 were significantly more likely to indicate this (43 per cent) than respondents overall.

Table 3.20 Young people’s views on how IFP had influenced their post-16 destination

Doing the IFP course....	Agree %	Not sure %	Disagree %	No response %
Helped me decide what I want to do in the future	42	22	30	6
Helped me choose what qualifications to study after finishing Year 11	38	22	33	7
Helped me decide where to study after finishing Year 11	35	20	38	6
Helped me decide what job to get after finishing Year 11	22	24	47	7
N= 1176				

A series of single response items

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

A total of 1,124 respondents answered at least one item in this question

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

In order to obtain an indication of the extent to which the IFP influenced their post-16 choices, the young people were also asked their views on what they would be doing if they had not taken their IFP courses. Although 59 per cent of respondents indicated that they would probably be in the same post-16 destination as they are currently, a notable minority of young people felt that they would have made an alternative choice.

As Table 3.21 shows, 16 per cent of respondents indicated that, if they had not participated in the IFP, they would probably be doing a different course to the one they were currently doing, while seven per cent stated that they would probably be doing the same course, but at a different location. This suggests that, for some IFP participants, the experience of studying out of school through the programme had an influence on their post-16 destination.

Eight per cent of the young people felt that they would probably have been doing a job, but not a course, if they had not undertaken their IFP course, which suggests that the IFP might have encouraged a small number of young people to consider further education, rather than employment, post-16. Conversely, for six per cent of young people, it appears that their IFP course helped them to decide the type of job they would like to do, as they felt that if they had not taken their IFP course they would be undertaking a course rather than in employment post-16. Two per cent of respondents felt that they would not have been doing anything post-16 if they had not taken their IFP course. While this is not a large proportion, these young people could potentially have been not in education, employment or training (NEET) post-16, and the IFP seems to have given them some direction, and helped them make a positive transition after Year 11. Ten of the 23 young people who said that they would not have been doing anything post-16 were currently engaged in a course at a college or sixth form college, while two young people were at a school sixth form and two had embarked upon Apprenticeships.

Table 3.21 Young people’s views on what they would be doing post-16 if they had not participated in IFP

Students would be doing:	%
The same as I am doing now	59
The same as I am doing now but at a different place	7
A different course to the one I am doing now	16
A different job to the one I am doing now	3
A course and not a job	6
A job but not a course	8
Nothing	2
Don’t know	18
No response	4
N=	1176

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

The availability of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) appeared to have had less of an influence on young people’s post-16 choices than other factors. A total of 87 per cent of respondents to the post-16 survey indicated

that they had heard of EMAs, and 44 per cent reported that they were eligible for an EMA. A total of 49 per cent of respondents had applied for an allowance, and 40 per cent of the young people had been awarded one.

Just under one third (30 per cent) of the young people who had both heard of an EMA and said that they were eligible to receive one (505 individuals) reported that the chance to claim an EMA had influenced what they decided to do after finishing Year 11, 12 per cent (61 individuals) stated that it influenced them very much, and 18 per cent (91 individuals) reported that it influenced them a little). Young people who had not continued into further learning post-16 were significantly less likely to report that the chance to claim an EMA had influenced their post-16 choices.

Further analysis of the characteristics of these young people revealed that those who had not heard of EMAs were significantly more likely than respondents overall to:

- be male
- be white
- have English as their mother tongue
- be eligible for free school meals
- be recognised for school action or school action plus
- have lower attainment at key stage 3.

There were few differences in the characteristics of young people who reported that they were eligible for an EMA, had applied for one or had been awarded an EMA, however, as might be expected all of these groups of young people were more likely to be eligible for free school meals. Those who indicated that they had applied for, or been awarded an EMA were also more likely than respondents overall to be female.

In order to explore a range of possible factors that could have influenced whether young people continued into further education or training post-16, or not, their responses to the Year 10 and Year 11 questionnaires³⁶ were also examined. Missing lessons due to participation in the IFP, and visiting an employer as part of the programme appeared to have no significant influence on whether these young people continued into further education or training or not after finishing Year 11.

Although, as described above, there were a number of factors that had influenced young people's post-16 choices, 46 per cent of respondents to the post-16 survey reported that they would have liked more help and guidance in

³⁶ All of the 1,176 young people who returned a post-16 questionnaire had returned a Year 10 questionnaire, and 673 had also returned a Year 11 questionnaire.

choosing what to do after finishing Year 11. There was no significant difference between young people who went into further education or training post-16, and those who did not, in terms of whether they would have liked further help with their post-16 choice.

More specifically, as Table 3.22 illustrates, young people who would have liked further help and guidance with their post-16 choices reported that they would have appreciated help in finding out which careers suited their skills, abilities and interests, information on jobs they could apply for, and information on courses or training programmes they could apply for. Young people who went into a work-based route after finishing Year 11 (for example, an Apprenticeship or another job with training), and those who were in an alternative post-16 destination (such as a job without training or taking a break from work and study), were significantly more likely to report that they would have liked information on local job opportunities when they were in Year 11.

Table 3.22 Help and guidance that young people would have liked

Type of help needed	%
Help in finding out which careers suit my skills, abilities and interests	84
Information on jobs I could apply for	62
Information on courses or training programmes I could apply for	59
Information on local job opportunities	47
Practice for interviews	47
Help in making applications or writing CVs	44
Opportunities for practical experience or work experience	36
Information on national job opportunities	20
Other help	4
No response	1
N=	544

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

All those who indicated that they would have liked more help in choosing what to do after finishing Year 11

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

This need for further guidance is reinforced by the finding that, although 60 per cent of young people felt that their education at school had given them useful skills and knowledge, only half felt that they had received helpful information about their choices post-16 (see Table 3.23). Furthermore, 45 per cent of respondents stated that their education had not prepared them well for adult and working life and 40 per cent reported that it had not helped them decide what to do after Year 11. Young people who had not continued into

further learning post-16 were significantly more likely to report that their education had not prepared them well for the future, in all the respects asked about.

Table 3.23 Young people’s views on how well their education prepared them for the future

How well did your education:	Very well %	Not well %	Not sure %	No response %
Give you useful skills and knowledge	60	28	11	2
Prepare you for adult and working life	37	45	16	2
Give you helpful information about your choices after Year 11	50	35	14	2
Help you decide what to do after Year 11	43	40	16	2
N= 1176				

A series of single response items

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

A total of 1,165 respondents answered at least one item in this question

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

With respect to assisting with making decisions about post-16 destinations, it appears that participation in IFP had been helpful for some of the young people surveyed. However, the IFP cohort is not a homogenous group so further analysis was conducted to explore whether a sub-group of young people could be identified who appeared to have found IFP particularly influential. The young people’s responses to six items within three questions that related to whether IFP participation had made a difference to their post-16 choices were explored.³⁷ Around a quarter (28 per cent) of the young people did not indicate that IFP had made a difference to their choices and decisions in any of their responses. However, the remaining young people indicated that IFP had influenced them in their responses to at least one of the items and 45 individuals (four per cent of the respondents) had indicated in six separate items that IFP had influenced their choices.

Further analysis revealed that there was a significant positive association between the extent to which IFP had been helpful (in terms of the number of times a respondent indicated that this was the case) and a student having taken an NVQ or GNVQ through the programme. In addition, students who had taken a course in care and childcare through IFP appeared to have found IFP

³⁷ The three questions (containing six items) used for this analysis were: the extent of influence of the IFP course in choosing what to do after Year 11 (Table 3.18), the helpfulness of the IFP course in helping decide what qualifications or job to do after Year 11 and location of study (Table 3.20), what respondents would be doing now had they not participated in IFP (Table 3.21).

particularly helpful in terms of their future choices, in so far as they indicated this on more occasions than other students, whereas those who had taken ICT-related courses were less likely to report that IFP had helped them make choices. An association emerged between the attainment at key stage 3 of students and the extent to which they reported that IFP had been helpful. Students who had attained level 5 and above in their key stage 3 assessments were significantly less likely to indicate that IFP had been helpful while those who had attained level 4 and below were more likely to have done so.

It could be argued, therefore, that participation in IFP had been particularly helpful in supporting the transition of a sub-group of students which included those who had taken NVQs or GNVQs through the programme, and those with lower attainment at key stage 3.

3.4.4 Influences on choices – data from schools

Using the post-16 destination data provided by schools, not the students' self-reported data, multi-level regression analyses were carried out to explore the relative impact of a range of factors on young people's post-16 destinations. More specifically, the purpose of the model was to examine which factors appeared to be associated with IFP participants'³⁸ continuation into further education and training. The variables accounted for in the model included³⁹:

- **Student-level variables** – such as prior attainment at key stage 3 and background characteristics.
- **School-level variables** – such as school type and participation in Excellence in Cities.
- **Census variables** – these were derived from census data at student-level and included characteristics of the local area such as employment and ownership of homes.

A range of variables emerged as being influential on young people's post-16 destination, and the following factors were those which were found to have most effect on post-16 transition:

Student-level

- **Key stage 3 attainment** – higher key stage 3 attainment in English and mathematics was associated with an increased probability that young people would continue into further education or training after finishing Year 11.
- **Gender** – there was a positive association between gender and young people going on to further education or training post-16, with female

³⁸ The model included only those young people for whom schools had provided details of their post-16 destination. Young people whose post-16 destination was 'unknown' were excluded from the model.

³⁹ See Appendix A for a full list of the variables included in the multi-level model analysis.

students having a higher probability of continuing into further learning than similar male students.

- **English as an additional language** – students with English as an additional language had an increased probability of going into further education and training post-16, compared with students who did not have English as an additional language but were similar in all other respects measured.
- **Eligibility for free school meals** – there was a negative association between young people’s eligibility for free school meals and their post-16 destination. Young people who were known to be eligible for free school meals had a lower probability of continuing into further learning post-16 than similar students who were not eligible for free school meals.
- **Studying a GCSE in a vocational subject through IFP** – even when other student and school characteristics were taken into account, there was a positive association between studying a GCSE in a vocational subject through IFP and a student going into further education or training.
- **Studying a GNVQ through IFP** – studying a GNVQ was negatively associated with post-16 transition. Students who took these courses through IFP had a decreased probability of continuing into further learning after finishing Year 11, compared with similar students who took other qualifications.

School-level

- **Participation in Excellence in Cities (EiC)** – students who attended schools involved in EiC had an increased probability of continuing into further learning post-16, compared with similar students not in EiC schools.
- **Specialist School** – attending a Specialist School was positively associated with students going onto further education or training.
- **Secondary Modern School** – students who attended ‘Secondary Modern’ schools had an increased probability of making a positive transition post-16 and continuing into further learning, compared with similar students in comprehensive or grammar schools.
- **Girls’ School** – attending a Girls’ school was negatively associated with going into further education or training. Students attending such schools had a decreased probability of continuing into further learning after finishing Year 11.⁴⁰

Census-level

- **Proportion of people aged 16-74 in routine occupations** – young people living in areas with a higher proportion of people in routine occupations, as distinct from managerial and professional occupations, had a lower probability of going into further education or training post-16.

⁴⁰ It is worth noting that there were only seven girls’ schools and ten secondary modern schools in the sample, therefore, these findings are based on small numbers of students.

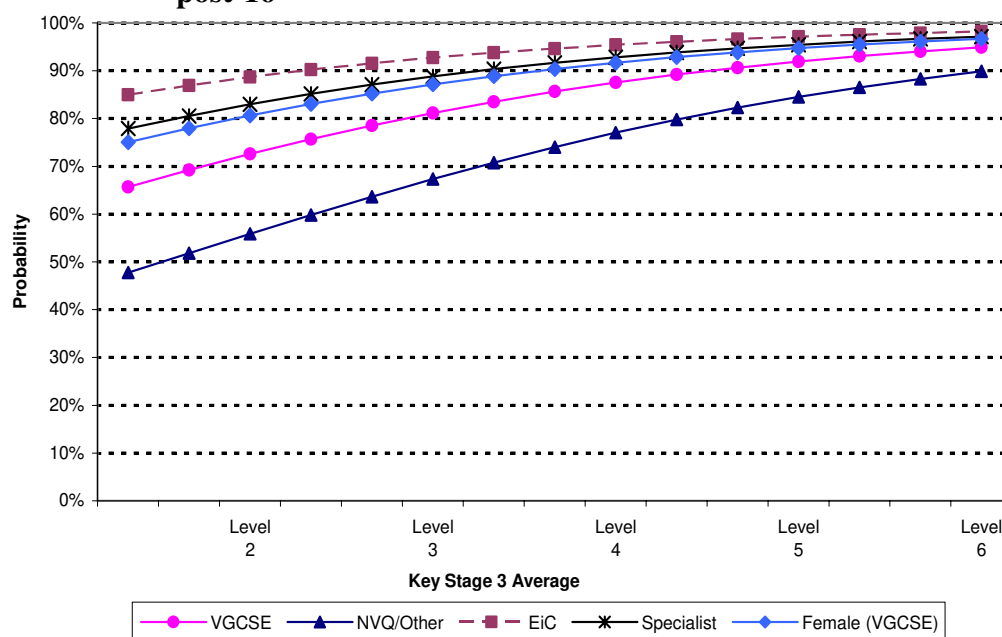
By way of illustration, Table 3.24 and Figure 3.1 below provides examples of the degree of impact that some of the above factors might have on a young person's likelihood of continuing into further learning post-16. These indicate the effect that a feature, such as taking a NVQ or other vocational qualification, has on a young person's progression over and above other influential factors which are controlled for, such as the characteristics of the individual, their school and their IFP provision.

Table 3.24, for example, reveals that a typical student who participated in IFP and took an NVQ or other vocational qualification through the programme, had an 83 per cent likelihood of continuing into further education or training. A student who was the same in all respects, but had chosen to take a GCSE in a vocational subject through IFP had a 91 per cent chance of making such a transition. Moreover, a student who was the same in all respects and was also female had an increased probability (94 per cent) of progressing to further education of training. The nature of the school that a student attended was also influential and, as can be seen in the table, attending a Specialist school or attending a school in an EIC area increased the probability of making a positive transition for IFP students.

Table 3.24 Probabilities of students with particular characteristics continuing into further education or training post-16

Student characteristics	Probability of continuing into further education or training post-16 %
Typical IFP student taking a GNVQ	47
Typical IFP student taking an NVQ/ other vocational qualification	83
Typical IFP student taking a GCSE in a vocational subject	91
Female IFP student taking a GCSE in a vocational subject	94
Typical IFP student taking a GCSE in a vocational subject at a Specialist School	95
Typical IFP student taking a GCSE in a vocational subject at an EiC school	97

Figure 3.1 presents this data in a chart which illustrates the impact that different factors have on post-16 transition, for young people with different levels of key stage 3 attainment. This reveals that studying a GCSE in a vocational subject, being female, attending a Specialist school or a school in an EiC area were associated with an increased probability of continuing into further education or training.

Figure 3.1 Probability of continuing into further education or training post-16

An additional model, which included only those young people who had continued into further learning post-16 (2,026 individuals), was developed in order to explore the factors which influenced whether young people took a post-16 course in a school sixth form rather than at a college or training provider. Again, the model included student-level variables, school-level variables and census variables⁴¹.

The following factors were found to increase the probability that young people who continued into further learning opted for a post-16 course in a school sixth form:

- **Ethnic background** – students of Asian or Black African origin had a higher probability of taking a post-16 course in a school sixth form rather than at a college or training provider, compared with students with other ethnic backgrounds, who were similar in all other respects.
- **Key stage 3 attainment** – higher attainment in English and mathematics was associated with an increased probability that young people would take a course in a school sixth form after finishing Year 11.
- **Studying IFP at school** – students who studied for their IFP course at school had an increased probability of going into a school sixth form post-16. Students who took their IFP course at another location were more likely to take a course at an FE college or training provider.
- **Faith School** – students attending a Faith School had an increased probability of going onto a course in a school sixth form, compared with similar students not in a Faith School.

⁴¹ See Appendix A for a full list of the variables included in the multi-level analysis.

- **Neighbourhood Renewal Area** – this was positively associated with students taking a post-16 course in a school sixth form. Students attending schools in such areas had an increased probability of going on to school sixth form post-16.

The following factors were found to decrease the probability that young people would take a post-16 course in a school sixth form:

- **Studying an NVQ through IFP** – studying an NVQ was positively associated with post-16 learning in an FE college or training provider. Students who took these courses through IFP had an increased probability of going onto an FE college or training provider, compared with similar students who took other qualifications.
- **School type** – as might be expected, attending a school with no sixth form was negatively associated with students going on to a school sixth form post-16. Students attending these schools were more likely to continue their learning at an FE college or training provider.
- **Single-sex School** – attending a Boys’ School or Girls’ School was negatively associated with post-16 learning in a school sixth form. Students attending such schools had a decreased probability of taking a course in a school sixth form.⁴²
- **Participation in EiC** – students who attended schools involved in EiC had a decreased probability of going onto a course in a school sixth form post-16.
- **Specialist School** – although attending a Technology College or Language College was positively associated with continuing post-16 learning in a school sixth form, students who attended Specialist Schools with other specialisms had a decreased probability of taking a course in a school sixth form.

These findings suggest that there was an association between the students’ experience pre-16, through the IFP, and their destinations post-16. It appears that the probability of taking a course post-16 at a college or training provider, rather than in a school sixth form, was greater than would be expected where young people had studied off-site pre-16. In addition, there was an increased probability of continuing into FE college or training provider than might be expected given all other factors where students had taken NVQs through IFP.

3.5 Future plans of young people who participated in the programme

In addition to their immediate post-16 destinations, the young people who had participated in the IFP and responded to the post-16 survey indicated their

⁴² It is worth noting that there were only seven girls’ schools and eight boys’ schools in the sample, therefore, this finding is based on small numbers of students.

longer term career plans through the post-16 survey (Table 3.25). A total of 31 per cent of the 913 students who were undertaking a full-time course or training programme post-16 planned to leave full-time education after two years in college or sixth form. Only four per cent reported that they planned to leave after only one year in college. Just over one third of the young people stated that they intended to leave full-time education in their early twenties, after taking a university course. This indicated that a notable proportion of young people who took a vocational course pre-16 are considering continuing into higher education in the future.

Table 3.25 Young people’s views on when they will leave full-time education

Intend to leave	%
At age 17, after one year in college or in sixth form	4
At age 18, after two years in college or in sixth form	31
In my early twenties, after taking a university or other higher education course	34
Not sure yet	24
No response	7
N=	913

A single response item

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

Table 3.26 presents the young people’s views on what they thought they would be doing in two year’s time. Just over one third of respondents reported that they thought they would be in employment in two years’ time: 22 per cent in a new job, and 12 per cent in the same job they were currently doing. In contrast, a total of 42 per cent of the young people indicated that they saw themselves in full-time education in two year’s time: 11 per cent taking a course at college, and 31 per cent taking a course at university. Fifteen per cent of respondents were not sure what they would be doing in two year’s time, while the remaining seven per cent said that they thought they would be taking a break from work or study (four per cent), looking after their home or family (one per cent) or doing something else (two per cent).

Table 3.26 Young people's views on where they see themselves in two years' time

Plans in two years' time	%
In a new job	22
In the same job I am doing now	12
Taking a course at college	11
Taking a course at university or higher education institution	31
Taking a break from work or study	4
Looking after home/family	1
Something else	2
Not sure	15
No response	3
N=	1176

A single response item

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

All those who were taking a course or training programme post-16

Source: NFER Evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme: Post-16 Survey of Young People, 2004

Around half of the young people who indicated that they were currently working towards A2 levels (56 per cent) and AS levels (54 per cent), said that they anticipated leaving education in their early twenties. However, the proportions of young people currently working towards NVQs, GNVQs and other vocational qualifications who intended to leave education in their early twenties were smaller (eight per cent, 13 per cent and 27 per cent respectively). Around one third of young people who were working towards NVQs (34 per cent), GNVQs (39 per cent) and other vocational qualifications (35 per cent) said that they intended to leave full-time education at age 18. This suggests that students taking these types of qualifications post-16 were less likely to continue in education post-18, but that a notable minority were considering this option.

A greater proportion of young people who were taking NVQs, GNVQs and other vocational qualifications indicated that they were not sure when they might leave full-time education (34 per cent, 39 per cent and 35 per cent respectively) than those who were engaged in A2 Levels and AS levels (12 per cent and 19 per cent respectively). This may reflect a need for guidance regarding future choices for young people who pursue qualifications other than AS and A2 levels post-16. In addition, young people who were pursuing AVCEs appeared to be slightly less likely to consider leaving full-time education in their early twenties (36 per cent) than those taking A2 levels and AS levels (56 per cent and 54 per cent) and were more likely to anticipate leaving at age 18 (38 per cent) than those taking A2 levels and AS levels (24 per cent and 23 per cent).

Further analysis of the data in Table 3.25 revealed that there was an association between young people's destinations post-16 and what they expected to be doing in two year's time. Young people who were on a course in a school sixth form were significantly more likely than respondents overall to indicate that they expected to be taking a course at university or taking a break from work or study in two year's time. Those currently on a course at college or in a school sixth form were also significantly more likely to report that they expected to be at university in two year's time than respondents overall. In contrast, young people in an Apprenticeship or in a job with training post-16 were significantly more likely than respondents overall to report that they expected to be in the same job they are currently doing, and were less likely to indicate that they expected to be at university. Similarly, young people in a job without training were significantly more likely than young people overall to report that they expected to be in the same job or in a new job, and were significantly less likely to indicate that they expected to be on a course at university.

3.6 Conclusion

The evidence from the surveys of young people and the information provided by schools indicates that around 90 per cent of IFP participants progressed into education, employment and training after leaving Year 11 which exceeds the target for IFP partnerships of 75 per cent. The majority of the sample of survey respondents pursued a course-based route and, for the majority of these, this was at a higher level than the course they had undertaken through IFP. While some young people appeared to have a continuing commitment to the subject area that they had pursued through IFP, a similar proportion were engaged in an alternative area.

Students' experience of IFP appeared to have influenced their post-16 choice in some instances. Those who had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects had an increased probability of progressing into education, employment or training after Year 11 while those who had taken GNVQs had a decreased likelihood of doing so. Around two-fifths of young people indicated that IFP had been an influence on their choice of destination post-16 and those whose experience of the programme had entailed undertaking an NVQ or GNVQ, and those with lower levels of attainment post-16, were more likely to report that participation in IFP had influenced their choices. Although the majority of young people surveyed were content with their destination after Year 11, and few had changed their initial destination, nearly half indicated that they would have liked additional help and guidance in making their decision. It was notable that young people who had chosen a work-based route post-16, and those who had embarked on a job without training or were taking a break from work and study, were more likely to indicate that they would have liked more help in exploring local job opportunities.

4. Other outcomes for young people who participated in the IFP

Key findings

- Young people who participated in IFP and were surveyed in Years 10 and 11 were significantly more positive about school and its usefulness for their future in the second year of the programme than they had been in the first year. (Section 4.2)
- A positive change in attitude towards school was associated with a young person having talked to an informed person about their progress towards the qualification that they were studying and finding the course interesting. Missing other lessons in order to participate in IFP was related to students having a less positive attitude towards school. (Section 4.2)
- There was evidence that students who participated in IFP improved in their confidence in their ability between Years 10 and 11. Improved confidence was associated with discussing progress on the course with an informed adult and finding the course interesting. (Section 4.2)
- The sample of students for whom details of their overall attendance was provided had missed around ten per cent of their curriculum time across Year 10 and 11 due to authorised and unauthorised attendance. (Section 4.3)
- The proportion of days missed was slightly greater for this sample of students in Year 11 (11 per cent) than Year 10 (nine per cent). (Section 4.3)
- A comparison of the attendance of students who participated in IFP with their peers in Years 7 to 11 in the same schools suggested that IFP participants had slightly more authorised and unauthorised absences than their peers. (Section 4.3)
- Within the IFP cohort sample, students who had taken NVQs and other vocational qualifications through the programme had significantly more unauthorised absences than those who did not take these qualifications. (Section 4.3)

4.1 Introduction

In addition to the aims of the IFP relating to attainment and progression after Year 11, discussed in the previous two chapters, the evaluation aimed to assess the impact of the IFP on participants' **attitudes** and **attendance**. This chapter will examine the factors which appeared to influence the development of attitudes among a sample of young people and will examine the attendance in Years 10 and 11 of a sample of students who participated in the programme.

4.2 Changes in skills and attitudes

Surveys of a sample of young people who participated in the IFP compared their self-reported skills and attitudes in Years 10 and 11. The analysis presented in the previous report of the evaluation⁴³ found that students were more confident in relation to their employability skills in Year 11 than they reported in Year 10 and this was more notably the case among those who had seen an employer during their IFP course. Moreover, more of the students who were surveyed in Year 11 said that they were well-behaved in school than had said this when they responded in Year 10, and overall more were positive about school in the second year of the IFP than they had been in the first year of the programme. In addition, this sample of students was significantly more:

- positive about school and its usefulness for the future in Year 11 than in Year 10, including the extent to which their education had given them useful skills and knowledge and prepared them for adult and working life
- confident in their own abilities in Year 11 than they had been in Year 10, including the ability to work on their own and to solve problems.

It is possible to explore further the changes in these two attitudes statistically. This analysis showed that, while a pre-existing positive attitude towards school and its usefulness in Year 10 was the most influential factor in continuing to have such an attitude, developing a more positive attitude towards school and seeing its value for the future was positively associated with students who:

- were female
- had talked to an informed person, such as a teacher at school or a college tutor, about their progress in the qualification that they were taking through IFP, and found that discussion helpful
- had talked to family and friends about their progress in the qualification that they were taking through IFP, and found that discussion helpful
- had said they found the course interesting, in contrast to students who said that they had found the course boring which was associated with a less positive attitude towards school and its usefulness
- were working towards GCSEs in vocational subjects and other vocational qualifications through IFP
- had higher attainment in their key stage 3 assessments
- spoke English as an additional language.

This suggests that some features of those young people whose attitude towards school had improved between Year 10 and 11 were not related to participation

⁴³ GOLDEN, S., O'DONNELL, L. and RUDD, P. (2005). *Evaluation of Increased Flexibility for 14 to 16 Year Olds Programme: the Second Year* (DfES Research Report 609). London: DfES.

in IFP, for example, being female or having higher attainment at key stage 3. Nevertheless, it appears that providing young people with an opportunity to discuss their progress with an informed adult, has value in supporting the development of a positive attitude towards school and perceptions of how useful education and learning can be for the future, which may translate into continuing to engage in learning in the long-term. In addition, where course tutors and teachers had succeeded in engaging the students' interest, this contributed not only to their attainment, as discussed in Chapter 2, but in supporting the development of a positive attitude.

The analysis also revealed some areas which had a negative association with students' attitude towards school. More specifically, a decrease between Years 10 and 11 in how positive students were about school its usefulness, was associated with instances where students:

- had missed lessons in order to participate in IFP
- had found it difficult to catch up with work they had missed when they had not been able to attend timetabled lessons.

It appears, therefore, that where students missed lessons in order to participate in IFP, this could have a negative effect on their overall attitude towards school which may be worthy of consideration in continuing to develop IFP provision.

Improvements in students' confidence in their abilities between Year 10 and Year 11 were primarily associated with being confident already in Year 10. Nevertheless, an improvement in students' self-reported confidence was also associated with:

- students talking to an informed person, such as a teacher or course tutor, about progress on the IFP course, and finding this helpful
- students talking with family and friends about their progress and finding this discussion helpful
- higher attainment in students' key stage 3 assessments
- students finding the course interesting
- students who, in Year 10, had a positive attitude towards school and how useful it could be for their future
- students who were working towards NVQs and other vocational qualifications through IFP
- students who attended a boys school.

As was discussed previously, these findings indicate the value for students' personal development in discussing their progress on the IFP course with an informed adult and finding the course interesting. Students who had done so

tended to have improved attitudes towards school and increased confidence in their abilities.

4.3 Students' attendance

At the end of each of the six terms of Year 10 and Year 11, a sample of schools returned details of the authorised and unauthorised absences of the students who participated in IFP. Across the six terms, details of absences were provided for 1,771 students who had participated in the first cohort of IFP in 79 schools. Due to the examination period in the second half of the Year 11 summer term, and the possibility of preceding study leave, the data for the final term of Year 11 related to the first half term only. As the target for the IFP related to students' overall attendance during key stage 4, this section focuses on students' overall attendance at school, including their attendance at any external provider where they undertook their IFP course, and not solely to their attendance on their IFP course.

In exploring the attendance data for this sample of students, it is worth noting that the 1,771 students for whom attendance details were provided differed from all students involved in IFP in some respects. Principally, it emerged that:

- A smaller proportion of these students were eligible for free schools meals (17 per cent), compared with the IFP cohort as a whole (22 per cent).
- A smaller proportion were recognised for school action on the register of special educational needs (14 per cent) or had a statement of SEN (three per cent) compared with the IFP cohort as a whole (27 per cent and six per cent respectively).
- Greater proportions of students had achieved Level 5 and above in their key stage 3 assessments in each of the core subjects (62 per cent had done so in each of English and mathematics and 63 per cent in Science) compared with the IFP cohort as a whole (49 per cent in English and 51 per cent in each of mathematics and science).
- A greater proportion of students was undertaking GCSEs in vocational subjects (69 per cent) through IFP than was the case for the whole cohort (58 per cent).

The attendance of this sample of students, therefore, may not be fully representative of the whole IFP cohort, as young people who are eligible for free school meals, are recognised for action on the register of SEN, or have lower levels of attainment are under-represented in the sample. Research has indicated⁴⁴ that higher than average levels of authorised and unauthorised

⁴⁴ MORRIS, M. and RUTT, S. (2004). *Analysis of Pupil Attendance Data in Excellence in Cities (EIC) Areas: an Interim Report*. London: DfES.

absences are associated with young people with SEN, and those who are eligible for free school meals. As students with these characteristics were under-represented in the sample, compared to the IFP cohort as a whole, it is possible that the proportions with authorised and unauthorised absence among the sample may be lower than the proportion in the cohort as a whole.

Across the five and a half terms of Year 10 and Year 11, the sample of 1,771 students had missed ten per cent of their curriculum time, which represents 72 half days or 36 full days. Although the majority of this absence was authorised, two per cent of the total days missed were due to unauthorised absence. In Year 11, students participating in IFP were absent for more days, on average, than they had been in Year 10. For example, in the autumn and spring terms of Year 10, students had unauthorised absences for one per cent of their curriculum time, whereas in the equivalent terms in Year 11, they had unauthorised absences for three per cent of their expected curriculum time. This indicates an increase in unauthorised absence in the second year of key stage 4.

National data indicates that around 89 per cent of all absences nationally are due to authorised absence and around 11 per cent are due to unauthorised absence.⁴⁵ Among the sample of IFP participants, unauthorised absences account for around 16 per cent of all the absences recorded, and authorised absences for around 84 per cent. This suggests that students who participated in IFP had more unauthorised absences than their peers nationally. However, a more robust comparison would be to compare students who participated in IFP with their peers in the same schools. While it is not possible to compare the proportion of days absent with the attendance of young people in the same schools who did not participate in IFP, as no data is available for the equivalent key stage 4 cohort as a whole, a broad comparison of the attendance across the whole school in 2003-2004 for 78 of these 79 schools, for which data was available,⁴⁶ was conducted. This indicated that, on average, students in Years 7 to 11 in these schools missed nine per cent of their curriculum time through authorised and unauthorised absences, with one per cent of the total being due to unauthorised absence. This suggests that the young people who were involved in IFP had slightly more authorised and unauthorised absences than students overall in their schools. However, this may be partly explained by attendance in Year 11. As noted above, the proportion of days absent was greater in Year 11, compared with Year 10, among the IFP cohort. It is worth noting that Year 11 attendance accounts for half of the possible attendance of young people in the IFP cohort, but only accounts for one fifth of the possible days for the school as a whole, where

⁴⁵ DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS (2005). *Pupil Absence in Schools in England (Revised)* (Statistical First Release 49/2004). London: DfES.

⁴⁶ Data on schools' overall attendance drawn from DfES statistics:
BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (2005). 'League tables', *BBC News* [online]. Available: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/league_tables [27 April, 2005].

attendance from Year 7 to 11 is included. This means that the impact of Year 11 absence will be greater on the absence data for the IFP cohort than on the data for the whole school which includes the broader group of Years 7 to 11. Nevertheless, it is likely that, overall, the proportion of unauthorised absences among the IFP cohort was greater than among their peers.

Further analysis allowed for an exploration of the relationship between the various approaches to IFP adopted and students' attendance. Young people who were participating in the first cohort of IFP could study either at school or away from school, at a college or training provider. Furthermore, they could pursue a range of different types of qualifications through the programme, which were primarily GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQs, other vocational qualifications and GNVQs. It emerged that there was an association between a student's absence, and the qualification they studied.

Within the IFP cohort, students who had taken at least one NVQ or other vocational qualification through IFP had significantly more absence (12 per cent of their curriculum time) than those who did not take such qualifications (nine per cent). Moreover, a significantly higher proportion of their time was missed due to unauthorised absence (three per cent) than was the case among students participating in IFP who did not take these qualifications (two per cent). Conversely, young people who were working towards at least one GCSE in a vocational subject had missed significantly less curriculum time due to absence (ten per cent) than those who were not taking these qualifications (12 per cent). Students working towards GCSEs in vocational subjects also had significantly less unauthorised absence (two per cent) than those not taking these qualifications (three per cent).

The relationship between absence and location of delivery was less marked. There was no significant difference in unauthorised absence between young people who undertook their IFP course away from school and those who remained in school for IFP. However, there was a significant difference in overall attendance with young people who studied at school having missed a higher proportion of their curriculum time due to absence (11 per cent of their time) compared with those who studied away from school (ten per cent). This suggests that studying away from school as part of the IFP programme did not adversely affect the students' overall attendance at school.

In summary, this sample of students had missed around ten per cent of their curriculum time during Years 10 and 11 due to authorised and unauthorised absence. This proportion was similar to, but slightly higher than, the attendance of students in Years 7 to 11 in the same schools, though the higher proportion among the IFP cohort could be explained by the increase in absence in Year 11. Although the absence from school of young people who had pursued an NVQ or other vocational qualification through IFP was slightly higher than that of IFP students who had not taken these

qualifications, this did not appear to be related to the location where young people studied these qualifications. It emerged that students who pursued courses away from school had slightly less authorised and unauthorised absence than those who had undertaken their IFP qualification at school.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Achievement of qualifications by IFP participants

The evidence from the evaluation of the first cohort of IFP indicates that the majority of young people who took GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs attained their qualifications and that the majority of the sample of young people who had undertaken NVQs and other vocational qualifications had achieved the qualification at the end of Year 11. In addition, young people who studied GNVQs and NVQs gained higher total point scores than would have been expected given their prior attainment and background characteristics. This indicates that, in accordance with the expectation of the target, they achieved over and above what might be predicted. However, those who took GCSEs in vocational subjects attained levels commensurate with their prior attainment and those who took other vocational qualifications achieved fewer points than might be expected. Overall, the IFP met its objectives in so far as more than one third of students gained GCSEs in vocational subjects at A* to C (Level 2 equivalent) and, in the sample of students, more than one third of those who completed the programme gained an NVQ at Level 1 or above.

To a large extent, the increased number of points achieved by young people who participated in IFP can be explained by the nature of the qualifications that they were undertaking. Students who studied GCSEs in vocational subjects and GNVQs, but did not participate in IFP, also attained better outcomes than might be expected and, indeed, gained higher points still than young people who had taken these qualifications through IFP. Although no similar comparison is possible for students who took NVQs through IFP, it was evident that, within the IFP cohort, students who had taken NVQs gained significantly higher points than students who took alternative qualifications through IFP. This may reflect the size of these qualifications in terms of the points they are assigned.

The evidence indicates that, where students had benefited from participation in IFP in terms of their attainment at the end of key stage 4, those with certain characteristics appeared to have benefited more than their peers. These findings may have implications for the targeting of the programme. Young people in the first cohort who had lower attainment (level 5 or below) at key stage 3, and who studied GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQs and other vocational qualifications, benefited more in terms of their total points achieved at the end of key stage 4 than students with higher attainment. This suggests that, although in general students with a range of attainments at key stage 3 benefited from participation in the programme, partnerships may wish to

consider the implications of these outcomes when selecting appropriate students to participate in the programme, for example through targeting the IFP particularly at those with lower attainment.

In terms of the achievement of the qualifications that students were undertaking through IFP, students who found the course interesting had better outcomes than those who had found it boring. This may indicate a need to ensure that young people who embark on the programme are interested in the vocational area and that the course they subsequently follow reflects and builds on this area of interest. Students who had a positive attitude towards school gained more in terms of the points they achieved through their IFP qualification than other students. There were indications from the surveys that IFP participants' attitudes towards school improved between Year 10 and Year 11 and that the IFP may have contributed to this and, thereby, to students' eventual attainment at key stage 4. For example, one aspect of IFP delivery that appeared to contribute to the development of a positive attitude towards school was providing the opportunity for students to have discussions with a teacher or tutor about their progress on the programme.

The findings have also indicated that there were some aspects of the delivery of IFP that appeared to influence the outcomes for young people. It emerged, for example, that young people who studied their IFP qualification at school gained more points than similar students taking the same types of qualification at an external provider. Moreover, partnerships where the approach to delivery was shared between a school and an external provider, achieved better outcomes in terms of the points achieved through IFP qualifications than those where delivery was through other approaches, such as an external provider only, or a school only, teaching the qualification. As only a minority of partnerships had adopted this type of approach, partnerships may wish to further consider the appropriateness and potential benefits of a shared approach when developing their programme.

Certain aspects of partnership working also appeared to be related to outcomes for young people in terms of their achievement of their IFP qualifications and may be worthy of consideration as the partnerships develop. Students in partnerships that were larger (working with more than five schools) achieved less well than similar students in smaller partnerships. Moreover, those which had involved employers and EBPs in their steering groups, and those where employers provided visiting speakers to schools, or colleges, experienced better outcomes than those where this was not the case.

5.2 Destinations of IFP participants

Overall, the transition target for IFP partnerships had been successfully met, as around 90 per cent of young people who had been involved in the first cohort

of IFP had continued into further education or training post-16. Furthermore, students who had taken a GCSE in a vocational subject through IFP were more likely to have continued into further learning than students who had taken other qualifications, even when other student and school characteristics had been controlled for.

Most of the young people were positive about what they were doing post-16. However, a minority were not satisfied with their post-16 destination and these young people were more likely to be those who were in a job without training. In contrast, those in an Apprenticeship post-16 were more positive about their current destination than young people overall. This difference highlights the importance of supporting young people to make a successful transition into the work-based route after finishing Year 11, and ensuring that they choose the most appropriate work-based option for them. There also appears to be a need to ensure that young people receive guidance from an appropriate person, as young people who were in work without training post-16 were more likely to have spoken to an employer, or another person in work, and they were more likely to say that these people had been influential on their post-16 choice. This suggests that these young people had sought guidance on their choice of post-16 destination, but were also more likely not to be satisfied with their current activity. This may indicate that the advice they received was not always appropriate.

A minority of young people had changed from their initial post-16 destination and, in most cases, this was due to young people's expectations of their course or job not being met. Again, this highlights the importance of ensuring that these individuals receive appropriate advice and guidance on their choices post-16, so that they can make fully informed decisions about their post-16 destinations. The finding that nearly half (46 per cent) of respondents to the post-16 survey would have liked more guidance in choosing what to do after finishing Year 11, particularly in relation to exploring which careers might suit their skills, abilities and interests, reinforces this conclusion.

The majority of young people who were undertaking a course post-16 were pursuing a qualification that was at a higher level than the level of the course they had undertaken through IFP. However, young people did not always choose to take a course or employment in the same vocational area as their IFP course. Some appeared to have a continuing commitment to the vocational area they studied through IFP, although, for others, this vocational area was not a lifelong career choice.

IFP participants who had continued into further learning were studying a range of types of qualifications post-16, at a range of locations, including the work-based route, the 'vocational' FE college route, and the traditional 'academic' A-level route. This suggests that the IFP cohort was not a homogenous group of students, and also indicates that participating in the IFP did not limit their

future options, but enabled them to progress onto a range of destinations post-16.

There appeared to be some continuity of routes from pre-16 to post-16, as students who had taken NVQs or other vocational qualifications through IFP were more likely to be taking these types of qualifications post-16. This suggests that participation in IFP, therefore, may have given young people the opportunity to find out more about the qualification pathways they could follow post-16. There was some indication that this transition into further education and training would be sustained, as most young people planned to remain in education and training for two years or more, and around a third were considering continuing on to higher education.

A range of variables emerged as influencing young people's choices of post-16 destination, including their experience pre-16, through IFP. The IFP had been an influence on the post-16 choice of two in five IFP participants, and, for eight per cent, the IFP had been the most influential factor on their post-16 destination. Furthermore, a notable minority of young people felt that they would have made an alternative post-16 choice if they had not participated in IFP. The programme appeared to have been particularly influential on certain sub-groups of young people. For example, those who had taken an NVQ or GNVQ through IFP, and those with lower levels of attainment at key stage 3, were significantly more likely to have found IFP helpful in supporting their transition. Furthermore, IFP appeared to have been particularly influential on those young people who were taking a course at college post-16, especially in relation to deciding what to do after finishing Year 11 and where to study. This is supported by the finding that those who studied their IFP course off-site were more likely to be taking a post-16 course at an FE college or training provider.

5.3 Attendance of IFP participants

The IFP partnerships were working towards a target whereby the attendance rate of IFP participants should match that for their peers in key stage 4. Although a direct comparison is not possible, as data for a comparison group of students in Years 10 and 11 is not available, it appears that the overall attendance of a sample of students during the five and half terms of Years 10 and 11 was slightly lower than the overall attendance for all students in Years 7 to 11 in the same schools. Moreover, students with SEN, and those who were eligible for free school meals, were slightly under-represented in this sample of IFP participants. As students with these characteristics are more likely to have unauthorised absences, the proportion with authorised and unauthorised absences among the sample may be lower than would be the case in the cohort as a whole. The number of authorised and unauthorised absences among students who participated in IFP was slightly greater when they were in

Year 11 than when they were in Year 10, and there were indications that those who studied NVQs and other vocational qualifications through the programme had significantly more absences than those who did not take these qualifications. There may be value, therefore, in considering targeting any strategies for reducing absences at young people taking these types of qualifications and those in Year 11.

5.4 Policy implications

The experience of the first cohort of IFP participants outlined in this report should prove useful in informing the future development of the IFP and similar programmes. The findings point to a number of implications for policy, which are outlined below.

Targeting students

The evidence suggests that, students particularly benefited from participation in IFP in terms of their attainment, and making a positive transition into education, employment and training after Year 11, where they had lower attainment at key stage 3. This suggests that, if such a programme is to be targeted at a sub-group of students within school, it may be worth considering targeting it at lower attaining students who would potentially benefit more from the experience. Alternatively, if such a programme is to be undertaken by all students, partnerships may need to consider how to ensure that higher attaining students engage in qualifications, and receive teaching, that is at an appropriate level for their ability.

Further guidance

The majority of young people who participated in the IFP made a positive transition into education, employment and training after Year 11 and the majority were satisfied with their choice. Nevertheless, around half of the IFP participants surveyed indicated that they would have liked more information and guidance about their choices. In particular, it appears that young people who wished or chose to pursue a work-based route post-16 had a particular need for guidance. For example, those who pursued a work-based route, or were taking a break from work or study, were more likely than their peers to state that they would have liked more information about local job opportunities. Moreover, among students who had embarked on a work-based route, those who were engaged in an Apprenticeship were more satisfied than those who had started a job without training. This suggests that, while many students would benefit from enhanced information, advice and guidance relating to their destinations after Year 11, those who intend to pursue a work-based route post-16 would particularly benefit from guidance about that route to enable them to make a positive transition into an appropriate job with training such as an Apprenticeship.

Engagement of students

Higher attainment at key stage 4 was associated with students having a positive attitude towards school and its usefulness for the future. Finding the course interesting, and having helpful discussions with teachers and tutors about their progress on the course were, in turn, associated with having a positive attitude towards school. There would be value, therefore, in ensuring that teachers and tutors are able to incorporate these discussions into their delivery of the programme and to ensure that their delivery is engaging for participants. One mechanism for achieving this might be to encourage opportunities for providers to share experience and good practice.

Shared delivery approaches

The evidence indicated that partnerships were more effective in terms of higher attainment where they included some element of delivery by school staff, either shared teaching with an external provider, or through delivery in the school. Shared teaching approaches were used in a minority of partnerships, so there may be value in exploring how best to support partnerships in further developing this shared delivery aspect of IFP.

Partnership organisation and communication

One of the distinctive features of IFP was the establishment, or extension, of partnerships between schools and external providers to enable young people to access a vocational learning experience. Evidence from the surveys of schools and colleges, presented in previous reports of the evaluation, indicated that such partnership working required time for efficient communication. The findings from this report indicated that smaller partnerships were more effective in terms of attainment outcomes than those which worked with larger numbers of schools. This may be related to the time required to liaise, and coordinate provision, with a large number of schools. While this suggests that encouraging partnerships to work more effectively with a smaller number of schools may be worthwhile, this would need to be balanced by the need to continue to enable as many schools to participate as wish to. Identifying creative and effective approaches to working in partnership with a large number of schools may usefully inform the further development of partnerships.

Appendix A: Variables included in the multi-level model analysis

Pupil-level background variables

variable	Label
cons	Constant term
base	IFP Student
ifpsch	IFP school
gcse	Studying GCSE in vocational subject through IFP
gnvq	Studying GNVQ through IFP
nvq	Studying NVQ through IFP
othqual	Studying other qualification through IFP
atlead	IFP Location – Lead Partner
atschool	IFP Location – School
atcollege	IFP Location – Non-lead FE College
atother	IFP Location – Other
k3engsc	KS3 English Score
k3mathsc	KS3 Mathematics Score
k3scisc	KS3 Science Score
k3avsc	KS3 Average Score
whith	White Other
gypsyr	Gypsy-roma
mixed	Mixed race
asiani	Asian – Indian
asianp	Asian – Pakistani
asianb	Asian – Bangladeshi
asiano	Asian – Other
blackc	Black – Caribbean
blacka	Black – African
blacko	Black – Other
chinese	Chinese
ethoth	Ethnicity – Other
ethrefu	Ethnicity – Refused
ethmiss	Ethnicity – No Information
female	Female
fsm1	Free school meal eligibility (FSM)
eal1	English as an additional language (EAL)
sensa	Special education needs – School Action/Plus
senstate	Special education needs – Statement or assessment
age	Age in months at start of year
pupmob	Pupil mobility KS3-KS4

School-level variables

variable	Label
n16	Number of pupils aged 16
n99	Headcount of total number of pupils
pcfsm	% pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

pcfsmis	Missing % FSM
pccsen	% pupils with statements of SEN
pceal	% EAL pupils (2003)
boysch	Boys' school
girlsch	Girls' school
faith	Faith school
secmod	Secondary modern
comp16	Comprehensive to 16
grammar	Grammar school
othsec	Other secondary school
ctcsch	City Technology College
specscl	Special school
pru	Pupil referral unit
specall	Specialist school (default Technology College)
specart	Specialist Art College
specspor	Specialist Sports College
speclang	Specialist Language College
specoth	Specialist – Other
neigh1	Neighbourhood Renewal Area
coal1	Coalfield Ward
rural1	Rural Ward
eaz	Education Action Zone
eic1	Excellence in cities area
eicclus	EiC – Clusters
eicph2	EiC – Phase 2
eicph3	EiC – Phase 3
eiccl1	EiC – City Learning Centre
eicaz1	EiC – Action Zone

Pupil-level census variables

variable	Label
pwhite	% white in output area
punemp	% of people aged 16 - 74 who are unemployed in output area
pnoqual	% of people aged 16-74 with no qualifications in output area
pqual35	% people over 16 with qualification level 3 or above in area
pqualu	% of people aged 16-74 with other qualifications/level unknown in output area
pmp	% of people aged 16-74 in managerial or professional occupations in output area
prout	% of people aged 16-74 in routine occupations in OA
pothor	% of people aged 16-74 never worked/long-term unemployed/students/not classifiable in output area
powner	% of households that are owner-occupied in output area
plph	% of households that have lone parent with dependent children in output area
pcrowd	% households overcrowded in area
pgood	% of people in output area with good health
pngood	% of people in output area with not good health
pnotdep	% of households in output area not deprived in any dimension
pdep24	% households deprived in more than two dimensions
density	Number of persons per hectare in output area
psame	% of households where whole household lived at the same address one year ago
nocensus	No Census Information

Interaction variables

variable	Label
ealint	Interaction – EAL by K3 average score
gramint	Interaction – GRAMMAR by KS3 average score
pcfsmint	Interaction – %FSM by KS3 average score
pcsenint	Interaction – %SEN by KS3 average score
vgcseent	Entered for at least one VGCSE
gnvqent	Entered for at least one GNVQ
gcsedis	Began GCSE through IFP but never entered examination
gnvqdis	Began GNVQ through IFP but never entered examination
lowks3	Indicator – (KS3 Average (non centered)<27)
lowkint	Interaction – lowks3*(KS3 Average (non centered)-27)
ififem	Interaction – Female and IFP
ifiks3	Interaction – KS3 and IFP
vgifem	Interaction – Female and vocational GCSE
vgiks3	Interaction – KS3 and vocational GCSE
gnifem	Interaction – Female and GNVQ
gniks3	Interaction – KS3 and GNVQ
ifvqfem	Interaction – Female and vocation GCSE through IFP
ifvqks3	Interaction – KS3 and vocational GCSE through IFP
lfgnfem	Interaction – Female and GNVQ through IFP
lfgnks3	Interaction – KS3 and GNVQ through IFP
lfnvqfem	Interaction – Female and NVQ through IFP
lfnvqint	Interaction – KS3 and NVQ through IFP
lfothfem	Interaction – Female and Other Qualification through IFP
lfothint	Interaction – KS3 and Other Qualification through IFP

Pupil Questionnaire Variables

variable	Label
confabi	Confidence in abilities
attisch2	Attitude to school and its usefulness
handson	'Hands on' learning approach
trulate	Truancy and Lateness
colorsch	Preferment of college to school
misscolo	Missing data about preferment of college to school
y10confa	Confidence in abilities
y10hands	'Hands on' learning approach
y10attis	Attitude to school and its usefulness
q5_4a	I was told to by my school
empexp	Students who had any employer experience in either Year 10 or Year 11 questionnaire
q9a	Not talked to anyone
q9b	Talked to an informed person
q9c	Talked to family and friends
q9bhelp	Talked to an informed person and found helpful
q9chelp	Talked to friends and family and found helpful
q6b3	I find it very difficult to catch up
q8int	I find all my course interesting
q8bor	I find all my course boring
q5yes	I miss lessons

School Questionnaire Variables

variable	Label
pc12a	% of curriculum time spent needed to do a Vocational GCSE
pc12amis	Missing % of curriculum time spent needed to do vocational GCSE
pc12b	% of curriculum time needed to do an NVQ
pc12bmis	Missing % of curriculum time needed to do an NVQ
pc12c	% of curriculum time needed to do an GNVQ
pc12cmis	Missing % of curriculum time needed to a GNVQ
pc12d	% of curriculum time needed to do an other vocational qualification
pc12dmis	Missing % of curriculum time needed to do an other vocational qualification
pc12one	% of curriculum time needed to do qualification the pupil is studying
pc12onem	Missing % of curriculum time needed to do the qualification the pupil is studying
Orgall	Organisation teaches entire curriculum (at least one subject)
Share	Organisation shares teaching with school (at least one subject)
Schall	School teaches entire curriculum (at least one subject)
q16exto	External teaching is only method used
q16sharo	Shared teaching is only approach used
q16scho	Teaching at school is only approach used
q12ayes	School supports students off-site
q12bact	School gives active support off site
q11pas	School provides pastoral/study support
q11act	School provides action plans
q11one	School provides 1:1 support
missch	Missing school questionnaire information

Appendix B: Point scores for qualifications

To calculate the points scored by students, QCA scores were used. In this system, a **GCSE** at each of the following grades is worth the following points:

	GCSE	Vocational GCSE
A*	58	116
A	52	104
B	46	92
C	40	80
D	34	68
E	28	56
F	22	44
G	16	32
U	0	0

GNVQs are worth the following points:

	GNVQ full intermediate	GNVQ Part 1 Intermediate	GNVQ Full Foundation	GNVQ part 1 Foundation
Distinction	220	110	136	68
Merit	196	98	112	56
Pass	160	80	76	38

The points assigned to **NVQs** and **other vocational qualifications** vary according to the individual qualification. Details of the points for each type of qualifications were drawn from the QCA website (www.openquals.org.uk)

Some examples of the points assigned to **NVQs** and **other vocational qualifications** are provided below.

Qualification Title	Level	Points
NVQ Performing Engineering Operations	1	168
NVQ Hairdressing	1	140
NVQ Preparing and Serving Food	1	140
CACHE Award in Caring for Children	1	140 (merit)
CITB/C&G Building Craft Occupations	1	75

Appendix C: Representativeness of respondents

Representativeness of survey respondents

A sample of 11,438 young people was drawn from the data on 29,990 students participating in IFP that was provided by schools during the baseline data collection in the autumn term of 2002. The sample was representative of the whole population in terms of the qualifications studied, the location of study for IFP and background characteristics such as ethnicity and gender.

A total of 1,176 young people who had continued their involvement in IFP responded to the questionnaire survey between December 2004 and January 2005. The young people had all responded to the questionnaire survey when they were in Year 10 and provided their contact details.

Table C1. Background characteristics of students participating in IFP: responding young people in 2004/5, sample and all IFP students

Characteristic	Respondents to post-16 survey 2004/5 %	Sample %	All IFP students in cohort 1 %
Sex			
Male	35	56	55
Female	65	44	45
N=	1138	10500	27761
Ethnicity			
White	88	89	91
Asian or Asian British	7	5	4
Black or Black British	2	2	2
Other	2	2	1
Prefer not to say	2	2	1
N=	1118	10301	27261
Mother tongue			
English	93	94	95
Other than English	7	6	5
N=	1138	10491	27732
Free school meals			
Receives free school meals	18	22	22
Does not receive free school meals	82	78	78
N=	1138	10488	27718
SEN			
No special provision	81	70	67
School action/ plus	16	25	27
Statement or assessment	3	6	6
N=	1099	9979	26467

Characteristic	Respondents to post-16 survey 2004/5 %	Sample %	All IFP students in cohort 1 %
KS3 English			
Level 4 and below	35	48	51
Level 5 and above	65	52	49
N=	1085	9679	25723
KS3 Maths			
Level 4 and below	39	47	49
Level 5 and above	61	53	51
N=	1110	9942	26211
KS3 Science			
Level 4 and below	38	46	49
Level 5 and above	62	54	51
N=	1101	9854	25988

All those for whom data was available on NPD

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme- baseline data and NPD

Although the young people who responded to the survey were broadly representative of the sample as a whole in terms of their ethnic background and whether English was an additional language, they differed from the sample in some key respects. A greater proportion of the respondents were female than was the case in the full sample and fewer were eligible for free schools meals or had been recognized on the register of SEN while at school. In addition, a smaller proportion had attained below level 4 in their key stage 3 assessments than was the case in the sample as a whole.

Table C2. Qualifications studied through IFP: responding young people in 2004/5: sample and all IFP students

	Respondents to post-16 survey 2004/5 %	Sample %	All IFP students in cohort 1 %
Qualification			
GCSE in vocational subject	66	58	58
NVQ	13	16	16
GNVQ	5	7	7
Other vocational qualification	16	18	19
Non-qualification	1	3	1
Qualification unknown	1	2	2
N=	1176	11438	29990
Location of study			
Lead partner	58	66	66
Non-Lead Partner	44	36	36
N=	1176	11438	29740

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme – baseline data

A higher proportion of young people who responded to the survey had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects through the IFP programme, and fewer were taking GNVQs, NVQs and other vocational qualifications. Furthermore, fewer had attended a Lead Partner in undertaking their IFP qualification and more had attended a non-Lead Partner organisation, including a school.

Representativeness of young people in data provided by schools

Details of the destinations and achievements for a total of 5,147 young people were provided by schools in autumn 2004. The young people were part of the representative sample detailed above. Table C3 presents the representativeness of these 5,147 young people.

Table C3. Background characteristics of students participating in IFP: young people whose details were provided by schools in 2004, sample and all IFP students

Characteristic	Young people whose details were provided by schools 2004 %	Sample %	All IFP students in cohort 1 %
Sex			
Male	54	56	55
Female	46	44	45
N=	4984	10500	27761
Ethnicity			
White	87	89	91
Asian or Asian British	6	5	4
Black or Black British	2	2	2
Other	2	2	1
Prefer not to say	3	2	1
N=	4914	10301	27261
Mother tongue			
English	93	94	95
Other than English	7	6	5
N=	4981	10491	27732
Free school meals			
Receives free school meals	19	22	22
Does not receive free school meals	81	78	78
N=	4981	10488	27718
SEN			
No special provision	73	70	67
School action/ plus	22	25	27
Statement or assessment	4	6	6
N=	4749	9979	26467
KS3 English			
Level 4 and below	45	48	51
Level 5 and above	55	52	49
N=	4614	9679	25723
KS3 Maths			
Level 4 and below	43	47	49
Level 5 and above	57	53	51
N=	4777	9942	26211
KS3 Science			
Level 4 and below	42	46	49
Level 5 and above	58	54	51
N=	4744	9854	25988

All those for whom data was available on NPD

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme - end of Year 11 data, baseline data and NPD

The sample of students for whom details of their destinations and achievements at the end of Year 11 were provided were broadly representative of the full sample. However, they were slightly less likely to be recognised for action on the register of SEN and to be known to be eligible for free school meals. Moreover, a slightly greater proportion had attained Level 5 and above at key stage 3.

Table C4. Qualifications studied through IFP: young people whose details were provided by schools in 2004, sample and all IFP students

	Respondents to post-16 survey 2004/5 %	Sample %	All IFP students in cohort 1 %
Qualification			
GCSE in vocational subject	68	58	58
NVQ	13	16	16
GNVQ	5	7	7
Other vocational qualification	15	18	19
Non-qualification	2	3	1
Qualification unknown	1	2	2
N=	5147	11438	29990
Location of study			
Lead partner	63	66	66
Non-Lead Partner	39	36	36
N=	5147	11438	29740

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Source: NFER evaluation of Increased Flexibility Programme – baseline data

A higher proportion of young people for whom data was provided by schools had taken GCSEs in vocational subjects through the IFP programme, and slightly fewer were taking GNVQs, NVQs and other vocational qualifications. Furthermore, fewer had attended a Lead Partner in undertaking their IFP qualification and more had attended a non-Lead Partner organisation, including a school.

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