



Press Notice
20th May 2008

Studio Schools included in DCSF White Paper

The Young Foundation welcomes the inclusion of Studio Schools in the Alternative Provision White Paper that builds upon their earlier inclusion in the Children's Plan published in December. The Young Foundation has been working closely with the DCSF to identify potential pilot sites for the first wave of Studio Schools. This work continues and will progress through the summer alongside work with officials and local partners.

Studio Schools are *not* for 'problem teenagers' or an alternative to PRUs. Instead they will aim to attract a wide range of young people – including entrepreneurial teenagers wanting more opportunities to start and run businesses - as well as helping to engage young people who are otherwise at risk of falling out of education.

Background

Designed by the Young Foundation, Studio Schools™ will help 14-19 year olds better prepare for the world of work The Young Foundation is working with DCSF, Edge Foundation, The Innovation Unit and local partners, teachers and young people on plans for Studio Schools in seven locations across England. The first field trial testing some of the elements for a future Studio School began in Luton this September.

A response to missing 'non-cognitive' skills and persistent disengagement

Employer skills surveys regularly identify key gaps as including customer handling, oral communication, problem-solving and team working skills. Employers are seeking motivation and flexibility, willingness to work and learn as well as resourceful behaviour, mannerisms and confidence – but aren't satisfied that school-leavers have these non-cognitive skills. Research by Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman has shown that non-cognitive skills are at least as important as technical skills in determining employability, earnings and career success.

- The National Employers Skills Survey in England 2005 found that one in four job vacancies were hard to fill because of a lack of suitably skilled applicants.
- Employers reported that the main skills lacking (53% of cases) were practical skills such as customer handling skills; oral communication; problem-solving skills; team working.
- Whilst the spotlight tends to focus on the lack of literacy and numeracy skills, the Survey found skills gaps in these areas in only 22% and 21% of cases respectively.

In order to foster these skills young people need real, practical experience in their formative years. Yet, in this respect there remains a stubborn mismatch between what is provided by the education system in the UK and what is needed.

The second challenge that Studio Schools address is the persistent level of youth disengagement from schooling. Large numbers of young people are continuing to truant, or to drop out into 'NEET' (Not currently engaged in Employment, Education or Training)

status; many of the key statistics have either remained flat or have worsened over the last decade. There are many reasons for this but they include a perception that the current curriculum is not sufficiently engaging or relevant to them. Studio Schools will help reduce this problem by keeping young people engaged in learning through a relevant, practical and personalised curriculum and strong personal support.

Entrepreneurial Schools

Studio Schools draw on extensive experience from the UK and around the world and bring together a number of proven elements in a new kind of schools which will provide young people with qualifications and a full range of skills – while also incorporating businesses or social enterprises providing services directly to customers.

Studio Schools will be small schools of around 300 students; they will teach the national curriculum through interdisciplinary, enterprise-themed projects; every student will have a personal coach; and they will incorporate paid work for older students. Their ethos will in many ways be very different from a traditional school, with a much stronger emphasis on practical work and enterprise. Students will graduate from Studio Schools with nationally recognized qualifications, allowing them a choice of progression routes including Higher Education.

New schools to be launched building on a field trial in Luton

The Young Foundation has plans to develop up to seven new schools with partners from Tyneside in the North to the East End of London. We are working with Newham Council and College, and the Councils in Blackpool, Kirklees, Oldham, Sheffield, and South Tyneside.

Elements of the Studio School model are the subject of a field trial with Barnfield College and Barnfield Academy West in Luton in collaboration with The Innovation Unit. The field trial began in September 2007 with 23 14-year olds and will eventually be scaled up to a full Studio School. Other Studio Schools are planned for opening from September 2009 onwards.

Andy Powell, Chief Executive of Edge said *"Edge wants all young people to have the opportunity to experience practical learning and try new things in a totally hands-on way. We think it's an essential part of every young person's education as it gives them the chance to discover where their skills and talents lie, figure out what they enjoy doing and ultimately prepares them for the working world. Studio Schools fits perfectly within this aim and we are very excited to be supporting the scheme."*

Simon Tucker, Associate Director at the Young Foundation said, *"There are plans for up to seven new schools in the pipeline. Studio Schools are not intended to replace other secondary schools – but rather to complement existing schools by providing an alternative approach suitable for young people looking for a more entrepreneurial option or alienated by traditional pedagogy."*

Notes to the Editor

The Young Foundation

The Young Foundation is a centre for social innovation that undertakes research to identify and understand social needs and then develops practical initiatives and institutions to address them. For more information go to www.youngfoundation.org.

Studio Schools Partnership

In July 2006, the Young Foundation delivered the first concept paper to the Department for Education and Skills, which delineated all the elements of the model and tested key assumptions. Over 30 local authorities, colleges and academies have expressed an interest in the Studio Schools concept and since January 2007, the Young Foundation has been working with eight of these to develop the concept in more detail and plan the first wave of Studio Schools.

The Studio School partnership includes Barnfield College and Academies, Barnsley, Blackpool, Kirklees, Newham Council and College, Oldham, Sheffield, and South Tyneside. We are continuing discussions with some additional councils and academy sponsors. In addition to our local partners, we are also supported by DCSF, The Innovation Unit, Edge, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Learning and Skills Council, Charles Dunstone Charitable Trust, Norfolk Trust and other stakeholders.

Edge Foundation

Edge is dedicated to raising the profile of vocational and practical learning, with a skills rather than an academic focus. It wants educational standards raised through applying practical experience to learning and providing opportunities to excel through vocational, as well as academic, studies. Edge believes that this is essential for the future competitiveness of the nation. For more information please visit www.edge.co.uk

The Innovation Unit

The Innovation Unit promotes innovation to improve education and other related services drawing on talent from both public and private sectors. One of The Unit's central roles is to combine the expertise of teachers and school leaders with the ideas and ambition of policy-makers The Unit runs a range of projects. Currently the largest of these is the "Next Practice" education programme in which the Unit supports schools and local authorities as they take forward their own cutting-edge ideas to improve education. For more information please visit www.innovation-unit.co.uk

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