

## Sourcing a Leicester+Shire Progress File Folder and Presenter

By now, schools, colleges and other partners should be aware of the DfES decision to cease supplying Progress File materials and resources from April 2006 onwards. Since the decision was announced, we have undertaken a survey of schools, colleges and other partners. This established that there is a strong interest in sourcing a local Progress File product that could be purchased by any institution or organisation. This view was generally reinforced at the well attended Progress File Consortium meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

As a result, Cathy Sibley from the CLAS Team in Connexions Leicester Shire along with VESA spent the summer and early autumn negotiating with providers to source the best possible offer for schools. We now believe that we have secured an excellent deal from a company called HFW Plastics (which provided the original Progress Files to the DfES). We will be writing to all schools, colleges and other partners shortly to explain this offer in detail but the key points to note are:

- a) The product offered by HFW Plastics is a combined Progress File Portfolio and Presenter priced at £3.00 per set.
- b) This is, by some margin, the best deal we have been able to find but, crucially, it is contingent on the number of orders submitted by our local schools and colleges.

We will need a total order across the City and County of 3000 Progress Files [Portfolio and Presenter sets] in order for HFW to offer these beneficial terms.

We have already had a number of phone calls from schools enquiring about developments with sourcing a local Progress File. With regards to Leicestershire County, it is probably sensible for families of High Schools, Upper Schools and FE Colleges to collaborate on this offer and look at mechanisms for sharing costs across the key stages. This is particularly pertinent where the Progress File is introduced at Key Stage 3 and students take them through into the Upper School and beyond. In the City the proposal will be raised with the new 14-19 partnership and the Education Improvement Partnership (EIP) in order to explore a collaborative response.

We very much hope that you will want to take advantage of this offer and will respond when you receive the letter and associated documentation. It is very important that we retain a coherent and cohesive approach to the use of Progress File in this area so that we can build on the very good practice that has been developed over recent years.

If you have any questions please contact Cathy Sibley at Connexions Leicester Shire on 0116 261 5920 or Tim Farthing at the VESA office.



### Key Dates for your Diary VESA Conferences

**KS4 Curriculum Conference  
"Celebrating Success at KS4"**  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November  
Beaumanor Hall

**Post 16 Curriculum Conference**  
Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November  
Beaumanor Hall

**Health & Social Care  
Student Conference Level 2**  
Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December  
Leicester Tigers

**Aimhigher  
'Way Ahead'  
for Looked After Children -  
National Conference**  
Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November  
NSPCC Beaumont Leys

### Regional Events

**East Midlands 14-19  
Curriculum Conference**  
Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February  
Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February  
Stoke Rochford

# Leicestershire Young Business Apprenticeships



Our congratulations go to Halima Abdulkadir and Thowani Lunghi (pictured) from Riverside Community College who have not only achieved more than 8 GCSE's [A-C] but have also completed their **Young Apprenticeship Certificate**. This entailed the full completion of the NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration and the Technical Certificate which is part of the qualification. In addition,

Halima completed the required 50 days of work experience in the VESA office over 2 years and Thowani with the Leicestershire Primary Health Care Audit group where their contribution was invaluable. LETG (one of our local training providers), assessed the students for their NVQ in the workplace. That these two students committed to this programme on top of their extensive school curriculum demonstrates considerable motivation and dedication to their education. Both students are now enrolled at Wyggeston Queen Elizabeth1 Sixth Form College to study Accounts, Business and Mathematics at A level. We are confident they will have brilliant careers and wish them every success.

In addition 11 students from Rawlins Community College have completed their first Art and Design Young Apprenticeship and have gained a BTEC 1<sup>st</sup> certificate in Art and Design.

This successful Young Apprenticeship programme has proved that qualifications gained off-site and in the workplace really do enable students to develop employability skills as well as raising confidence and self-esteem. Beaumont Leys has students in Cohort 2 & 3 of this exciting initiative and Burleigh Community College has joined the programme this year. We shall keep you updated about developments as this provision evolves.

For further information please contact Viv Laxton at the VESA office



## PC Tablets a Great Success

Within the local ESF Project, 'Pathways to Vocational Achievement', Burleigh Community College has successfully piloted the use of PC Tablets with students who have poor basic skills.

All of Burleigh's ESF students have access to PC Tablets both within their alternative curriculum programme and their mainstream classes.

The PC Tablets are about the size of a lap-top, so are easy to carry around. Onto the Tablets are loaded **PLUS** materials to support the development of students' basic skills and in addition there are other packages, some of which are just for fun. The tablets allow students to write directly to the screen which then converts their work into printed text.

For further information contact either Graham Conway at VESA or Gerry Stroud at Burleigh Community College.

The response of the students has been very positive and their enthusiasm came across strongly at the 'Leicestershire Alternative Curriculum Conference (May 2006)', where they made an excellent presentation to teachers about the value of PC tablets. Some of the comments made by the students illustrate well the success of this approach.

Gerry Stroud, Burleigh's ESF Co-ordinator, is exceptionally pleased with the impact that the PC Tablets, in conjunction with the **PLUS** Materials have had on improving students' basic skills. 80% of the project groups have reached Level 1 in literacy and numeracy from a base line of Entry Level in October 2005.

The PC Tablets could become an important element in engaging students in their learning.

## Leicester City Increased Flexibility Partnership Awards

A celebration event was held on June 26<sup>th</sup> 2006 to mark the completion of the first year of the City Increased Flexibility Programme for Cohort 4 students. There were over 300 students, parents, school co-ordinators and course delivery staff packed into the Hall at Leicester College, where all students received a certificate from Maggie Galliers, the Leicester College Principal. Awards were given out for the best and most improved student in each group.

Everyone present was pleased to see how much the students had achieved, and subsequent conversations illustrated how much they had benefited from the off-site experiences.

For further information about the Increased Flexibility initiative, please contact Viv Laxton or Graham Conway at the VESA office

## Accreditation of the Personal Development Curriculum impacts positively on schools' results

4 city schools were able to attribute an increase in their 2006 GCSE results directly to the accreditation of learning through LPDP (Leicestershire Personal Development Programme).

The following results were achieved through LPDP using the existing NOCN qualification (NOCN Award for Careers Education and Preparation for Working Life).

NOCN Results: June '06	Pass Rate
City of Leicester	93%
New College Leicester	100%
Riverside	82.5%
Soar Valley	100%

Whilst the existing NOCN qualification has been around for some time, until this year few schools had gone for the full 2

GCSE equivalent qualification, mainly because it requires 150 guided learning hours plus an external assessment.

This year's LPDP results have undoubtedly had a positive effect on participating schools' Achievement and Attainment Table performance as well as providing a formal structure for the further development of their Personal Development Programmes.

### News Update - the revised NOCN Qualification originally due for approval in September 2006

Many local schools had hoped to offer the revised LPDP course commencing this September. QCA has put on hold all new qualifications in this curriculum area as '*new guidelines for PSCHE are due to go into school in 2007 (to be implemented in September 2008)*'. Centres around the country are extremely disappointed with this decision. However, it is not all disappointing news.

As a result of this QCA decision, the existing NOCN qualification has been given a further two year extension and therefore remains on the Section 96 list of approved qualification.

Following this year's excellent results, many schools are planning to increase the number of targeted learners they put in for the full qualification.

Together with a number of Heads of schools currently delivering the existing qualification, VESA has written to both NOCN and QCA.:-

- to request that NOCN be allowed to revise the proposed new LPDP qualification to meet the requirements of the new guidelines for PSCHE

- to allow some Leicester/shire schools to pilot these revisions from September 2007 (pending full availability from September 2008).

For further information on the current status of the existing NOCN qualification or any other points raised by this item, please contact Kay Ives at the VESA office

## FOUNDATION LEARNING TIER: LEARNING BELOW LEVEL 2.

The proposed **Foundation Learning Tier (FLT)** is the new term being used to describe the educational provision available to learners aged 14 + working below level 2. The FLT describes and encompasses students' learning programme, any supporting units and any qualifications to be used. Currently, there is some concern about the quality and coherence of such programmes which are often offered to low/under-achieving students at KS4.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) have been set the challenge of improving the quality of the current offer below level 2. Particular focus areas for development will include:

- improved access to a curriculum offer better matched to individual learning needs;
- recognition of a broader range of achievements relevant to learners working at these lower levels;
- qualifications with clear purposes that set out stepping stones from entry level to level 2;
- valued progression pathways;
- development of qualifications that provide progression to level 2 via validated pathways.

The QCA has issued a consultation document about its proposals for FLT and has also invited 'expressions of interest in tests and trials'. In its work with schools on alternative curriculum, VESA will keep colleagues updated on progress. At the next meeting of the **Leicestershire Alternative**

**Curriculum Network (now called the Curriculum Enrichment Network), on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October**, further information about the initiative will be provided. In addition, the Future Pathways Consortium will consider the FLT at its meetings. The consortium will consider changes to the Future Pathways Programme in order to ensure that it evolves appropriately to respond to the FLT challenge.

The development of a quality Foundation Learning Tier is an exciting prospect, and hopefully one that will lead to the increased engagement of learners currently following potentially inappropriate level 2 courses/programmes.

For further information please contact Graham Conway at the VESA office.

## VESA Vocational Curriculum Support

VESA runs a range of vocational subject-based Network & Development Groups. This provides a forum through which busy teachers can work together with colleagues from across the area to become more effective, economise on effort, and inform teaching and learning in their respective centres.

Hitherto, our Development Groups have at the behest of the DfES, focused on Applied GCSEs (GCSE in Vocational Subjects) and Applied A Levels. However, many institutions are now offering a fuller range of vocational or applied courses.

As a result, we have evolved our support to reflect these changes and to meet the needs of local centres as they continue to develop their 14-19 offers.

In future, subject networks will

- be level based rather than qualification based (i.e. Level 3 and Level 1/2);
- be led by Lead Teachers (practitioners who work in local schools or colleges) and are immersed in current good practice;
- provide access to shared resources;
- support new teachers and those seeking to address specific aspects of teaching and learning;

### New Activity for 2006/7

- **Basic Numeracy & Literacy Developments Groups**
- **BTEC Introductory Vocational Studies Development Group**
- **BTEC Support Group**
- **Vocational Curriculum Support Programme (VCSP)**

(one off training and update events, led by trainers from national organisations, Awarding Body representatives and local practitioners.)

For further information contact Stuart King/Brian Sanderson at the VESA office.

## Basic, Key & Functional Skills What's In A Name?

This year will see "skills" begin to take on an increasingly prominent role in the evolving 13-19 curriculum.

### • Key Skills

(the main ones being Application of Number, Communications and ICT) have been with us since Curriculum 2000.

### • Basic Skills

Adult Literacy and Numeracy originated as adult programmes, are well known in colleges, have currency with employers and have, in recent times, begun to be taken up by schools, in particular at Key Stage 4 to supplement GCSEs in English and Maths.

### • Functional Skills

(in Mathematics, English and ICT) are to be piloted and introduced as a new qualification, as featured prominently in the **14-19: Education & Skills** White Paper.

The phased introduction of Functional Skills will undoubtedly impact directly on Key and Basic

Skills. The Key Skills of Application of Number, Communications and ICT will be subsumed into their Functional counterparts. A broader rationalisation of the skills scene may eventually also see Adult Basic Skills being brought under the same banner. We are currently awaiting further guidance from QCA about this potential decision.

**Functional Skills** will have a place in the curriculum of all 14-19 learners. Commencing in 2008/9, they will become an integral part of GCSE requirements in Maths, English and ICT. Achievement in the functional component of each will be essential for the achievement of GCSE grades C and above. This achievement will become all the more significant from 2008 when GCSEs in Maths and English will be an essential part of the annual Achievement & Attainment Tables.

For more information about Basic, Key or Functional Skills please contact Stuart King at the VESA office.

## SPECIALISED DIPLOMAS - MOVING FORWARD

Specialised Diplomas form a key part of the emerging 13-19 education scene and are increasingly likely to focus the minds of school and college managers and curriculum planners as their demands become apparent.

The first five Diploma lines in IT, Society Health and Development, Engineering, Creative & Media and Construction & the Built Environment are due for piloting in September 2008. Details can be found at [www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19/documents/diplomacontent.doc](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19/documents/diplomacontent.doc).

"Specialised Diplomas - Your Questions Answered" is another

useful source of information [www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19/documents/DfESDiplomasJuly06.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19/documents/DfESDiplomasJuly06.pdf). Detail now available will enable area partnerships to discuss which Diploma Lines they might realistically offer and thus, how to phase their developmental and collaborative energies.

During 2006/07 VESA will support Diploma developments through

**Management Forums,  
Subject Networks,  
Conferences, Tailored Events.**

For further information contact Stuart King or Alex McManus at the VESA office.