

Promoting enterprise in vocational courses for 16–19-year-old students in colleges

A good practice report

The promotion of an enterprise culture as a means of stimulating economic growth and improving economic prosperity is a key focus of government and industry. The further education sector has a major role in helping foster an enterprise culture. This good practice report presents the key factors in the successful promotion of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in 15 high-performing colleges. It explores the strengths of curriculum provision and leadership and management that result in the successful development of students' enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability.

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361

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Contents

Executive summary	4
Key findings	6
Recommendations	8
Key features of effective practice	9
The commitment of the principal and senior leaders to promote the development of enterprise	9
Enterprise provision that is a coherent part of students' experience	12
Highly skilled staff who consistently promote enterprise in their teaching	24
Strong employer links and industry-standard learning environments	28
Outcomes for students	34
Notes	39
Further information	40
Publications by Ofsted	40
Ofsted's good practice website area	40
Other publications	40
Annex A: Providers visited	41

Executive summary

The promotion of an enterprise culture as a means of stimulating economic growth and improving economic prosperity is a key focus of government and industry. The promotion of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability among young people entering the workforce has been seen as central to this. The further education sector has a major role in helping to foster an enterprise culture.

Between January and May 2012, inspectors visited 15 colleges to identify the key features of good practice in the promotion of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability among 16–19-year-old students following vocational courses in colleges. The colleges had been judged to be either good or outstanding for overall effectiveness in their most recent inspection. The survey highlights the transferable practice of these colleges in promoting enterprise education and the positive impact on learner outcomes. Vocational areas explored during the survey visits included: agriculture; animal care; art; graphics; media and fashion; business; childcare; health and social care; construction; furniture making; hair and beauty; hospitality and catering; motor vehicle maintenance; science; sport; travel and tourism.

In this context the following definitions were used when exploring enterprise education.

- Enterprise-related skills include the ability to: respond positively to change; be creative and innovative; understand risk and reward; be able to solve problems; communicate effectively; work as a member of a team; use initiative; take the lead as the occasion demands; be confident; develop generic and specific employability skills, including self-management, business and customer awareness, and application of numeracy and information technology; engage in relevant work experience; acquire knowledge about chosen job/career; and develop positive attitudes to work.
- Entrepreneurial capability involves using enterprise-related skills in order to become self-employed or to set up or develop a business successfully.

Teachers and managers in the colleges visited recognised that success for their students was not just about high success rates in formally assessed qualifications but also involved developing a range of essential enterprise-related skills. Only together would these ensure that students were well equipped with both the technical and personal capabilities to succeed in the world of work.

A number of key factors in the successful promotion of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability emerged across the sample. These included:

- the commitment of the principal and senior leaders to promoting enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability
- an extensive enterprise-related provision that was not a 'bolt-on' but was an integral and coherent part of students' experience while at college, within

their mainstream assignment work, tutorial sessions, additional work-related activities and experiences, and work placements

- highly skilled staff who had excellent knowledge and experience, maintained strong links with their sectors and were fully committed to promoting and developing students' enterprise-related skills in the context of their subject specialism
- teaching that consistently promoted enterprise-related skills regardless of the subject
- very strong links with local employers that informed, supported and enhanced curriculum provision, facilitated high-quality work experience, and ensured that students were made fully aware of the professional or business context of their studies and the skills and attributes required
- learning that took place in facilities and environments that modelled industry standards and provided students with experiences that reflected real employment situations
- good outcomes for students in relation to success rates in formal qualifications and the successful development of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability as reflected in student successes in a variety of enterprising contexts, as well as progression to higher education, further training, employment or self-employment.

Evidence from the visits indicated that there was no single approach that led to the successful promotion of enterprise other than a commitment to well-thought-out and high-quality provision. No single model of curriculum delivery proved more effective than any other. Some of the colleges were having a radical rethink about how they organised their curriculum. For example, organising teaching and learning into concentrated periods of time and then providing additional discrete time to apply knowledge and skills to a practical, work-based project that allowed students to demonstrate and practise their enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability. Other colleges continued to follow a more conventional curriculum model.

Certain common areas for development emerged from the visits. There were weaknesses in the auditing and quality assurance of the provision of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability. These functions are needed to make sure that the curriculum is of the highest quality and that the minimum entitlement for all students is ensured. Good practice in one curriculum area of the college was not routinely shared with others or used to support cross-curricular developments.

As a result of the weakness identified above, opportunities were missed to evaluate the impact of provision to develop enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability on student outcomes. Thus the colleges visited were rarely seen to be identifying, recording and assessing achievement in relation to these skills and attributes explicitly, or collecting and analysing detailed destination data about employment and self-employment.

In 10 of the 15 colleges visited, students undertook some form of short additional qualification to accredit enterprise-related skills. These included work skills, employability or enterprise certificates. While these contributed to developing students' enterprise-related skills, such qualifications often did not differentiate for level or ability and hence were not always sufficiently challenging for all students.

Advice and guidance on self-employment and business start-up opportunities and the fostering of business-related financial awareness were relatively weaker aspects of provision compared with the promotion of more general enterprise-related skills. Although they were not the focus of this particular survey, it was also noted that students on non-vocational courses in the colleges surveyed appeared to have far fewer opportunities to develop enterprise-related skills.

Key findings

- The colleges visited had made a strategic decision to focus on the promotion of enterprise. They had recognised that formal qualifications by themselves were not always enough to guarantee success and that employers and higher education institutions were looking for a range of additional skills and attributes.
- The colleges' focus on developing students' enterprise-related skills contributed to students being very well prepared for their work placements and for employment. The students surveyed were able to reflect maturely and with insight on their developing skills; they were confident and had positive attitudes and good communication skills.
- The commitment of the principal and senior leaders was the single most important factor in the successful promotion of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in the colleges visited. This permeated college values, was an important element in strategic plans and was linked to strategic priorities.
- The colleges offered extensive and coherent enterprise-related provision that was an integral part of students' experience. Four colleges were having a radical rethink about how they organised their curriculum, for example by promoting the value of innovative project-based approaches to learning. Other colleges continued to follow a more conventional scheduling approach. The survey identified no single approach that led to the successful promotion of enterprise other than a commitment to well-thought-out, high-quality provision.
- There was a clear focus on the development of enterprise-related skills in almost all the assessed work seen, regardless of the principal subject focus. In many cases, assessed work also focused well on the development of entrepreneurial capability, where students were required to produce business plans and identify market opportunities, but this tended to be confined to particular subject areas rather than occurring more generally across all vocational courses.
- The opportunity to undertake additional industry-relevant skills-based qualifications, as well as more generic employability and enterprise qualifications, provided a value-added element to students' experience. This enabled them to

enhance their employment prospects and often contributed to the skills they might need to support small business or self-employment aspirations.

- The colleges visited provided: purposeful work placements that were well managed and well structured, with clear learning objectives; workplace supervision and mentoring; opportunities to practise skills in real work settings and develop enterprise-related skills under supervision; assessment by employers or placement supervisors; and the provision of constructive feedback. Assessment and outcomes were linked closely to students' college programmes. This informed and gave direction to their continuing work on developing enterprise-related skills on their return to college.
- Highly skilled staff with up-to-date knowledge and experience in their sectors made a major contribution to the successful provision of enterprise in their particular subject areas. In the colleges visited, the staff observed had high credibility with students, employers and other agencies in their sectors.
- Teaching and learning consistently promoted enterprise-related skills regardless of the subject matter. Thus, basing learning in real business contexts; encouraging collaborative working; requiring students to take responsibility and use their initiative to solve problems; and making presentations, were regular aspects of teaching and learning in all the colleges surveyed.
- Very strong links with local employers ensured that students were made fully aware of the enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability required in particular vocational sectors. Many of the most valuable links were with local small or medium businesses. There was little evidence of regional or national business or employer representative organisations having an impact on the work of the colleges visited in this respect.
- Industry-standard facilities and environments provided students with experiences that reflected real employment situations. The use of college-based companies and enterprise initiatives to develop business ideas and students' enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability contributed to this.
- Additional activities contributed to the development of students' enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability by providing them with opportunities to experience their subject in a variety of real-world business contexts. These included, for example, taking part in industry-relevant competitions; attending industry-relevant events, shows, demonstrations and conferences; listening to guest speakers and undergoing mock interviews.
- Despite these very positive features of provision, colleges did not routinely audit or quality assure their provision for enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability. As a result they were unable to ensure the highest quality of delivery across all curriculum areas; they did not routinely share good practice across curriculum areas or encourage cross-curricular developments, and were unable to guarantee a minimum entitlement for all students. The role of governors in promoting sustainable and systematic business links and in holding their colleges to account for enterprise-related targets and performance indicators was unclear.

- Colleges were not able to show that those students who had access to provision with an emphasis on enterprise-related skills did better, or were more likely to go into employment or self-employment, than those students on similar vocational programmes who did not. This was because colleges were not evaluating the impact of their provision in this area by explicitly identifying, recording or assessing achievement in relation to enterprise-related skills. At a macro-level, the lack of detailed destination data relating to employment and self-employment meant that colleges were unable to identify trends that might inform their curriculum planning and improvement.
- The extent to which these colleges provided advice and guidance on self-employment and business start-up opportunities depended on the subject sector being considered and the expertise and background of staff. While all made good provision to develop students' understanding of current market trends and opportunities in their specific sectors, the explicit provision to develop students' understanding of the business start-up process, their financial acumen and ability to assess the viability of different business models was more variable. In general, where this was not evident it was because colleges did not judge it to be relevant for students at this stage in their careers, for example because they were considering further or higher education and training rather than self-employment.
- The focus of this good practice survey was to consider the experience of 16–19-year-old students on vocational courses, but it did emerge that for students taking non-vocational courses in preparation for higher education there were far fewer opportunities and relatively little provision to develop enterprise-related skills. Arguably they are as likely to need such skills in their future lives as students on the vocational courses explored during the visits.

Recommendations

The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education should:

- ensure that colleges provide a minimum entitlement for all students to develop their enterprise-related skills so that on completion of their courses they have not only gained formal qualifications but have also developed skills that will enhance their employment or self-employment prospects
- collect, monitor and report on college destination data in relation to employment and self-employment in order to provide regional and national trends for the college sector.

The Confederation of British Industry, Sector Skills Councils, local enterprise partnerships and other employer organisations should:

- be more active in their support for, and involvement in, the work of further education and other colleges in promoting enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in young people in the 16–19 age group, in order to enhance their employment or self-employment prospects.

Colleges should:

- improve the quality of destination data relating to employment and self-employment so that trends over time can be analysed and evaluated to inform provision and assess learner outcomes in terms of enterprise
- quality assure provision for enterprise education to ensure that delivery across the curriculum is coherent and provides a minimum entitlement for all students, creates opportunities to share good practice across curriculum areas and encourages cross-curricular developments and synergy
- evaluate the impact of enterprise education provision by identifying and recording or assessing achievement in relation to enterprise-related skills
- ensure that advice and guidance on self-employment and business start-up opportunities and a focus on business-related financial awareness are themes on courses where these are deemed relevant to students' future career paths and that suitably trained staff are available to deliver them
- extend opportunities for all 16–19-year-old students to develop enterprise-related skills to ensure they are well prepared for their future employment, education or training
- raise the profile of college governors in relation to enterprise, for example, in promoting sustainable and systematic links with businesses and in holding colleges accountable for enterprise-related targets and key performance indicators.

Key features of effective practice

The commitment of the principal and senior leaders to promote the development of enterprise

1. In all the colleges visited, there was a clear recognition of the value of provision to promote enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability, and its impact on student outcomes. A key feature of their success was the fact that principals and senior leaders gave the provision a high profile, championed its development, had a clear commitment to this agenda and provided the drive necessary to ensure that this became an embedded element of students' experience at college.
2. While most of the colleges visited had a specific policy relating to enterprise education, seven of the 15 did not. In these colleges, although provision was very good in the curriculum areas reviewed, enterprise education was developing as a result of the dedication, enthusiasm and experience of staff in these curriculum areas rather than a whole-college approach. The quality of students' experience and the opportunities open to them to develop their enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability across curriculum areas were, therefore, variable. Related to this was that the colleges, in general, did not audit or quality assure the provision for enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability. The role of governors in promoting sustainable and

systematic business links and in holding their colleges to account for enterprise-related targets and performance indicators was unclear. Despite this, in preparation for the survey visits inspectors found that college managers had requested relevant subject areas to audit their provision in order to identify where and how key enterprise-related skills were promoted. This exercise provided inspectors with evidence of the very extensive and very effective nature of provision for enterprise in the colleges surveyed.

3. The examples below illustrate, respectively, a land-based college's approach to enterprise and new approaches to promoting enterprise education across the curriculum in two colleges.

A land-based college's approach to enterprise

The college has a longstanding policy in relation to enterprise. A long-term plan for the development of the campus, introduced in 2004, had as a central component to develop an enterprise culture in which commercially run departments provided facilities and services for the wider college, for external clients and for the wider community. The enterprises included a working farm reflecting the latest industry working practices in beef, sheep and pig production and arable production; an equestrian centre with a competition arena; a dog grooming and hydrotherapy centre; and a sport and fitness centre. The managers of these facilities are commercial managers (not teaching staff) and provide real working environments for students. The college expects that anyone who teaches, trains or supports students can help develop a culture of enterprise. This is driven by college values, which include 'first class', 'first choice vocational education'; 'respect for each other and our campus'; 'a can-do attitude'; 'striving for excellence in all that we do'.

Current strategic objectives that reflect the centrality of enterprise include:

- provide a dynamic curriculum that engages students and prepares them for life and work
- prepare students to live and work in a diverse society
- develop students as ambassadors of the college to enable them to be effective members of society and highly valued employees
- provide high-quality teaching and learning that enable an inspection grade of outstanding
- develop curriculum provision that meets the changing needs of stakeholders.

The college presents its approach to enterprise in diagrammatic form as a virtuous circle that includes the following three elements: context, leadership and resources for enterprise; enterprise skills in teaching and learning; work experience and real working environments supporting enterprise skills.

High-profile and coherent provision for the promotion of enterprise education at whole-college level

The college has been highly successful in developing a strategy for enterprise-related skills in which the various elements are very well coordinated. The elements include: a new curriculum model (being piloted in hospitality and catering and in health and social care) that is based on a 4:1:1 allocation of each six-week block of time, so that four weeks are used for delivery, one week for reflection and one week for enterprise activities; student business enterprise ideas developed during the enterprise week in 4:1:1; the Peter Jones Enterprise Academy¹ and its employer partners; enterprise competitions such as Young Enterprise and skills competitions; and a business incubation unit for recent alumni, where students receive a contribution towards their business start-up from the college's community interest company and a location within the college from which to run their business. The community interest company bids for external funds and provides funding for student business ideas in return for a share of the profits/dividends which are reinvested in the company (more details on this are provided in a case study on page 15).

Promoting and embedding an enterprising culture throughout the college

The college has successfully raised the profile of enterprise education by placing the development of these skills at the heart of its work. Clearly defined in the college's mission, vision and values statements, the development of enterprise skills is prioritised and promoted throughout the college. Endorsed by the Corporation Board, and extremely well supported by college senior managers, enterprise-related education is becoming embedded in the curriculum. The college has identified challenging targets at whole-college and at curriculum-area level that it is using to monitor progress. A student charter clearly defines the enterprise and employability skills that students can expect to develop in addition to their main course of study. All full-time students study towards an enterprise qualification and the college is further developing links with employers and other partners to further enhance the curriculum for the benefit of students. Enterprise-related skills are developed through students completing work-experience placements; by the involvement of employers in curriculum design, delivery and evaluation, including

¹ The Peter Jones Enterprise Academy offers a range of BTEC courses in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship that are delivered in 36 colleges nationally. The courses involve students in starting their own business or investigating and preparing to start up their own business. Students undertake up to four weeks of work experience and undertake a personal and professional development programme designed to guide them and support their business aspirations.

contributing to teaching and learning; and by providing motivational, inspirational and coaching sessions for students.

4. Other examples of how the colleges in the survey included a focus on the promotion of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in their corporate strategies included:
 - a refocusing of strategy and values, including a revised mission statement, to centre more explicitly on planning a curriculum for progression that ensured that students have the employability, enterprise and study skills to secure progression to employment, self-employment and/or higher education; the appointment of an operations manager to support the development of employability and enterprise across the college
 - an enterprise and employability strategy that involved the college in identifying the component parts of the college 'passport for success', that is, a set of skills and behaviours that students should be equipped with and that would add value to their qualifications; a mapping exercise that had taken place to establish where these skills and behaviours were being developed and where gaps existed and needed to be filled
 - a clear strategic intention to establish student learning companies that would provide sponsorship for entrepreneurial activity and contribute to developing the skills of teaching staff, who could in turn more effectively promote enterprise, employability and entrepreneurial skills to students.

Enterprise provision that is a coherent part of students' experience

5. The promotion of enterprise-related skills was an integral part of the curriculum in all of the vocational areas observed during the survey. In two colleges, a more radical and innovative approach to embedding enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability across the curriculum was being introduced. The promotion of entrepreneurial capability, in the sense of using enterprise-related skills to consider how to set up and run a business, was less of a focus in the sixth form colleges visited and on courses where students were judged to be more likely to progress to higher education.
6. A focus on enterprise was embedded firmly within, and was an integral part of, the content and assessment of each of the vocational courses reviewed in the colleges surveyed. Students usually had excellent opportunities to practise enterprise-related skills within their courses, and in some, such as hair and beauty and hospitality and catering, industry-standard facilities that were open to the public were standard practice. In a number of courses in business, hair and beauty and sport, a discrete module in the main qualification focused on planning to set up a small business or to develop a business idea. In 10 out of the 15 colleges, students worked towards a separate generic employability or enterprise qualification in addition to their main qualification. In one sixth form college, level 3 students undertook the research-based Extended Project

Qualification. Many of the projects they undertook had a strong entrepreneurial focus. The two examples provided below are small-scale college projects with minimum financial outlay and small-scale returns, but they illustrate the entrepreneurial and financial potential of students' ideas.

One student created a website for his clan (a 'clan' is a group of online gamers). The website was created without any financial outlay using free downloads and Dreamweaver software from the college. The student had T-shirts made up with the clan logo for fellow clan members to purchase. In doing this, he undertook a costing exercise to find the best value for money supplier. The student is currently exploring other merchandise that he can brand with the clan logo to sell for profit.

For one student, the initial focus of his project was to solve the problem of the red rings of death (RROD), a common issue associated with the overheating of an X-Box 360 games machine. The student bought a broken machine on eBay and some tools for fixing the problem. Based on his technical research, he made some adaptations to the machine and solved the problem. He has since bought further broken machines, fixed them and sold them on, making a profit on each machine sold.

7. In all of the colleges, a focus on developing enterprise skills was a planned element of the tutorial programme for students on vocational courses; in particular, colleges focused well on providing opportunities for students to develop essential employability skills, including developing job application and interview skills, IT skills, teamworking and communication skills.
8. Discussions with tutors and students and case study evidence provided by the colleges surveyed indicated that the use of competitions developed students' self-confidence and promoted their autonomy and creativity. Involvement in competitions is a common activity in vocational areas such as hair and beauty and hospitality and catering. When well managed, it enabled students to demonstrate a range of enterprise-related skills including the ability to communicate effectively; to use initiative; to take the lead; to be confident; to demonstrate knowledge about their chosen careers; and to develop positive attitudes to work. Participation in high profile competitions, for example in hair and beauty, raised the profile of colleges and of individual students. Employers often recruited students based on the work they saw them producing during competition or showcase activities.
9. In all of the colleges visited, the staff and students spoken to had a particularly good understanding of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability. Staff were very well focused on equipping students with the skills required to enter the world of work as well as with the requisite vocational or professional qualifications. Different colleges used a wide range of terms, for example, 'employability skills', 'transferable skills', 'soft skills', 'work-related skills', 'interpersonal skills'. All of these terms encompassed similar attributes, including confidence, teamworking and communication, and aspects of

entrepreneurship. Students spoken to or observed understood the importance of such skills and were able to reflect on their own development of these skills and understand their relevance in relation to their future education, training and employment.

10. The following example illustrates a highly coherent provision to develop students' specific hair and beauty knowledge and skills and to promote their enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability.

Embedding enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in the hair and beauty curriculum

Students ran the well-equipped hair and beauty salons at the college under the watchful eye of teaching staff. In the huge spectrum of activities and responsibilities they undertook in doing so, they developed a whole range of enterprise-related skills (as identified on page 4 of this report) and in particular business and customer awareness and an excellent knowledge about their chosen career. Students staffed reception areas and completed reception duties, including call handling and the operation of a computerised booking system. They performed an extensive range of hair and beauty treatments – well in excess of those required by the qualifications they were studying for – and promoted the sale of merchandise to clients. Students also operated a coffee shop, were involved in the ordering and purchasing of supplies, arranged staffing rotas that included evening and weekend working, and handled payments received from clients. The college salons were run on a commercial basis and were open during the day, in the evenings and at weekends. The college had been successful in attracting many clients due to highly effective marketing and promotion of facilities. Salons were extremely well equipped and of industry standard.

Students undertook work experience duties within the college and gained an insight into all aspects of business practice including marketing and promotion, ordering and stock control, handling money, sales, customer care and the development of practical skills by working on real clients. Students benefited from many enrichment activities that further developed their skills. Competitions were a significant feature and promoted the work of the college and individual students to local businesses and the public so that their work could be showcased. Students also benefited from many expert visitors who provided demonstrations or gave talks to further develop students' subject knowledge, professional and enterprise-related skills and their entrepreneurial capability. Suppliers of hair and beauty products provided valuable talks on marketing strategies and explained ordering, stock control and merchandising systems.

11. The colleges provided a wide variety of opportunities for students to undertake experiential learning to gain business experience in order to develop enterprise-related skills. One college had introduced a department specifically focused on

promoting and supporting entrepreneurial activity. Another had set up a 'community interest company' for the same purpose, while also providing students with a curriculum that meant every sixth week they were fully engaged in enterprise-related activities. A third college had reviewed its BTEC level 3 provision in order to promote enterprise-related skills more explicitly. Details of each of these are provided below.

Opportunity to undertake experiential learning and gain real business experience at whole-college level in the Enterprise Academy

The Enterprise Academy has been set up to provide real work opportunities for students at the college and to provide them with the essential enterprise-related skills that employers look for. It is run by a college manager and staffed by two interns, both former students of the college, and operates as a business fulfilling both external and college briefs.

The academy has delivered over 100 projects since September 2010. Many of the college's enterprise projects have involved community partners. Two high-profile commissions came from the police and the NHS. For the police, students created original artwork, installations and photographs to enhance the new patrol and custody base in the town. This enabled students to develop and demonstrate their creativity, teamwork and communication skills as well as gain an appreciation of the importance of producing work for a particular context and particular clients. The local Primary Care Trust (PCT) commissioned film clips from animation and video production students to encourage young people to eat healthily. Their campaign was launched on one of the PCT's digital channels. Work has been developed for a large range of education areas within the college, including brand design and marketing materials for the new beauty salon open to the public. At the salon launch, music students performed, food studies students provided the food and drinks, and public services students helped act as stewards. In this case, students from diverse vocational areas had the opportunity to work together to achieve a common goal. Painting and decorating students painted a local Methodist church inside and out. Graphic design students produced both the full-time and higher education prospectuses.

Interns prepare quotations and keep track of project progress, ensuring that work is completed to agreed standards and deadlines, and prepare invoices. Students who take part in Enterprise Academy projects receive payment for their services. Feedback from employers has been highly positive and work opportunities are increasing. One additional benefit is that the college is reducing its costs by using its students' expertise.

A community interest company²

The college has set up a community interest company (CIC) to engage students, staff and other stakeholders in creating new ideas, setting up new student businesses, commercialising internal processes and communicating enterprising actions across the education sector. All additional income is reinvested to support students' learning experience and to help those requiring financial support just to remain in education. The student businesses in which the company invests should be sustainable over a planned timescale, have a sensible business plan, and follow the stated ethical requirements. Services of the company include the running of a monthly voluntary donation programme paid into the college hardship fund by staff, parents or wider supporters of the college; and a business incubation programme, whereby the college provides space on its estate for a number of student businesses each year run by recent alumni. The businesses have to pitch for an investment with a business plan and in return the college takes a dividend which is paid back into the CIC. Some corporate organisations wishing to support the CIC prefer to offer their time and expertise, goods or services in preference to making a financial donation; for example some offer professional, legal and accounting services to which student businesses supported by the CIC have access.

Projects supported by the CIC cover a range of different vocational areas and supplement the extensive curriculum-based enterprise-related activities that students are engaged in. For example, in hospitality and catering, students run the college's catering outlets and refectories. In doing this, they focus on developing their teamworking and leadership skills to provide them with the experience they will need when working in commercial establishments. In addition they also organise and run cookery classes for the public; produce cakes and organise the sale of these in local markets; and recently organised all aspects of a Valentine's Day dinner event that was open to the public. In furniture making, an artist in residence is provided with a college location and facilities for their work. They contribute to the development of students' vocational and enterprise skills by teaching and mentoring them, and supporting them in developing their own furniture-making skills and the branded products that they sell at various venues, including the local Christmas market.

² Community Interest Companies (CICs) are limited companies with special additional features, created for use by people who want to conduct a business or other activity for community benefit, and not purely for private advantage.

BTEC level 3 review

The college reviewed its BTEC level 3 provision in order to promote enterprise-related skills more explicitly. The revised programme enabled students to experience a range of different aspects of employment and enterprise, including working with local employers and the community. Central to the approach was the pairing of diverse vocational areas, such as engineering and creative arts or business administration and performing arts, in collaborative projects and extended assignments. For example, business administration and performing arts students collaborated on a project working with local schools. This involved arts students in writing a play to perform at the schools and business students making the arrangements, using a range of enterprise-related skills and their marketing knowledge. Students valued working with students from other subjects and the focus on developing enterprise-related skills, such as making presentations, communicating and working in groups. They said that as a result they felt more confident about communicating with employers.

12. Other examples of colleges promoting and supporting students' entrepreneurial aspirations include the following:
- Young Enterprise provision was a successful feature of one college where students were able to use the enterprise-related skills they had developed to set up small business activities and go on to develop their entrepreneurial capability.
 - In a college that held an annual *Dragons' den*-type activity, a successful group from the previous year which had gained a £1,000 start-up prize by demonstrating strong entrepreneurial capability was now successfully running a juice bar in the college.
 - In most of the colleges surveyed, work placements took place in a discrete block, but in one college this mode of organisation was deemed less effective, and instead students worked on live project briefs that involved direct liaison with employers and the production of real products or the pitch of real ideas including marketing strategies – for example, a book launch for a local author. This required students to apply knowledge and understanding from their vocational courses in business and graphics to a real business problem, and thus to develop very good enterprise-related skills.
 - Work-based projects for art, design and media students in one college led them to undertake real work briefs for local clients, including the production of websites, radio and television advertisements and poster campaigns. Such activities enabled students to develop their creative skills, use their initiative and also develop business and customer awareness. In another example, construction students completed community projects for local football teams, including building changing facilities and carrying out maintenance work at sports grounds. This provided them with opportunities

to respond to customer requirements, work as members of a team and manage their own time.

13. Planned provision to develop enterprise-related skills was available to all students and groups of students within a curriculum area and was related well to students' ability levels. Thus students from foundation through to advanced level had appropriately designed opportunities. In the case of the former, there was more focus on developing students' confidence and general employability skills.
14. As well as the two independent specialist colleges visited, inspectors explored discrete specific provision to develop enterprise skills for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in five other colleges. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities mainly involved providing opportunities to work in college enterprises or social enterprise contexts, for example by running a laundry (see the case study below); working in the college shop or café; running a second-hand goods shop; running a horticultural business that involved growing and selling flowers, plants and vegetables; eBay selling; or the production and sale of handcrafted gifts and cards. Such experiences contributed significantly to their independent personal and social development as well as promoting enterprise-related skills such as working in teams and problem-solving, because the businesses were run as commercial, profit-making enterprises where students were involved in making decisions and taking risks. A case study of an annual golfing event that promotes students' enterprise-related skills is provided below.

Undertaking experiential learning and gaining real business experience for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in a golfing event

An annual golfing event for about 150 participants at a local golf club provides an opportunity for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from an independent specialist college to develop and demonstrate a range of enterprise-related skills. The college students, with support from staff, manage and administer this very popular and successful event from start to finish, on behalf of a local business. The event involves students from a range of vocational areas, including customer service, administration, food service, catering and media.

Customer service students are responsible for meeting and greeting the players at the registration table. They ensure players register their attendance, receive their score cards, collect any outstanding payments and issue receipts. Students from administration prepare advertising materials, entrance forms, starter sheets, disclaimers, letters, score cards and confirmation booklets for the teams that have entered. They are also responsible for ordering the trophies from a local supplier. Students from food service and catering are responsible for the 'halfway house'. This involves them in making, preparing and serving refreshments to golfers

mid-way through their round of golf. Two students from the media course are responsible for taking 'action shots' of players. They print and frame the photographs and make them available for sale. Some of the photographs are also used to support the press coverage after the event.

All students are involved in continual problem-solving to ensure the day runs to plan and is successful. At the evening presentation, students are involved in organising the presentation of prizes and trophies by the competition sponsor. One of the students will also take responsibility for delivering a short speech to the golfers. The skills demonstrated during the preparation for the day, and on the day itself, are assessed and accredited and outcomes are high.

Undertaking experiential learning and gaining real business experience for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in a laundry

To provide opportunities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to work in a supported environment, the college operated a laundry facility where students washed and dried a range of items; for example, the towels from the hair and beauty salons, the kits from sports teams and sleeping bags from Duke of Edinburgh expedition activities. Within the laundry, students were encouraged to develop their numeracy, literacy and communication skills, for example through sorting, measuring and weighing. The college reported that it was saving £1,000 per month by processing its own laundry.

15. While all the vocational students surveyed had opportunities to develop their enterprise-related skills, opportunities to develop entrepreneurial capability were less well developed. Not all students, for example, had access to advice and guidance on how to set up their own small business. However, even where formal opportunities to develop entrepreneurial capability were less well developed, the colleges surveyed were able to provide many examples of students who used their enterprise-related skills to develop entrepreneurial capability and subsequently set up commercial and social enterprises.
16. On some of the courses surveyed, such as business, hair and beauty and sport, students typically benefited from a discrete module on setting up a small business or becoming self-employed. Success rates for these courses in these colleges were good or better, indicating the positive impact on student outcomes. In other contexts, students benefited from talks provided by employers and former students who had become self-employed. For example, a former level 3 sports student returned regularly to her college to discuss the issues she faced in setting up her own Taekwondo coaching company. Similarly, a former level 3 child development student who had taken over the ownership and management of a local nursery was a frequent visitor to the college to discuss the issues she faced in running her business. In one college, students had the opportunity to gain the Prince's Trust business start-up

qualification, and in another college, most students took a generic enterprise qualification that included dealing with the practicalities and challenges of being self-employed. Here the college recognised that, increasingly, more students were likely to start their own business than seek employment, and thus aimed to ensure that all students were developing their entrepreneurial capability.

17. In all the colleges, there were examples of subject tutors assisting those individual students who were keen to develop a particular business idea. One college had an entrepreneur in residence, a former student who runs a successful online jewellery business and comes into the college to work with students on their business ideas. In another, students were able to propose business ideas and, if successful in their applications, have them supported by the college. Examples included: a weekend car parking enterprise, which students are now paid to run, and a college loan provided to four students to enable them to set up an enterprise to buy and resell textbooks to fellow students. In addition to repaying the loan, each of the students committed to providing five days educational input into future learning at the college, including speaking to current students about their entrepreneurial projects. In another college, an emphasis on equipping students with the knowledge to start their own business was seen in media, where two students had been supported to run their own film company.
18. The sector subject areas that include construction and business are relatively lower-performing in terms of success rates across the further education sector. Inspectors explored the extent to which the promotion of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability featured in courses for 16–19-year-olds in construction and business.
19. Five colleges with construction courses indicated that while the qualifications their students gained equipped them with relevant industry-specific skills, for example, to build a wall or to plumb a bathroom, they did not traditionally provide them with sufficient opportunities to develop enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability. These colleges recognised that, increasingly, self-employment was becoming a popular option in the sector, with the consequent need to ensure students had the enterprise-related skills and the knowledge required to operate successfully in a self-employed context. As a result, all five colleges had introduced a range of strategies to address this gap in provision.
20. Two of the colleges had introduced employability or enterprise qualifications or units within the main qualification that focused upon developing enterprise-related skills and preparing students for self-employment. Three had introduced more opportunities for students to practise their skills in real work settings and to complete real-life building projects as a result of improved partnerships with social enterprise and community organisations. Yet another had developed particularly good links with industry and was working with several employers on a pre-apprenticeship scheme that was proving very successful in developing students' work-ready skills and enabling them to progress to an apprenticeship,

often with the company that had provided them with the work placement part of the pre-apprenticeship programme.

Working with the community to develop enterprise and employability skills within the construction curriculum

The college has developed several productive and beneficial links with local businesses, employers and community groups to enable students to develop enterprise and employability skills. A partnership with a local community sports club has been developed that enables construction students to put their skills into practice whilst working on a real-life project. Students have been involved in the design and construction of facilities and have gained valuable site experience. The project now extends to routine maintenance and other improvement work that enables students to enhance their practical skills and develop communication, project management, budgeting and organisational skills that enhance their employability. Other projects include beneficial working relationships with the local train station, where students are engaged in the design, construction and maintenance of benches and planters that are also offered for sale to members of the public.

21. Nine colleges offered students following business courses a unit about setting up a small business. This might suggest that business students are therefore well placed to develop enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability within their main course of study. This was often the case, but in practice the business students surveyed tended to have far fewer opportunities to work on live project briefs. However, such opportunities were enhanced, for example by the introduction of Young Enterprise-type activities that involved students in setting up and running real business ventures. Relevant and well-focused work placements provided opportunities for business students to develop enterprise-related skills. In two colleges where this was done particularly well, including appropriate preparation and debriefing, this enhanced students' skills considerably. In one college, students from art and design and business worked on a complementary project that blended designing art work with costing and marketing to provide a more realistic context for the development of enterprise-related skills.

Work experience for students on business courses

The college used dedicated college staff to coordinate work experience provision and to work with the local education business partner (EBP), which finds and vets all suitable work placements. Employers' first point of contact, for example in the case of complaints about students, is with the EBP, which in turn liaises with the college. Work experience takes place at different points in the year for each course. Students are fully prepared for their work experience as a result of programmes in each vocational area that stress the importance of appropriate dress, good communication,

time-keeping skills and other employability skills. This is done via discussion, role play and visiting speakers.

During the work experience period staff visit students and discuss their progress with students and with employers. Following each work experience, employers assess students, who engage in reflection and self-assessment, and teachers organise focus groups to enable students to share their experiences and explore the development of key employability skills. Students view their work experience as an important part of their course and recognise its importance in terms of providing them with opportunities to develop a range of skills. For example, one student talked about the confidence it gave them in dealing with customers, about learning how to diffuse potentially difficult situations, about how to negotiate, and about working in teams with people from very different backgrounds and viewpoints. Another spoke about how they overcame their fear of approaching a manager and eventually felt comfortable to ask their manager questions and seek clarification. All students were aware of how their work experience would enable them to write a more persuasive application for further and higher education.

22. While the 16–19-year-old students on the vocational courses surveyed generally had access to an excellent range of provision to promote their enterprise-related skills, this was not the case for all 16–19-year-olds. Students on non-vocational courses were not the focus of this survey, but evidence suggested that they did not have regular access to such provision. These skills, however, are relevant to all students, whether considering progression to employment and further training, to self-employment or to higher education.
23. The following example illustrates the approach of a college that is introducing a more innovative curriculum model to promote enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability.

Whole-college entrepreneurial and enterprise strategy

The college has responded to the national challenge of rising youth unemployment, and concerns raised by Professor Wolf regarding the quality of some vocational courses, by developing an entrepreneurial and enterprise strategy across college.³ This involves:

- curriculum: a new experiential model of learning for students which is project-based, active and online
- college employment and enterprise: employing and training students to meet business needs wherever possible

³ Review of vocational education (The Wolf Report), Department for Education, March 2011; www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00031-2011.

- creating and supporting college-owned and student-owned businesses
- adding value by utilising the opportunities available through local employers: students taking over running a business for a day; running events for employers; developing business ideas to a brief; using past students to support entrepreneurship in the current cohort
- developing its own workforce: ensuring staff develop their skills and expertise while being provided with the resources and support they need to succeed in delivering a refreshed and entrepreneurial curriculum through learning conferences and extended training.

In 2011/12, 24 courses are involved in the new model of delivery. The focus is on developing expert students with an entrepreneurial outlook. Over a 35-week year, students' learning is broken down into six-week 'packages' of team-based learning events which lead to a project or review week (green week), when students' learning is put to the test in an extended, team-based and employment-focused project. Teachers, learning mentors and coaches meet weekly to review progress and to ensure learning events are planned so that learning is sequential for the students rather than a series of disjointed units.

Projects usually include tasks that cover a range of subjects or units from awarding body qualifications. The projects are task orientated, experiential and include problem-based learning. They are student-centred, personalised, flexible, negotiated and designed to develop a range of enterprise-related skills and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate entrepreneurial capability.

The following are examples of activities during 'green week' that provided opportunities for students to develop enterprise-related skills.

Level 2 art and design students who developed a rap and accompanying video, which was then used as promotional material by the college marketing department.

Level 2 media students who worked in small groups with professional animators as part of a short film competition to produce a series of three animations for the Olympics.

Level 3 media students who worked with the NHS to produce a series of training videos that involved working with clients in a hospice. This was a very challenging piece of work where students developed not only enterprise-related skills, but learnt how to manage their emotions.

In 2012/13 the college plans to add 40 courses to the new model, further refining the existing 24. The college recognises the need for significant staff development and plans to support all staff to adopt new behaviours for experiential and entrepreneurial learning.

24. The following is an example of a college where the arts sector was having great success in promoting enterprise.

Developing enterprise-related skills in the arts and preparing students for employment

Managers and staff in the arts department, which includes art and design, performing arts, music technology and media production courses, recognised the need to ensure that a focus of the vocational qualifications on offer was to prepare students for employment as well as higher education. This was also in response to the changing nature of parents' questions when attending college open events – from questions about course content, such as 'What does the course include?', to questions about progression routes, such as 'Where will this course lead?'

Managers were also concerned about a possible perception that arts were a softer option and an area that did not lead to employment. Through a mapping exercise across the departments' assignments, managers and staff have been able to include opportunities for students to develop and practise important skills for future employability and ensure that these are present in every assessment. As a result, skills such as literacy, numeracy, IT and employability skills are embedded into learning and assessment.

Staff ensure that students have varied assessment tasks to reflect and meet the needs of employment; an increasing proportion of these tasks are 'live briefs' where students work to produce an actual end product within deadlines. For example, a magazine produced quarterly by advanced level creative media production students, and the college's radio station that broadcasts both within the college and online around the world. Around half the staff in the department are practising freelancers in a variety of related businesses. As such, they are able to support students well in developing their enterprise and entrepreneurial skills, drawing on their own professional experience and their network of industry contacts. Two companies have been set up as a result: an online games production collective formed by the staff and students of the advanced level creative media production/games development course, who design, produce and sell computer game applications for phones; and the college's music label that records, mixes and masters students' compositions.

Highly skilled staff who consistently promote enterprise in their teaching

25. Tutors in all of the colleges surveyed had high credibility with the employers interviewed. All had relevant skills and experience in previous job roles, many were current practitioners who ran their own businesses or worked freelance while working part time in college, and some were former students.

26. Teaching and learning in the vocational areas explored during the survey visits very effectively promoted enterprise-related skills. This was usually the result of:
- highly student-centred teaching and learning that encouraged autonomy, creativity and self-management: for example, students working in groups on a project, assigning their own job roles, making decisions about how to approach problems and meeting externally set deadlines
 - lessons that involved lots of group work, presentations, negotiation, problem-solving and industry-relevant activities
 - the use of role models and guest speakers from local businesses and former students
 - participation in high-profile industry-based, employer sponsored and internal competitions, particularly in fashion, hair and beauty, film, graphic design and catering
 - the completion of coursework assignments based on real-life projects
 - working in real environments, for example within college salons and restaurants which were indistinguishable from real business environments
 - highly skilled staff, often with expertise in relevant business contexts because of their own current freelance experience or the fact that they run businesses in their own right.
27. Examples of the interactive nature of teaching and learning observed included the following.
- Students on a 3D design course designed, with the principal and local architects, a new frontage for the college. Students created a range of designs, produced a final 3D model and presented this to an employer panel. Students on this course had already designed the new reception and refectory areas. As well as the design skills, students were developing their ability to make decisions, work as a team and meet customer requirements.
 - Agriculture students engaged in an investigative project that involved the redevelopment of a college beef enterprise, where the best proposals were presented to a panel that included the principal and college governors. This required students to consider not only the agricultural elements of the decision but also the financial and business implications, as well as requiring them to provide clear presentations using effective communication skills.
 - Science students explored, in teams, the source of an outbreak of food poisoning and had to decide the actions to be taken to limit the outbreak and the most effective means of communicating issues to the various stakeholders and to the public. This required highly effective teamwork and problem-solving, as well as a clear focus on communication issues.

28. A more detailed example of teaching and learning activities that promote enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in hospitality and catering is provided below. The teaching and learning activities identified in the case study are not uncommon in good hospitality and catering provision in any college, but they serve to illustrate well how students' enterprise-related skills are promoted through strong links with employers, by operating in industry-standard environments and by being involved in real work contexts.

Guest speakers provided valuable demonstrations and lectures to students. Staff had excellent contact with high-profile professionals. These included former students, TV personalities, Michelin star chefs and head chefs at prestigious hotels and restaurants – all of whom provided valuable insights into the industry for college students. Strong links with local employers in restaurants and hotels significantly enhanced the curriculum by enabling students to visit premises to undertake work placements and paid employment, and employers to visit the college and work with staff to train students. The college catering operations were run in-house and students produced and sold the majority of the items for sale in the college. Kitchens, refectories and the restaurant were run on a commercial basis with students having to work under strict time pressure and industry working conditions, including unsocial hours, as a normal part of their course. Staff had high expectations and promoted high standards of dress, hygiene and presentation. Menus were extensive and varied daily; working routines, shifts and tasks mirrored those in commercial premises. As part of developing a student learning company in hospitality and catering, the college offered external catering services to local offices, to businesses and for private functions such as weddings and birthdays. This enabled students to develop their enterprise-related skills and to have the opportunity to put these into practice in a real entrepreneurial context.

The college has plans to develop a number of learning companies that will involve students from each curriculum area managing all aspects of the company. This will provide valuable experience, enabling students to develop enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in real-life settings where they are involved in decision-making processes and will carry risk, while having the benefit of advice and guidance from the college.

29. The following example illustrates how well-focused professional development can encourage the promotion of enterprise in teaching and learning.

In one college, 'learner-led' teaching is a particular strength and is at the heart of its teaching and learning strategy. The college invests significantly in continuing professional development for teaching and learning and has developed an enterprise and employability skills teaching module that is a mandatory part of the teacher training course at the college. It also promotes learner-led teaching through a three-day residential staff

development course, which is designed to give teaching staff a structured opportunity to explore ways of helping students take responsibility for their own learning, supporting them in becoming creative thinkers and team players, and generally promoting enterprise and employability skills through their teaching activities.

Students are encouraged to learn through project work and activity-based learning where they are active participants. The college has also enabled 20 teachers to complete a professional development course where enterprise and employability skills are further developed and promoted. Teachers speak very highly of the staff development programme and many comment positively about the impact it has had on their teaching practice and on levels of student engagement and achievement. Students speak highly of the approach and many recall interesting and memorable activities they have completed, often when working on real-life projects. The impact of the college's approach has seen the proportion of good and better lessons increasing, as demonstrated by the internal observation process, and an increase in student satisfaction levels as reflected by perception surveys.

30. Additional examples of professional development evidenced during the survey include the following.
- Some staff development policies enabled tutors to apply for secondments to broaden and refresh their industrial skills, or stipulated a certain amount of time to be spent on vocational updates, providing opportunities to refresh the currency of tutors' teaching about enterprise in their specific vocational areas.
 - Lead teachers in each curriculum area (who had received training from external consultants) had responsibility for embedding enterprise, employability and entrepreneurial activity within their areas. Teachers' entitlement to professional development had a focus on enterprise, entrepreneurship and employability to enhance their teaching practice and improve their links with industry. Curriculum managers had key performance indicators set to measure progress in relation to this.
 - A management residential conference focused on developing the enterprise and employability strategy, including a session on learning to think like an entrepreneurial leader.
 - In hair and beauty, staff maintained their technical and employment currency as a result of various development opportunities, including working in salons; technical updating with visits to manufacturers and wholesalers; employer demonstrations on site; and attendance at supplier business start-up and management programmes. These activities contributed greatly to tutors' current experience and expertise in professional business practice. This knowledge was used well to promote the development of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in their students.

- In a land-based college, a formal professional development policy required staff to work in industry every five years. This was supplemented by excellent communication between staff running the commercial units and teaching staff; and teaching staff provided cover on the commercial units at weekends.
 - Staff were encouraged to gain further experience by shadowing practitioners in their specific fields. For example, in BTEC sports all staff had an opportunity to spend a day in an area they were unfamiliar with, such as working with a physiotherapist.
31. Survey evidence indicated that there were very good opportunities to share good practice within curriculum areas. However, cross-curricular opportunities to work together and share good practice were not a regular occurrence and as a result, the quality of students' experience in different curriculum areas varied more than would otherwise have been the case.

Strong employer links and industry-standard learning environments

32. All the colleges visited demonstrated very good engagement with employers. Partnerships developed with businesses were a significant contributory factor in the high quality of enterprise-related provision in these colleges. They provided very beneficial learning opportunities for students in promoting and developing their enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capabilities.
33. Involvement took the form of:
- provision of work placements to give students the opportunity to develop a wide range of enterprise-related skills in a real business context
 - employers and businesses working with colleges on live briefs to provide opportunities for students to engage in real problem-solving, to be creative and use their initiative, and to work as a member of a team
 - contributing to curriculum delivery by providing talks and demonstrations, for example former students explaining how they had set up their own business – with the rewards and the difficulties involved
 - evaluating the quality of provision and thus contributing to college self-assessment, for example by reviewing the extent to which courses developed relevant industry-required and enterprise-related skills
 - employer focus groups contributing to curriculum design and development, including contributing data and information so that assignments reflected real business issues.
34. Many of the partnerships seen involved former students either as business owners or representative employees. Partnerships included working with the local Chamber of Commerce and Young Chamber; the Prince's Trust; Young Enterprise; the Peter Jones Enterprise Academy; local education business

partners; sector skills councils and major professional bodies. In those colleges where provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was reviewed, strong links were also made with local social enterprise organisations. Most of the links evidenced during the survey were with local employers or community groups rather than with regional or national businesses or representative organisations.

35. The good links with local employers were in many respects beneficial both ways, with employers increasingly contacting colleges to request student input, for example in catering for an event; refurbishing a studio in a theatre; painting and decorating; front-of-house meeting and greeting requirements; designing a supplement for a local newspaper.
36. Although many partnerships were longstanding, they were usually developed at curriculum level and as a result of individual links between staff members and employers, businesses and community groups, rather than as a result of a whole-college strategic planning approach. As a result, business links, and their impact in enhancing the ability of colleges to promote enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability, were well developed in some areas but less so in others.
37. All the colleges visited had close links with businesses, employers and local community groups in relation to curriculum delivery, design and evaluation. Many of the case studies in this report exemplify how these strong links helped colleges to embed enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in the curriculum. Other examples included the following.
 - Highly productive links were formed with employers and other local organisations that resulted in good opportunities for students to be involved in real-work activities, helping them to develop a range of enterprise-related skills. For example, 3D design students completed a project to design community buildings for a local employer using sustainable and eco-friendly materials. This required them to develop and demonstrate a range of skills including teamworking, communication and numeracy skills, working to deadlines and meeting customer needs.
 - The Peter Jones Enterprise Academy provision in one college required approximately 50% of learning activities to be provided by employers and coordinated by the college. This included mentoring students in starting up and running their micro businesses in the level 3 qualification. Two mentors each invested £2,500 in the businesses of their students.
 - A recent post-16 enterprise conference in one college involved workshops and plenaries on the problems of start-up businesses, where local businesses presented their journeys as entrepreneurs. This was followed by workshops covering related issues.
 - In a media course there were strong links with a TV company that provided students with opportunities to learn how TV programmes were developed and produced and shadowing opportunities with professionals in their

specific areas of interest (whether writers, cameramen or producers). Industry professionals, including journalists, TV producers, advertising directors and special-effects make-up specialists visited the college to give talks, and students attended industry-organised events. Former students, now working in the media, were regularly invited to address students about their careers. This range of involvement enabled students to develop enterprise-related skills that were relevant to the particular industry.

38. Employers were highly complimentary about the facilities and courses offered by the colleges surveyed, the outward focus of colleges to meet their needs and the quality of work produced by students when commissioned for projects or on work placements. Local employers who had strong links with the colleges surveyed said they were happy to recruit directly from college students because they were confident of the training they received and the specific vocational and broader enterprise-related skills they developed on particular college courses. The following testimonies support this view.

- **The manager of a spa attached to a local leisure centre:** 'It is imperative that the staff I employ are reliable, self-motivated, and professional. Through my own experience and the recommendation of many others, I have come to find the college invaluable in the recruitment process. To date I have employed eight therapists and receptionists from the college. All of these students have proved to be confident, skilled, customer-focused. They are now all on full-time and part-time permanent contracts with the company. The college's beauty courses are designed to such a high standard and variety. The students leave as all-round competent therapists. By the time they come to us, there is very little more to do. I am so enthusiastic about working with the college that we now organise tours of the spa including a talk and demonstration of treatments. This is specifically for beauty students to give them an insight into a working spa environment; it enables me to thank the college and it gives me an opportunity to meet potential future staff.'
- **The manager of a local travel agency:** 'The college produces people who are employable. Students show initiative, are bright and have a very good work ethic. Students are literate, well presented, understand basic travel and tourism industry issues and have clearly been taught well about the basics of the travel and tourism industry.'
- **The manager of a local government department:** 'Students exceed expectations, take on challenges, are very willing and flexible. They demonstrate good employability skills, make a major contribution, take instructions, take the lead when required and are well prepared.'

39. The following examples indicate the value that employer engagement can bring to the development of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in, respectively, hair and beauty, hospitality and management, and whole-college provision.

The value of employer engagement for a hair and beauty course

Employer engagement is a vital component of the quality of provision and a key strategic aim for the college. College staff work hard to engage with employers and suppliers. The quality of the college's provision and the quality of students completing courses at the college have made it a centre of excellence which attracts the more progressive employers to update their own technical skills and to stay abreast of developments within the industry. This engagement is assisted by the work the college has done in engaging with its suppliers, who see the college as wishing to promote high-quality practice and to encourage students to use the best products on the market. Suppliers judge that they are investing in the salon owners of tomorrow and are keen to come into the college whenever they can to do technical updating for staff, students and local salons. Some of this work consists of developing students' consultation skills with the client, ensuring that they get the right information from the client, so that they are able to recommend the right products and services and thus meet or exceed clients' expectations. In this way, employer engagement is playing an important role in helping colleges to promote the enterprise-related skills of its students and, in particular, their business and customer awareness.

The value of employer engagement in a land-based college

Very good links with local farms and farming-related businesses exist as a result of a well-established 300-hour work experience programme for students. It involves family farms, where the owner may well have studied at the college and now their children study there; local businesses which see the college as a 'hub' for networking and an indirect means of marketing their businesses; links with businesses through crop trials on the farm or through machinery suppliers holding commercial exhibitions in the college's horse competition arena, which students attend; the college's centre for agricultural innovation, where conferences are held which include presentations on issues such as food retailing and innovations in husbandry, marketing, new technology and economic perspectives; and RSPCA freedom food accreditation for the farm livestock enterprises. The college is very active with Young Farmers and the local county show. Students also make visits to other farms and agricultural businesses to see enterprises the college does not, or could not, run and to see different resources and methodologies. Here, employer engagement ensures that students have opportunities to develop enterprise-related skills in a variety of different contexts that enable them to become confident practitioners with good business awareness.

Whole-college provision to promote enterprise-related skills

An enterprise week that includes the following events: business start-up information sessions; opportunities to pitch business ideas to experts; networking with the local chamber of commerce; opportunities to access business finance at an event coordinated by the local development agency; sessions by motivational speakers; Tenner Tycoon activities, where students, or groups of students, are provided with £10 which they need to grow via a business enterprise venture; a 'make your mark' business start-up competition.

A 'Be employable' week when more than 30 local employers came into the college offering individual advice, guidance and feedback (written and oral) to about 500 students on improving their CVs, letters of application and interview techniques, and promoting other skills in order to make them more employable. Students who attended the advice sessions found it very useful and commented as follows.

'It's nice to gain advice and guidance from a professional.'

'The person I saw was very informative and told me how I could improve my CV and covering letter. They seemed to be able to pick out exactly what was good about it and told me to expand it.'

'I had some advice on interview questions and we did a little interview, going through the type of questions you would usually be asked in an interview. I now feel I can improve my employability skills.'

Feedback from one of the employers taking part noted: 'There just aren't enough events like this in the area. They can only help us as employers, as we are helping tomorrow's workforce become more employable to us. It's fantastic to see a local college taking the responsibility to make their students more employable and give them an advantage in the future jobs market.'

40. For many of the sector subject areas inspected during the survey, learning took place in facilities and environments that modelled industry standards, providing students with experiences that reflected real employment situations. These gave students excellent opportunities to develop practical skills in a business/customer-focused environment. In hair and beauty and hospitality and catering in particular there is an expectation that in every college, courses should be offered in a way that emulates commercial standards. The following case study exemplifies this.

Real-work environments in hospitality and catering and in hair and beauty

The building is the college's commercial and leisure centre where students have the opportunity to work in real business settings. It is home to hair

and beauty salons, a restaurant and café, a sports centre and a travel agency, all open to the public. Part of a multi-million-pound development at one of the college's campuses, the salons and restaurants are staffed by college students, who have the opportunity to develop valuable enterprise-related skills during their periods of work experience. In the restaurant and bistro all the food is cooked by students, overseen by highly qualified and experienced chefs. The bistro is where new trainee chefs work, while more experienced students cook meals for the restaurant. The waiters who serve are also students who are learning the trade through real-life work experience. The bistro is open during the day from Monday to Friday and the restaurant is open at lunchtimes and on two evenings a week. As a result of high customer demand, plans are under way to open the bistro on Saturdays. High levels of customer demand expose students working in the kitchen and front of house to the commercial pressures they would face in a real working environment. Those on advanced-level courses have opportunities to supervise the work of other students to gain important managerial skills.

The salon and spa offer a wide range of treatments, including body massage, facials and manicures, by trained therapists. Treatments in the training salon, which are carried out by students under the guidance of skilled professional therapists, are offered at a reduced price. Facilities in the spa include a dry flotation tank, jacuzzi, steam bath and hydrobath, enabling students to gain the necessary experience to work in health spas as well as in beauty salons. The two hair salons are run on similar lines – one with qualified, experienced stylists, and a training salon where cuts and colouring by trainee hairdressers are offered at reduced prices. The graduate salons are open six days a week and on two evenings to 8pm, with the trainee salons open during term time. As in the hospitality and catering example above, it is the volume of clients that students have to deal with that exposes them to real commercial pressure. Students work their way up through the levels and through the training salons, with those demonstrating high-level skills being recruited into the graduate salons.

In both the above examples, students were routinely working in a real-work environment, with industry-standard facilities and a large volume of paying customers who had high expectations of the services they would receive – in terms of both quality and speed. As a consequence, and together with the work placements that provide students with further commercial experience and exposure to commercial pressure, students developed strong vocational knowledge, understanding and skills, as well as relevant enterprise-related skills that included communicating effectively, working as a member of a team, using their initiative and taking the lead, self-management, and business and customer awareness.

Outcomes for students

41. Data review and discussions with staff indicated that all colleges used the main qualification success rates as an implicit measure of their success in developing enterprise-related skills. Despite often very sophisticated and transparent tracking and monitoring systems to identify students' progress in relation to knowledge and understanding for the main qualification, this did not extend to explicit recording and monitoring of students' progress in developing enterprise-related skills.
42. Two colleges in the survey had systems in place to assess and record enterprise-related skills and others were actively developing systems. In one college, a 'college certificate' awarded on completion of the main course involved not only rigorous assessment in the main qualification, but additional assessment for specific industry-based skills qualifications and enterprise-related skills demonstrated during extensive work placements and practical work-related activities. In another college, a 'passport to success' was being developed that will include the assessment of enterprise-related skills. The following example illustrates a college where enterprise-related skills are formally mapped and assessed.

Enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability in arts courses

For students in the arts, developing enterprise-related and employability skills and entrepreneurial capability is an intrinsic part of their courses and their assessments. These skills have been mapped into their learning and assessments to ensure that students have the skills they need to progress to employment. In addition, since 50% of the staff in this area are on part-time contracts and most are active freelancers, they use their own personal experience in developing the arts students' entrepreneurial skills. Students are encouraged to promote their own work through setting up their own websites, hosting their work on other websites, and ensuring they keep a record of what they have accomplished through working on live briefs. Good examples of students working on realistic briefs to produce an actual product include the production of a quarterly student magazine and programmes for the college radio. Two companies set up to develop students' entrepreneurial skills include an online games production collective formed by staff and students of the level 3 creative media production/games development course, and the college's music label, where students record, mix and master the musical compositions of music technology and music practice students with the aim of developing future music industry business leaders.

43. Individual college data suggested that most students progressed to further or higher education, training or employment. Destination data about progression to, for example, higher education, was often very detailed in terms of which universities and which courses, and clearly provided colleges with good

information that might contribute to decisions about curriculum provision. However, destination data in relation to employment and self-employment was not collected systematically or in sufficient detail so that it could be used to identify trends or to inform evaluation of provision in relation to enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capacity.

44. The colleges surveyed assessed student outcomes in relation to enterprise-related skills using a variety of alternative measures, including functional skills success rates; apprenticeship outcomes; attendance and retention rates; employer feedback on students' work placements and involvement in work-related projects; and student feedback on courses. Furthermore, all were able to provide an extensive range of examples of former students who had successfully developed enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability, many of whom returned regularly to their colleges as role models and enterprise champions for current students. (See the case studies at the end of this section.) However, colleges were not able to show that those students who had access to provision for enterprise-related skills did better or, for example, were more likely to go into employment or self-employment, than those students on similar vocational programmes who did not. This was because colleges were not specifically monitoring progress in relation to enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability, and were not evaluating its impact on students' outcomes.
45. In 10 of the colleges, students undertook some form of short additional qualification to accredit enterprise-related skills. These included work skills, and employability or enterprise certificates. While these contributed to developing students' enterprise-related skills, such qualifications often did not differentiate for level or ability and hence were not always sufficiently challenging for all students.
46. In addition, most students studied a range of additional qualifications that supported and enhanced their main qualification. These included industry-based accreditation units; product-specific accreditation units; 'licence to work' qualifications such as health and safety and manual handling in construction; first aid, health and hygiene and food safety in hospitality and catering; pesticide application courses in agriculture; lifeguard qualifications and junior sports leadership qualifications in sport. Such additional qualifications and experiences added to students' confidence and contributed significantly to their employment prospects.
47. Extensive case study evidence was available of the success of individual students in developing enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability as a result of well-planned provision in the colleges surveyed. The following examples give a flavour of what young people of different abilities and in different curriculum areas can achieve with the right kind of support.

Case study of a student on a transition programme including developing skills for the catering industry

The student had originally attended a mainstream college to study catering, but did not get the specialist support for his condition (Asperger's Syndrome) that he needed to progress. He then moved to an independent specialist college, where he undertook a one-year transition programme, personalised to address his needs, to help him gain the skills and qualifications needed for a career in catering and to manage his anxiety about being in new situations – a skill crucial to his chosen career path. 'I used to feel nervous about everything – new people and new surroundings. I did not like working in different environments. But I loved college and felt more and more confident because of the support I received.'

The support involved not just a focus on developing his catering skills, but also broader enterprise-related skills so that he was able to confidently communicate, manage his time effectively, respond to change positively and work as a member of a team. Success followed success. The student completed his NVQ level 2 catering qualification in professional cooking three months early, gained a CLAIT (Computer Literacy and Information Technology) qualification and a level 1 in adult numeracy. He gained his qualifications as a result of his work in the college catering enterprises, and externally at a local pub and restaurant. He gained the full range of experiences needed to prepare him to move to paid employment in the catering industry, including a one-to-one fish filleting tuition session on Grimsby docks. The student then passed his driving test, which gave him even more independence, and college staff worked with him regularly to develop his confidence in driving unfamiliar routes. He gained the post of catering assistant with one of the college's partnership catering enterprises that provides meals and refreshments for staff on a local authority site.

Case study of a student on a creative media production course

The student attended an open event at the college in 2009 and joined the college in 2010. At interview it was recognised that he had a genuine interest in films and print-based journalism but very little experience of filming and editing moving images. At the start of the course he was shy and lacked confidence, but his confidence grew quickly as his skills developed. During the first year of his studies he undertook a range of assignments, each having an industrial context. This focus on the industry, coupled with a formal work placement at a local radio station, demonstrated to the student the importance of entrepreneurial capability. On progression to the second year, he acknowledged that in order to be successful in media (an industry dominated by freelance workers), he would need to be proactive and, in partnership with one of his peers, he developed his own business using the resources and support available in

college. Since setting up the business they have undertaken a number of successful work projects. The student is predicted to gain distinction level grades in the Extended Diploma and is applying for a place on a highly competitive degree course in cinematography.

Case study of a student on a construction course

The student is currently studying plumbing at college. His tutor referred him to the college's pre-NEET⁴ Back on Track project because of his lack of direction and the fact that he was experiencing peer pressure. As part of the programme he attended an induction where a motivational speaker, who was a former winner of *The Apprentice* TV programme, delivered a presentation explaining how he became successful by setting and working towards short-term and long-term goals and targets in all aspects of his life. This particular aspect of the induction was chosen because it fitted in well with the college's non-accredited training provision, GOALS UK. As part of the project, participants also took part in the GOALS UK's Motivation Programme, which challenges young people to think and behave differently. The programme is designed for 14–19-year-olds with a main focus on developing self-esteem and an overall sense of responsibility by encouraging participants to question and challenge themselves to consider career options and life goals. Young people leave the programme feeling empowered and well focused on the future. GOALS UK also arranged for a UK pop, R&B and hip-hop singer, who had been through the GOALS UK programme herself, to speak to the students about her experience of the programme and the difference it made to her life. The student said about his experience of attending the programme: 'The course helped to show me how to set myself targets and goals, which made me think how I could work out how to plan the steps I need to get to where I want to be in my career. Before the course, I would never have taken part in anything like this; this course has given me the push I needed to plan for my future.'

Case study of a student on an enterprise and entrepreneurship course

On the level 3 Enterprise and Entrepreneurship diploma course, one student developed a business idea that enabled small businesses to use a remote Sharepoint facility that provided document management services. Such a system would be too expensive for small businesses to provide for themselves, so the student's system acts as a host. The student pitched his idea to real business investors in a *Dragons' Den*-type activity and was successful in gaining a 30% investment stake in his business idea.

⁴ NEET refers to young people not in education, employment or training.

Case study of a student on a hairdressing course

The student originally attended the college one day per week while still at school as part of a 14 to 16 'increased flexibility' programme, and gained a level 1 qualification in hairdressing. She then joined the college full time to study for a level 2 qualification while attending a work placement one day per week to support her studies. As part of the process for gaining entry to level 3, she had to undertake a trades test in front of a number of employers. During her time at college she was very involved in cross-college and external events such as open evenings, careers events and entering competitions to develop her skills. In addition to her vocational qualifications, she achieved a variety of additional qualifications in work skills, teamwork and work-related topics which helped her to develop enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability. When she left college, she was given the opportunity to rent a chair in a hairdressing salon. She had the confidence and self-belief to accept the opportunity and has not looked back. Her clientele continues to grow and she is earning a good living.

Case study of a student on a beauty therapy course

The student had no prior experience of beauty therapy before starting on the course but had set out intending to become self-employed within the beauty industry. She began as a part-time student, completing level 2 by attending on two evenings per week. The next step was a level 3 in beauty therapy. She impressed her tutors with her willingness to perform treatments on clients and her motivation to pass her assessments. She maintained excellent progress on the course, developing the confidence and professionalism to work independently and to demonstrate competence in her practical assessments of clients. Her client care was exemplary. She secured a treatment room within a local hairdressing salon. Her business skills enabled her to produce and organise all the necessary equipment and resources needed for her beauty salon as well as continuing with her full-time qualification. Her entrepreneurial capability has enabled her to use her skills to advertise, promote and launch her new salon successfully.

Case study of a student on a graphic design course

A student who went on to study for a graphic design degree was awarded Young Mayor of Lewisham (2011); was a member of a social enterprise based in his local area; participated in local activities involving design projects in advertising, graphic design, illustration and fashion; worked as a part-time designer doing custom-printed T-shirt designs as part of his own social enterprise; was winner of a design competition (whose work was shown in the Houses of Parliament); and won a competition to design the logo for his borough council's new youth centre.

Notes

Two-day visits were made to 15 colleges between January and May 2012. The college sample included general further education colleges, specialist land-based colleges, sixth form colleges and independent specialist colleges. The colleges selected had been judged to be either good or outstanding for overall effectiveness in their most recent inspection. The vocational curriculum areas explored were determined in discussion with individual colleges and depended on their individual contexts and provision. In each case, visits to the colleges sought to establish good practice in the following areas:

- the quality of provision to promote the development of enterprise-related skills and entrepreneurial capability
- the impact of this provision on the quality of students' enterprise-related skills and their entrepreneurial capabilities and related outcomes
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in establishing high-quality provision in this area and ensuring that it resulted in positive student outcomes.

During the visits, inspectors engaged in a range of inspection activities, including:

- observation of teaching and learning activities
- reviewing learning outcome data, including destination, attainment, achievement, and monitoring and tracking data, where this was available
- reviewing case studies of current and former students who exemplified the positive impact of college provision in relation to enterprise-related skills, entrepreneurial capability and employability skills
- reviewing witness testimony from employers about the impact of college provision on student outcomes
- reviewing curriculum documentation, including schemes of work
- meetings with groups of students and individual students
- meetings with staff, including tutors, curriculum leaders and senior leaders
- meetings with employers, local business owners and former students (who might now be self-employed or run local businesses)
- reviewing curriculum documentation, including schemes of work.

Further information

Publications by Ofsted

Apprenticeships for young people (110177), April 2012;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110177.

Good practice in involving employers in work-related education and training (090227), October 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090227.

Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (100232), August 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100232.

Ofsted's good practice website area

For the last three years, Ofsted's good practice database for learning and skills has been hosted by LSIS on its Excellence Gateway. In March 2011, Ofsted launched its own online good practice database showcasing good practice across the sectors that Ofsted inspects and regulates; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/goodpractice.

The case studies are written by Ofsted's inspectors following a visit to the provider to investigate a lead about good practice, which has usually been identified during an inspection. A number of the examples on the website include documents supplied by the provider which can be downloaded and adapted. There are currently over 80 learning and skills examples, including four video case studies, illustrating effective teaching and learning in business administration, construction, hairdressing and engineering.

Other publications

Annual review of employment and skills, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2011; www.ukces.org.uk/publications/review-of-employment-and-skills.

Enterprising futures: the changing landscape and new possibilities for further education, Gazelle Global, 2012; www.thegazellegroup.com/gazelle-publication.php.

Learning to grow: what employers need from education and skills, Confederation for British Industry, June 2012;
www.cbi.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2012/06/further-progress-on-school-and-college-leaver-attainment-requires-radical-new-vision-cbi-pearson.

New challenges, new chances, further education and skills system reform, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011;
www.bis.gov.uk/Consultations/fe-and-skills-new-challenges-new-chances.

Annex A: Providers visited

General further education colleges

Barking and Dagenham
Bolton College
Cambridge Regional College
City of Sunderland College
Cornwall College
New College Nottingham
North Hertfordshire College
Oxford and Cherwell Valley College
South Devon College

Sixth form colleges

Queen Mary's College
St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College

Specialist land-based colleges

Bishop Burton College
Moulton College

Independent specialist colleges

Linkage Community Trust
RNIB College Loughborough