

# Evaluation of Increased Flexibilities for 14-16 Year Olds: Profile of Partnerships and Students 2002 and 2003

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National Foundation for Educational Research

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The Increased Flexibilities Programme (IFP) was introduced in 2002 by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The programme aimed to *'create enhanced vocational and work-related learning opportunities for 14-16 year olds who can benefit most'*. In order to achieve this, partnerships were formed between further education (FE) colleges and schools and, in some instances, other training providers and employers. Each partnership had a Lead Partner, which was usually an FE college, and the funding was channelled through Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) who also had responsibility for monitoring the process.

Partnerships were established in 2002 and the first cohort of Year 10 students embarked on their courses in September 2002. Subsequently, further funding was made available for a second cohort of Year 10 students who embarked on their courses in September 2003. The partnerships aim to raise the attainment of students who participate and increase their skills and knowledge, develop their social learning and increase retention in education and training after the age of 16. They are working towards a set of targets relating to achievement of qualifications, post-16 progression and attendance.

The DfES commissioned the NFER to undertake an evaluation of the first and second cohorts of IFP students. This summary is based primarily on the analysis of the details of schools and students who were participating in the second cohort of IFP. It also presents comparisons with the first cohort and with all Year 10 students in IFP schools and nationally. Around two-thirds of schools (63 per cent or 1,279 schools) provided details of 33,706 students who were participating in the second cohort.

## Key findings

- ♦ A total of 2,020 schools, special schools and PRUs were engaged in partnerships for the second cohort of IFP. This represents around 45 per cent of all state secondary and special schools in England. Most (1,520 schools) had also been involved in the first cohort and, although 237 schools were only involved in the first and not the second cohort, overall the number of participating schools had increased.
- ♦ Returns from 63 per cent of schools revealed that 33,706 students in Year 10 in 2003-2004 were participating in IFP. This represented around nine per cent of the Year 10 cohort in these schools. The average number of participating students in a school was 26. If this average was the same in schools that did not respond, then there would be around 53,000 students, in total, participating in IFP. This would represent nine per cent of all Year 10 students.

- ◆ The majority of students were taking their courses away from the school site. Most (64 per cent) attended a Lead Partner for at least one of their qualifications and 39 per cent attended other organisations, most of which were schools (30 per cent).
- ◆ Half of the students (50 per cent) were taking new GCSEs in vocational subjects, which was a noticeably smaller proportion than in cohort 1, when 58 per cent did so. Greater proportions were taking other VQs (24 per cent), NVQs (19 per cent) and GNVQs (11 per cent) than was the case in the first cohort.
- ◆ Students were working towards qualifications across a range of vocational areas. The most common areas were ICT, engineering and motor vehicles, and care and childcare. The proportion taking ICT-related qualifications was lower than in the first cohort and the proportion taking engineering was greater.
- ◆ The majority of students were taking one qualification through IFP: as was the case with the first cohort, nine per cent were said to be taking more than one qualification.
- ◆ Students across the range of ability were represented among the IFP participants. Overall, the attainment profile of the IFP cohort, in terms of attainment in end of key stage 3 assessments, was lower than that of their peers in IFP schools and nationally. This difference was more marked among students taking NVQs and other VQs, while the profile of those taking new GCSEs more closely matched that of all Year 10 students.
- ◆ The majority of a sample of around 6,000 students who were involved in the first cohort of IFP remained engaged with the programme at the end of Year 10. A total of 13 per cent had discontinued their qualification.

### **Aims of the evaluation**

These findings need to be seen in the context of the NFER evaluation as a whole, which aims to:

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

### **Profile of IFP partnerships**

Across the 47 LLSC areas, a total of 283 partnerships between schools, FE colleges, and other providers were involved in the second cohort of IFP. The Lead Partners were working with 2,020 schools comprising 1,900 secondary schools, 97 special schools and 21 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). This represented around 45 per cent of all secondary and special schools in

England. The majority of the schools (1,520 schools) had participated in the first cohort, while 500 were involved for the first time with the second cohort. A total of 237 schools whose students had participated in the first cohort, were not involved in the second cohort of new students. Overall, therefore, the number of schools participating in IFP expanded in the second year of the programme.

Around two-thirds of schools (63 per cent or 1,279 schools) provided details of the students who participated in the second cohort of IFP. This indicated that 33,706 students participated in these 1,279 schools.

On average, partnerships comprised eight schools and 132 students. This reflected the overall expansion from cohort 1 when partnerships comprised an average of seven schools. Within each school, around 26 Year 10 students in 2003-2004 were participating in IEP. This suggests that around one or two more students in a school participated in the second cohort compared to the first, when 24 students were involved, on average.

### **Profile of IFP schools**

The majority of schools that were involved in the second cohort of IFP were community comprehensive schools. Around half (51 per cent) were comprehensive to 18 while 43 per cent were comprehensive to 16. As was the case with the first cohort, compared to all schools in England, a slightly greater proportion of schools involved in IFP were comprehensive to 16. In addition, compared with all schools in England, a slightly smaller proportion of those participating in IFP were those with the highest attainment level, and a slightly greater proportion had high proportions of students who received free school meals.

### **Characteristics of the second cohort of IFP students**

Details of the students who were participating in the second cohort were provided by 63 per cent of all IFP schools. The details for 33,706 individual students from these 1,279 schools were matched to their records on the National Pupil Database (NPD)<sup>1</sup> which contained details of background characteristics and attainment in end of key stage 3 assessments. Analysis of the students' characteristics revealed that:

- ♦ Just over half (56 per cent) were male and just under half (44 per cent) were female. As was the case with the first cohort, males were slightly over-represented among IFP participants compared with all students nationally (50 per cent).
- ♦ More than 90 per cent of students were white (91 per cent), three per cent were Asian or Asian British, and two per cent were black or black British. Two per cent were of an 'other' ethnicity. White students were slightly

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<sup>1</sup> Overall, around nine per cent of students did not match to NPD. For some characteristics, data was missing for more students. Data on the characteristics of students includes students attending special schools, but not those attending PRUs.

over-represented among IFP participants compared with all students in Year 10 in 2003 (86 per cent), as was the case with the first cohort.

- ♦ English was the mother tongue of the majority of students, while for five per cent English was an additional language. A smaller proportion of IFP participants had English as an additional language compared with all students nationally (nine per cent).
- ♦ Around a fifth (22 per cent) of students received free school meals compared with 16 per cent of all students nationally.
- ♦ Most students (70 per cent) were not on the register of SEN, compared with 82 per cent of all students nationally. Six per cent of IFP students had a statement or statutory assessment, compared with four per cent nationally, and 24 per cent were recognised for 'school action' or 'school action plus' compared with 14 per cent nationally.
- ♦ Students across the ability range were represented among the IFP cohort. Around half of the students had achieved level 5 or above in their end of key stage 3 assessments in each of the core subjects. More specifically, 56 per cent attained level 5 or above in mathematics, 53 per cent had done so in science and 52 per cent achieved level 5 or above in English. Overall, the profile of students who participated in IFP indicated that they had lower attainment at the end of key stage 3 compared with students nationally, where around 70 per cent of students attained level 5 or above.

Students who were participating in IFP appeared, therefore, to differ from their peers in Year 10 nationally, and in IFP schools, in many characteristics. In most respects, these differences reflected those found between the first cohort of IFP students and their peers. However, comparisons of the first and second cohorts of IFP participants reveal that a smaller proportion of students in the second cohort was recognised for SEN 'school action' or 'school action plus' (24 per cent) than was the case among the first cohort (27 per cent).

### **Qualifications undertaken by the second cohort of IFP students<sup>2</sup>**

Half of students (50 per cent) who were participating in the second cohort of IFP were undertaking new GCSEs in vocational subjects. Just under a quarter (24 per cent) were taking other VQs and 19 per cent were taking NVQs. Eleven per cent were working towards GNVQs. A smaller proportion of students in the second cohort were taking new GCSEs than was the case in the first cohort (58 per cent) and correspondingly greater proportions were taking NVQs, other VQs and GNVQs. This change was particularly marked among those taking Applied ICT GCSE which was taken by 12 per cent of students in the second cohort compared with 18 per cent in the first. Most qualifications other than new GCSEs were level 1 qualifications, although ten per cent of students were taking level 2 qualifications.

The new GCSEs in Applied ICT (12 per cent) and Health and Social Care (11 per cent) were the most widely taken qualifications, followed by the new GCSEs in Engineering, Leisure and Tourism and Applied Business. NVQ

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<sup>2</sup> Students could be taking more than one qualification. Percentages should not, therefore, be totalled.

level 1 Hairdressing was the most widely taken NVQ, as was the case with the first cohort, and the Foundation Construction award was the most frequently studied other VQ. Intermediate level ICT was the most common GNVQ studied.

Some differences emerged between students taking different types of qualifications. Males were slightly over-represented among those taking other VQs and females slightly over-represented among those taking new GCSEs. Students of Asian and Asian British heritage were slightly over-represented among those taking new GCSEs and GNVQs and slightly under-represented among those working towards NVQs and other VQs. Those of black and black British background were slightly over-represented among those taking other VQs and slightly under-represented among those taking NVQs and new GCSEs in vocational subjects. In addition, students on the SEN register were slightly more likely to be taking NVQs and other VQs and less likely to be taking GNVQs. Students who were taking new GCSEs appeared to have higher attainment levels, and their profile of attainment more closely matched that of all Year 10 students than those who were working towards NVQs and other VQs.

The qualifications which students were working towards represented a wide range of vocational areas. As was the case with the first cohort of IFP participants, the most common vocational areas remained ICT (20 per cent), engineering and motor vehicles (18 per cent) and care and childcare (14 per cent). However, the proportion engaged in the ICT area was smaller than in the first cohort, perhaps reflecting the change in the proportions taking Applied ICT GCSE noted above. Other areas where smaller proportions of students were taking qualifications included administration and business, and sports, leisure and tourism. Greater proportions of students in the second cohort were involved in engineering and motor vehicles, care and childcare, construction and hair and beauty courses.

As was the case with the first cohort of IFP participants, some vocational areas were dominated by one gender. For example, most students in the hair and beauty, care and childcare and animal care areas were females. Most in the construction, engineering and motor vehicles, manufacturing and land-based areas were male. Most areas were not dominated by one gender, however, including administration and business, catering and ICT. Students who were pursuing courses in the ICT and administration and business vocational areas were more likely to have achieved higher levels in their end of key stage 3 assessments and were less likely to be recognised for action on the register of SEN. Those who were engaged in the land-based, construction, catering and animal care areas tended to be those who achieved less well at key stage 3 and were more likely to be recognised for action on the register of SEN.

Nine per cent of students were said to be taking more than one qualification through IFP (as was also the case with the first cohort). In general, these students appeared to be working towards qualifications in more than one vocational area, one of which was often ICT. However, there were a number

of cases of students taking more than one qualification in the same subject area, notably in engineering and motor vehicles, or construction .

### **Location of study for the second cohort of IFP participants**

The majority of students attended a Lead Partner organisation to pursue their IFP qualification. A total of 39 per cent attended other organisations, which included schools (attended by 30 per cent of students), colleges which were not Lead Partners (six per cent of students) and other providers, such as training providers and employers (three per cent). A smaller proportion of students in the second cohort attended a Lead Partner while slightly more appeared to attend a non-Lead Partner college. Most of the students (75 per cent) who were working towards their IFP qualification at school were studying new GCSEs in vocational subjects and those studying at a Lead Partner or other college tended to be taking NVQs and other VQs.

### **Achievements and discontinuation of the first cohort at the end of Year 10**

A total of 219 schools provided details of the extent to which a sample of 6,112 students in the first cohort of IFP (Year 10 in 2002-2003) had achieved or discontinued the qualifications which they were taking through IFP by the end of Year 10. It should be noted that students embarked on a two-year course and, in most cases, would not be expected to have achieved their qualifications by the end of Year 10.

The majority of these 6,112 students remained involved in IFP at the end of Year 10. One per cent of this sample of students (72 individuals) were said to have achieved qualifications by the end of Year 10. A similar proportion (one per cent or 71 students) had changed from the qualification which they had originally embarked on to an alternative vocational qualification in the course of Year 10. A total of 13 per cent had discontinued their involvement with IFP.

Students who had discontinued their qualifications and not embarked on an alternative course had done so across the three terms of the school year, and so discontinuation did not appear to be clustered in the first term. Most schools and Lead Partners in the sample had experienced at least one student discontinuing, which suggests that students discontinuing courses was not likely to be attributed to the characteristics or approach of a particular partnership.

### **Research methods**

The findings presented in this summary are mainly based on:

- ♦ The baseline data collection exercise for the second cohort of IFP participants (Year 10 in 2003-2004) which was undertaken in the 2003 autumn term. This collected details of schools and students that were participating in the second cohort.

- ♦ The revised baseline data collection exercise for the first cohort of IFP participants (Year 10 in 2002-2003). This included schools which responded after January 2003.
- ♦ The achievement and discontinuation of qualifications taken through IFP by a sample of 6,112 students in the first cohort.

The details for schools were matched to NFER's Register of Schools, and details for students were matched to the National Pupil Database, which contain background information on schools and students.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents a profile of the partnerships between schools and colleges which were formed to deliver the Increased Flexibilities Programme (IFP) to Year 10 students in 2003. It outlines the characteristics of the students who were participating and the qualifications they studied. This is the second cohort of students participating in IFP and comparisons with the first cohort are provided throughout.

## 1.1 Background

In 2002, the Green Paper: *14-19: extending opportunities, raising standards* set out a proposal to increase curriculum flexibility in order to enable pupils to learn at a pace which is appropriate to them and to pursue individually focused programmes to help them to meet their potential. The Green Paper also announced the introduction of new GCSEs in vocational subjects. These eight new qualifications are intended to provide young people, whose needs have not fully been met by the National Curriculum, with an opportunity to achieve 'vocational' qualifications, that have parity of esteem with existing 'academic' qualifications.

In response to the Green Paper, the Increased Flexibilities for 14-16 year olds Programme (IFP) was introduced in 2002. This is an £80 million programme which aims to '*create enhanced vocational and work-related learning opportunities for 14-16 year olds of all abilities who can benefit most*' including through undertaking GCSEs in vocational subjects. The IFP is delivered through partnerships which comprise a 'Lead Partner', the majority of which are further education (FE) colleges, partner schools and, in some instances, other training providers and employers. Funding to support these partnerships is channelled through Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) who also have responsibility for monitoring the process.

Partnerships were established in 2002 and the first cohort of Year 10 students embarked on their two-year courses in September. Subsequently, further funding was made available for a second cohort of students to become involved in the IFP from September 2003. A total of 283 partnerships have been formed to deliver IFP to students in both cohorts and to fulfill the objectives of the IFP which are to:

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

The partnerships are working towards a set of targets that are as follows:

- ♦ one-third of the young people involved in IFP should gain at least one GCSE in a vocational subject at level 2
- ♦ one-third of students should gain at least one NVQ at level 1
- ♦ three-quarters of IFP participants should progress into further education or training
- ♦ attendance rates of the young people involved should match that of the average key stage 4 cohort.

The DFES commissioned the NFER to undertake a national evaluation of the first cohort of IFP to examine the extent to which these aims and objectives were being met. This was subsequently extended to include the second cohort of participants.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The evaluation aims to:

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

The research methods which contribute to the elements of the evaluation presented in this report are outlined below.

This report presents the findings from two elements of the evaluation:

- ♦ The baseline data collection exercise for the second cohort of IFP participants (Year 10 in 2003-2004).
- ♦ The achievement and discontinuation of qualifications taken through IFP by a sample of around 11,500 students in the first cohort (Year 10 in 2002-2003).

In addition, the revised baseline data for the first cohort, which includes schools who provided information after January 2003, is presented for comparison.

Further details are provided below.

## 1.3 Research Methods

### 1.3.1 Baseline data collection for the second cohort

At the beginning of the autumn term 2003, each Lead Partner was provided with a list of the schools which they had identified as being involved in the first cohort of IFP. They amended this list to indicate any schools that were not involved in the second cohort and identified any new schools which had become involved. New Lead Partners indicated all of the schools with whom they were working in partnership. All Lead Partners provided this information and identified a total of 2,020 schools which were participating in the second cohort. This information was matched to the NFER's Register of Schools which contains background information relating to schools. Details of these schools, and the differences between those involved in the first and second cohorts, are presented in Chapter 2.

Schools were asked to provide details for each student in the second cohort (Year 10 in 2003-2004) in their school who was involved in IFP. In a repeat of the exercise undertaken with the first cohort, schools were asked to detail individual students':

- ◆ name
- ◆ date of birth
- ◆ Unique Pupil Number (UPN)
- ◆ qualification(s) which they were studying through IFP
- ◆ location where they studied their IFP qualification.

Common qualifications were listed on the form with a code number for teachers to enter. Full details of the type, level and title of any qualifications not listed were requested.

The data collection exercise was undertaken between September and December 2003. A total of 1,279 schools, or 63 per cent of all those participating in the second cohort, responded and provided details of 33,706 Year 10 students who were participating in IFP. This information was matched to the individual students' records held on the National Pupil Database (NPD) which contained details of students':

- ◆ sex
- ◆ ethnicity
- ◆ mother tongue
- ◆ stage on the register of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- ◆ receipt of free school meals
- ◆ attainment in the key stage 3 assessments

Analyses of the characteristics of students who were participating in the second cohort of IFP, and comparisons with those in the first cohort are provided in Chapter 2. Details of 29,990 students in 1,282 schools in cohort 1 were provided in 2003. This represented 73 per cent of all schools involved in the first cohort. In addition, comparisons with students in Year 10 in IFP schools and all students in Year 10 nationally are presented. Details of the qualifications studied by the second cohort of IFP participants, comparisons with their peers in the first cohort and with all Year 10 students are provided in Chapter 3.

It is worth noting that the findings in this report reflect the information provided by Lead Partners and schools. As such, it is based on their understanding and interpretation of involvement in IFP in autumn 2003 and there may be students who are contained in this dataset who were not engaged in courses which were funded through IFP. This may be due to school staff identifying students who were involved in other, similar provision. For example, in the survey of the first year, 53 per cent of schools and 76 per cent of colleges indicated that they were involved in partnerships to support vocational learning other than through IFP. In addition, most Lead Partners and around half of schools have made use of additional funding sources to support IFP.

Furthermore, in exploring the findings, it is worth considering that a range of models and approaches have been adopted by IFP partnerships to support the delivery of vocationally-related qualifications at key stage 4. For example, the evaluation of the first year found that models of delivery of IFP varied between and within partnerships, and between and within schools. Approaches included delivery entirely in college by college staff, delivery shared between college and schools by both college and school staff, delivery entirely within school by college tutors or entirely within school with college support.

Finally, the data is based on responses from just under two-thirds of schools. This represents the majority of schools that were involved in the second cohort of IFP and the schools that responded appear to be representative of all schools involved in IFP, as outlined in Appendix A. However, the data is not comprehensive and should not be viewed as a 'census' of all schools and students who were participating in the second cohort.

### **1.3.2 Achievement and discontinuation of qualifications of the first cohort**

A representative sample of 11,500 students who were involved in the first cohort of IFP was drawn from the baseline dataset collected in autumn 2002. This sample of students, and their associated 446 schools and 89 Lead Partners, form the sample partnerships for the ongoing evaluation.

In summer 2003 and autumn 2003, each of the 446 schools were asked to provide details for the IFP cohort in their school of:

- ◆ students' attendance for the preceding terms
- ◆ whether students had discontinued their IFP qualifications and, if so, whether they had embarked on an alternative qualification through IFP
- ◆ whether students had achieved the qualification they were taking through IFP.

A total of 219 schools (49 per cent of all 446) provided details for a total of 6,112 students in all three terms. As discussed in Chapter 4, this sample of students was broadly representative of all IFP participants although a slightly smaller proportion were on the register of SEN. The findings relating to the achievement and discontinuation of IFP qualifications among this sample of the first cohort are presented in Chapter 4.

## 1.4 Structure of the Report

**A profile of the schools and students that participated in IFP is presented in Chapter 2.** It details the structure of the partnerships in terms of the numbers of schools and students involved and explores the extent of any change from the first cohort. The overall profile of participating schools, and comparisons with all schools in England and with schools in the first cohort are provided. Finally, this chapter explores the characteristics of students who were participating in the second cohort and investigates any differences between this group and all students in Year 10 in IFP schools and all Year 10 students nationally. Comparisons with the first cohort are also provided.

**Chapter 3 examines the qualifications which students in the second cohort were pursuing through IFP,** including the types, levels and subject areas, and compares these with those taken by the first cohort of IFP participants. Any notable differences in the characteristics of students pursuing different qualifications are explored. Details of the types of locations where students undertake these qualifications are presented.

The first cohort of IFP participants are the focus of **Chapter 4 which explores the extent to which students had achieved or discontinued their qualifications at the end of their first year of involvement.** It examines the extent of any relationship between the achievement or discontinuation of qualifications and the characteristics of the students, the qualifications they studied or the location of study.

The **main differences between the first and second cohorts** of IFP participants are summarised in the **final chapter** and the main conclusions and implications are presented.



## 2. IFP PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS: 2003 AND 2004

### Key Findings

- ◆ There was an overall increase in the number of schools involved in the second cohort. A total of 263 new schools became involved in IFP. However not all schools continued their involvement in IFP. A total of 237 schools were involved in the first cohort but did not participate in the second.
- ◆ More students were involved in the second cohort of IFP than had been involved in the first.
- ◆ Partnerships consisted of an average of eight schools and 132 students. In each school, an average of 26 students participated. This was two more than was the case in the first cohort when the average was 24 students.
- ◆ Community schools and those which were 11 to 16 schools were slightly over-represented among those involved in the second cohort of IFP compared with the profile of all schools nationally. This reflected the profile of the first cohort of IFP schools.
- ◆ A smaller proportion of schools which were involved in the second cohort of IFP were those with the highest attainment compared with all schools in England. IFP schools were also more likely to have higher proportions of students who received free school meals than all schools.
- ◆ As was the case with the first cohort, male students were over-represented among the IFP cohort. Students who were of ethnic backgrounds other than white were slightly under-represented, compared to the profile of ethnicity in IFP schools as a whole.
- ◆ In both cohort 1 and 2, a greater proportion of students received free school meals than was the case among their peers.
- ◆ A greater proportion of students in both cohort 1 and 2 were recognised for action on the register of SEN, or were statemented, than was the case among Year 10 students as a whole. However, the proportions who were recognised for school action or action plus was smaller in the second cohort than in the first.
- ◆ Students across the full ability range were represented in both cohorts of IFP. However, overall, IFP students had attained less well at key stage 3 than their peers or all students nationally. This difference was more marked among students who were pursuing NVQs, GNVQs and other VQs while than those taking new GCSEs in vocational subjects.

This chapter presents a profile of the Cohort 2 IFP partnerships and the schools and students that participate in these partnerships. It outlines:

- ♦ the structure of the partnerships in terms of the number of schools and students participating and compares this with the structure of the first cohort.
- ♦ the characteristics of the schools which were participating in the second cohort compared with all schools in England.
- ♦ the characteristics of the students who were participating in the second cohort of IFP and explores the extent of any difference between these students and those in the first cohort.
- ♦ comparisons between IFP participants and their peers in Year 10.

## **2.1 Profile of IFP Partnerships**

In addition to the existing partnerships which had been involved in the first cohort of IFP, 14 new partnerships were formed in response to the announcement of funding for a second cohort of students. This, in addition to the merging of some colleges and therefore partnerships, resulted in a total of 283 partnerships which were involved in the second cohort of IFP. The partnerships were located in the 47 LLSC areas with an average of six partnerships in each area, though across all areas there was a range of one to 13 partnerships. The IFP is a national programme and the number of participating schools and partnerships in an area will be influenced by the geographical context. For example, a partnership in an inner city area will have potentially greater numbers of schools to engage with than a partnership in a more rural area.

The partnerships indicated that they were working with 2,020 secondary schools which included special schools (97 schools) and Pupil Referral Units (21 PRUs). Partnerships which were involved in the first cohort of IFP worked with 1,757 schools which indicates that 263 more schools were participating in the second cohort of IFP. Further analysis revealed that:

- ♦ 1,520 schools were involved in both cohorts of IFP
- ♦ 500 new schools became involved in the second cohort
- ♦ 237 schools were involved in the first cohort but not the second cohort of IFP.

This indicates that most schools had continued their involvement and, although some had discontinued, there was an overall increase in the number of participating schools.

A total of 112 partnerships had worked with at least one school which was involved in the first but not the second cohort of IFP and this experience does not, therefore, appear to be isolated to a few partnerships. In addition, there

did not appear to be any noticeable common characteristics among the schools who were not involved with the second cohort. For example, they were not noticeably more likely to be comprehensive to 18. The reasons why schools discontinued their involvement are unclear. Preliminary findings from the case-study visits, where two schools had not continued their involvement, suggest that this was due to the distance to travel to the college and developing approaches to delivering new GCSEs in schools.

Just under two-thirds (63 per cent) of schools provided details of Year 10 students who were participating in the second cohort of IFP. This indicated that a total of 33,706 students participated in these 1,279 schools. The number of students was greater in the second cohort than the first when 29,990 students were involved in 1,282 schools (73 per cent of IFP schools).

More specifically, it appears that:

- ◆ Lead Partners worked with an average of eight schools and this ranged from one to 24. In the first cohort, partnerships worked with an average of seven schools suggesting that partnerships were working with one more school each, on average.
- ◆ A total of 223 schools were listed as members of more than one partnership. Fourteen of these were members of three or more partnerships. However, of the 159 schools which provided information about students' location of study, only 74 indicated that their students actually attended more than one partnership.
- ◆ Each Lead Partner supported the vocational learning of an average of 132 students. This ranged from two to 1,129 students<sup>3</sup> and the large number may inflate the overall mean. The median number of students involved with a Lead Partner was 97. Both of these averages indicate an increase in the number of students participating in IFP, as might be expected given the overall increase in the number of schools and students participating, noted earlier.
- ◆ The mean number of students participating in a school was 26 and the median was 15. The number ranged from one to 249. In 2002 the mean was 24 and median 14 which suggests that schools had an average of one or two more students involved in the second cohort.
- ◆ If the average number of students in a school is applied to the 741 schools who did not return details of their participating students, it could be argued that between 11,115 and 19,266 additional students could be participating in IFP. In total, there could be between 45,000 and 53,000 Year 10 students participating in the second cohort of IFP. This would represent between eight and nine per cent of all 598,883 Year 10 students nationally.

The profile of the partnerships suggests that, overall, Lead Partners had sought to expand the number of schools and students whom they supported through

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that not all schools in a partnership will have returned data and that missing data may influence these figures

the second cohort of IFP. Within a school, however, the number of students who were participating in IFP increased only slightly and the median cohort size in a school remained less than an average class size. The small size of the cohort in a school was noted as having implications for the timetabling of cohort 1 in some case-study schools but schools and partnerships do not appear to have sought to address this through increasing the size of the cohort. This may be related to the amount of funding provided which remained the same for the second cohort as the first.

As was the case in the first cohort of IFP students, there appears to be some considerable variation in the numbers of students who were reported to be participating in IFP partnerships. It is worth noting that, as school staff were asked to identify the students who were participating in IFP, those named will reflect their interpretation and understanding of 'involvement'. Indeed, evidence from the case studies suggests that some colleges offer a range of vocational opportunities for school-age students and that school staff are not always aware of the funding stream which supports their students. Moreover, the evaluation of the first year of IFP found that most Lead Partners subsidised the IFP funding through a range of means. In some cases this may have enabled additional students to be supported. Therefore it is not possible to state conclusively that all of these students were involved in IFP-funded activities. However, all but two per cent were known to be pursuing a vocational qualification. The range in the numbers of students may reflect different approaches to delivery. For example, as will be seen in Chapter 3, around 27 per cent of students attend a school to pursue their IFP qualification which would enable larger group sizes to be supported than is the case in specialist college workshops.

## **2.2 Profile of IFP Schools**

The profile of schools that were participating in the second cohort of IFP differed from all schools in certain respects. These included that they were slightly more likely to be community schools and comprehensive to 16. In addition, a slightly smaller proportion were among schools with the highest attainment and a slightly greater proportion had high proportions of students who received free school meals. These differences are discussed further in this section. It should be noted that the special schools and PRUs were excluded from this analysis because of the disproportionate affect that they had on certain variables such as attainment at key stage 3 and SEN status.

As was the case with the first cohort, schools across the nine Government Office Regions were represented and there was no notable difference between the geographical profile of schools involved in the second cohort of IFP and all school nationally. However, schools located in London were slightly under-represented as ten per cent of schools involved in the second cohort of IFP were located in London while nationally, 13 per cent of schools are in London. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 present the school governance categories and school types of those involved in each cohort of IFP and nationally in 2003.

**Table 2.1 School governance: IFP schools and all schools**

School governance	IFP schools 2002 %	IFP schools 2003 %	All schools 2003 %
Community school	74	71	64
Foundation school	12	13	16
Voluntary-aided school	11	13	16
Voluntary controlled school	3	3	3
City Technology College	<1	<1	1
Academy	-	<1	<1
<b>N =</b>	<b>1,663</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>3,132</b>

Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data 2002 and 2003 and NFER Register of Schools  
All secondary schools excluding special schools and PRUs  
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

It appears that, as was the case with the first cohort of IFP, there was a slightly greater proportion of Community schools participating in IFP partnerships than are represented among all schools and slightly fewer Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools.

**Table 2.2 School type: IFP schools and all schools**

School type	IFP schools 2002 %	IFP schools 2003 %	All schools 2003 %
Comprehensive to 16	43	43	39
Comprehensive to 18	51	51	49
Other secondary	1	1	1
Grammar	<1	-	5
City Technology College	<1	<1	1
Secondary Modern	5	4	4
<b>N =</b>	<b>1,663</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>3,132</b>

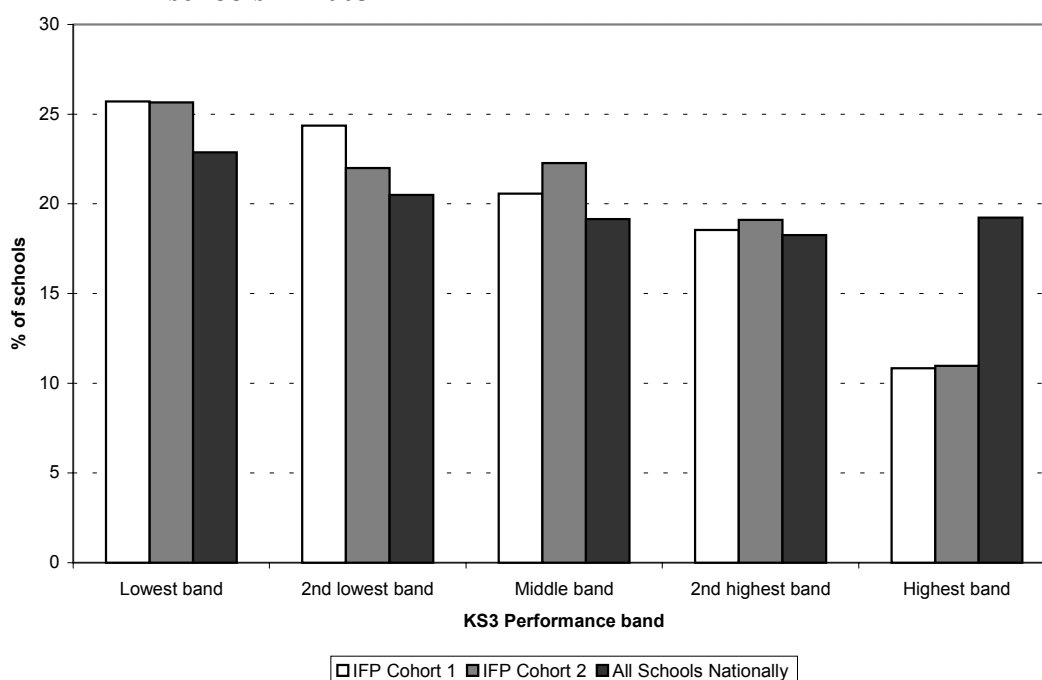
Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data 2002 and 2003 and NFER Register of Schools  
All secondary schools excluding special schools and PRUs  
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Few differences emerged in the profile of the types of schools involved in IFP compared with all schools nationally although, as was the case with the first cohort, a slightly greater proportion of schools involved in IFP partnerships were comprehensive to 16. In addition, none of the three Grammar schools which were said to be involved in the first cohort, were involved in the second.

Schools which were involved in the first cohort of IFP differed from all schools in terms of their average attainment at key stage 3. They were more likely to be those in the lower attaining bands and less likely to be in the

higher attaining bands. A similar pattern emerged among schools involved in the second cohort, as demonstrated in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1 Performance at key stage 3: IFP schools in 2002 and 2003 and all schools in 2003**

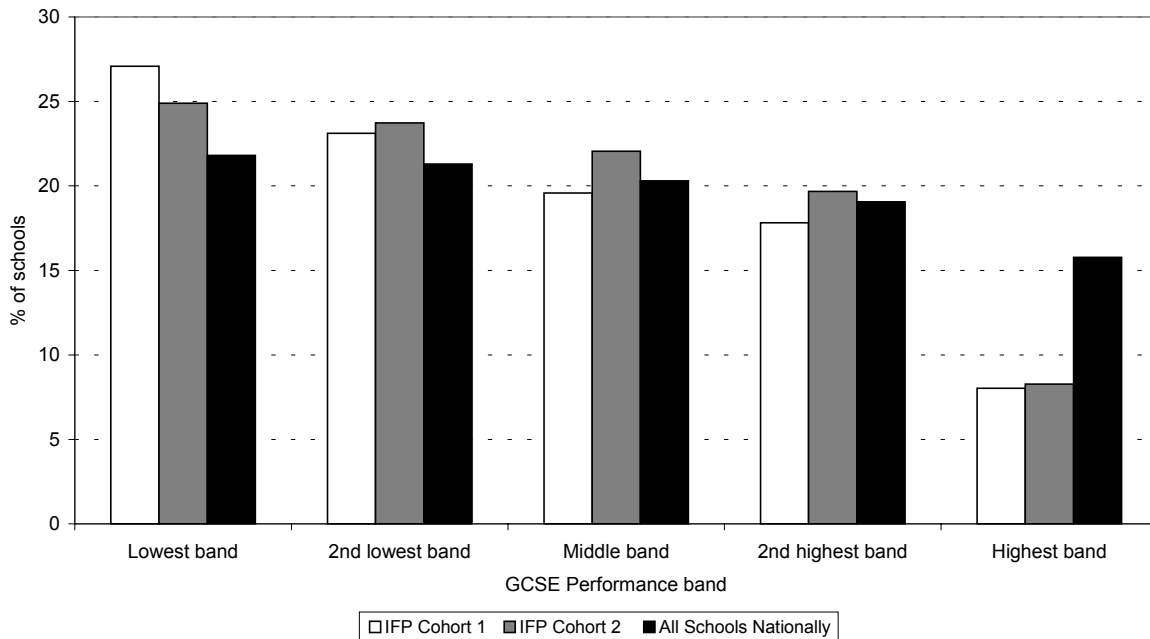


Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data 2002 and 2003 and NFER Register of Schools All secondary schools excluding special schools and PRUs

The figure reveals that greater proportions of IFP schools in both cohorts were represented among the lowest achieving band than all schools and correspondingly smaller proportions were represented among schools in the highest achieving band. Slightly more schools that were involved in the second cohort of IFP were in the middle band of attainment, than was the case in the first cohort, and slightly fewer were in the second lowest band.

A similar profile emerges when the GCSE attainment of schools is considered, as illustrated in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2 Performance at GCSE: IFP schools in 2002 and 2003 and all schools in 2003**



*Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003 and NPD 2002 and 2003 All those for whom data was available on NPD*

As can be seen, IFP schools in the second cohort have a similar profile to those involved in the first cohort in terms of their GCSE attainment bands. Compared to all schools nationally, a slightly greater proportion of schools involved in the second cohort were represented in the lower attainment bands (25 per cent in the lowest and 24 per cent in the second lowest compared with 22 per cent and 21 per cent respectively nationally) and a smaller proportion were in the highest band for attainment at GCSE (eight per cent of IFP schools compared with 16 per cent nationally).

Schools that were involved in the second cohort of IFP differed slightly from all schools in terms of the proportions of students who received free schools meals, as illustrated in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3 Proportion of students receiving free school meals: IFP schools in 2002 and 2003 and all schools in 2003**

<b>Band - % receiving free school meals</b>	<b>IFP schools 2002 %</b>	<b>IFP schools 2003 %</b>	<b>All schools 2003 %</b>
Lowest band	2	2	7
Second lowest band	20	23	24
Middle band	29	28	26
Second highest band	27	28	25
Highest band	20	18	18
Not applicable/no data	1	1	1
<b>N=</b>	<b>1,663</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>3,132</b>

*Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data 2002 and 2003 and NFER Register of Schools  
All secondary schools excluding special schools and PRUs  
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

Overall, schools which were involved in the second cohort of IFP were under-represented among the band of schools which have the lowest proportions of students with free school meals and slightly over-represented among those with higher proportions of students in receipt of free school meals. On the whole, the schools involved in the second cohort had a similar profile to those in the first cohort although there were slightly fewer in the band of schools with the highest proportion of students with free school meals (18 per cent of cohort 2 schools compared with 20 per cent of cohort 1 schools) and slightly more in the second lowest band (23 per cent of cohort 2 schools compared with 20 per cent of those in cohort 1).

In summary, compared with all secondary schools in England, schools involved in the second cohort of IFP were:

- ♦ slightly more likely to be community schools
- ♦ slightly more likely to be comprehensive to 16
- ♦ slightly more likely to be among schools in the lower attainment bands at key stage 3 and GCSE and slightly less likely to be among the highest attaining schools
- ♦ slightly less likely to be among schools with the lowest proportions of students receiving free school meals.

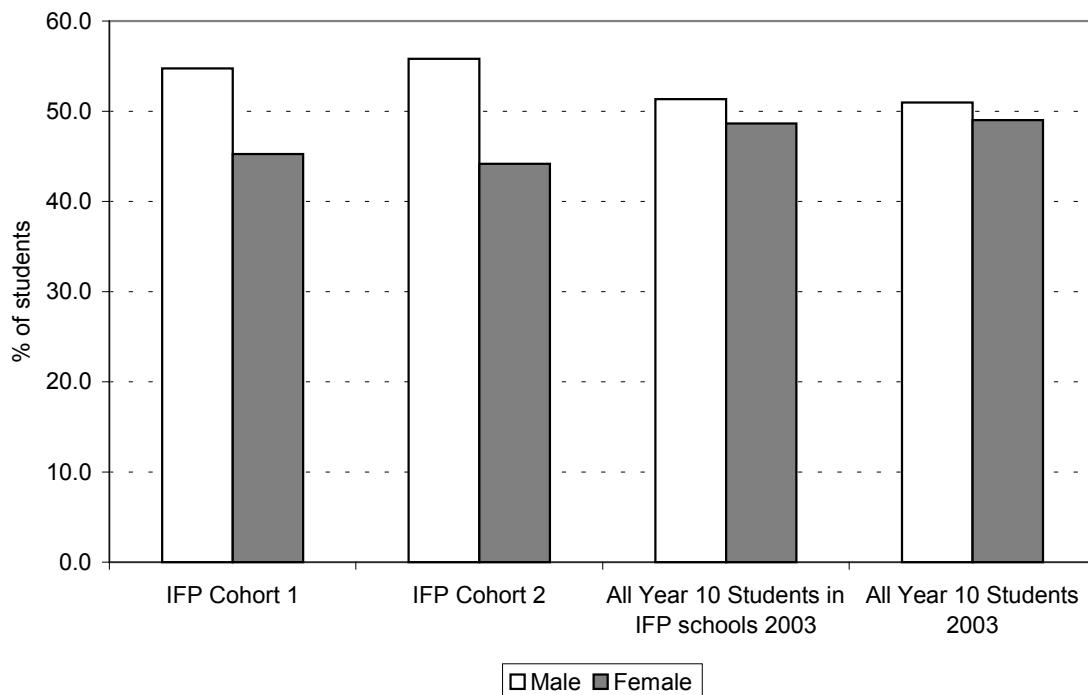
## **2.3 Characteristics of IFP Students**

As noted in Chapter 1, 1,279 schools provided details of 33,706 students who were participating in IFP. This represented 63 per cent of all schools that participated in the second cohort of IFP. The students' details were matched to their records held on the National Pupil Database (NPD) which provides details of their background characteristics. It should be noted that the data on

characteristics of students includes all students for whom data was available including those attending special schools. This section presents a profile of students who were participating in the second cohort of IFP (Year 10 in 2003-2004) and provides comparison with the first cohort (Year 10 in 2002-2003). In addition, the characteristics of all students in Year 10 in the schools which were involved in the second cohort of IFP, and of all Year 10 students nationally in 2003-2004 are provided for comparison. Comparison with the peers of IFP students in the same schools allows any differences which might be due to students being in different schools or different locations to be taken into account. For example, it may be reasonable to expect the IFP cohort to resemble all students in their year group in their school, while differences from the national profile of students may be explained by an over- or under-representation of certain types of schools, such as those with high attainment, or geographical location, such as those in areas with a high proportion of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The relationships between the characteristics of the students and the qualifications which they pursued through IFP are discussed in Chapter 3.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the sex of students who were participating in IFP. It shows that, in the second cohort, just over half (56 per cent) of students were male and the remaining 44 per cent were female. This was similar to the profile of the first cohort where 55 per cent were male and 45 per cent female. Overall, male students were slightly over-represented among the IFP cohorts in both years. The gender profile of students studying different subject areas is discussed in Section 3.4.

**Figure 2.3 Sex of IFP students 2002 and 2003 and all Year 10 students in 2003**



Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003 and NPD 2002 and 2003  
All those for whom data was available on NPD

The ethnic breakdown of the IFP cohorts is presented in Table 2.4. This reveals that in both cohorts, more than 90 per cent of students were white. Moreover, students who were of Asian or Asian British, black or black British or other heritage were slightly under-represented among the IFP cohorts. The reasons for this under-representation are unclear. If the broad ethnic profile of post-16 learners in further education is considered,<sup>4</sup> where around six per cent were of Asian or Asian British heritage and four per cent of black or black British heritage, it again appears that young people of these backgrounds are under represented in the IFP cohorts. However, these figures include students pursuing academic qualifications in further education colleges and would not, therefore, reveal the reported greater tendency for people whose ethnicity is black or white to pursue vocational courses compared with those of South Asian or Chinese heritage.<sup>5</sup> This tendency may be reflected in the pre-16 choices of students of these ethnic backgrounds.

**Table 2.4 Ethnicity of IFP participants 2002 and 2003 and all Year 10 students 2003**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>IFP students 2002 %</b>	<b>IFP students 2003 %</b>	<b>All Year 10 students in IFP schools 2003 %</b>	<b>All Year 10 students in England 2003 %</b>
White	91	91	87	86
Asian or Asian British	4	3	5	6
Black or black British	2	2	3	3
Other	1	2	3	3
Prefer not to say	1	2	2	2
<b>N=</b>	<b>27,261</b>	<b>30,985</b>	<b>346,382</b>	<b>579,984</b>

Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003 and NPD 2002 and 2003

All those for whom data was available on NPD

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

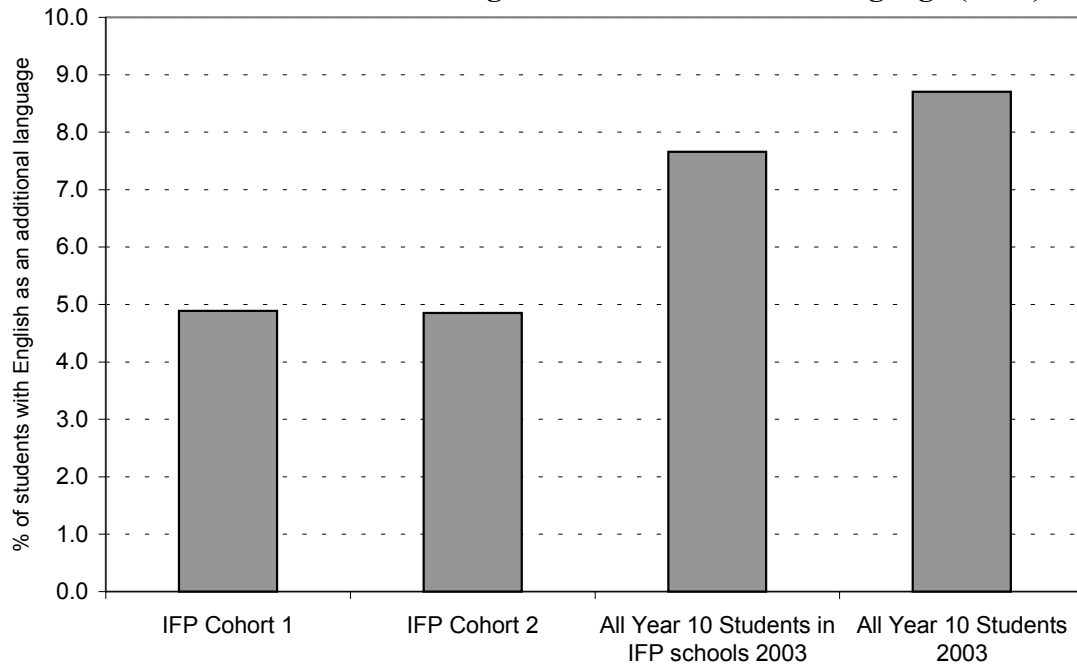
'Other' includes Chinese and mixed race

The extent to which students who participated in IFP had English as an additional language is illustrated in Figure 2.4.

<sup>4</sup> LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL (2003). *Further Education and Work Based Learning for Young People: Learner Numbers in England 2002/03* (Statistical First Release ILR/SFR02) [online]. Available: [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000438/ILR\\_SFR02b\\_7b.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000438/ILR_SFR02b_7b.pdf) [10 June, 2004].

<sup>5</sup> WHITMARSH, A. and HARRIS, T. (1996). *Social Focus on Ethnic Minorities*. London: HMSO.

**Figure 2.4 Proportion of IFP students 2002 and 2003 and all Year 10 students in 2003 for whom English was an Additional Language (EAL)**

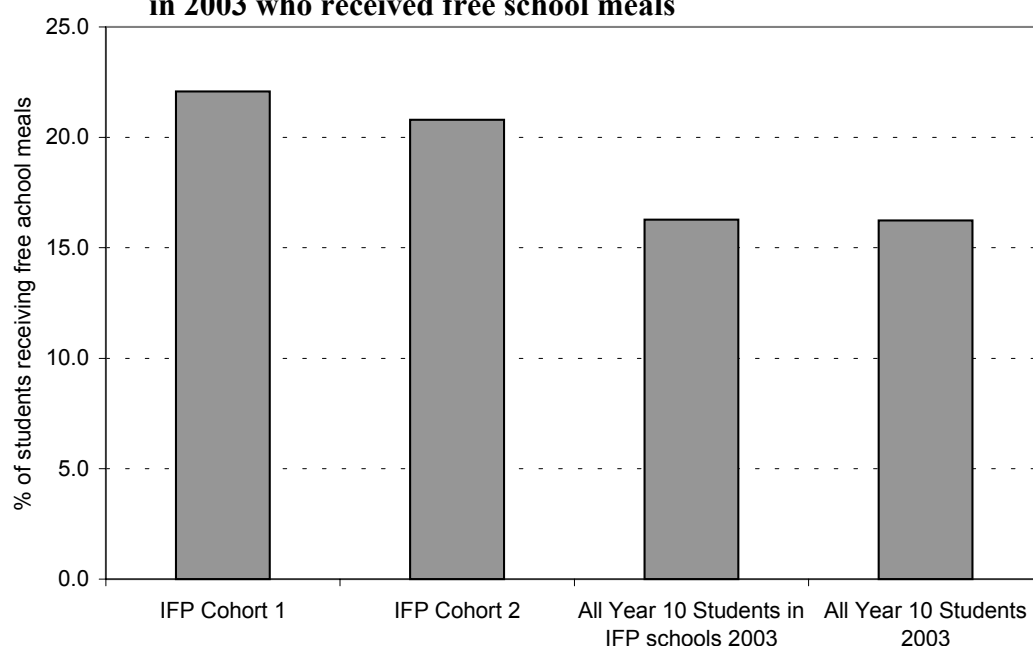


*Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003 and NPD 2002 and 2003 All those for whom data was available on NPD*

The figure shows that there was a small percentage of students for whom English was an additional language in the IFP cohorts (five per cent in each cohort). As was the case in the first cohort, in the second cohort, this proportion was noticeably lower than was the case among their peers in IFP schools or schools nationally (eight per cent and nine per cent respectively). This may reflect further the slightly lower proportion of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds among the IFP cohorts for whom English might be more likely to be a second language. This is substantiated by the finding that, nationally, 60 per cent of students for whom English is a second language were of Asian heritage.

Figure 2.5 reveals that 21 per cent of students in the second cohort of IFP received free school meals which was similar to the proportion in the first cohort (22 per cent).

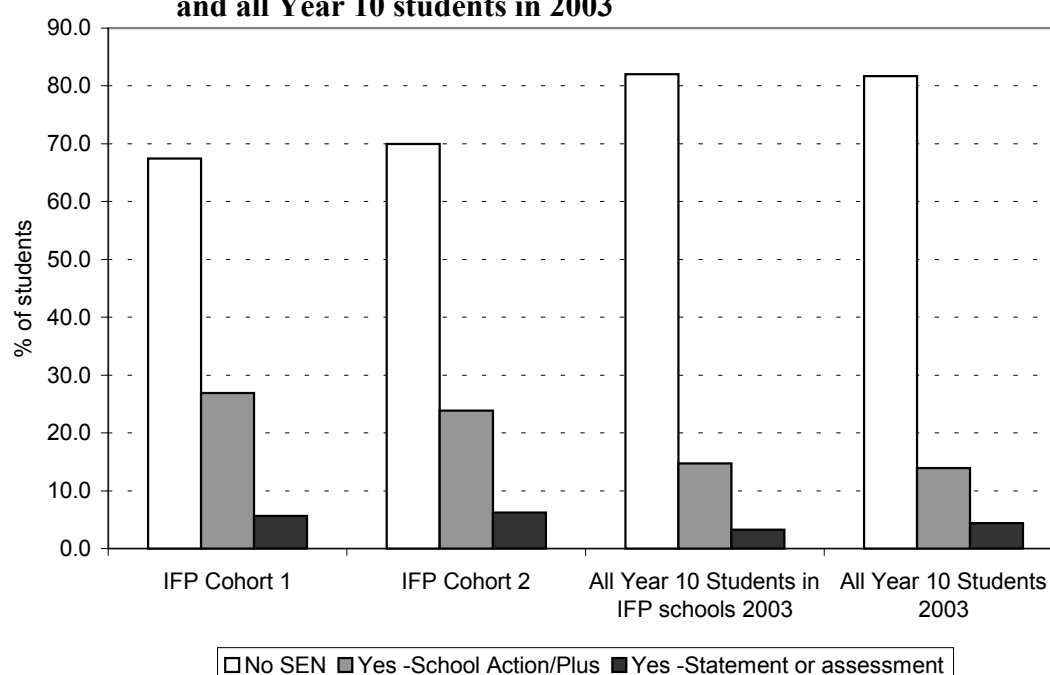
**Figure 2.5 Proportion of IFP students 2002 and 2003 and all Year 10 students in 2003 who received free school meals**



Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003 and NPD 2002 and 2003 All those for whom data was available on NPD

Greater proportions of students who participated in IFP received free school meals (22 per cent) than was the case among IFP schools or schools nationally in 2003 (16 per cent in both cases). Students who were also participating in IFP were noticeably different from their peers nationally in terms of their SEN status, as shown in Figure 2.6.

**Figure 2.6 Recognition on the Register of SEN - IFP students 2002 and 2003 and all Year 10 students in 2003**



Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003 and NPD 2002 and 2003 All those for whom data was available on NPD

The SEN<sup>6</sup> profile of students who participated in the second cohort shows that fewer had no recognition on the register of SEN (70 per cent) than was the case among Year 10 students in all IFP schools or all schools in England (82 per cent in both cases). Moreover, a greater proportion were recognised for school action or school action plus (24 per cent) than was the case among all IFP schools (15 per cent) or all schools (14 per cent). The proportion who had a statement of SEN was greater in the IFP second cohort (six per cent) than in IFP schools (three per cent) or nationally (four per cent). It is worth noting that most of the students with a statement of SEN in the second cohort of IFP were based in mainstream schools. Of the 1,990 students who had a statement of SEN, 84 per cent were in mainstream schools and 16 per cent (311 individuals) attended special schools.

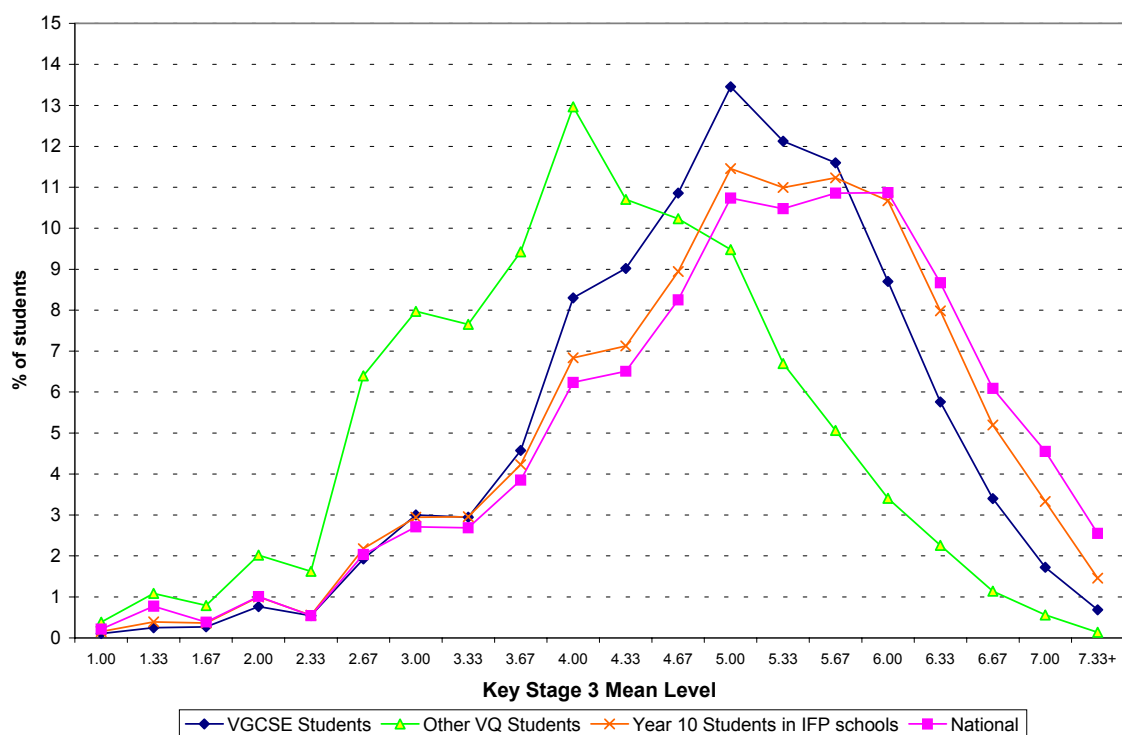
Figure 2.6 indicates that, although the same proportion of students in both cohorts had a statement of SEN (six per cent in both years), slightly fewer students in the second cohort of IFP were recognised for school action or school action plus than was the case in the first cohort (24 per cent in the second cohort compared with 27 per cent in the first cohort). When this difference is examined in more detail, it appears that the proportions of students who were recognised for school action and school action plus were lower across all qualification types in cohort 2 compared with cohort 1. However, although the number of students who were recognised for school action or school action plus increased across the qualification types, in line with the overall increase in the number of students participating in the second cohort, the number taking new GCSEs who were recognised for school action or school action plus was lower in the second cohort (2,562 in the second cohort and 3,039 in the first). This suggests that fewer students who were recognised for school action and school action plus were embarking on new GCSEs in vocational subjects.

The attainment at the end of key stage 3 of students who participated in the two cohorts of IFP are illustrated in Figures 2.7 and 2.8. The figures present the percentage of students achieving each mean score across the three subject areas: mathematics, English and science. The IFP cohort is separated into two groups: those taking GCSEs in vocational subjects and those taking NVQs, GNVQs and other VQs. The attainment of all Year 10 students in schools which were participating in IFP, and Year 10 students nationally are presented for comparison.

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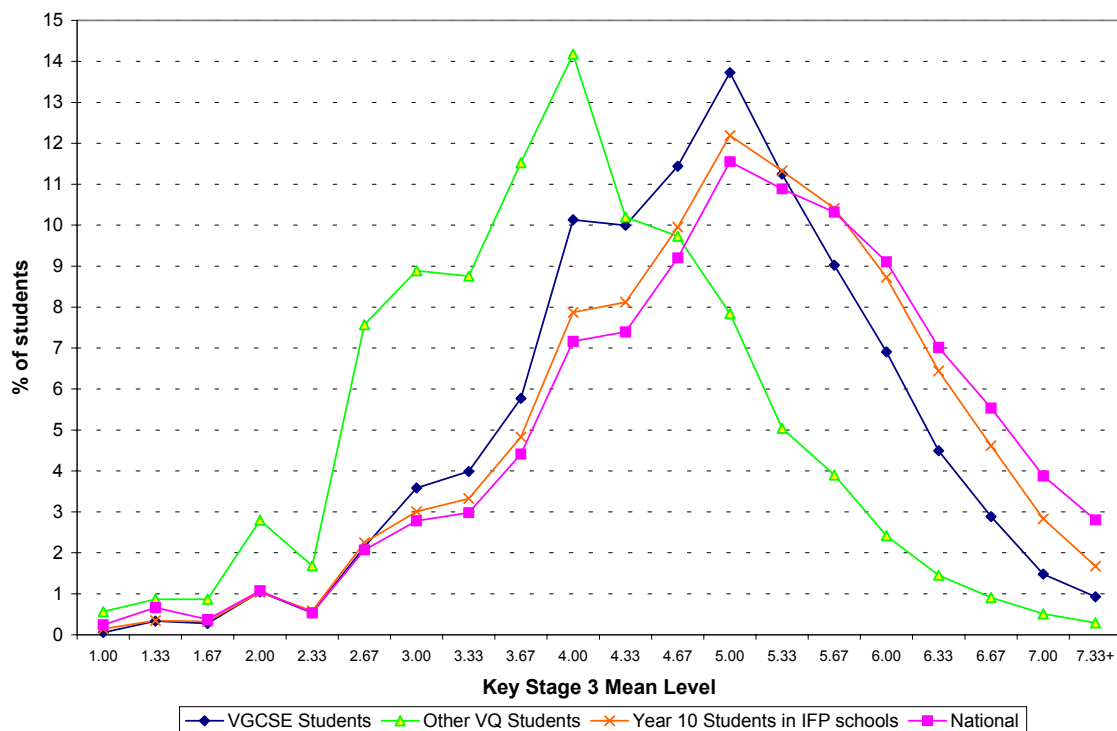
<sup>6</sup> Stages on the SEN Code of Practice were grouped as follows:  
 No special provision  
 School action and school action plus  
 School action plus and statutory assessment, and statement of SEN.

**Figure 2.7 Key stage 3 attainment of Year 10 students 2003-2004 (cohort 2)**



Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2003 and NPD 2003  
 All those for whom data was available on NPD

**Figure 2.8 Key stage 3 attainment of Year 10 students 2002-2003 (cohort 1)**



Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and NPD 2002  
 All those for whom data was available on NPD

The figures show that students across the ability range were represented in both cohorts of IFP participants. Indeed, 14 per cent of students in the second cohort and 12 per cent in the first cohort had attained an average of level 6 or above in their key stage 3 assessments. However, the profiles of students who participated in IFP indicated that they had lower attainment at the end of key stage 3 than was the case among Year 10 students in IFP schools or all schools nationally. The profile of the sub-group of IFP participants who were undertaking new GCSEs in vocational subjects more closely matched that of all Year 10 students than was the case among the students who were working towards other VQs. This latter group tended to have achieved less well at key stage 3 than those taking GCSEs in vocational subjects.

Table 2.5 provides further details of the attainment at key stage 3 of IFP students in each assessed subject. It shows that, although a greater proportion of students in the second cohort of IFP had attained level 5 and above than was the case in the first cohort, this should be viewed in the context of an overall increase in the attainment at key stage 3 in all schools. Indeed, the difference between the percentage of IFP students who attained level 5 or above, and the overall percentage in their schools, remained similar (around 18 per cent) in both cohorts. For example, in the first cohort 49 per cent achieved level 5 or above in English which was 18 per cent less than in all IFP schools (67 per cent). Similarly, 52 per cent of students in the second cohort of IFP had attained level 5 or above in English which was 19 per cent less than among all Year 10 students in IFP schools (71 per cent).

**Table 2.5 Proportion of students achieving Level 5 and above in each key stage 3 assessment: IFP students in 2002 and 2003 and all Year 10 students**

<b>Achieved level 5 and above</b>	<b>IFP students 2002</b>	<b>IFP students 2003</b>	<b>All Year 10 students in IFP schools 2002</b>	<b>All Year 10 students in IFP schools 2003</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
English	49	52	67	71
Mathematics	51	56	68	72
Science	51	53	68	70

*Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003, and NPD 2002 and 2003  
All those for whom data was available on NPD*

Overall, the profile of students who were participating in the second cohort of IFP was similar to that of the first cohort. However, a smaller proportion of students in the second cohort were recognised for school action or school action plus on the register of SEN. In summary, as was the case with the first cohort of IFP participants, the second cohort of students differed in some respects from their peers in Year 10. Compared with all Year 10 students in IFP schools, a greater proportion of IFP participants:

- ◆ were male
- ◆ were white
- ◆ received free school meals
- ◆ were recognised on the register of SEN.

In addition, compared with their peers in Year 10:

- ◆ a smaller proportion had attained level 5 or above in the key stage 3 assessments
- ◆ fewer had English as an additional language.

### 3. QUALIFICATIONS UNDERTAKEN THROUGH IFP

#### Key findings

- ◆ Half (50 per cent) of students in the second cohort were taking new GCSEs in vocational subjects. Just under a quarter (24 per cent) were taking other VQs and 19 per cent were taking NVQs. Eleven per cent were pursuing GNVQs.
- ◆ Fewer students in the second cohort were taking new GCSEs in vocational subjects (50 per cent compared with 58 per cent). This change was particularly marked for the GCSE in Applied ICT which was taken by 18 per cent of students in the first cohort and 12 per cent in the second.
- ◆ Compared with the first cohort of IFP participants, greater proportions of students in the second cohort were taking other VQs (24 per cent compared with 19 per cent), NVQs (19 per cent compared with 16 per cent) and GNVQs (11 per cent compared with seven per cent).
- ◆ The new GCSEs in Applied ICT and Health and Social Care were the most widely-taken qualifications, followed by Engineering, Leisure and Tourism and Applied Business. NVQ level 1 remained the most widely-taken NVQ and the Foundation Construction Award was the most frequently-studied other VQ. Intermediate level ICT was the most common GNVQ studied.
- ◆ There were some differences in the characteristics of students taking different types of qualifications. Males were slightly over-represented among those taking other VQs and females were slightly over-represented among those taking new GCSEs in vocational subjects. Students of Asian or Asian British heritage were slightly over-represented among those taking new GCSEs and GNVQs and slightly under-represented among those taking NVQs and other VQs. Students of black or black British heritage were slightly over-represented among those taking other VQs. Students who were recognised for action on the SEN register were slightly more likely to take NVQs and other VQs and less likely to take GNVQs. Students taking new GCSEs appeared to have higher attainment levels at key stage 3 and those taking NVQs than other VQs had lower attainment.
- ◆ The level of qualification studied by most students other than GCSE was level 1, which was taken by 32 per cent of students. Ten per cent were working towards level 2 qualifications and six per cent entry level. Each of these proportions was greater in the second cohort than in the first. The levels which students were working towards suggests that IFP partnerships could reach their targets of a third of students achieving a GCSE in a vocational subject and a third achieving level 1 qualifications.
- ◆ Students with a statement of SEN, or recognition on the register, were more likely to be taking entry level or level 1 qualifications than all students. The majority of those taking entry level qualifications were in the lowest attaining group and those taking level 2 qualifications were more likely to be in the highest attaining group than all students.

- ◆ The most common vocational areas of the qualifications which students were working towards remained ICT (20 per cent), engineering and motor (18 per cent) and care and childcare (14 per cent). The proportion taking ICT-related qualifications was lower in the second cohort, perhaps reflecting the fall in those taking the new GCSE in ICT. Other areas where fewer students were taking qualifications included administration and business and sports, leisure and tourism. Areas in which a greater proportion were studying included engineering and motor, care and childcare, construction and hair and beauty.
- ◆ Some vocational areas continued to be dominated by one gender. For example, most students in the hair and beauty, care and childcare and animal care areas were females. Most in the construction, engineering and motor, manufacturing and land-based areas were male. Most areas were not dominated by one gender, however, including administration and business, catering and ICT.
- ◆ Students who were pursuing courses in the ICT and administration and business vocational areas, were students who had achieved higher levels in their key stage assessments and were less likely to be recognised for action on the register of SEN. Those who were engaged in the land-based, construction, catering and animal-care areas tended to be those who had achieved less well at key stage 3 and were more likely to be recognised for action on the register of SEN.
- ◆ Nine per cent of students were said to be taking more than one qualification through IFP. Generally, they were working towards qualifications in more than one vocational area and appeared to often combine their subject with an ICT qualification. However, there were instances of students taking more than one qualification in the same vocational area, notably engineering and motor or construction.
- ◆ The majority (64 per cent) of students attended a Lead Partner to pursue their IFP qualification. A total of 39 per cent attended other organisations which included schools (attended by 30 per cent of students), colleges which were not Lead Partners (six per cent) and other providers such as training providers and employers (three per cent).
- ◆ A smaller proportion of students in the second cohort attended a Lead Partner while slightly more attended a non-Lead Partner College.
- ◆ Most students (75 per cent) who were pursuing their IFP qualification at school were taking a new GCSE in a vocational subject. Lead Partners and non-Lead Partner colleges and training providers and employers were delivering NVQs and other VQs. There was a notable increase in the proportion of students in the second cohort who were studying new GCSEs at a training provider or employer, from eight per cent in cohort 1 to 22 per cent in 2003.

This chapter explores the qualifications which students were pursuing through their involvement in IFP partnerships. It presents:

- ◆ the types, levels and subject areas studied by students in Year 10 in 2002-2003 (cohort 1) and in Year 10 in 2003-2004 (cohort 2)

- ♦ the relationships between students' characteristics and the qualifications they were working towards
- ♦ details of the types of locations where these students pursued their qualifications.

### 3.1 Background

For this analysis, the qualifications which the students were taking were grouped in three ways as follows:

- ♦ Qualification **type** (for example GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQ, other VQ, GNVQ)
- ♦ Qualification **level** (for example GCSEs in vocational subjects, entry level, Level 1, Level 2)
- ♦ Qualification **subject area** (for example ICT, construction, hair and beauty).

The data is based on the information supplied by schools which responded to the baseline data collection exercise. Full details of the type, level and subject of each qualification were not always provided and the data is, therefore, not comprehensive. Furthermore, a student may study more than one qualification and the percentages presented, therefore, should not be totalled.

Visits to case-study IFP partnerships, and surveys of schools, colleges and training providers, revealed that a range of factors were taken into consideration in deciding which qualifications to offer through IFP. These included:

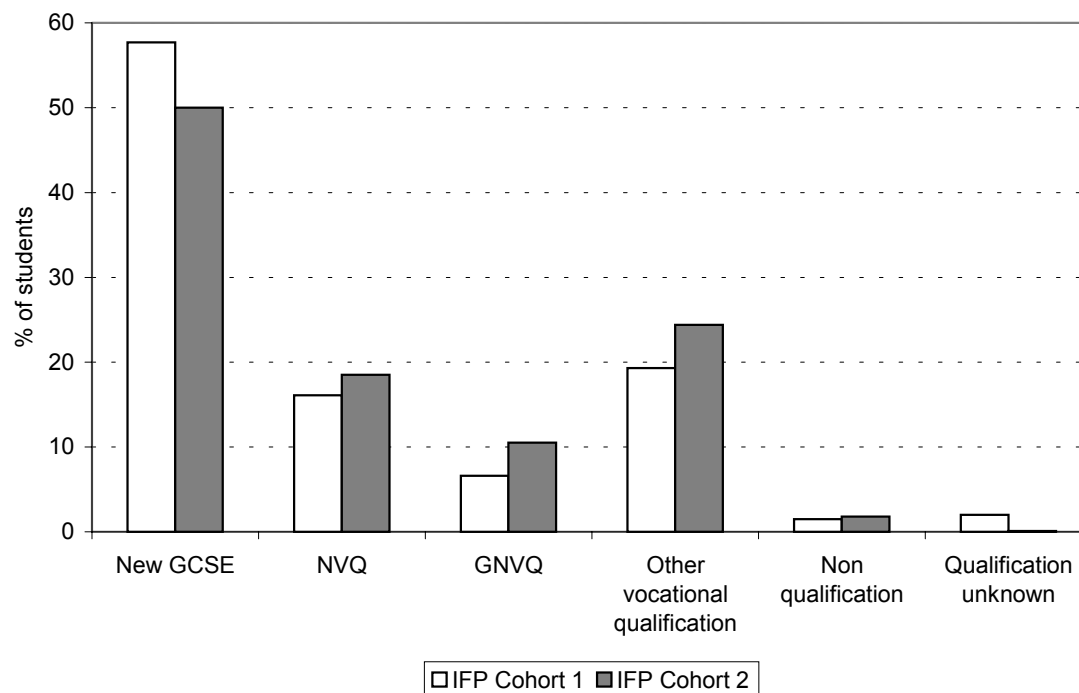
- ♦ responding to schools' requests and requirements. One consideration for schools was that IFP courses supplemented, and did not duplicate, their provision
- ♦ whether qualifications were approved under Section 96 which lists qualifications that are approved for use for learners aged 18 and under
- ♦ meeting the needs of students including providing opportunities for students' progression
- ♦ availability of appropriate facilities
- ♦ the skills and expertise of staff
- ♦ complementary qualifications in the same subject area.

In addition, most schools surveyed in 2003 had been involved in deciding which qualifications would be offered for the first cohort in all or most cases and, on the whole, felt that the qualifications would meet the needs of half or more of their students.

### 3.2 Types of Qualifications Undertaken

The main types of qualifications which were taken by students in the first and second cohorts of IFP are summarised in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1** Types of qualifications taken by IFP students in 2002 and 2003



Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003  
 A multiple response item – students could be studying more than one qualification

The type of qualification which was most often studied in both years was a GCSE in a vocational subject. However, a smaller proportion of students in Year 10 in 2003 embarked on GCSEs in vocational subjects (50 per cent or 16,839 individuals) than in the first cohort in 2002 (58 per cent or 17,294 individuals). Further details are provided in Table 3.1. While the proportion of students taking new GCSEs was lower in the second cohort of Year 10 students, there was a corresponding increase in the proportions taking other VQs (19 per cent in 2002 and 24 per cent in 2003) and NVQs (16 per cent in 2002 and 19 per cent in 2003). Moreover, the proportion of students who were said by school staff to be taking GNVQs was higher in 2003 (11 per cent) than in 2002 (seven per cent). The proportion taking qualifications which did not appear to be accredited vocational qualifications remained at two per cent while those whose qualification was unknown was lower in 2003 (less than one per cent) than in 2002 (two per cent).

Tables 3.1 to 3.3 provide details of the subject areas for the main qualifications of each type which students were working towards in each year.

**Table 3.1 Applied GCSE qualifications undertaken**

Applied GCSE	IFP students 2002 %	IFP students 2002 No.	IFP students 2003 %	IFP students 2003 No.
Applied ICT	18	5,440	12	4,108
Health and Social Care	11	3,282	11	3,657
Engineering	8	2,414	8	2,582
Leisure and Tourism	9	2,578	7	2,193
Applied Business	9	2,557	6	2,042
Applied Science	4	1,166	5	1,599
Art and design	2	733	3	878
Manufacturing	2	573	2	698
<b>N=</b>	<b>29,990</b>		<b>33,706</b>	

Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003

Percentage of all IFP students, not just those doing GCSEs in vocational subjects

A multiple response item – students could be studying more than one qualification – percentages do not sum to 100

The overall reduction in the proportion of students taking new GCSEs, detailed in Figure 3.1, appears to be explained by a reduced proportion of students pursuing particular GCSEs. This was particularly noticeable regarding the new GCSE in applied ICT. As can be seen in Table 3.1, although it remains the most widely studied of the new GCSEs in the IFP cohorts, the percentage of students taking Applied ICT was 18 per cent among the first cohort of IFP students and 12 per cent among the second. Visits to the case-study partnerships suggests that this may be due in part to schools feeling able to deliver this qualification without the need to engage in a partnership with a college or training provider thus making best use of the skills and facilities of each. Other notable changes include a slight decline in the proportions taking Leisure and Tourism and Applied Business GCSEs and a slight increase in those taking Applied Science and Applied Art and Design.

The proportions taking each of the main NVQs remained similar in each of the Year 10 cohorts, as illustrated in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2 Main NVQs undertaken**  
**Qualifications taken by 100 or more students**

NVQ level 1	IFP students 2002 %	IFP students 2002 No.	IFP students 2003 %	IFP students 2003 No.
Hairdressing	5	1,522	6	1,866
Performing engineering operations	2	692	3	959
Food preparation and cooking	3	849	3	876
Trowel occupations (construction)	1	186	1	319
Sport, recreation and allied occupations	1	225	1	205
Wood occupations (construction)	1	182	1	164
Administration	1	168	1	156
Preparing and serving food	1	144	<1	131
Decorative occupations (construction)	1	158	<1	113
<b>N=</b>	<b>29,990</b>		<b>33,706</b>	

*Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003*

*Percentage of all IFP students, not just those doing NVQs*

*A multiple response item – students could be studying more than one qualification – percentages do not sum to 100*

In both 2002 and 2003, all of the NVQs which were taken by more than 100 students were at level 1 and hairdressing remained the most common NVQ taken. Hairdressing also remained the most widely taken qualification which was not a GCSE in a vocational subject. The proportion taking hairdressing had increased slightly from five to six per cent and the proportion taking performing engineering operations was slightly greater in the second cohort.

The proportions taking the main other VQs are presented in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3 Other VQs undertaken  
Qualifications taken by 100 or more students**

Other VQ	IFP students 2002 %	IFP students 2002 No.	IFP students 2003 %	IFP students No.
C&G/CITB foundation construction award (level 1)	3	1,004	4	1,250
Skills for Working Life (entry level)	2	534	3	951
ABC certificate in motor vehicle studies (level 1)	3	766	3	925
CACHE award in caring for children	1	391	1	410
C&G progression award in automotive vehicle servicing and repair (level 1)	1	323	1	387
CIEH certificate in food hygiene	<1	115	<1	117
<b>N=</b>	<b>29,990</b>		<b>33,706</b>	

Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003

Percentage of all IFP students, not just those doing other VQs

A multiple response item – students could be studying more than one qualification – percentages do not sum to 100

As was the case among the NVQs, the proportions taking each of the main other VQ qualifications were largely similar in each cohort. Most of the qualifications were at level 1 with the exception of the entry level skills for working life qualification.

The least used type of vocational qualification among the IFP cohorts in both years was the GNVQ (seven per cent in 2002 and 11 per cent in 2003). In both years, the most widely taken GNVQ among these students was the ICT Intermediate GNVQ, which was taken by 2,107 students in 2003 and 935 in 2002. The second most frequently cited GNVQ was the ICT Foundation GNVQ which was taken by 218 students in 2003 and 241 in 2002.

### Characteristics of students taking different types of qualification

An examination of the background characteristics of students taking each of the main types of qualifications revealed that:

- Among **male** students in 2003, a greater proportion took other VQs (31 per cent) than was the case among the IFP cohort as a whole (24 per cent)
- Among **female** students in 2003, a greater proportion took GCSEs in vocational subjects (57 per cent) than was the case among the cohort as a whole (50 per cent).

- ◆ Among students whose ethnicity was **Asian or Asian British**, a greater proportion were working towards new GCSEs in vocational subjects (61 per cent) than was the case among the cohort as a whole (51 per cent). In addition, a greater proportion of students of Asian or Asian British heritage were taking GNVQs than was the case among the whole cohort (17 per cent compared with 11 per cent). Conversely, a smaller proportion were taking NVQs (seven per cent) and other VQs (17 per cent) compared with the cohort as a whole (18 per cent and 24 per cent respectively).
- ◆ A greater proportion of students who were of **black or black British** heritage were taking other VQs than was the case among the whole cohort (32 per cent compared with 24 per cent). Conversely, slightly smaller proportions of students in this ethnic group were working towards NVQs (14 per cent compared with 18 per cent) and new GCSEs in vocational subjects (46 per cent compared with 51 per cent).
- ◆ Among students who were recognised as **not having any SEN** on the register, a greater proportion were taking GCSEs in vocational subjects (59 per cent) than was the case among the whole IFP cohort (50 per cent) and smaller proportions were taking other VQs (18 per cent compared with 24 per cent) and NVQs (15 per cent compared with 18 per cent).
- ◆ Similarly, of those who were recognised for action on the register of **SEN**, but did not have a statement or assessment, 34 per cent were taking GCSEs in vocational subjects compared with 50 per cent overall. A total of 37 per cent of this group were taking other VQs, compared with 24 per cent overall, and 25 per cent were taking an NVQ, compared with 18 per cent of the whole cohort.
- ◆ These differences were more marked among students who had a **statement or assessment of SEN**. Among this group, 22 per cent were taking GCSEs in vocational subjects, compared with 50 per cent of all students, and 44 per cent were taking other VQs and 30 per cent were taking NVQs compared with 24 per cent and 18 per cent respectively in the cohort as a whole.

It appears that overall, there were some differences in the gender, ethnicity and SEN status of students taking different types of qualifications. In particular, male students were over-represented among those taking other VQs and female students slightly over-represented among those taking GCSEs in vocational subjects. Students of Asian and Asian British heritage were slightly over-represented among those taking new GCSEs and GNVQs and slightly under-represented among those working towards NVQs and other VQs. Those of black or black British backgrounds were slightly over-represented among those taking other VQs and slightly under-represented among those taking NVQs and new GCSEs in vocational subjects. In addition, students who were recognised at some stage of the register of SEN were slightly more likely to take NVQs and other VQs and less likely to take new GCSEs.

Some differences emerged in the types of qualifications taken by students attending different types of schools. The 380 students who attended special

schools differed notably from the overall profile of IFP students in the qualifications they were pursuing through IFP. For example, ten per cent of these students were taking new GCSEs in vocational subjects compared with 50 per cent of all IFP students, and none were taking GNVQs. Conversely, there was a noticeably greater proportion who were taking other vocational qualifications (54 per cent compared with 25 per cent of all IFP students) and NVQs (25 per cent compared with 18 per cent).

Other differences in the qualifications studied by students in different types of schools included the following.

- ◆ A greater proportion of students who attended schools that were comprehensive to 16 were taking new GCSEs (54 per cent) and a smaller proportion of students in schools that were comprehensive to 18 were doing so (46 per cent) compared with the overall profile of IFP students (50 per cent taking new GCSEs).
- ◆ A smaller proportion of students who were attending schools that were comprehensive to 16 were taking other vocational qualifications (21 per cent) compared with the overall profile of IFP participants (24 per cent). A slightly greater proportion of students in schools which were comprehensive to 18 were taking other vocational qualifications (27 per cent).
- ◆ A greater proportion of students who attended voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled schools were taking new GCSEs (55 per cent) than was the case among all IFP participants (50 per cent).
- ◆ A smaller proportion of students who attended foundation schools were taking GNVQs (seven per cent) than was the case overall (11 per cent). Conversely, a slightly greater proportion of students in such schools were taking other vocational qualifications (27 per cent compared with 24 per cent).

An analysis was conducted which grouped the IFP students into three groups according to their attainment at key stage 3. This revealed some differences in the prior attainment of students taking each type of qualification. These are shown in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 Attainment at key stage 3 of IFP students in cohort 2 taking each qualification type**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Lowest band %</b>	<b>Middle band %</b>	<b>Highest band %</b>
GCSE in vocational subject	21	34	46
GNVQ	22	34	44
NVQ	51	34	14
Other VQ	55	29	15
Non-qualification	73	22	5
Qualification unknown	69	29	3
Overall	34	33	33
<b>N=28,692</b>			

*Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2003*

*All those for whom key stage 3 data was available*

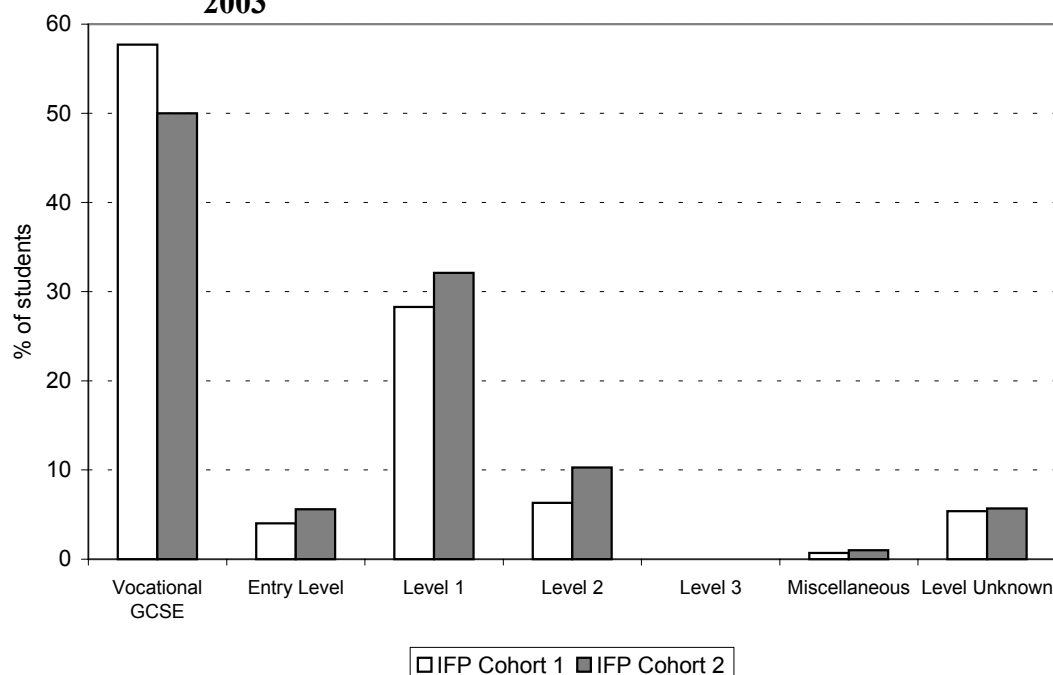
*A multiple response item – students could be studying more than one qualification*

The profile of the students who were taking GCSEs in vocational subjects indicates that they had higher attainment at key stage 3 than their peers in the IFP cohort as a whole. Conversely, the profile of those taking NVQs and other VQs suggests that in general, they had lower prior attainment. For example, 46 per cent of those taking GCSEs in vocational subjects were in the highest attainment band whereas 14 per cent of those taking NVQs were in this band.

### **3.3 Levels of Qualifications**

The qualifications were grouped into levels according to the QCA's qualifications framework. Applied GCSEs remain separate as their level on the framework depends on the grade achieved (A\* to C is equivalent to level 2 and D to G is equivalent to level 1). As can be seen in Figure 3.2, the most common level of qualification which IFP students were working towards, other than GCSE, was level 1.

**Figure 3.2 Levels of qualifications undertaken by IFP students in 2002 and 2003**



Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003  
 N=29990 in 2002 and 33706 in 2003

'Miscellaneous' includes levels which could not be aligned to QCA's qualifications framework such as 'general', ASDAN bronze and 'certificate'

A multiple response item – students could be studying more than one qualification

16 individuals were taking level 3 qualifications in 2002 and nine were doing so in 2003

The proportions of those taking each of the levels that were not GCSE had each increased in line with the overall decrease in the proportion of students taking new GCSE qualifications. Although the proportion taking entry level qualifications had increased slightly (from four per cent to six per cent), the proportions taking qualifications at the higher levels of 1 and 2 had also both increased from 28 per cent to 32 per cent in the case of level 1 and from six to ten per cent in the case of level 2.

As outlined in Chapter 1, IFP partnerships are aiming to achieve the targets of one-third of students achieving at least one GCSE in vocational subjects and one-third achieving an NVQ at level 1. As was the case in 2002, the levels of qualifications which students were working towards suggests that there is potential for achieving these targets in so far as substantially more than a third were working towards GCSEs in vocational subjects through which they could achieve a level 1 or level 2 qualification. Moreover, just under a third were working towards a level 1 qualification and ten per cent were pursuing qualifications at level 2.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> As a student could be working towards qualifications at more than one level, these percentages should not be totalled.

### **Characteristics of students taking different levels of qualification**

As the GCSEs in vocational subjects are a major separate category in the level groupings and the type groupings, the variations in the background characteristics of students taking different levels of qualifications broadly reflect those presented earlier in relation to types of qualifications. For example, there was a greater proportion of females than males among those taking GCSEs. However, there were no other notable differences in the gender of students taking different levels of qualifications.

Other differences which emerged included the following:

- ♦ There was a greater proportion of students who had a statement or assessment of SEN among those taking entry level or level 1 qualifications than was the case overall. For example, 15 per cent of those with a statement were taking entry level qualifications, compared with six per cent of all IFP students, and 51 per cent of those with a statement were taking level 1 qualifications compared with 32 per cent of all IFP students.
- ♦ Conversely, among those with no recognition on the register of SEN, only three per cent were taking entry level qualifications, compared with six per cent overall, and 12 per cent were taking level 2 qualifications compared with ten per cent overall.

Analysis of the relationship between students' prior attainment and the level of qualifications towards which they were working, other than GCSEs in vocational subjects which were discussed earlier, reveals that:

- ♦ The majority of those taking entry level qualifications (68 per cent) were in the lowest attaining group of students and 53 per cent of those taking level 1 qualifications were in this lowest attaining group.
- ♦ Conversely, 46 per cent of those taking level 2 qualifications were in the highest attaining group of students.

This may reflect students undertaking qualifications which were commensurate with their prior attainment.

### **3.4 Subject Areas of Qualifications**

The qualifications which students were taking were grouped into 'subject areas' which reflected the vocational area. In this grouping, qualifications of different types were grouped together, for example the new GCSE in engineering is in the same group as the NVQ level 1 in performing engineering operations. The proportions of students taking qualifications in each of the broad vocational areas in 2002 and 2003 are presented in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5 Subjects areas of qualifications studied 2002 and 2003**

Subject area	IFP students in 2002	IFP students in 2003
	%	%
ICT	23	20
Engineering and motor	16	18
Care and childcare	13	14
Sports, leisure and tourism	10	8
Construction	7	8
Hair and beauty	6	8
Administration / business	10	7
Catering	5	5
Science	5	5
Arts	4	4
Other	3	4
Manufacturing	2	2
Land-based	1	1
Animal related	1	1
Retail	<1	<1
Key skills	<1	<1
Area unknown	4	3
<b>N=</b>	<b>29,990</b>	<b>33,706</b>

Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003

'Other' includes, for example, life skills and job-seeking skills

A multiple response item – students could be working towards more than one qualification – percentages do not sum to 100

Although ICT remained the most common vocational area in which these students were studying in 2002 and 2003, the proportion was lower among the students who embarked on their course in 2003. This may be explained in part by the fall in the proportion who were taking the new GCSE in Applied ICT noted earlier in Table 3.1. Other differences between the two cohorts included a slight decline in the proportions taking qualifications in the administration and business and sports, leisure and tourism vocational areas: and a slight increase in those taking engineering and motor vehicles, care and childcare, construction and hair and beauty-related qualifications. There was also a slight increase in the proportion taking qualifications in 'other' areas which included more generic job-seeking and life skills development which were not related to a specific vocational area.

An exploration of the gender of students taking qualifications in these areas revealed some notable differences. In considering these differences, it is worth noting that in the overall cohort of IFP students, 56 per cent were male and 44 per cent were female.

Subjects where a notable majority of the students were female included:

- ◆ Hair and beauty (98 per cent females)
- ◆ Care and childcare (95 per cent females)
- ◆ Animal care (76 per cent females)

Subjects where a notable majority of the students were male included:

- ◆ Construction (97 per cent males)
- ◆ Engineering and motor (97 per cent males)
- ◆ Manufacturing (83 per cent males)
- ◆ Land-based industries (72 per cent males)

Subjects areas where no gender predominated included:

- ◆ Administration and business (58 per cent males and 42 per cent female)
- ◆ Catering (52 per cent males and 48 per cent female)
- ◆ ICT (61 per cent male and 39 per cent female)
- ◆ Arts (42 per cent male and 58 per cent female)
- ◆ Sports, leisure and tourism (47 per cent male and 53 per cent female)
- ◆ Retail (39 per cent male and 61 per cent female)
- ◆ Science (44 per cent male and 56 per cent female)

This suggests that, as was the case in 2002, there remained some subject areas which were dominated by one gender, but that there were also many subjects which had a fairly even representation of both genders. Such a gender profile in particular subject areas is not isolated to the IFP cohort. Statistics relating to participation in further education post-16<sup>8</sup> reveal that students undertaking qualifications in construction and engineering, technology and manufacturing areas are predominantly male. Those in hairdressing and beauty therapy and, to a slightly lesser extent, in business administration, management and professional, health, social care and public services and visual and performing arts and media, are predominantly female.

Students with a statement or assessment of SEN appeared to be over-represented in certain vocational areas. In the whole cohort, six per cent of students had a statement or assessment of SEN, however this proportion was greater in the land-based (18 per cent), catering (12 per cent), animal-related (11 per cent), construction (11 per cent) and sports, leisure and tourism (11 per

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<sup>8</sup> LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL (2003). *Further Education and Work Based Learning for Young People: Learner Numbers in England 2002/03* (Statistical First Release ILR/SFR02) [online]. Available: [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000438/ILR\\_SFR02b\\_7b.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000438/ILR_SFR02b_7b.pdf) [10 June, 2004].

cent) areas. Conversely, although in the whole cohort 70 per cent of students were not recognised for action on the register of SEN, the proportions were greater in the ICT (83 per cent), administration and business (82 per cent), science (80 per cent) and arts (78 per cent) areas.

There appeared to be a relationship between the key stage 3 attainment levels of students and the vocational areas which they pursued. Around half of the students taking qualifications in the land-based (55 per cent), construction (55 per cent), catering (51 per cent), hair and beauty (50 per cent) and animal-related (49 per cent) areas were in the lowest band of attainment at key stage 3, compared with 34 per cent overall. Meanwhile, only 18 per cent of those taking ICT and 20 per cent of those taking administration and business or science qualifications were in this band. Moreover, around half of the students who were working towards qualifications in ICT (54 per cent) and administration and business (48 per cent) were in the highest band of attainment at key stage 3, compared with 33 per cent of the cohort as a whole.

Overall, the evidence suggests that students pursuing courses in the occupational areas of ICT and administration and business were students who had achieved higher levels in their key stage 3 assessments and were less likely to be recognised for action on the register of SEN. In addition, students who were engaged in courses in the land-based, construction, catering and animal-related areas tended to be those who had achieved less well at key stage 3 and were more likely to be recognised for action on the register of SEN.

### **3.5 Students Studying more than one Qualification**

As was the case in the first cohort of IFP students, around nine per cent (3,022 individuals) were said to be working towards more than one qualification. In most of these cases, the students were working towards two qualifications (2,604 students), although a small number (418 students) were pursuing three or more vocational qualifications.

At least one of the qualifications was a new GCSE in vocational subjects for the majority (68 per cent) of these nine per cent of students. This was a smaller proportion than was the case in the first cohort (73 per cent) which may reflect the fact that overall fewer students in Year 10 in 2003 were taking GCSEs in vocational subjects. Moreover, in the first cohort, half (50 per cent) of the students were taking more than one new GCSE only, whereas in the second cohort this was the case for 24 per cent of students. Other combinations of types of qualifications among the second cohort included 16 per cent of students who were taking new GCSEs and GNVQs, 15 per cent who were taking new GCSEs and other VQs and 13 per cent who were taking other VQs only.

Students were working towards a variety of different combinations of subject areas (169 different combinations were identified). The most common combinations emerged as:

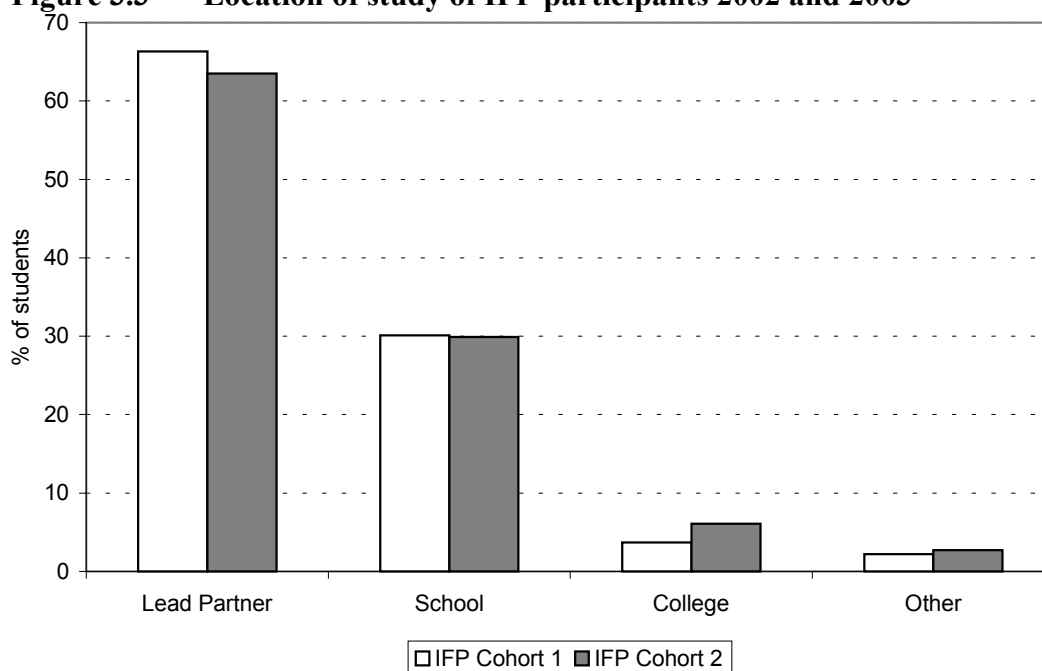
- ◆ ICT and administration and business (217 students)
- ◆ ICT and science (208 students)
- ◆ ICT and sports, leisure and tourism (194 students)
- ◆ ICT and engineering and motor vehicle (151 students)
- ◆ ICT and care and childcare (129 students)
- ◆ ICT and manufacturing (113 students).

These combinations reflect those found in the first cohort and suggest that, once again, students taking more than one qualification were often pursuing more than one vocational area. However, 108 students were taking more than one course in the engineering and motor vehicle subject area and 93 were taking more than one construction-related qualification.

### 3.6 Location of Study

Students who pursue vocational qualifications through the IFP can do so at a range of locations of study. These include their Lead Partner organisations, which are usually colleges of FE, partner colleges or training providers, their school or another school, or another organisation such as an employer. Schools identified the main location where each student pursued each of their qualifications as illustrated in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3 Location of study of IFP participants 2002 and 2003**



Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003  
 A multiple response item, students could be studying at more than one location of study

The majority of students (64 per cent) attended a Lead Partner organisation for at least one of their courses. A total of 39 per cent of the second cohort attended other organisations, most of which were schools (cited as the locations of study for 30 per cent of students), but included colleges which were not Lead Partners (six per cent) and other providers (three per cent). The locations where the second cohort of IFP students pursued their qualifications differed slightly from those in the first cohort. It appears that fewer in the second cohort attended the Lead Partner organisation and more attended a non-Lead Partner college. This may suggest an increase in the extent to which Lead Partners are developing relationships with partner providers. Whether this is a response to providing for a greater number of students, or to support a wider range of courses, is unclear.

The majority (95 per cent) of students attended only one location to pursue their vocational qualification. This was slightly lower than was found with the first cohort where 98 per cent attended only one location. Table 3.6 provides further details of the locations of study in both cohorts.

**Table 3.6 Locations of study in 2002 and 2003**

<b>Location</b>	<b>IFP students 2002 %</b>	<b>IFP students 2003 %</b>
Lead Partner only	64	60
School only	28	27
College only	3	5
Other organisation only	2	2
Lead Partner and school	1	1
Other combinations	1	1
No data	1	3
<b>N=</b>	<b>29,990</b>	<b>33,706</b>

*Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003  
A single response item, due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100*

The table indicates that fewer students in Year 10 in 2003 attended their Lead Partner only and that there was a slight increase in the proportion who attended a non-Lead Partner college only, which reflects the findings in Figure 3.3.

Some notable differences emerged regarding the types of qualification studied at different locations, as shown in Table 3.7.

**Table 3.7 Types of qualifications studied at different locations 2003**

Type of qualification	Lead Partner %	School %	Non-Lead Partner College %	Training provider/ employer %
GCSEs in vocational subjects	41	75	30	22
NVQ	24	1	31	41
GNVQ	6	20	10	2
Other VQ	30	9	31	34
Non qualification	2	<1	2	3
Qualification unknown	<1	-	-	-
<b>N =</b>	<b>20,189</b>	<b>9,208</b>	<b>1,792</b>	<b>779</b>

Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2003

All those studying at one location and for whom information on the type of qualification studied was provided.

A multiple response item – students could be working towards more than one qualification – percentages do not sum to 100

As might be expected, schools were largely delivering new GCSEs in vocational subjects, or GNVQs, whereas Lead Partners, non-Lead Partner colleges and training providers and employers were mostly delivering NVQs and other VQs. In most respects these findings reflect those for the first cohort although there has been a notable increase in the proportion of students who attended training providers or employers to take new GCSEs from eight per cent for the first cohort to 22 per cent in 2003. The reasons for this are unclear and, as this represents 170 individuals, the experience may not be more widespread. When this group of 170 students is examined in more detail, it emerges that most (65 per cent or 110 individuals) were taking new GCSEs in engineering. Of the remaining 60 students, 18 were taking leisure and tourism, 17 were taking health and social care, 12 were working towards applied ICT and the same number were taking manufacturing GCSE. One student was taking applied business. The students were associated with 11 different partnerships in nine LLSC areas across the country and were fairly evenly spread across these 11 partnerships. They attended 12 different training providers or employers of which most appeared to be specialist training providers such as in engineering or care. For example, all 17 students in this group who were taking the new GCSE in health and social care appeared to attend a specialist training provider in care.

## 4. ACHIEVEMENT AND DISCONTINUATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

### Key findings

- ◆ The majority of a sample of 6,112 IFP participants who had embarked on vocational qualifications in autumn 2002 remained engaged in these qualifications at the end of Year 10 (summer 2003). One per cent (72 students) had achieved the qualification they had started and one per cent (71 students) appeared to have switched from their original qualification to an alternative. A total of 13 per cent had discontinued their qualification completely.
- ◆ The 72 students who had achieved their qualifications had achieved an NVQ (40 students) or an other VQ (32 students).
- ◆ Students who had discontinued their qualifications and not embarked on an alternative had done so throughout the school year and most Lead Partners and schools in the sample had experienced at least one student discontinuing. Preliminary findings from the case-study visits suggest that students often discontinued their qualifications for reasons that were unrelated to the IFP course such as wider school-related or personal issues.
- ◆ There was a slight tendency for those who had discontinued to have been studying NVQs and other VQs. In addition, students who were recognised for school action or school action plus on the SEN register, and those who had attained less well at key stage 3 were over-represented among those who had discontinued their qualification.

This chapter focuses on a sample of students in the first cohort of IFP who had completed Year 10. It explores:

- ◆ the extent to which cohort 1 students had achieved or discontinued their qualifications by the end of their first year of IFP involvement
- ◆ the types of qualifications studied, location of study and background characteristics of the students who had achieved or discontinued
- ◆ whether there appears to be any relationship between these factors and achievement or discontinuation.

### 4.1 Background

Each term schools in the sample provided details of the attendance at school, and the achievement or discontinuation of vocational qualifications, by IFP students. Details were provided for a total of 6,112 students who were broadly representative of all students who participated in the first cohort of IFP in

terms of their background characteristics. However, there were slightly more students in the sample of 6,112 who were not recognised on the register of SEN (72 per cent of the sample compared with 67 per cent of the cohort as a whole) and a correspondingly smaller proportion were recognised for school action or school action plus (24 per cent compared with 27 per cent) or had a statement of SEN (four per cent compared with six per cent).

The data which is explored in this chapter is based, therefore, on a sample of around 20 per cent of all IFP students in the first cohort. The majority of these students continued with their qualifications, and most of those who had not, had discontinued completely (804 individuals). Therefore, the numbers of students in the sub-groups of those who had achieved or changed courses are relatively small (72 individuals and 81 individuals respectively). Consequently, these findings should be examined with care and regarded as indicative of the experience of some students which may not reflect a wider experience.

The baseline data, provided originally by schools in autumn 2002, indicated that the majority of these students (91 per cent) were taking one qualification while nine per cent were taking more than one qualification. Table 4.1 provides details of the qualifications taken by the sample students, compared with all students in the first cohort.

**Table 4.1 Qualifications taken by sample students and all IFP students 2002**

Qualifications	Sample students	All IFP students 2002
	%	%
GCSE in vocational subjects	62	58
NVQ	16	16
GNVQ	5	7
Other VQ	20	19
Non-qualification	-	2
Qualification unknown	<1	2
<b>N=</b>	<b>6,112</b>	<b>29,990</b>

*Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data autumn 2002 and 2003*

*A multiple response item – students could be studying more than one qualification – percentages do not sum to 100*

As was the case for the whole cohort, the majority of students in the sample had embarked on new GCSEs in vocational subjects in autumn 2002. Indeed, a slightly larger proportion in the sample group had done so. Nevertheless, overall, the sample of students reflected the overall profile of the cohort in terms of the qualifications they embarked on in autumn 2002. The details provided for this sample of students in terms of the discontinuation and achievement of the qualifications they had started through IFP reveal that:

- ♦ One per cent of the sample (72 students) had achieved at least one of the qualifications they were studying

- ♦ 13 per cent (804 students) had discontinued their qualification and not embarked on an alternative vocational qualification through IFP
- ♦ One per cent (81 students) had switched courses from one vocational qualification to an alternative.

Each of these findings is discussed in more detail in the remainder of the chapter. In examining the findings it is worth considering that IFP students embarked on courses which were expected to continue for two years and be completed in Year 11 at the end of their compulsory schooling. Therefore, in most cases, it would not be expected that they had achieved their qualifications by the end of Year 10 although they may have gained a supplementary or lower level qualification.

## **4.2 Achievements of Qualifications at the end of Year 10**

A total of 72 students (one per cent) were said to have achieved at least one of their vocational qualifications by the end of Year 10. The number of students who had achieved was small, and an analysis of their characteristics can only be indicative. However, it appears that 40 of these students were working towards NVQs and 32 were pursuing other VQs and it may be that they had achieved units towards the full qualification rather than the full award. The majority of these students had attained level 4 or below in their key stage 3 assessments, for example 52 students had done so in English. In addition, most (45 students) were recognised for school action or school action plus on the register of SEN.

Where information relating to their location of study was provided, it revealed that most of these students (62 individuals) attended a Lead Partner organisation, three pursued their IFP qualification at school and five attended an other organisation. The students who had achieved their qualifications were located in 11 different partnerships and in 12 different schools. This suggests that the achievement of qualifications was not due to one or two partnerships having adopted an approach which differed from most partnerships.

## **4.3 Discontinuation of Qualifications at the end of Year 10**

A total of 885 students were identified by their schools as having discontinued their IFP qualification either in the course of the autumn term 2002 or during the spring and summer terms of 2003. These students can be grouped into two sub-groups as follows:

- ♦ those who had discontinued their qualification and not embarked on an alternative
- ♦ those who had discontinued their original qualification and embarked on an alternative or 'switched'.

It should be emphasised that those in the latter group may not have switched through an active choice on their part. Evidence from the case-study visits revealed that, in some instances, the initial qualification started by students proved inappropriate and was changed to an alternative by the Lead Partner.

#### **4.3.1 Students who had discontinued and not embarked on an alternative**

Most of the students who had discontinued their qualification (804 or 13 per cent of all 6112 students) did not embark on an alternative vocational qualification. This discontinuation was not isolated to the early stages of the programme. Indeed, although 36 per cent (291 students) were said to have discontinued during the autumn term, 63 per cent (513 students) did so during the spring and summer terms. Moreover, no one type of qualification predominated and similar proportions of students taking each main qualification type had discontinued. More specifically, 36 per cent of these students had started GCSEs in vocational subjects in autumn 2002, 32 per cent were taking NVQs and 31 per cent were taking other VQs. Three per cent had been undertaking GNVQs. However, when these proportions are compared to the overall profile of qualifications taken by IFP students in the sample, where 16 per cent took NVQs, 20 per cent took other VQs and 62 per cent took new GCSEs, it appears that a greater proportion of those who had discontinued were taking NVQs and other VQs than might be expected if the drop-out had been similar across the qualification types. Furthermore, the proportions who had discontinued new GCSEs were lower than might be expected given the overall profile.

Only 11 of the 89 partnerships which were in the sample had no students who were said to have discontinued their qualification, which suggests that this experience was widespread and not likely to be attributed to the characteristics or approach of a particular partnership. In addition, all but 51 of the 219 schools attended by these students had experience of at least one of their students discontinuing. The location where the student pursued their qualification did not appear to be a notable factor influencing discontinuation, although a slightly greater proportion of those who discontinued had attended a Lead Partner (76 per cent) than was the case for the sample as a whole (66 per cent). Conversely, a smaller proportion of those who discontinued had been taking their IFP qualification at school (14 per cent) than among the sample as a whole (24 per cent).

An examination of the background characteristics of students who had discontinued their IFP course, compared with those who had not discontinued, revealed some differences. For example, around a third (36 per cent) were recognised for action or school action plus on the register of SEN, whereas only 22 per cent of those who had not discontinued were recognised for action. A greater proportion of those who had discontinued (35 per cent) received free school meals compared with 20 per cent of those who had not discontinued. Around two-thirds had achieved at level 4 or below in their key stage 3 assessments. For example, 65 per cent attained level 4 or below in English whereas 46 per cent of those who had not discontinued had achieved level 4 or

below at key stage 3. It may be, therefore, that the ability or SEN of some of these students may have been a factor in their discontinuing their course.

The reasons why students discontinued their qualifications cannot be inferred from this data, but will be explored through the case-study visits. However, the evidence does not suggest that the location of study, or the nature of any particular school or partnership is influential. In addition, students appeared to have discontinued their qualifications throughout the first year of IFP. It may be that, in many instances, individual circumstances and personalities may be the explanation for students discontinuing their IFP courses. Indeed, preliminary findings from the case-study visits suggest that students often discontinued their involvement with IFP for reasons that were unrelated to the IFP course. For example, students had been excluded from school, excluded themselves from school, moved area or were absent due to illness. The reasons for discontinuation will be explored further in the forthcoming report of the follow-up visits to case-study partnerships. However, it appears that the ability of the student, and whether they have SEN status may be influential factors. In addition, among this sample of students, the type of qualification studied appears to have had some relevance.

#### **4.3.2 Students who had switched courses**

A total of 81 students (one per cent of all students in the sample) had switched courses during Year 10. As this analysis is based on a small number of students, it provides some indicative insights, but cannot be said to be representative of a wider experience. As was noted above with regard to students who had discontinued, this group of students had switched courses at various points during Year 10. Around half (37 students) had switched during the autumn term of 2002 and a similar number (44 students) had switched during the spring and summer terms.

Most of the students (58 individuals) were taking one qualification as part of their IFP course (the remaining 23 were taking two). A total of 36 students were taking GNVQs originally, 20 were taking at least one NVQ and 22 were working towards at least one other VQ. Twelve were taking GCSEs in vocational subjects. In terms of the location where they had studied their initial qualification, most (38 students) had done so at school while 30 students attended the Lead Partner. This small number of students who had switched courses were associated with 15 partnerships and attended 18 schools.

In terms of their background characteristics, the students who had switched courses did not appear to differ noticeably from their peers who had not switched. However, a greater proportion of those who had switched were recognised for school action or school action plus on the register of SEN (49 per cent) and it may be that they changed to what they saw as a more appropriate course.

Where information was provided regarding the course that the students had changed to, it appeared that 15 students had started on an alternative course of

the same type. More specifically, seven had changed from one GCSE in a vocational subject to another, five had changed NVQs and three had changed other VQs. It was noticeable that 34 students appeared to have changed from a GNVQ course to a GCSE in a vocational subject. It may be that, in these instances, school staff had not provided the correct qualification details when the original baseline data was collected.

Overall, the findings for this sample of students indicates that, by the end of Year 10, around 13 per cent of students in the first cohort had ceased their involvement with IFP. The pattern of discontinuation did not appear to be clustered in the first term, but continued through the spring and summer terms. This suggests that these students did not embark on the course and find immediately that they did not wish to continue, and there may be implications of discontinuing their IFP course for their re-integration into school. The reasons for discontinuation will be explored further through the case-study visits.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The report has shown that, in the second year of the IFP, more than 2,000 schools in England, which represents the majority of schools, were using the IFP to support the curriculum of their 14 to 16 year old students. Indeed, most schools who indicated that their students were involved in the first cohort had continued their involvement and had students in Year 10 in 2003-2004 participating in the second cohort. In addition, there was an overall expansion in the numbers of schools and young people who were involved with IFP partnerships in the second cohort. This suggests that there is an ongoing commitment to IFP among schools and Lead Partners.

The partnerships appear to have the potential to meet their targets of one-third of students achieving a new GCSE in vocational subjects and one-third achieving a level 1 qualification. More than a third of students in the second cohort were working towards new GCSEs in vocational subjects, through which they could achieve a level 1 or 2 qualification, just under a third were working towards a level 1 qualification and ten per cent were undertaking qualifications at level 2. In this respect, the second cohort was similar to the first. However, there were notable differences in the qualifications which were being studied. In particular, a smaller proportion of students in the second cohort than in the first were working towards new GCSEs in vocational subjects while greater proportions were reported to be working towards NVQs, other VQs and GNVQs. Examined in more detail, it appeared that smaller proportions of students were engaged in the new GCSEs in Applied ICT and Applied Business and, in general, fewer students were working towards qualifications in these subject areas. Interviews in case-study partnerships suggest that, in some cases, schools felt able to deliver such qualifications, which do not require specialist workshops, without the need to work in partnership with an external provider.

On the whole, the profile of the second cohort of IFP participants reflected that of the first cohort in terms of the background characteristics of students. In both cohorts there were some differences in the characteristics of the cohort and those of Year 10 students. The evidence indicates that greater proportions of IFP participants were male, were white, received free school meals and were recognised for action on the register of SEN than was the case among Year 10 students as a whole. In addition, while students across the ability range were represented among the second cohort, overall the attainment of students who participated in IFP was lower than that of all Year 10 students and this difference was more marked among those taking NVQs, other VQs and GNVQs. This suggests that take-up of IFP courses in the second cohort continued to be greater among students with certain characteristics which may reflect schools and IFP partnerships continuing to target this resource at specific groups of students whom they feel will benefit most.

The second cohort of IFP participants differed from the first cohort in one respect. In the second cohort, a smaller proportion of students were recognised for school action or school action plus on the register of SEN than was the case among the first cohort. Moreover, there is an indication from the evaluation of the first cohort that students who were recognised for school action or school action plus were more likely to have discontinued their involvement with IFP. It may be, therefore, that partnerships' experience of the first year of IFP led them to give greater consideration of the SEN status of students when identifying those to participate in the second cohort of IFP. However, it is worth noting that the proportion of students who had a statement of SEN remained the same.

The analysis of the second cohort of IFP participants can provide an insight into some elements of the way in which IFP is delivered and the extent to which the approaches adopted for the first cohort were continued for the second. This may reflect partnerships' views on which approaches were successful, and which less so, and their strategic response to this. Alternatively, it may reflect a more responsive experience whereby changes have occurred in response to needs. The comparison of the cohorts has suggested that:

- ◆ there is a difference in the types of qualifications undertaken by students through IFP, as noted above
- ◆ similar proportions of students were working towards more than one qualification through IFP in both cohorts
- ◆ where students were working towards more than one qualification, there were differences in the types of qualifications studied between the two cohorts. For example fewer students in the second cohort were said to be taking more than one new GCSE which may reflect a change of approach. However, as was the case with the first cohort, students were generally working towards qualifications in more than one vocational area.
- ◆ the locations where students studied for their qualifications was different in the second cohort than the first. Fewer students were said to be studying at their Lead Partner and more were attending a non-Lead Partner FE college.

This suggests that partnerships may have adapted their approaches regarding the types of qualifications which were most appropriate and more carefully examined the SEN status of potential participants. In some cases, they may also have extended the locations where students could pursue their IFP qualifications.

With regard to the models of partnerships, the evidence from the baseline suggests that the overall expansion in the numbers of students participating in the second cohort is due to an increase in the number of schools rather than a large increase in the number of students within each school participating. This suggests that, in general, partnerships have sought to offer the IFP widely rather than consolidate provision in a larger cohort in fewer schools.

Finally, for the majority of a sample of students who were engaged in the first cohort of IFP, the delivery approaches appear to have been successful as they remained engaged in their IFP programme by the end of Year 10. Students who had discontinued their involvement were spread across a number of partnerships and were not clustered in a few, which suggests that partnership-level factors may not have influenced discontinuation. However, there was some evidence that students who had pursued their course at a Lead Partner organisation were more likely to have discontinued than those at school. This will be explored further through the analysis of the students' achievements at the end of Year 11.



# APPENDIX A

## Representativeness of schools who provided details of Year 10 students participating in IFP in 2003-2004 (cohort 2)

This table presents details of all schools participating in the second cohort of IFP all those who provided details of their participating students and all secondary and special schools in England. It should be noted that the table includes special schools and PRUs whereas these are excluded from the comparison of IFP schools and all schools presented in Chapter 2 due to the disproportionate effect such schools have on the attainment profile and SEN status of students.

**Table A1. Representativeness of responding schools: Comparison of IFP participant schools with those which returned student data: 2003**

	IFP schools 2003 %	Responding IFP schools 2003 %	All schools 2003 %
<b>LEA Type</b>			
London Borough	10	8	13
Metropolitan authorities	21	19	23
English unitary Authorities	18	20	17
Counties	51	53	48
<b>Government Office Region</b>			
North East	6	6	5
North West/Merseyside	15	16	15
Yorkshire and the Humber	10	9	9
East Midlands	10	10	9
West Midlands	13	13	12
Eastern	10	10	11
London	10	8	13
South East	16	17	17
South West	10	11	10
No data available	<1	-	-
<b>School governance</b>			
Academy	<1	<1	<1
City Technology College	<1	<1	<1
Community School	67	69	45
Foundation School	12	12	11
Voluntary Aided School	12	11	11
Voluntary Controlled School	3	3	2
Special school	5	4	24
PRU	1	1	6
<b>School type</b>			
Secondary Modern	4	3	3
Comprehensive to 16	41	42	27
Comprehensive to 18	48	49	35
Grammar	-	-	4
Other secondary schools	1	<1	1
CTC schools	<1	<1	<1
Special schools	5	4	24
PRU	1	1	6
No data available	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,020</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>4,471</b>

Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data 2003 and NFER Register of Schools

**Table A2. Comparison of all IFP participant schools with those which returned student data: 2003**

	<b>IFP schools</b>	<b>Responding IFP schools</b>	<b>All schools 2003</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Sex of school</b>			
Boys	4	4	7
Girls	4	3	5
Mixed	91	92	85
no data available	1	1	3
<b>School size</b>			
600 pupils or fewer	15	13	35
601-1000 pupils	39	39	30
1001-1300	27	28	20
1301 or more	18	20	13
no data available	1	1	3
<b>Achievement band (key stage 3 2003)</b>			
Lowest band	26	23	24
Second lowest band	20	20	14
Middle band	21	21	13
Second highest band	18	20	13
Highest band	10	12	13
no data available	5	4	24
<b>Achievement band (GCSE 2002 total point score)</b>			
Lowest band	27	23	24
Second lowest band	22	22	15
Middle band	21	23	15
Second highest band	19	21	13
Highest band	8	8	11
no data available	4	3	22
<b>% of pupils with English as an additional language</b>			
None	24	25	23
1-5%	48	51	40
6-49%	22	20	23
50% or more	4	4	4
no data available	2	1	10
<b>% of pupils eligible for free school meals</b>			
Lowest 20%	3	2	9
Second lowest 20%	22	24	17
Middle 20%	27	28	19
Second highest 20%	27	28	22
Highest 20%	21	17	29
no data available	1	1	4
<b>% of pupils with SEN</b>			
None	1	1	3
1-3%	47	48	34
4-29%	20	20	15
30% or more	5	4	24
No data available	28	27	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,020</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>4,471</b>

Source: NFER evaluation of IFP – baseline data 2003 and NFER Register of Schools

Overall, the 63 per cent of schools which provided details of the students in Year 10 in 2003 who were participating in the second cohort of IFP were representative of all cohort 2 schools in terms of the main school characteristics. They differed slightly in terms of their overall attainment and the proportions of students who received free school meals. For example:

- ♦ 23 per cent of schools who responded were in the lowest achievement band at key stage 3 whereas 26 per cent of all IFP schools were in this band.
- ♦ 23 per cent of schools who responded were in the lowest attainment band at GCSE level while 27 per cent of all IFP schools were in this band
- ♦ 17 per cent of schools which responded were among schools with the highest proportions of students receiving free school meals while 21 per cent of all IFP schools were in this group.

This suggests that, to a small extent, lower attaining schools with high proportions of students who receive free school meals are under-represented in the data.

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