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New Opportunities Fund Summer School Schemes, 2000 – 2002

An evaluation of 30 schemes in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the mid-1990s, the area of study support has attracted increasing interest from educationalists and others wishing to explore avenues by which levels of achievement might be raised, as well as how the challenges faced by poor motivation and disaffection amongst young people might be addressed.

The potential contribution of 'out of school hours learning' to school improvement was highlighted in the Government's White Paper *Excellence in Schools*, which stated: 'These activities raise pupils' motivation, improve social skills and encourage participation in other activities' (GB. Parliament HoC, 1997a, Paragraph 30). The White Paper went on to express the Government's aspiration that all young people should have access to a range of activity in addition to normal classroom teaching and learning.

Shortly afterwards, the Government published a further White Paper setting out its plans for the National Lottery (GB. Parliament. HoC, 1997b). This included proposals to establish the New Opportunities Fund to support three areas of education, health and the environment, including 'out of school hours activities'. The document set the following target for out of school hours activities designed to raise pupils' achievement. 'By 2001, we want high quality programmes of regular learning activities established in at least half of all secondary and a quarter of all primary schools' (Paragraph 14).

The following year, the Government published a consultation document focusing specifically on the area of study support (GB. DfEE, 1998). This set out the steps needed to achieve a national framework of provision, and explained how various bodies (e.g. central and local government, library services, business, youth and voluntary organisations) could contribute to study support.

The concept of study support prior to this had much in common with that of 'extra-curricular activities', which schools and others had traditionally provided for young people. However, study support was seen as different in two key ways from what had gone before. Firstly, there was an explicit connection with raising achievement. Secondly, whereas extra-curricular activities had traditionally been dependent on the goodwill of individual members of staff, study support implied a planned programme of provision tailored to meet the needs of particular client groups.

Since that time, a number of research and development projects, such as those by the Prince's Trust, the National Youth Agency, Education Extra and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), have advanced understanding of the conditions that facilitate effective provision.

In April 1999, the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), a National Lottery distributor of good cause money to health, education and environment projects, announced that a total of £205 million was available for out of school learning activities throughout the UK. The intention was that around half of all secondary and special schools, and a quarter of all primary schools would be involved in NOF-funded projects by 2003.

The funding was to be divided between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the basis of population, weighted to reflect levels of deprivation. NOF intended to support sustainable projects that would improve the quality of life of people throughout the UK, address the needs of those most disadvantaged in society, encourage community participation, and complement local and national strategies and programmes.

Organisations concerned with out of school hours learning, including Local Education Authorities (Education and Library Boards in the case of Northern Ireland), consortia of schools and single schools, and public, private and voluntary organisations were able to apply for NOF grants. Potential providers were able to submit bids that included support for activities such as that for music, drama, art, key skills, sports and outdoor pursuits.

The first grants were awarded in October 1999, and grants were continued to be awarded on a regular basis until December 2002. Funded projects were usually for a maximum of three years. Some organisations were awarded grants for projects with term-time and summer school components, while others had prepared bids and received grants for summer school schemes only.

In April 2000, NOF commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to evaluate the out of school hours learning programme. Both term-time projects and summer schools were to be included in the evaluation. For projects in Scotland, the NFER recruited the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) to undertake case study work in that country.

Of the £205 million available, £25 million was specifically dedicated to creating new summer school places for 250,000 young people throughout the UK. Of this amount, £19.375 million was available for England, £2.85 million for Scotland, £1.65 million for Wales, and £1.125 million for Northern Ireland.

This report focuses on the research findings in relation to the summer schools, while a separate report will be concerned with the term-time projects.

1.2 Aims of the Research

The main aims of the research into both term-time and summer school projects were:

- to complement NOF monitoring in assessing the degree to which the delivery of the NOF programme is realising its stated objectives and priorities;
- to focus in particular on the extent to which the programme is: meeting the needs of those who are most disadvantaged in society, promoting social inclusion; and encouraging the involvement of local communities;
- to address issues of sustainability and the transferability of identified good practice.

1.3 Methodology

The evaluation design took the form of a comprehensive set of detailed case studies representing the range of summer school projects funded through the NOF programme. Fieldwork was conducted over three successive summers: 2000, 2001 and 2002. Each year a sample of summer school projects was selected by NFER, in consultation with NOF and the evaluation project Steering Group.

The selection reflected a number of important dimensions in order to ensure that the sample was broadly representative of the totality of funded projects. The sample included projects:

- in disadvantaged and less disadvantaged areas
- delivered by LEAs, consortia of schools and single schools
- involving different types of partner organisation including careers service, youth service, private organisations, voluntary organisations, arts organisations and local communities
- involving different partnerships of schools (e.g. primary school partnerships, secondary school with feeder primary school partnerships)
- offering different types of provision in terms of curriculum content (e.g. basic skills, enrichment, extension) and teaching and learning strategies
- of different duration and starting dates
- in all four countries (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), to identify any national issues
- in rural and urban areas

For each project, a case study report was written by the researcher(s) who had undertaken visits to the summer school to interview providers and participants, and to observe activities. Also, documentation was collected and analysed where relevant.

A total of 30 summer school projects were evaluated over the three years, comprising nine in England, nine in Scotland, seven in Wales and five in Northern Ireland. Eight summer schools were evaluated in 2000, 14 in 2001 and eight in 2002. In cases where LEAs were managing summer school schemes comprising a number of

separate projects, the evaluation sometimes focused on a single project within the scheme or on a small number of the projects.

It should be noted that of these 30 summer school projects, 28 were evaluated in the first year of their operation and two in their second year. This means that this report includes information pertinent to the experiences of summer schools in preparing for and delivering a NOF-funded summer school for the first time.

Chapter 2
Summer School Aims

2.1 General Aims

The summer school projects varied considerably in terms of size, age of participants, staffing, venue, duration and 'curriculum' content. With regard to general aims, there were four main, sometimes overlapping, categories:

- to provide additional support for children and young people identified as underachieving
- to ease transition from one phase of schooling to the next
- to provide enrichment activities for children and young people, some who may be becoming disaffected with education
- to provide extension activities for children and young people, who wish to develop further their skills and experiences in a particular area.

A number of sub-aims were associated with these general aims, such as motivating children and young people, increasing their appreciation of the value of learning and self-esteem, developing their interpersonal skills, and addressing poor behaviour.

With regard to the general aims, enrichment is considered to be more about the breadth given to the curriculum, through a broader range of activities and experiences, while extension is about extra depth through activities and experiences pursued in more detail and with greater complexity. In fact, enrichment may entail the provision of activities of which the children and young people have had no previous experience.

Some of the larger summer school schemes addressed more than one of these general aims through the provision of several separate projects, each with its own programme, and often based at different sites. Also, there were a small number of projects in which the general aims of providing enrichment and extension activities were addressed within the same summer school programme. Such programmes typically

catered for pupils across a wide ability range, and the activities provided were differentiated so that both relative beginners and those who had developed a level of relevant skill with the content were able to benefit. However, there were a small number of examples where the range of skills or previous experience of participants was so wide that the providers found it particularly challenging to deliver sessions that were of benefit to all participants.

Other summer schools addressed both the issue of easing transition from one phase of schooling to the next with the general aim of providing additional support for those underachieving. This was typically for young people in their final year of primary schooling, and targeted on those who were underachieving relative to their peers in key subject areas, such as in literacy, numeracy or ICT.

2.1.1 Providing support for underachievers

Ten of the summer schools in the evaluation sample had the general aim of providing additional support for those young people identified as underachieving. For large schemes, it was typically the case that one or two projects out of a large number of summer school projects addressed this need. For example, the Oldham LEA Summer School Scheme in England ran 12 different summer schools in 2001, one of which was a summer literacy school for Year 7 pupils at one of its secondary schools. Often, numeracy, literacy and ICT comprised the 'curriculum' content of such summer school programmes, with literacy support appearing to be the main area of concern. Pupils in their final years of primary schooling or in their first year of secondary schooling were usually the target groups for this provision.

One such summer school programme was for the Merthyr Tydfil Summer Literacy School held at Cyfartha Junior School, Wales.

The Merthyr Tydfil Summer Literacy School held at Cyfartha Junior School was a key element of the local authority strategy to improve literacy, and was a response to the drive towards improved key skills within an area of severe social and economic disadvantage. School development plans in the area had identified an urgent need to develop and improve literacy skills of pupils in Year 5, and consequently the authority

had developed a strategy to improve literacy standards. The main aims of the literacy scheme were to develop:

- speaking, listening, reading and writing skills
- social skills
- confidence and self-esteem
- continuity of engagement

Pupils whose literacy skills had not flourished during term-time were targeted as suitable for the three-week summer school on the basis of them being likely to achieve Level 3 in English if given greater individual attention, less distraction and sustained social and learning support during the summer months.

2.1.2 Easing transition

Eleven of the 30 summer school schemes that were evaluated had easing transition as a general aim. Ten were concerned with easing transition from primary to secondary, while the remaining scheme, in the Borough of Poole, England, (which operated a middle school system) ran some projects in which the aim was to ease transition either between the first and middle school or between the middle and upper school phases. None of the summer schools in the Northern Ireland evaluation sample had this as a general aim. Overall, the easing transition focus was particularly rare throughout the NOF-funded summer schools in Northern Ireland, where the aims of providing enrichment activities and providing support for underachievers in key subject areas appeared to be more of a priority.

The typical model of provision was of activities provided at the secondary school and attended by Year 6 and sometimes Year 5 pupils as well, (or Primary 7 and Primary 6 in Scotland). In some cases, pupils who appeared particularly nervous or shy about transferring to secondary schools were targeted by the primary schools. The evaluation indicated that as a result of attending these summer schools pupils felt less daunted by the prospect of transferring to secondary school. Generally, pupils welcomed the opportunity to see the secondary school facilities, meet some of the teachers, and to experience 'taster' sessions in a range of subjects they would be taking. However, it is worth noting that some attendees would not actually be

transferring to the secondary school hosting the summer school, which was a concern for some schemes.

The reason why some summer schools included pupils who had just completed their penultimate primary year was that the primary schools themselves wanted to benefit from the provision by being able to have another year working with those who had attended the summer school and had hopefully been influenced by it.

One scheme that had a transition summer school as part of its provision was the Summer University held at Langdon School, Newham, England.

Langdon School is situated in the borough of Newham, the second most deprived of the London boroughs, and an area of high unemployment. It is a mixed 11-16 comprehensive, and 42 per cent of pupils received free school meals, and over 50 different languages were spoken within the school community at the time of the evaluation, 2000.

A key element of the Summer University was to familiarise Year 6 pupils from partner primary schools with Langdon School and to help them feel at ease when they joined the school in September.

Once a provisional schedule for the Summer University was in place, letters were given to the pupils of Langdon School and Year 6 pupils of the partner primary schools, highlighting the activities that would be provided and inviting them to enrol. Those pupils about to transfer to the secondary school were reminded at their admission interview of this provision.

2.1.3 Providing enrichment activities

This was the most frequent general aim throughout the NOF-funded summer schools, and consequently in the evaluation sample of projects. A total of 24 of the 30 summer schools had this as a key feature. The most common content areas for such activities were music, art, drama and sport.

During the research, many providers commented that these activities had become peripheral to the school curriculum over the last ten years or so, the period coinciding with the introduction, development and revision of the National Curriculum. Some providers suggested that schools would benefit from devoting more time on such activities, largely to deliver a more balanced curriculum, but also to meet the needs of those pupils who were interested in 'non-academic' areas or who had ability or potential talent in such areas.

With regard to the more physical activities, such as sports and dance, there were comments made by some providers about the general fitness level and lifestyles of children and young people in the UK, and how participating in these activities would in a small way, begin to address problems associated with a lack of physical exercise and poor diet.

A common view was that with the pressure on the school day likely to remain in the foreseeable future, then it was only out of school hours projects that could provide opportunities for pupils to participate in these activities in any meaningful way.

Many of the summer schools providing enrichment activities employed professionals other than teachers to deliver them. These included professional musicians, artists, dance instructors and sports coaches. Some of these providers remarked that schools in general did not have adequate premises or resources, or the teachers sufficient expertise, to deliver such activities appropriately. This was a view that was also expressed by teachers at several of the schools, specifically primary schools.

In general, young people participated in enrichment activities because they were interested in them rather than because they had particularly talents in these areas. However, there were a small number of projects providing activities that could be classified as extension as well as enrichment, with some of the participants already having a level of skill with the content area and taking the opportunity to develop that further.

Overall, enrichment activities were successful in introducing young people to new activities or giving them more time on activities they had some amount of experience

with, and enjoyed, but were frustrated with because of the lack of school time allocated to them. These activities also enabled young people to have the opportunity to work with professionals other than teachers, and in some cases to form more positive relationships with these adults than they had with their teachers.

One summer school scheme that provided enrichment activities was the Dalmellington Arts Summerfest, Doon Academy, East Ayrshire Council, Scotland.

East Ayrshire Council was responsible for a total of 11 summer schools. East Ayrshire is an area of acute deprivation where social, financial and geographical constraints restrict access to participation in the arts. An aim of the Dalmellington Arts Summerfest was to raise the educational achievement of pupils, both primary and secondary, through participation in one of five activities: drama, dance, art, video and website design. Pupils were able to select which activity to study for the duration of the summer school.

The staffing of the summer school, included five specialists/tutors and five secondary school teachers, in addition to an on-site project coordinator. The specialists delivered the sessions, while the teachers provided support. This arrangement was devised so that there would also be a staff development element for the teachers as well as quality tuition for the pupils.

2.1.4 Providing extension activities

Twelve of the 30 summer school schemes had the provision of extension activities as a general aim (although several of these schemes did not specifically state this in their documentation or publicity information). In this context, extension is considered to be greater depth through activities provided in more detail and with greater complexity. The activities provided were either based on more traditional 'academic' subjects, such as science, mathematics, ICT, Welsh language for some schools in Wales, or drama, music, art or sports.

For some summer schools, there was an overlap in the programme with providing support for underachievers. Also, as noted earlier, there was often an overlap with enrichment activities, in which participants with differing levels of skills and

experiences were working together on the same summer school. For some participants, it was simply taking part in the activity that was the main outcome, while for others (and the providers) it was about developing skills to a higher level. One such example is the Mosslands School Summer Sports Camp, Wirral, England.

Mosslands School on the Wirral is a large boys' school with approximately 1,500 boys. It received approximately £10,000 of NOF funding, via the LEA, to run a summer sports camp for three years. The summer sports camp was open access to Year 7 and Year 8 pupils, and offered tuition and training in a range of sports (some of which pupils had not yet experienced during term-time) as one of its aims.

The evaluation identified that the teachers providing the activities were constantly aware of the need to tailor activities to the needs and abilities of the boys. The approach was exemplified by the organiser who said: *'I just think it's about including everyone at a level which is appropriate to them, and also allows them to be able to achieve, so that everyone can have come out of each little session having achieved something'*. He described the process of differentiation as, for example, pairing together boys of equal ability, providing different equipment (such as a tennis racquet with a larger head), or moving or widening the goalposts. Much of what he described was, he felt, simply good teaching practice.

A small number of summer school schemes providing extension activities specifically targeted gifted and talented pupils. A common view expressed by providers was that these young people had particular needs to address, in the same way that those underachieving had needs. For example, the Oldham LEA Summer School Scheme, which ran 12 different summer schools in 2001, had two summer schools specifically for 'able and gifted' pupils. Both summer schools were focused on IT activities.

2.1.5 Other general aims

It should be noted that in addition to the aims described already, many of the summer school schemes specifically stated that they wanted to have an impact on young people's attitudes, motivation, self-esteem, teamwork, interpersonal skills, behaviour, etc. For most these were sub-aims, while for a few these were the overriding aims.

One such example was the Young Women at Risk Programme, Ard Carnet, South Eastern Education and Library Board, Northern Ireland.

The Ard Carnet Neighbourhood Education Centre is situated in Dundonald, about half an hour's drive to the east of Belfast City centre. The education centre is a base for a range of professionals working with disaffected young people both locally and in surrounding areas.

The Young Women at Risk programme was a small part of a larger summer school. The project was aimed specifically at young women who were having difficulty in mainstream education – either excluded or on the point of exclusion. Some of the participants were already attending alternative education projects, and several were referred to the programme by education welfare services or social services.

It was agreed by the staff working on the programme that building self-esteem and self-confidence were the priority concerns for these young women. Given that most were on the point of leaving full-time education, gaining confidence to meet new people, and an ability to work as part of a team were also felt to be essential. Many were seen as capable of working in a solo capacity, but unable to function effectively even in small groups. The targets were therefore that each individual would:

- successfully experience working in a team;
- develop a level of self-esteem and self-confidence, and
- sustain working on a project with a clear aim, and achieve a completion in the task by the end of the week.

The research indicated that when the aims were primarily concerned with having an impact on participants' attitudes or behaviour, it was harder for organisers to recruit the intended target group, and also more challenging to retain them throughout the entire summer school programme.

2.2 Recommendations

As an outcome of the research, the NFER research team makes the following recommendations in relation to general aims for organisations planning to set up summer schools or intending to extend existing summer holiday provision:

- When setting the general aims for summer school provision, the characteristics of the potential participants (e.g. ages, ability) should be taken into account, along with the intended content, so as to set aims that are appropriate for all participants. It may be necessary to revise general aims, target different groups of participants, or change the intended content, or a combination of the three.

- When the general aim is to ease the transfer of young people from one phase of schooling to the next, the potential benefits to the feeder schools should also be considered. There are likely to be benefits to these feeder schools from carefully selecting pupils in their penultimate year at such schools to be included in the group of summer school participants.

- When the general aim is to provide enrichment activities delivered by professionals other than teachers, it may be possible to include a staff development element for teachers within the programme. This may be achieved by recruiting teachers to provide support for specific sessions of the programme led by these professionals. This arrangement may also help to respond to cases of misbehaviour from participants that were experienced by a few summer schools at times when the providers present were all non-teachers.

Chapter 3

Content

3.1 Core Subjects and Key Skills

Most summer schools that focused on core subjects or key skills recognised that they needed to be precise about the content of the programme and what they were attempting to achieve in such a short period of time. Some summer schools took the view from the outset that only a limited amount of progress could be made in the time available. Many such projects placed an emphasis on the enjoyment of the subject, such as reading for fun. They included activities that were intended to increase participants' self-confidence, self-esteem and interpersonal skills, and to improve their general attitude to learning. A view taken by some providers was that if participants could be encouraged to think that learning was personally beneficial then there would be outcomes in the medium and long-term with regard to significant improvements in participants' attainment.

Many summer schools planned this type of provision so that a teacher or teachers who had worked with the pupils during the school year also worked with them on the summer school. These teachers had the advantage of knowing the pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and the arrangement enabled for continuity of learning. Many participants themselves remarked to researchers that they had appreciated working with their 'normal' teacher, and felt they had benefited from working in a smaller group in a more informal and relaxed environment.

One summer school that was focused on developing pupils' key skills was that based at St Catherine's College, Armagh, Northern Ireland.

The St Catherine's College Summer Scheme was funded out of the Southern Education and Library Board's grant from NOF. SELB planned to create projects that would enhance existing summer school provision, giving particular attention to the areas of literacy, numeracy, ICT, and the improvement of self-esteem and self-

confidence of disadvantaged pupils. In particular, the two-week summer scheme at St Catherine's College aimed to improve the literacy skills of a small group of pupils with low achievement who were thought likely to benefit from 'catch up' sessions at the end of their first year of secondary school (Year 8 going into Year 9).

During the first week, participants spent two hours a day working with their English teacher. At the start of the scheme, they looked at a range of themes – such as prefixes, homophones, and stage directions in play scripts – which their teacher had identified from their summer tests as needing 'catch-up' sessions. In addition to these themes, the participants picked out handwriting, spellings and layout as other aspects for improvement. The teacher based her scheme of work on the national literacy scheme, and was also following through work from the SELB's literacy framework.

While two hours a day was felt to be appropriate for the first week of the scheme, four hours a day were spent on activities during the second week. As well as the English sessions, some IT sessions were now included. On the Tuesday of the second week, participants worked on the internet, while on the Wednesday the ICT teacher led a session on PowerPoint. On the Thursday, they were engaged in writing and sending emails. Such resources – although available at the school – were ones they would not normally have had the opportunity to use.

The participants also went on two trips. In the first week there was a visit to an ice-rink, while in the second week there was a visit to W5 – an interactive science exhibition. The providers regarded both the IT sessions and these trips as incentives, useful in encouraging young people to attend.

3.2 'Taster' Activities

'Taster' activities are those that are held at summer schools aiming to ease cross-phase transition. These transition summer schools were typically held at the secondary school, with children who had just completed their final year of primary school, or those who had just completed their penultimate primary year. It was the

teachers at the secondary school who were often the main providers of 'taster' activities'.

The content of the case study summer schools focused on transition was diverse, ranging from conventional subjects within the secondary school curriculum, such as mathematics, science, ICT, art, music, drama, to more unusual activities, such as Indian dancing, kite making and glass painting. A common approach of many transition summer schools was to provide a programme in which the 'academic' work was held during the mornings and recreational activities took place in the afternoons. A small number of transition summer schools planned programmes in which several separate subject areas were linked together by a common theme or where they were designed so that collectively they led to a final display or presentation.

One transition summer school was held at The Wheldon School, Nottinghamshire, England.

The Wheldon School is an 11-18 community comprehensive school with over 1,000 pupils, situated on the north-eastern fringe of the City of Nottingham. The school received £3,400 from NOF, via Nottinghamshire LEA, to run a summer school with the aim of easing transition between key stages 2 and 3.

The majority of participants, who had just completed Year 6 at feeder primary schools, were at level 3 for subjects at the end of key stage 2 and would be in Year 7 'catch-up' groups on entering The Wheldon School.

The content of the scheme had three areas of activity – drama, art and dance. Activity in each of the three groups was distinct, but all three were working towards the same end-product of a production entitled 'The Wheldon Soap', which was to be filmed. Staff had developed a general plot before the scheme began, focusing on a school mural being vandalised. The idea was to build this into a longer piece using ideas from participants. It was originally planned that there would be five scenes (later increased to nine) with pupils developing the narrative, building sets and providing

dance sequences linked to the plot. Each group had a specific role in the development of the production:

Art Group: This was split into two groups. One group created and painted the scenery required and the other designed and painted the mural.

Dance Group: This group provided eight dance routines linked to the overall plot.

Drama Group: This group developed plot and narrative elements and acted them out for the final production.

The combination of generic and subject-specific aims was very successful. Participants were able to work within smaller groups to achieve pre-determined aims, and were able to develop friendship groups amongst peers, which are likely to continue when they join the secondary school. The small group approach also enabled them to work closely with particular teachers who they will probably be in contact with in the future. Another transition summer school, held at a community high school, was provided by the City of Edinburgh Council, Scotland.

Another transition summer school, held at a community high school, was provided by the City of Edinburgh Council, Scotland.

The City of Edinburgh Council received funding of £243,000 from NOF for summer school provision over four years. Part of this funding was allocated to each secondary school in the city to run summer schools for pupils making the transition from P7 to S1. One such summer school, for 20 young people, was held at a community high school, the Wester Hailes Education Centre (WHEC).

The week-long summer school took place from 9.30am to 3.30pm each day and was jointly coordinated by a community education worker based at the school and a member of the school staff. It was marketed to pupils as *'an exciting programme during the summer holidays to help with your transition to First Year'*, and included a range of activities in the school ('speedy pizzas', making volcanoes, glass painting, building bird boxes, swimming, key boards, sports and computing) and trips around

Edinburgh. There was no emphasis on the academic curriculum, but rather on giving young people a range of different experiences and a choice of activities.

Trips out included children exploring their own community by walking along the nearby canal and visiting a walled garden, as well as visits to other attractions in Edinburgh.

3.3 Enrichment and Extension Activities

In many respects, the content of summer schools that offered extension or enrichment activities was very similar. (As mentioned earlier, some summer schools could be regarded as offering both enrichment and extension activities within the same programme, the only differences being some differentiation within the provided activities and the skill level or prior experience of the participants.) The content of many of these summer schools took more of a theme or topic approach, rather than providing a number of unconnected sessions. It was evident in many cases that the providers had spent a considerable amount of time planning these activities and preparing materials.

One summer school providing enrichment/extension activities was the Leeds Summer Schools 2002, run jointly by the University of the First Age (UFA) and Education Leeds, and supported by a wide range of partners.

The typical model of a UFA summer school is one lasting five days in which participants are presented with a challenge on the first day, concentrated work in a variety of sessions throughout the week, leading to a demonstration to others that they have met the challenge through a display, a presentation, a production, or something similar. Throughout the summer school, the students work on learning strategies, memory, communication and research skills, and are guided to appreciate what constitutes intelligence as well as understanding their preferred learning style. Some tasks are designed so that students are able to involve their parents/carers at home. A particular feature is the idea of 'a provocation'. This is an unexpected task presented to participants towards the end of the summer school, designed to encourage them to

revisit their earlier work and to use learning strategies they had been developing to make decisions and produce solutions in a relatively short time period. This was the model followed by the Leeds Summer Schools 2002, which ran at a number of secondary schools in Leeds and at other venues in and around the city.

While there was considerable variety amongst the summer schools in Leeds, the one held at Cockburn High School illustrates some of the more important features concerning the content of a UFA summer school.

The summer school, along with several others in the scheme, had a South African theme, which was thought highly appropriate as Leeds is twinned with Durban, South Africa. Each of the five days began at 9.00am and finished at 3.00pm, with a 30-minute lunch break. In addition, there was a one-day visit to Chester Zoo on the Saturday, for participants to see African animals, and make sketches and take photographs.

A science teacher at Cockburn High led the summer school. She had prepared the course plans following UFA guidelines, recruited staff and participants, and managed the budget. Other staff included two support staff and ten peer tutors (Year 9 and 10 students at the school). Twenty-six Year 7 pupils were in attendance on the Thursday, the day the project was visited by an NFER researcher.

The challenge for the week was the creation of a South African street café in an outside area of the school. This entailed setting up of food stalls offering South African food and drinks made by the pupils, and displays of artwork made during the week. There would also be a dance performance from some of the pupils. The street café would be opened on Friday afternoon to be visited by parents and others.

Throughout the week, participants had been involved in a variety of sessions, some directly to do with meeting the challenge, and others concerned with whole-brain/multiple intelligences work. Many of the activities took place in one of the school's art rooms, with internet research activities held in a computer suite of the City Learning Centre (CLC) adjacent to the school. The school sports hall was used for the dance rehearsals. It was evident that the participants had been very productive

during the first three days, as around the art room were pieces of pottery, including models of elephants, crocodiles and rhinos, African masks, and a number of posters and banners in various stages of completion. Earlier in the week, they had learnt about South African food and drinks through the internet, and some dishes and drinks had been prepared. There had also been some work on T-shirt designs and these were currently being printed onto the T-shirts by one of the support workers. As can be seen from the description of one day of the scheme the activity was varied and provided participants with a range of learning experiences.

In the morning, ten participants rehearsed the dance to South African music they would be performing on Friday. This was led by one of the peer tutors. The rehearsal was purposeful, with the peer tutor giving clear directions, and the participants were visibly developing their dance skills.

After the lunch break, a 90-minute session was held in the computer suite of the CLC. Participants were presented with the 'provocation' and had to prepare a response. The 'provocation' was in the form of a (fictitious) letter from the South African Embassy stating that Nelson Mandela was planning to visit the street café on the following Tuesday. The task was to use the internet to plan Nelson Mandela's journey to Leeds from Pretoria, detailing flights, transfers and accommodation. Participants first worked individually and then later in groups to produce a single display sheet showing their plans. The peer tutors had an important role here in guiding and encouraging the pupils. The work was completed later in the afternoon back in the art room.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent completing artwork, reviewing progress, and making preparations for setting up the street café the following morning.

3.4 Other Content

Providers of all types of summer school recognised that the inclusion of visits to places of interest would enhance the overall programme. This appeared to be particularly important for summer schools in which the content was fairly similar to

pupils' usual classroom experiences during term-time. These summer schools felt strongly that it was necessary to include a 'fun' element to attract young people to the programme in the first place and also to retain them. Across the summer schools, there were visits to theme parks, exhibitions, museums, theatres, cinemas, leisure/sports centres and to the seaside. Some summer schools planned for these activities to be 'educational' to some extent, whereas others simply stressed the enjoyment of the activity.

The summer school held at Langdon School, Newham, England regarded visits as a key element of their overall programme.

Newham is an area of considerable social and economic deprivation and the organisers of the summer school were keen that they should provide experiences for participants that they probably would not normally have experienced. As such, outings were planned to be a vital part of the programme, and were wide-ranging, encompassing the Science Museum, the Tate Gallery, an Imax Cinema, Kew Gardens, the Globe Theatre and others, and included a trip to the Millennium Dome for all participants. Careful thought had been put into the best use of funds, and local resources were exploited to the full. Rather than hiring coaches, use was made of the Travelcard system, which gave access to the whole London Transport Network for a cost of 80 pence per young person per day. Many of the venues offered free admission and the support of an education department.

3.5 Recommendations

As an outcome of the research, the NFER research team makes the following recommendations in relation to the content of summer school programmes for organisations planning to set up summer schools or intending to extend existing summer holiday provision:

- Plan the content of the summer school programme to be significantly different from participants' experience of school, whether the content is concerned with key skills/core subjects, 'taster' activities, or enrichment or extension

activities. This may be achieved by involving professionals other than teachers from partner organisations to lead sessions, by including one or two trips to places of interest in the programme, by creating a more relaxed environment for sessions, and by giving participants some choice in the activities they wish to pursue or in the direction they want the work to proceed.

- Providers should have high expectations for the quality of participants' work and for their behaviour. While activities may take place in a more relaxed and more informal environment than that experienced by young people at school, this should not mean that expected standards should be lower during summer school provision. With this in mind, the tasks given to participants should be sufficiently challenging and purposeful.

- Where the summer school programme is focused specifically on core subjects or key skills, it is useful to plan this provision to be one small element within a systematic, long-term strategy to raise levels of achievement for the participants. It is not realistic to expect to raise levels of achievement significantly in such a short time scale. Providers and funders should take the view that the purpose of the programme is to stimulate participants' interest in the subject area, which may in the medium and long-term lead to raising achievement.

Chapter 4
Partnerships

4.1 Schools Working Together

Very few of the schemes in the evaluation sample consisted of a single school working alone (with or without non-school partners). Of the schemes that comprised more than one school, around two-thirds were LEA schemes and one-third were groups of schools who had come together but not under the leadership of the LEA (or Education and Library Board in the case of Northern Ireland). A common model of schools working together was the transition summer school, typically a secondary school working with a number of its feeder primary schools, with 'taster' activities provided at the secondary school.

For LEA schemes, the scheme coordinator was usually an LEA officer, who had responsibility for out of school hours learning, or a related area, or who was an adviser, either for a phase of schooling covered by the summer school provision or for a subject that comprised the main 'curriculum' content of the programme. Sometimes, a small team of officers shared the scheme coordinator role.

The work of the scheme coordinator leading up to the start of the summer school entailed a variety of tasks, including contacting schools and partner organisations to discuss their possible involvement, deciding on the aims and content of the summer school programme in discussion with others, recruiting summer school staff, approving courses and activities, setting up financial systems, devising methods of monitoring and evaluation, delegating specific tasks to individual schools, and reviewing how the planning and preparation was progressing.

An example where the scheme coordinator role was shared by two officers was for the Caerphilly Local Education Authority Schools, Wales.

The summer schools scheme in Caerphilly County Borough was jointly supervised by the Principal Officer for School Effectiveness and the Primary Schools Adviser within the LEA. Both officers were part of the Schools Effectiveness Unit, which was part-funded by the local authority and the Education Support and Inspection Service (ESIS). Together they were responsible for *'working with the schools to put bids together'* and for day-to-day monitoring of the summer school scheme. One officer handled the financial, monitoring and organisational aspects, while the other attended to quality control, data analysis and training.

Generally, across the schemes where schools were working together, the partnership arrangements appeared to work well, whether or not under the leadership of the authority. However, there was often a considerable amount of work for the scheme and/or school coordinators to perform in preparation to ensure that the summer school provision was successful in recruiting the intended target group(s) and meeting their aims (see Sections 6.1 Recruiting children and young people and 5.3 Outcomes). Sometimes there was more planning and preparation necessary than had been initially thought. On other occasions, it was realised that planning and preparation had begun too late. Not surprisingly, this negatively affected the summer school, as the following examples show.

One summer school involved a mainstream primary school working with a special school for children with physical disabilities, some of whom were in wheelchairs. The venue for the summer school was the primary school. Early in the programme, it became evident to all summer school staff that some of the school accommodation was not suitable for the children with special needs. As a result, additional ramps had to be acquired and installed, and changes made to the layout of some of the rooms where activities were taking place, midway through the programme. There were also problems with a number of activities not being entirely suitable for the children with special needs. For example, a main goal in the arts activities was the creation of 'an underwater display' comprising sea creatures and plant life made from coloured paper, paint, and other materials. With the display being on the floor alongside one wall, this meant that the children in wheelchairs were unable to access the display themselves, although they had made impressive items for it. Instead, they had to take

a more passive role. With greater planning and more liaison between the two schools beforehand, many of these problems would have been avoided.

Another scheme, which provided a range of successful summer schools, experienced major recruitment difficulties with one. The scheme coordinator had delegated the recruitment of young people from a particular area for this summer school to a health promotion worker who had been working in the area and had a network of contacts within it. The intention was that a large number of young people from the Asian communities would be recruited by this approach. In the event, no such young people were recruited, and, at the time of the research, the scheme coordinator was unclear as to why this had happened, other than herself being at fault in not closely monitoring that the health promotion worker was doing what had been agreed or providing a clear support structure if there had been difficulties.

As reported in Chapter 6, it was challenging for some schemes to recruit participants from several schools. A few summer schools experienced difficulties when individual schools failed to fill their quota of summer school places. Consequently, the scheme coordinator had to recruit from elsewhere to fill available places, with the result being that the composition of the group of participants did not closely match the intended target group. There were also instances on other schemes of the summer school staff, and the scheme coordinator, not knowing the extent to which it had been possible to recruit the target group, and so beginning the summer school programme with a group of participants who were unknown collectively in relation to their background characteristics.

4.2 Private, Public and Voluntary Partners

The majority of schemes with one or more partners from the private, public or voluntary sectors were led by a partner that was a single school, a group of schools or an organisation that had overall responsibility for schools, such as an LEA or a company which had replaced a council's education department. One exception was Share Discovery '80 Ltd, Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, which is a company limited by guarantee. Its sources of income included grants from an array of bodies in Northern Ireland, income from its residential complex and its use as a Social Services

Day Centre. Another example of a non-school lead partner was that of Na Magha CLG, a hurling club in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

A small number of schemes had joint lead partners in which one of the partners was a private company, for example, The Academy of Youth Ltd, which was connected to the University of the First Age (UFA) scheme, which worked with a number of LEAs in England on providing summer school provision.

Across the schemes, the range of partners from the private, public and voluntary sectors was considerable, including universities, colleges of further education, museums, theatres, art galleries, sports clubs, community libraries, environmental organisations, local newspapers, community groups, and so on. The involvement of partner organisations added to the quality of the schemes in all four countries. An example follows of the partners who made a contribution to one scheme in England.

The Borough of Poole Summer School Scheme, England ran several summer schools for children and young people of different ages. The activities ranged from putting together an art exhibition (at The Study Gallery, part of Bournemouth and Poole College) to following a Smugglers' Trail on Brownsea Island (as part of the Baden Powell Activity Week), from football (at Canford Heath Middle School) to African drumming (on the Alderney Arts' Development project at Martin Kemp Welch School, led by professional musicians). There was also drama input from the Jake's Ladder theatre company. The summer schools also received the support of the local Youth Services, the National Trust and St John's Ambulance. The Alderney Arts Development Project had additional sponsorship from a number of commercial companies, including Marks and Spencer and W. H. Smith. For some summer schools, there was involvement from volunteer helpers, typically parents, or older pupils working as peer mentors.

Schemes that made provision for disaffected children and young people formed partnerships with the Youth Service, the Education Welfare Service or Social Services, often to provide a direct input into the summer school programme, and sometimes to nominate potential participants. An example of such a project was the

Young Women at Risk Programme, Ard Carnet, South Eastern Education and Library Board, Northern Ireland.

The Young Women at Risk Programme, Ard Carnet, Northern Ireland was aimed specifically at young women having difficulty in mainstream education. They had either been excluded or were on the point of exclusion.

The core team running the programme were a youth worker, an education welfare officer and a social worker. They worked closely together as a team in both planning and delivery, with the youth worker taking the coordinator role. For most of the week-long project they were joined by a professional artist specialising in mosaic work, who also had considerable experience of working with disaffected youth. A beauty therapist and a colour consultant also provided single short sessions. A hairdresser who had been booked to provide a session withdrew because of health reasons.

No additional voluntary adult workers were sought, and it was not felt appropriate to work with peer mentors.

Some schemes formed partnerships with organisations in order to recruit professionals other than teachers to provide a direct input to programmes. These professionals included musicians, dancers, artists and drama providers. A few partners, typically local businesses, took more of a passive role and provided material resources and sometimes premises.

On occasions there were difficulties for some schemes in employing professionals other than teachers. Some non-teacher professionals reported that they had not been sufficiently informed of the ability level or learning needs of the young people with whom they would be working. This sometimes meant that these professionals had to be very flexible in adapting the content they had prepared for their sessions so that it was more appropriate. There were also instances of professionals working with a group of children and young people with a much greater range of skills than they had

anticipated, which sometimes meant that they were unable to deliver a programme that was appropriate for the entire group.

Overall, the use of professionals other than teachers was a positive experience for the summer schools. However, there were reports of participants misbehaving during their sessions, possibly because some of the professionals did not have the necessary behaviour management skills.

The difficulties experienced by some non-teacher professionals might have been avoided if they had received some induction or training prior to the summer school. However, it should be noted that NOF stipulated that no part of the grant should be spent on providing training for providers. Consequently, any scheme that did provide training had to fund this from a different source.

4.3 Venues

Around one-third of the summer schools in the evaluation sample were based for the most part at non-school venues. Those projects that were school based included transition summer schools, hosted by the secondary school to which many of the participants would shortly be joining, and those summer schools where the content was focused on key skills or core subjects. It appeared entirely appropriate for this latter category of summer schools to be based at the participants' school, where they could work in familiar surroundings, usually with teachers who had taught them during term-time.

Summer schools involving special schools were sometimes based at mainstream schools. There is a case to be made that summer school provision for particular children and young people with special educational needs might be more effective if delivered at their own school, as young people are familiar with their surroundings.

Generally, those schemes that had formed partnerships with owners or those responsible for non-school sites so that the summer school could be delivered at these places appeared to benefit from the arrangement. Across the schemes, summer schools were based at community centres, youth centres, sports clubs, theatres,

museums, dance studios, newspaper offices and environmental centres. There was much evidence to show that participants were particularly motivated to work at these often well-equipped, and sometimes luxurious premises and locations. Furthermore, the opportunity to work with professionals other than teachers, from the partner organisation based at such sites, was also invaluable.

The Leeds Summer Schools Scheme, 2002, England, which had two lead partners of the University of the First Age (UFA) and Education Leeds, was an example of a scheme that made good use of non-school sites and the support from the partner organisations responsible for such sites.

The Leeds Summer Schools Scheme, 2002, comprised a total of 16 summer schools for secondary-aged students. One of the strengths of the scheme is the variety of venues used, and consequently the range of professionals providing an input. The venues included City Learning Centres (CLCs), the Resource Centre at the Yorkshire Post Newspaper offices, the Royal Armouries, the study support centres at Leeds Rhinos Rugby League Club and at Leeds United Football Club, the West Yorkshire Playhouse, the Leeds Bradford International Airport, Thackray Medical Museum and the Temple Newsam and White Rose Study Support Centres, as well as school premises.

Some summer schools were based at venues that enabled the participants to make good use of specialist facilities. This was the case for the Scottish Ballet Summer School, Glasgow, Scotland.

The Scottish Ballet Summer School, Glasgow, was based at the Scottish Ballet Studios in the city. It was attended by young people between the ages of six and 12 years old. The youngsters were able to work in a professional dance studio equipped with large mirrors, a bar, flooring especially suited to the requirements of dancers and a stage. Furthermore, they had the experience of working with qualified dance teachers, live musicians, and the use of costumes, and make-up in their activities leading up to a final performance.

On occasions, there were difficulties for some young people attending summer schools at non-school sites. There were cases of some participants, especially younger ones, being daunted by the prospect of attending a venue that to them appeared imposing, or was located in an area they did not know. As reported elsewhere in this report, attendance at many summer schools was disappointing though it is not known the extent to which the actual venue discouraged potential participants who had enrolled from attending. It was also reported by a small number of summer schools held at outdoor sites, such as environmental centres, that participants had wandered off during activities. It should be noted that these projects had conducted the necessary risk assessments of such locations and were quickly able to address the problem.

More details about venues can be found in Section 7.1.3 (Locations).

4.4 Recommendations

As an outcome of the research, the NFER research team makes the following recommendations in relation to partnerships for organisations planning to set up summer schools or intending to extend existing summer holiday provision:

- Begin planning and preparation for the summer school provision at an early stage, especially if more than one school is involved, or there is an intended input from partner organisations. It is useful to have regular progress meetings at frequent intervals in the lead up to the summer school, to which key representatives from all partners are invited. This would facilitate a sense of shared ownership for the scheme, and enable those responsible for the overall scheme to anticipate potential difficulties, which can then be addressed, and the programme redirected.

- Build in a level of flexibility with plans. This is necessary to deal with any unexpected difficulties just prior to the start of the summer school or during the provision. There may be difficulties to do with staff from partner organisations being unavailable at the last moment, so making it necessary to have contingency plans for activities and staffing that can be put into

operation. There may be difficulties with unexpected poor weather, making activities planned for outdoor venues unsuitable, so having to be transferred to indoor locations.

- Induct professionals who are not teachers into key aspects of the provision, and where necessary, provide training. For effective provision, it is necessary that all providers are aware of the aims of the summer school and the intended outcomes. Schemes that plan to include a substantial input from professionals who are not teachers would benefit from holding an induction meeting for such summer school staff. The meeting could cover aspects such as overall aims, the planned activities, intended outcomes, the characteristics of the group of participants, health and safety procedures and any necessary paperwork. The pedagogical skills of these professionals should be considered, as it may be beneficial to provide specific training for some on working with young people especially in relation to behaviour management.

Chapter 5
Internal Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 Attendance

The level of attendance was a measure used by all summer schools to gauge the success of their provision. Attendance registers were kept each day and the figures collated to determine the actual take-up. Often, the coordinator of the summer school had a role in analysing attendance data, and including such information in internal evaluation reports. A few schemes planned to analyse the attendance data to determine whether there were certain categories of participants who had failed to attend or who had stopped attending partway through the summer school.

Coordinators noted that attendance was disappointing for the majority of summer schools, in all four countries, especially on the first day. For example, one summer school that had been planned for 100 participants was attended by only around 60 throughout the course. Another summer school with 60 places available had only 27 enrolments, and of these only 20 attended on the first day. The difficulties experienced by a third summer school, and the action they took, are highlighted below.

On the first day of the summer school actual attendance was 40 per cent of the expected number. Consequently, the on-site coordinator and other members of staff made telephone calls to the homes of pupils who had not appeared. This revealed that several had gone on holiday and others had lost track of time, not realising that the date was the first day of the summer school. These telephone calls resulted in more pupils attending for the remainder of the course. Nevertheless, actual take-up remained relatively low in comparison to the expectations of summer school staff.

Those schemes that attracted considerably below capacity were consequently less cost-effective, as there was not a commensurate reduction in expenditure. The only savings that these schemes were able to make were on consumable resources, and on

items such as refreshments and transport costs. To be cost-effective, schemes needed to recruit and retain close to capacity. On the other hand, having fewer participants meant that summer schools were in a position to operate with a very high staff: participant ratio, which increased the amount of individual support participants received or allowed for smaller groups to be formed. However, low first day attendance was felt not to have created a good image for the summer school in terms of providers, participants and their parents/carers.

There were a few summer schools that experienced a decrease in attendance as the course progressed. It was not part of this research to identify why participants had decided to drop out of summer schools, nor was it part of the research to determine the reasons why some children and young people had decided in the first place not to access the provision that was on offer.

It should be noted that all but two of the summer school schemes in the case study sample were evaluated in the first year of their operation, that is, at a stage when difficulties with attendance for many had not been anticipated. Many coordinators commented that dealing with this difficulty would be a given a high priority in the planning of future summer schools.

5.1.1 High attendance

Those case study projects that had a relatively high level of attendance were in a minority. Important factors in achieving high attendance were well-directed publicity at opportune times, and maintaining a high profile leading up to the event. An example is the Leeds Summer Schools 2002 in England. This scheme built commitment and enthusiasm for the summer school amongst those who had been enrolled through holding 'ice-breaking' events in the schools involved, in the weeks leading up to the summer school.

A clear purpose for the summer school was another factor which related to good or satisfactory attendance. For instance, those summer schools that aimed to ease transition between one phase of schooling and the next were generally well-attended. It appeared that participants were keen to acquaint themselves with the school they

would be joining in the autumn, and to take the opportunity of meeting some of their future teachers and classmates.

One summer school scheme that had excellent attendance was held in a remote, isolated area. It appeared that the scheme was addressing a genuine need in the community for the types of activity on offer in a location where there was no other provision of a similar type during the summer holiday.

5.1.2 Low attendance

There was a constellation of factors as to why the majority of summer school schemes experienced disappointing attendance, according to the providers. (As mentioned earlier, the research did not include a focus on why children and young people themselves had decided not to access the provision.) These factors included timing of the summer school, poor organisation, lack of publicity, perceived attractiveness of the activities to potential participants, location, and costs likely to be incurred by families.

With regard to timing, summer schools held at the beginning of the holiday appeared to have been too soon for some young people who were possibly tired with school and learning and were ready for different experiences. Also, providers who were school staff felt that this timing hindered planning as their term-time commitments left very little spare time to plan activities that would be particularly attractive. However, there were also attendance difficulties for those summer schools held in the middle or towards the end of the holiday period. Some schemes recognised that potential participants and their families may have forgotten about the summer school and so sent out reminder letters to parents/carers shortly before the summer school was to start. This approach appeared to have had some success. Some participants who attended summer schools later in the holiday indicated that they had appreciated the provision at this time as the initial excitement of being on holiday had waned.

It is likely that some activities did not appear attractive to potential participants. One summer school had a focus on sports, with the PE teachers from the school where the provision was located, running activities. Pupil mentors or external sports coaches

were not employed. The activities provided were very similar to those the participants had experienced during term-time. The similarity to school might explain why recruitment had been difficult for this scheme and why a number of participants dropped out. Other summer schools had similar experiences. In the evaluation of the summer schools with content focused on core subjects or key skills, some participants felt that the activities were too much like school during term-time. Some were reluctant attendees as their parents had recognised that their children had fallen behind their peers in these areas and had been persuasive about them attending.

Some summer schools, in both rural and urban areas, experienced low attendance, according to providers, because they were located at sites that were difficult to get to. For some families the extra cost may have proved problematic or the journey may have been inconvenient. Some schemes anticipated this problem and arranged transport for some participants to be picked up at convenient locations and to be returned to these locations afterwards.

A small number of schemes charged participants a fee. While this was typically a small amount, such as £10, it may still have had the effect of deterring some parents/carers from allowing their children to enrol.

Poor weather was given as the reason for low attendance at one summer school, in which some of the activities were held outdoors. Some other schemes with outdoor activities took a chance with the weather, by not having any contingency plans should the weather be poor. While they had not needed any contingency plans at the time of the evaluation, these projects recognised that for future summer schools such plans would be in place.

5.2 Other Monitoring and Evaluation Methods

In addition to collecting attendance data, summer school schemes used a variety of methods and instruments by which to monitor and evaluate their provision (some of which supported the compilation of annual monitoring information required by NOF).

These methods included methods and instruments used with participants (review sheets, questionnaires, self-evaluation forms, diaries, 'hopes and fears' boards, interviews, tests) and those used by providers (review sheets, daily reports, skills checklists, formal meetings of core staff at which activities and outcomes were discussed). Furthermore, the actual work produced by young people (e.g. artwork, drama performance, music performance) was also used by some projects as a means of deciding how successful they had been in meeting its aims. Also, a small number of summer schools either asked parents for their views as to what the benefits for their children had been or used parent review forms.

Provider review sheets were used by the Share Discovery '80 Ltd Summer School, Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, among other monitoring and evaluation methods/instruments.

Over 200 children had been involved in activities during the six-week period in which the Share Discovery '80 Ltd Summer School had been running. Providers completed review sheets, which were used to identify problems and would inform future planning. The sheet used with arts providers included the following questions:

- What were the aims and objectives of the project?
- How do you feel that the above was achieved?
- Did you feel that the project was successful?
- What exactly did you do in the sessions?
- Did you work to a planned schedule?
- Were there any problems with the delivery of the project?
- Was there a need for volunteers on the project?
- What new skills and techniques have the beneficiaries acquired?
- What new equipment do you think the Share Centre needs to improve and run similar projects in the future?

One summer school scheme used a questionnaire, which had been developed by the Prince's Trust, to measure participants' self-esteem before and after participating in programmes. The intention was that this information would supplement reports written by the summer school coordinators, and this would be disseminated to colleagues running similar programmes the following year.

Several summer schools planned to monitor changes in participant attitudes, behaviour or performance over a longer period than that of the summer school itself, by asking schools to track summer school participants or to do a 'snapshot' of them at some point in the autumn term. These projects recognised that summer school provision had the potential to have more than just a short-term impact on participants. The Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council Summer'z Kool Programme in Wales was one scheme that had planned to involved schools in the ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation.

The organisers of the Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council Summer'z Kool Programme had developed a monitoring and evaluation form, which the providers of each activity were asked to complete. In addition, a participant form was produced which took account of participants' literacy and numeracy levels to ensure it was accessible to them. The coordinator, project manager, and the finance officer jointly monitored the activities. Interviews had also been held with parents for feedback on one of the activities.

Data was collected on each activity of the scheme, and this information would be used to inform the planning process with a particular focus on levels of participation and participants' views on the strengths and weaknesses of each activity.

Also, a process had been devised by which the organisers of the programme would contact schools after the summer programme to enquire whether they had identified any differences in the attitudes, motivation and attainment of the participants.

Summer Schools that had a focus on core subjects or key skills had initially identified their target group through pupil results on national tests or on standardised tests. The intention of these projects was to measure the impact of the summer school provision

by analysing pupil results on similar assessments at some future date. Some summer schools appreciated that they needed to compare such results against a control group of pupils who had not accessed the summer school provision if this was to be meaningful.

One scheme, which had content focused on key skills, used a formal test at the start of the summer school and then a similar one at the end. This is not regarded as good practice. It reduces the attractiveness of the summer school to participants, it takes up valuable time that could be spent on teaching and learning activities, and most importantly, it is likely to produce invalid results with pre- and post-course assessment having been conducted over such a short timescale. Any assessment of this type would be more informative if the initial assessment was performed at the end of the summer term, and then repeated at some point at the beginning of the following term, so providing information regarding whether the impact of the provision had been more than transitory.

5.3 Outcomes

It was not part of the research methodology of this study to look at the impact of NOF-funded summer school provision on participants, other than the impact made within the actual timescale of the summer school. As such, the research is not able to identify whether there have been any significant changes in participants' performance, behaviour or attitudes in the medium or long term. Indeed, any significant changes in these areas are likely to result from a constellation of factors, associated with schools' implementation of other initiatives, of which the summer school scheme might comprise one factor.

The study is, however, able to provide some details of the immediate impact on participants, as reported by providers and participants themselves, and as observed by researchers.

Generally, summer school providers felt that it was unrealistic to expect significant academic progress in the short period the summer school was in operation. A common view of providers was that if the summer school could have a positive effect

on participants' confidence, self-esteem, motivation, attitude to learning or interpersonal skills then this would have a significant effect of their attainment in the years ahead.

Several summer school schemes commented that the availability of the provision itself was a major outcome with regard to addressing the social inclusion agenda. For these projects, giving young people the opportunity to participate in activities during the summer holiday, when otherwise they may not have had anything meaningful to do and would have become bored, and possibly, for some, become involved in anti-social behaviour was of vital importance. As the coordinator of one of the summer schools in the Leeds Summer Schools Scheme, 2002 remarked: *'These young people, they would have nothing else to do in the summer but to come here. They would be on the streets, committing crime or getting caught up in crime as victims. These are the ones getting into trouble at school. To get them here and involved is a great opportunity'.*

Those summer schools closely focused on specific skills (e.g. music, dance, sports) did report that participants had made significant advances in these skills. Whether such advances are maintained or continued would obviously depend on the extent to which these young people are able to take part in activities that build on the work of the summer school after it has finished.

The scope of individual summer schools was considerable, and much was achieved in a variety of domains. Overall, the aims of many projects in all four countries to build confidence and to raise levels of self-esteem of participants were achieved during the summer school. It was apparent from observing activities and talking to those young people taking part that they were benefiting greatly by being actively and constructively involved in processes designed to educate in the broadest sense. Some were benefiting from working with adults other than their teachers, with whom they may have developed a negative relationship. And others clearly gained from the opportunity to work with older pupils working as peer mentors.

These comments from two participants at the Scalby School Summer School, North Yorkshire, England are typical of those made by young people throughout the case study projects.

The main aim of the Scalby School Summer School was to raise participants' confidence and to develop their interpersonal skills. Interviews with several participants, along with numerous comments on evaluation sheets, indicated that these aims had been largely achieved.

Two Year 7 pupils explained how their confidence had grown:

'I think I have done much better whilst at Summer School. I am now more confident at trying to do the work instead of just thinking it was too hard.'

'Since starting the Summer School I feel more confident about my work and I don't get embarrassed if I get things wrong now.'

The summer schools that were about easing transition reported that they had generally achieved their aims of addressing participant concerns about joining the secondary school (or middle school in one case) and increasing their self-confidence. Again, such evidence emerged through the evaluation sheets the summer schools had used with participants, or simply observing the young people taking part in activities. One transition summer school was the Grangemouth New Community School Summer School, Falkirk, Scotland.

As part of the NFER evaluation, participants at the Grangemouth New Community School Summer School were asked to talk about the best aspects of the summer school. The most common responses were to do with getting to know people, meeting the teachers and finding out where the classes were. Although they recognised that it was different from school because there was no uniform, lunch was free and they were doing 'fun things', such as making pillows in crafts and testing for acid content in science, they appeared to value the introduction to secondary school that the summer school offered them.

5.4 Reporting

Most schemes indicated that they would be preparing an internal evaluation report shortly after the summer school(s) had been completed. This was in addition to any monitoring information that was required by NOF. Typically, the report would be written by the scheme coordinator, with input from coordinators working at the individual summer school level, in cases where the scheme comprised a number of summer schools.

The intention was that the report would be an overview of the provision, including details about attendance, the activities provided, staffing, financial/expenditure information, and information relating to the extent to which the provision had met its aims. Generally, it was stated that reports would not contain any information about individual participants. Typically, the report would be disseminated to those who had been directly involved in planning or managing the provision, and those who would be planning summer schools for the following year. Some schemes mentioned that partner organisations and the schools from where participants had been recruited would receive the report or a summary.

Some summer schools planned to inform the participants' schools about the work their pupils had undertaken, along with brief details about their attendance and achievements, sometimes in a short written report. A few other projects said that they would be speaking more informally to participants' teachers. Overall, the feeding back of information to schools about the pupils who had participated did not seem a high priority for schemes, although it should be remembered that nearly all the schemes evaluated were in their first year of operation, and this may have been an area in which there has been some developments in subsequent years.

At one summer school, those providing the activities completed daily assessments of each participant. The participants were Year 6 and 7 pupils with learning difficulties. Some had behavioural problems, others were disaffected, and others were at risk of being excluded. The intention was to monitor participants' progress over the week, and to identify specific learning difficulties that could later be addressed by teachers at the secondary school in the autumn term. In addition, teachers would be given a

breakdown of the activities each pupil had participated in so as to avoid any duplication of the activity during term-time.

5.5 Recommendations

As an outcome of the research, the NFER research team makes the following recommendations in relation to monitoring and evaluation for organisations planning to set up summer schools or intending to extend existing summer holiday provision:

- Schemes should use strategies to achieve a high level of attendance on the first day and throughout the programme, which will ensure a greater level of cost-effectiveness. To do this, it is necessary to give the scheme a high profile in the lead up to the summer school, to send out reminder letters to parents at opportune times, and to organise appropriate transport arrangements for those participants who would otherwise find it difficult to attend, for both rural and urban schemes.

- The level of success achieved by the scheme should be determined through the use of appropriate monitoring and evaluation methods and instruments, including participant review sheets. Such review sheets should focus on what participants had actually gained from participating in specific activities rather than simply asking if they had enjoyed the experience and what might be improved.

- Formal assessment instruments, such as standardised tests, should not be used during the actual programme. This is demotivating for participants. It is not valid to use pre- and post-tests during the short timescale of the typical summer school programme. (See the third recommendation in 3.5 Recommendations.)

- Prepare an internal report that includes details of the extent to which the stated aims of the provision have been met, using general evidence acquired from both providers and participants. The report should be disseminated to all those who were directly involved in planning, managing or providing activities, as

well as the partner organisations, including schools which had supplied participants.

Chapter 6

Summer School Participants

6.1 Recruiting Young People

Most summer schools in the evaluation sample had identified a clearly-defined target group within a particular year group or a range of year groups for their planned provision. Across the schemes that targeted specific young people, the criteria used for targeting included:

- underachievement (typically in key skills)
- high achievement (e.g. gifted and talented pupils)
- poor attendance at school
- disadvantaged home locations
- lack of confidence
- poor behaviour/disaffection
- single-parent families
- special educational needs

Many of the schemes that targeted young people by underachievement did so on the basis of their National Curriculum test results, standardised test results or their levels as determined through teacher assessment. The Caerphilly Local Education Authority Summer Schools in Wales was a scheme in which young people were targeted by underachievement, amongst other criteria.

The schools in Caerphilly LEA from which Year 5 and 6 pupils were selected for attendance at the summer schools in 2001 were chosen on the basis of meeting two or more of four key indicators:

- Low scores in English, Welsh or mathematics on National Curriculum standard tests;
- High gender differential in academic performance;
- High incidence of socio-economic deprivation;
- A significant cohort of pupils with special educational needs or confidence problems.

Pupils were selected if they were performing at or below Level 3 of the National Curriculum in English, Welsh or mathematics. They were then encouraged to apply for a place on the summer school, and, when accepted, a letter was sent to their parents informing them of the nature of the summer school scheme.

A few schemes experienced difficulties with recruitment when the target group was defined by levels of underachievement (e.g. those at Level 3 in English who it was thought could be at Level 4 by a certain date through receiving additional support). Some targeted pupils were reluctant to attend, possibly because they thought the summer school would be similar to term-time work, and others dropped out partway through the course, with it being too late for the coordinator to find replacements. These summer schools might find it easier to recruit in future years if they broadened their criteria for the intended target group.

As previously noted, a number of the summer schools were for young people in their final year of primary schooling about to transfer to secondary school. These summer schools tended to target particular groups of pupils, such as those who had been identified as lacking confidence or most likely to be daunted by the prospect of joining the secondary school.

In general, the summer schools appeared to be appropriately sensitive about targeting young people who were underachieving, lacking in confidence or had disadvantaged home lives, so as to avoid the possibility of them feeling stigmatised. It was reported on several schemes that school staff had discreetly approached the parents/carers of those pupils whom it was thought would benefit most from the provision to talk about the aims and content of the summer school and to persuade them to apply for a place. Sometimes, summer school places were kept available for a considerable time in order to recruit the intended target group.

On some occasions, the summer school gave the impression of being entirely open access, operating on a ‘first come, first served’ basis, so as to appear to be fair to all pupils, when the reality was somewhat different, in order to ensure that the intended target group was recruited. One such example is described below.

Children from two local primary schools attended the summer school – one was the venue for the activities, and the other a school nearby. It was intended that there would be a good mix from each school so that children, who often lived in the same street or high-rise flats, would get to know each other. The opportunity to attend was offered to all five to eight-year-olds at each school.

At the school with the smaller roll, all those who wanted to attend were able to. But at the larger school a ballot was held. A system was developed to ensure that those children whom it was felt 'needed' to attend (because of academic, social or behavioural reasons) were selected. Teachers identified these children (there were seven in total) and their names were placed in a small bag. This bag was then placed within the larger ballot bag, to enable the names in the small bag to be pulled out as part of the balloting process. The coordinator felt that although this may have been *'slightly sneaky'*, it was done so that those who needed to attend could do so without being stigmatised.

A minority of summer schools in the evaluation sample were entirely open access for pupils within a year group or a number of year groups. For some schemes, whether to target particular groups of young people or whether to be open access had been an area of consideration.

The North Ayrshire Summer School Workshops, Scotland provided for around 20 primary schools in isolated rural areas that experienced high levels of unemployment and significant socio-economic disadvantage.

In the lead up to the first summer of provision, 2002, there had been suggestions from some of the headteachers about excluding, or including, some young people with behaviour problems, and some parents wanted complete families of children, including much younger siblings, to attend. In the islands, were social activities were limited, there were also requests that visiting relations be allowed to come as well. A conscious decision was made not to include or exclude anyone from the local area, and applicants were selected on an age and 'first come, first served' basis, with a reserve list in case of dropout.

Some summer schools experienced difficulties with planned content that was offered across more than one year group, especially if it involved pupils from two phases of schooling. It may be that if secondary school pupils observe primary school children engaging with a particular activity, then those from the secondary phase regard themselves as being too old for the activity. This certainly appeared to be the case for one of the summer schools in England.

One of the summer schools in this scheme provided for both Year 6 and Year 7 pupils working together. The production of a play was the central goal for the week's work. The Year 6 children were enthused by the idea. They became very involved with the various preparatory activities, which included making costumes and rehearsing, and they were particularly excited about ultimately performing to their families and friends on the last day.

However, the majority of Year 7 pupils were less enthusiastic as they felt the topic of a play was too immature for their age group. As one pupil explained:
'*The play is so innocent. I can't understand why they chose it; it just does not interest me. I understand the moral of the play, not to pick on people with disabilities, but it is pointless ... nobody in Year 7 is going to take that seriously. My sister would probably enjoy doing it, but she's six'.*

This content evidently worked well for the younger cohort, but for the Year 7 pupils it may have been advantageous to have selected a topic more suitably to their age and interests, or to have asked them for ideas as to the end-product of the summer school and the work that would go towards it.

It appeared challenging for the larger schemes to recruit summer school participants from several schools. This typically entailed a considerable amount of liaison between the scheme coordinator and individual schools. Difficulties were experienced by one or two of the larger schemes in the evaluation where a few schools had failed to fill their quotas of summer school places. As a consequence, the coordinator had to recruit from elsewhere to fill all the available places, with the result being that the composition of the group of participants did not closely match the intended target group.

During the research, several providers remarked that they had not been able to recruit young people from groups who it was felt would benefit most from summer school provision, for instance, those who were seriously disaffected rather than those who were becoming disaffected. Some open access summer schools reported that their provision had not attracted those who would probably have benefited the most. This was seen by the providers as being a result of potential participants lacking confidence or them possibly not wanting their friends to know that they had enrolled. In fact, a small number of summer schools decided at the outset of their planning that they would not target 'the most needy' groups as they anticipated that they would not be successful at attracting these particular young people.

The challenges of recruiting from such groups is exemplified by the Young Women at Risk Programme, Dundonald, Northern Ireland. The project appreciated that its particular target group (young women who were either excluded or on the point of exclusion) were already disaffected by the education system, and therefore amongst those likely to fail to attend or sustain attendance. It was intended that there would be 12 participants, but only nine attended the first day, and there were fluctuations in attendance throughout the week from those remaining, with an average of six in attendance each day.

6.2 Participants with Special Educational Needs

Around one third of the summer schools in the evaluation included young people with special educational needs. This was either in relation to special schools being a partner school or to groups of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools being specifically targeted to attend provision. An example of the former category was the Chorlton Park Primary School/Lancasterian School Summer School, Manchester, England.

Around 90 young people who had just completed either Year 4 or 5 at Chorlton Park, and ten pupils with special educational needs, of similar ages, from the nearby Lancasterian School attended the Chorlton Park Primary School/Lancasterian School Summer School. This latter group comprised some who were wheelchair users and

other who had cerebral palsy. They were selected by teachers at Lancasterian School as those who had the potential of benefiting most from the experience.

The committee which planned the summer school, made the decision to recruit staff familiar with special educational needs to be some of the providers. Three support assistants from Lancasterian School applied for the available posts and all were appointed. One of the three was given a more senior position as SEN summer school coordinator in order to coordinate all aspects of Lancasterian School's involvement.

For the majority of young people from Lancasterian School, the prospect of attending a summer school at an unfamiliar site and with many unfamiliar pupils would have been a very daunting experience without the presence of the three support assistants.

All summer school staff encouraged an inclusive atmosphere. It was apparent during the running of the summer school that both groups of young people mixed together well, and no cases of teasing or bullying were observed. The Lancasterian School pupils were made to feel welcome by the other pupils who were at their own school. There were examples of the Chorlton Park pupils suggestion adaptations to some activities so that those young people with special educational needs were able to participate more fully.

An example of pupils with special educational needs within a mainstream school being specifically targeted to attend the summer school was at St Catherine's College, Armagh, Northern Ireland.

The summer school at St Catherine's College, Northern Ireland was part of the Southern Education and Library Board's scheme. The summer school was aimed specifically at the Year 8 special educational needs class; a class of 17 girls in total. Pupils at the school were streamed into classes and each year group had a class designated as special needs. This particular group was described by the summer school coordinator as having poor motivation and lower than average attendance during the school year, but *'not too many behavioural problems'*. All pupils had shown some weaknesses in their summer tests in English.

Seven girls attended the summer school, which had the aims of supporting work in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and addressing low self-esteem and lack of confidence. The staffing comprised an English teacher, an ICT teacher and the summer school coordinator, all who taught at the school. The English teacher had taught the Year 8 class during the school year. She was an experienced teacher of pupils with special educational needs, and a SENCO at the school.

Throughout the schemes, there were examples of children and young people with special needs who had benefited from participating. One such example was evident at the Mosslands Summer School Camp, Wirral, England.

One particular success story at the Mosslands Summer School Camp, Wirral, England concerned a boy with special needs who had originally signed up with a friend, but who in the end attended on his own. Providers reported that he had worked exceptionally hard, acknowledging how daunting it must have been for him to attend under these circumstances. During the research, he was seen to be mixing well with the rest of the group, being chosen as a partner without demur, and enthusiastically taking part in every activity.

The outcomes for this particularly boy appeared to have been greater integration with the mainstream boys at the school, and the forming of friendships with his peers. It was also thought that increased confidence in his physical skills would also be a personal outcome.

One scheme reported that it had planned all its provision with the intention of encouraging young people with special educational needs to participate. For instance, locations were chosen that were equally accessible to able-bodied and those with physical disabilities, staff who were experienced with working with pupils with special needs were recruited, and assistance was made available for young people who needed medication. For other schemes, it appeared that little thought in planning had been made regarding the inclusion of those with special needs. This is not to say that they were not included in schemes, but it was only after they were recruited that consideration was given to their involvement.

The inclusion of young people with special educational needs in schemes entailed a great deal of planning and liaison between different partners. Sometimes, things did not always proceed smoothly. For example, one summer school had been planned to target exclusively young people with dyslexia. The nomination process had resulted in some difficulties, according to the scheme coordinator. This concerned a child who had been nominated by an educational psychologist as being dyslexic. When the child's school was approached, the headteacher said that no one in the past had ever diagnosed this child as being dyslexic, and although the school had requested additional resources to support the child, they had never received them. The school was concerned that if they were to inform the child's parents that their child was dyslexic, they would be unhappy that support had not been offered earlier. The scheme coordinator felt that this had implications for other 'specialist' summer schools to be held in subsequent years.

Some schemes deliberately targeted young people with behavioural difficulties, whether or not these were severe enough to have led to a statement. One project was aimed specifically at girls having difficulty in mainstream education. Some of the intended participants were already attending alternative education projects, and several were referred to the summer school by education welfare services or social services.

6.3 Recommendations

As an outcome of the research, the NFER research team makes the following recommendations in relation to recruiting summer school participants, including those with special educational needs, for organisations planning to set up summer schools or intending to extend existing summer holiday provision:

- Schemes should make efforts to publicise extensively the planned activities, especially the 'fun' ones, in the recruitment period through a variety of ways. Pupils who had attended the scheme in previous years, and had gained from the experience, and/or peer mentors, could be used to promote the summer school to groups of potential participants. Posters, attractive leaflets, and

letters to parents would all help to raise the scheme's profile and help ease difficulties with recruitment.

- In recruiting underachieving young people for the summer school it is advantageous not to be too rigid in applying specific criteria for the intended target group. This type of target group is challenging to recruit. Such summer schools would benefit from broadening the criteria, but still focusing on relative underachievement, or have a reserve list of participants who would also benefit from the provision.

- When young people are recruited between different phases of schooling (e.g. Year 6 and Year 7 in England), schemes need to consider carefully the content of the summer school programme so that all are fully engaged. Often, it will be helpful to build in a degree of differentiation with various activities, and at times to offer separate activities.

- When young people with special educational needs are recruited as participants it is particularly helpful for them to have some continuity with their term-time experiences. This may be achieved through holding the summer school at their own school, or by recruiting some staff members who have worked with these pupils at school to be summer school providers or support staff. Above all, it is imperative that those partners in the scheme with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all aspects of planning and preparation.

Chapter 7
Good Practice

7.1 General Comments

The summer school schemes in the evaluation sample were selected broadly to reflect the range of different types of scheme funded by NOF. The schemes varied considerably in terms of 'curriculum' content, size, partnership involvement, venue, and so on. Examples of good practice were evident throughout the schemes in all four countries, and were related to their particular circumstances, general aims and the identified needs of participants.

In some cases, the good practice evident was specific to an individual or very small number of summer schools, such as the excellent use of a new community facility, the inclusion of bilingual provision (i.e. activities in both Welsh and English) in a project in Wales, opportunities for teachers for professional development, and efficient transport arrangements for a summer school situated in an isolated area. A few examples of the good practice found more frequently across the schemes are described in the following sections.

7.2 Examples of Good Practice

7.2.1 Provision that links with LEA aims or priorities

In planning summer school provision, some schemes, especially the LEA ones (or Education and Library Board ones in Northern Ireland), had used LEA aims or priorities as a basis by which to target specific needs or disadvantage within the authority. This seems to have been a particularly effective way of planning provision. For these schemes, there also appeared to be a high degree of continuity with the out of school hours activities that had been operating before NOF funding had become available. As such, provision was purposeful, and partners were fully aware of and committed to what the scheme was attempting to achieve. For many schemes, this

approach clearly pointed up that the overall intention of such summer provision was to support wider plans about social inclusion.

The Oldham LEA Summer School Scheme in England was an example of a scheme that had this strong linkage to LEA aims/priorities, and had built on its out of school hours activities leading up to receiving NOF funding.

Oldham had operated a number of schemes in the years leading up to NOF-funded provision, using funding from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). Wide consultation within the authority had taken place with regard to these schemes, and as one outcome it was recognised that there was a need to raise levels of educational achievement among pupils in the authority's schools and also to reduce the levels of disaffection. Under SRB4 funding in 1998, the authority established the post of coordinator of out of school hours learning, based at Oldham Education Business Links (Oldham EBL). The main task for the coordinator was to organise and deliver an authority-wide scheme that linked to its existing 'Welfare to Work plus' initiative, and also incorporated a number of summer school projects.

Later, a steering group for out of school hours learning activities was formed, involving schools, voluntary and private sector organisations and public bodies. The steering group decided to prepare a summer school scheme and to apply for NOF funding. The scheme was targeted on those schools in the more deprived areas as identified through free school meals entitlement, and each project subsequently developed within the scheme was asked to address the key themes in the authority's out of school hours learning strategy. These key themes were:

- Raising pupil achievement
- Ensuring equal access
- Creating dynamic communities
- Promoting healthy lifestyles

The schools that had been identified through the free school meals criterion, and later other schools not meeting this criterion, but demonstrating other disadvantage, were

invited to prepare plans for summer school projects in discussion with parents and community groups. In addition, voluntary sector organisations and other community groups were invited to put forward plans for possible summer school projects to Oldham EBL to be included in the overall scheme.

This linkage of the aims of the summer school scheme to LEA aims/priorities was also evident for The Grangemouth New Community School Summer School, Falkirk, Scotland.

The summer school at Grangemouth New Community School was one of four NOF funded summer schools that took place in the authority in 2000. All four summer schools were concerned with easing the transition from one phase of schooling to the next.

NOF funding had been received for out of school hours learning activities forming part of a larger authority-wide strategy entitled 'Learning to Achieve'. One aspect of this strategy was a focus on benefiting young people who had suffered significant disadvantage socially and economically, and those who had experienced a lack of facilities from living in remote areas. Thus, authority-level objectives for the summer schools, focusing on the five-year period of funding, were:

- to help young people cope with the transition between sectors of education and stages of life;
- to provide an appropriate and varied programme of learning and developmental activities for disadvantaged young people in localities across the authority;
- to establish all secondary schools as summer learning centres over a three year period;
- to develop summer learning facilities and infrastructure in the remotest areas of the authority; and
- to monitor and evaluate the impact of holiday learning on attitudes and attainment over a five year period.

7.2.2 Peer mentors

A number of summer schools recruited peer mentors to work alongside main providers to support the provision, and their involvement appeared to bring benefits both to the participants and also to the peer mentors themselves. The main role of the peer mentors was to help and support their younger peers, although there were a few examples of peer mentors leading activities. Summer schools gave peer mentors a chance to take responsibility, to develop their skills in working with younger pupils, and to use their imaginative and creative skills. The precise way in which they worked varied from summer school to summer school, according to the programme and the needs of the participants.

Generally, peer mentors were recruited from the senior year groups of secondary schools when the provision was for secondary school pupils, and from the lower year groups of secondary schools when the summer school was concerned with transition. It appeared that most summer schools clearly thought about the type of peer mentor they wanted to recruit. Sometimes they had to apply for the position and were interviewed. Some schemes paid peer mentors for their work, whereas others did not.

The following examples give an indication of the type of work in which peer mentors were involved. The first example is from a scheme in England, while the second is from Scotland.

In the Leeds Summer Schools 2002 in England, one summer school was held at Cockburn High School for around 30 Year 7 pupils. A science teacher at the school led the summer school and she was supported by two adults (an arts technician and a learning mentor) and ten peer mentors. The peer mentors were Year 9 and 10 students at the school, and they had received extensive training leading up to the summer school from one of the lead organisations, the University of the First Age (UFA).

Their role was to support the summer school participants with the various activities that addressed the challenge for the week of creating a South African street café in an

outside area of the school. The peer mentors worked with individuals and groups of participants, guiding and encouraging them, but not dominating the work.
One or two of the peer mentors had roles in leading activities, as was the case with Amy Walton, who throughout the week was rehearsing a group of ten participants (eight girls and two boys) with a dance to South African music they would be performing when the street café would be open to parents and other visitors.

Part of the evaluation included observing Amy rehearsing the dance group. This took place in the sports hall of the school. Amy had recently been on a dance course in which animal movement had been a main element. She had adapted the movements she had learnt so that the participants could follow them. Today's rehearsal lasted for about 40 minutes. It was purposeful, with Amy giving clear instructions, and the participants were visibly developing their dance skills. Amy was gaining too from this teaching role.

The Orkney Islands Council in Scotland provided a summer school scheme that offered young people a variety of activities in sports, outdoor pursuits, drama and traditional music throughout the islands.

NOF funding had enabled the scheme to employ senior pupils from secondary schools to work as peer tutors. Their involvement was seen as being a very positive aspect of the provision, which placed an emphasis on young people helping each other. For the music activities, providers regarded this as consistent with the way traditional music would have been taught. There were also thoughts that the involvement of peer tutors would help sustain such work beyond the period of NOF funding. The scheme was creating a resource of young people who were gaining experience of working with their younger peers, and at the same time developing their own music skills.

A particularly interesting example of the involvement of pupil mentors was at The Wheldon School Project, Nottinghamshire, England.

The summer school decided that they would recruit Year 7 pupils to work as peer tutors, but those who would also be likely to benefit from the experience. As such, seven Year 7 pupils were recruited. All had a reading age lower than that of the children they would be supporting. One had already experienced problems at school with attendance. Working on the summer school was regarded by the school as a way of re-engaging her with schooling.

Before the summer school started, peer mentors were provided with a brief guidance sheet as what they were expected to do. The sheet described how the peer mentors would be acting as representatives for the school, and would be supporting participants during the scheme. The guidance noted that they should be supportive, thoughtful and helpful. In addition, the guidance stressed that they should become involved in activity and should enjoy themselves.

From the start, it was evident that the peer mentors exceeded what was expected of them. For example, peer mentors took it upon themselves to provide refreshments for participants, and to clear up afterwards. They valued having a level of responsibility and their self-esteem quickly developed. They also gained the respect of both summer school staff and the participants. They were not paid for their involvement, but this was not an issue for them.

On being asked to identify the skills they felt were required for the role of pupil mentor they indicated:

- good behaviour;
- a positive attitude;
- knowledge of the school;
- the ability to be trusted by staff and pupils alike;
- the ability to be able to work with pupils.

7.2.3 Involvement of professionals other than teachers

Many summer schools made good use of professional other than teachers to make a direct input to programmes as main providers. These included classroom assistants, playworkers, youth workers, sports coaches, and freelance artists and musicians. It was evident that their input to summer schools was much appreciated by the young people. For some young people, their relationships with their teachers may have

become problematic, so having the opportunity to work with other adults can have major advantages in these young people becoming remotivated. The research identified, although this was not a particular focus for the study, a small number of instances where teachers, who were supporting activities led by these professionals, had been surprised by participants' positive attitudes or by the quality of the work they had produced.

In fact, many summer schools recognised at an early stage in their planning that only a very small number of teachers wanted to be employed in summer school work, so it was imperative to recruit providers from elsewhere. Some summer schools made more of a positive decision to recruit beyond teachers, as they believed that particular professionals would be able to bring specific skills to the summer school programme that many teachers were not able to offer.

The North Ayrshire Summer School Workshops in Scotland, held in 2002, was one project that benefited from the input of professionals other than teachers.

Primary school children in North Ayrshire have little opportunity to participate directly in music, drama and art, other than in the short sessions they have at school. These sessions are usually delivered by the class teacher. Music tends to be limited to singing and playing percussion instruments. Although there are physical activity classes for primary children, creative dance is no longer part of teacher training. North Ayrshire Council recognised the value of out of school hours activities, such as for art, drama and music, in developing core skills, helping to raise attainment and giving children increased confidence in their abilities.

Artscool, which ran throughout the year, consisted of two, three-year projects, funded by NOF with support from the Council. Part of the funding was to provide arts workshops for primary school children during the summer holiday. Artscool had a full-time coordinator, who was a trained drama teacher, and previously the Education Officer for Scottish Youth Theatre. His previous work meant that he had an excellent network of arts contacts, and from the start of the project had established links with a very wide range of professionals and external bodies.

The coordinator personally interviewed the arts workers and support staff for the summer school. He focussed on the need to involve a particular type of creative specialist rather than staff who had what he called a 'kit approach' – making use of tried and tested prepared activities. Arts activities were to provide more than entertainment for the young people. Staff were selected for their enthusiasm for their subject, but also for their capacity to be sensitive to the needs of children, and to respond flexibly to their requirements by adapting and modifying their approach to maximise each child's personal development. Several of the arts workers were already known as freelance workers for the Council, while other were recruited through an advertising campaign.

A few of the larger summer school schemes recruited staff from a wide range of different organisations. One example was the Blaenau Gwent Education Department Summer Adventure Scheme, Wales.

The Blaenau Gwent Education Department Summer Adventure Scheme provided for two groups of 40 young people per group from 21 primary schools. The summer school took place over two weeks at two locations: Hilston Park Outdoor Adventure Centre near Monmouth and Glyncoed Comprehensive School in Ebbw Vale. Each group had two and a half days at each location.

The scheme was coordinated jointly by the LEA officer responsible for out of school hours learning and a senior education welfare officer. The summer school staffing comprised the permanent staff at Hilston Park and a number of volunteers from several different organisations: the National Children's Homes Action for Children, the Youth Service, Education Welfare Services, and the LEA. In addition, some university students, and Year 11 pupils completing the service component of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, also provided assistance. There was also an input from the private sector, in the form of a professional musician who ran samba music workshops at the comprehensive school.

In a few summer schools, the organisation was such that teachers (and sometimes classroom assistants as well) worked alongside adults from other professions. This

enabled for there to be an element of professional development for the teachers (and classroom assistants) concerned. One such example was the Dalmellington Arts Summerfest run by East Ayrshire Council, Scotland (see Section 2.1.3 Providing enrichment activities).

7.2.4 Locations

Around two-thirds of the summer schools that were evaluated were entirely school-based (apart from visits to places of interest). All the summer schools that aimed to ease transition were held at the school all or most of the participants would shortly be joining. This naturally had benefits for both participants and providers: participants gained some familiarity with the school, while providers – teachers at the school – were working in accommodation and using resources they knew well. The remaining summer schools were either based entirely at a non-school location or shared between a school and a non-school location. The latter category included the Blaenau Gwent Education department Summer Adventure Scheme, which had two and a half days of activities at an outdoor adventure centre during one week and two and a half days of activities at a secondary school in another week.

Providers regarded having some or all of the summer school activities away from a main school site as particularly beneficial with regard to widening the horizons of the participants. Some of the locations used included youth centres, environmental centres, community centres, professional sports clubs' study support centres, dance studios and outdoor pursuits centres. Indeed, the research found a number of instances of participants being particularly motivated by the opportunity to follow activities at venues they had not visited before, and to use up-to-date facilities and resources with which they had no previous experience.

Rhonnda Cynon Taff (RCT) is the third largest local authority in Wales, and has a population of around 240,000. Travelling from one part of the county borough to another is not easy. Moreover, RCT includes a number of small towns which have their own identity and which enjoy strong local attachment, consequently it is difficult to provide facilities or events at one central location. The Summer'z Kool programme was developed through a collaboration of the authority's Community Leisure, Special

Events, Community Education, library, Community Safety, Arts Development and Youth Service departments and a broad range of other partner organisations.

The locations that were selected across the authority to host activities included community and leisure centres, a local museum, an environmental centre and an outdoor pursuits centre. Other outdoor activities were also arranged at public parks.

In 2002, when the summer school scheme was evaluated, nearly 90 different activities were provided in each of the weeks. Some of these were:

- Football skills and curling sessions at a leisure centre
- A drums workshop at a museum
- A cycling workshop held at a large and well-equipped public park
- Making drums from recycled materials at an environmental centre

A few summer schools were run by sports clubs using their facilities or those in the community. One of these was Na Magha CLG Summer School held at Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

Na Magha CLG is a hurling club in Derry/Londonderry, which ran a hurling and camogie (a non-contact version of hurling played by girls) summer school for primary school children. While it had run a limited programme of summer activities prior to NOF funding, the funding had enabled the club to extend their provision, pay professional coaches and purchase necessary sports equipment.

The summer school had originally been planned as a two-week programme, but it was later decided to divide the programme into two two-week programmes, one on sports fields on the city-side and one on sports fields on the water-side of the city.

Residential courses were rare within the NOF-funded summer schools and consequently in the case study sample. One such summer school comprised part of the Invergarry Primary School Board Summer School, Scotland, in which one of the three programmes provided was entitled ‘Outward Bound’. This was a course offered

to young people between the ages of 12 and 14, and was a residential experience which aimed to use the outdoors as a medium to develop communication, teamwork and leadership skills.

There were also examples of good use made of new premises at schools, such as the use of a recently completed £1 million sports hall at one school, which hosted a summer sports camp. A small number of schemes were also able to make use of newly-built City Learning Centres (CLCs) funded through the Excellence In Cities (EiC) programme. The centres were frequently attached to host schools..

7.2.5 Celebrating and recognising work and achievements

The majority of summer schools planned celebration events to be held on the final day, to which parents/carers, and others interested in the work of the summer school, were invited. Celebration events included drama productions, music performances, dances and displays of artwork. These events were particularly successful at providing a clear focus for summer school work and gave it a real sense of purpose for the children and young people. It also enabled parents/carers to gain some knowledge of the work of the summer school, and the young people indicated that they were pleased to be able to show their parents/carers what they had been doing.

Some celebration events involved the presentation of certificates to participants in order to recognise achievement, effort or attendance. In some cases, the final day of the summer school was devoted to celebrating achievement along with a programme of recreational activities.

Shown below are some brief details of celebration events held at three of the summer schools that were evaluated. The first is from a scheme in Wales, the second from Scotland, and the third from England.

The summer school held at Lewis Girls' Comprehensive School, part of the Caerphilly Education Authority Summer Schools Scheme in Wales, devoted the final day of the week to a presentation of certificates and calculators to children by the

Director of Education in the morning, followed by a tour of the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, and then lunch and bowling in Cardiff Bay.

The Carnwadric and Kennishead Pre-5 Unit Creative Summer School in Glasgow, Scotland ran a four-week summer school for 5 to 8-year-olds. An open day was held for parents in the final week, giving them the opportunity to see some of the activities that the young people had been engaged in, and to see children's work, which was displayed on the walls, as well as photographs of them at work.

At Martin Kemp Welch School, one of the venues for The Borough of Poole Summer School Scheme in England, there was an end-of-course performance and display of work for parents. The school hall was set out with several displays of work, such as clay models, decorated boxes, story books and musical instruments made by the young people, who took great pride in showing parents and other adults the work they had done. There was also a 'hopes and fears' board, with post-it notes showing how pupils had felt at the start of the course, showing their anxieties and interest.

In the event, the performance was much longer than originally planned because so many young people were keen to present what they had prepared – stories, dialogues, poems, dance, music – and their enthusiasm to do this certainly revealed that they had grown in confidence.

7.3 Less Successful Aspects

Overall, the least successful aspect of the summer school schemes was the level of attendance (see Chapter 5). This had the effect of making the majority of summer schools less cost-effective.

There were a number of other less successful aspects evident for some schemes. These included insufficient time allocated to planning and preparation, poor summer school publicity, inappropriate content/unchallenging targets for participants, unsuitable accommodation for participants with special educational needs, disputes over different payment rates for staff performing similar tasks, confusion amongst

staff over roles and responsibilities, inadequate transport arrangements, inappropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures, and lack of feedback to partners.

On the whole, schemes were aware of these less successful aspects, and indicated that they would endeavour to address them in the planning and operation of future summer schools under NOF funding (see Chapter 8). It is probably not surprising that many schemes had experienced difficulties, as the overwhelming majority in the NFER evaluation sample were in their first year of operation under NOF funding.

A small number of schemes reported that some of their difficulties had stemmed from a delay in receiving the NOF grant or from uncertainty that had arisen from being asked by NOF to make alterations to their initial plans.

7.4 Recommendations

As an outcome of the research, the NFER research team makes the following recommendations for organisations planning to set up summer schools or intending to extend existing summer holiday provision:

- Schemes, wherever possible, should link their aims and objectives, and consequently the content of the summer school programmes, to the LEA's aims or priorities concerning strategies to address specific needs or disadvantage. This will add to a coherent approach to meeting needs within the authority and support wider plans about social inclusion.
- The recruitment of peer mentors to work on summer schools will bring benefits to the participants, and also to the peer mentors. Peer mentors may help individuals and groups of participants on a range of activities, and provide valuable background support work. Peer mentors typically provide good role models for their younger peers. At the same time, the peer mentors are likely to develop their own skills, including personal and communication skills.
- Recruit professionals other than teachers to contribute to summer school programmes as main providers. The involvement of experts in a particular

field can add to the quality of the overall programme. For some young people, this involvement can provide a positive role model, or enable them to work with another adult in cases where their relationships with teachers had become strained. Having professionals lead sessions may also enable teachers working in a support capacity to receive staff development concerning the professional's area of expertise.

- Summer schools should give careful consideration to the location of activities. For particular types of summer school (e.g. transition summer schools, those where the content focus is on core subjects/key skills) a school location is entirely appropriate, while for others (e.g. those providing enrichment activities), a non-school location for all or a major part of the programme may bring benefits. Participants are likely to be particularly motivated and have their horizons widened by taking part in activities based at youth centres, environmental centres, community centres, sports clubs, dance studios, and outdoor pursuits centres.
- Include a celebration event towards the end of the summer school programme, or shortly afterwards, to which parents/carers and others interested in the work of the summer school are invited. Celebration events may include drama productions, music performances, dances or displays of artwork. It is useful at these events to present participants with certificates to recognise their achievements. Celebration events provide a clear goal for the summer school programme and enable the participants to share their work and experiences with their parents/carers. It also completes the summer school on a high note so making it more of a memorable experience for all concerned.

Chapter 8
Future Plans and Sustainability

8.1 Future Plans

Twenty-eight of the 30 schemes in the NFER evaluation sample were operating for the first year under NOF funding at the time of the research. While, some of these had been operating on a smaller scale or with a reduced focus prior to NOF funding, and had gained from this experience, many had a variety of challenges to meet in delivering the planned provision. In a few cases, schemes were working with a degree of uncertainty in the build up to the first summer school(s) because of delays in receiving NOF funding. A few schemes suffered from changes in personnel who had either prepared the NOF bid or who would be taking a leading role in putting plans into action, or both.

For these reasons, and others, many of the schemes recognised that particular aspects of their provision in this first year of operation needed to be improved for the remaining years for which they would receive NOF funding, typically a further two or three years. (See Section 7.3 Less Successful Aspects.)

Intended changes to summer schools across the schemes in all four countries included matters to do with recruitment, programme content, staffing, planning and preparation, and contacts with partners. Apart from the difficulties with attendance, which were widespread, proposed changes, indicated by scheme coordinators and other in management positions, corresponded to the particular circumstances of the individual scheme and what it was attempting to achieve. The following list gives an indication of some of changes to summer schools that schemes indicated would be made:

- improved targeting of participants to ensure those who would benefit the most enrol, or to achieve a better gender balance in the group as a whole (some

projects envisaged that this would involve recruiting from different year groups or an extended range of year groups)

- giving the summer school a higher profile during the recruitment period and in the lead up to the actual event, and immediately afterwards
- beginning the process of planning and preparation of activities, and acquiring resources, much earlier
- devising and implementing strategies to ensure higher levels of attendance
- making better transport arrangements where provision is in locations not familiar to participants or some distance away (this was particularly pertinent in isolated rural areas in Scotland and Wales)
- changes to activities, including dropping 'unsuccessful' ones and devising new ones
- changes to the general programme, such as having a shorter lunch break, less active sessions in the morning, more active sessions in the afternoon, trips later in the week, and contingency plans for poor weather for outdoor events
- giving participants greater flexibility in choosing what they want to do from an extended range of activities
- devising and implementing an improved system of monitoring and evaluation, with a greater focus on the aims of the provision
- involving parents/carers more in the summer school, such as through a celebration event, recipients of publicity material or recruiting them to work as volunteers on the scheme
- forming a clearer link to LEA aims and priorities, such as the inclusion of the scheme in Education Development Plans
- linking the scheme to other summer initiatives, possibly at the same locations, to ensure a more effective and efficient use of resources
- devising a reporting system by which the outcomes of the scheme for individual participants could be feed back to their schools

The research methodology was such that it was not possible to revisit summer schools to determine the extent to which the difficulties encountered by many of them in the first year of operation had been addressed, and whether intended changes to the provision had been carried out, and, if so, if they had led to improvements.

Two schemes in the evaluation sample were operating their second year of NOF-funded summer schools. One such scheme was the Leeds Summer Schools Scheme, 2002, in England, with joint lead partners the University of the First Age (UFA) and Education Leeds.

Education Leeds had ambitious plans for out of school hours learning, including that during the summer holiday period, at the time of the research (2002).

The summer school coordinator had built partnerships with Leeds Metropolitan University (which donated the venue for peer tutor training and hosted the summer school scheme presentation evening in 2002) and Leeds College of Technology (which has a group of 21 staff being trained in UFA principles and practices). A large central summer school is envisaged, possibly being held on these sites in the centre of Leeds, and also using the facilities of the City Learning Centres (CLCs). This would allow a large shared budget to be utilised to ensure that hundreds of pupils had access to a wide range of experiences and expertise. Another major benefit would be the aspirational nature of partnerships with institutes of further and higher education for pupils who may not have previously considered and worked towards such an educational pathway.

8.2 Sustainability

As part of the research, providers were asked about any plans they had for sustaining the scheme beyond the period of NOF funding. The overwhelming majority said that this was not an issue for them at this stage. This is not surprising with the majority of the schemes being in the first year of operation. It was apparent that the projects were more concerned with putting their plans into action and establishing the provision. A common view was that sustainability would be more of an issue from the mid-point of schemes onwards and into the final year.

Several of the smaller schemes indicated that they did not expect to be operating after the period of NOF funding, or if they were then it would be in a significantly reduced form. These projects felt that they were unlikely to receive any substantial funding so that any continuation of the scheme would have to operate on a much smaller budget. They felt that this might be achieved through:

- fewer activities, including fewer trips away from the main site
- a much smaller project in terms of participant numbers
- a summer school of shorter duration
- fewer paid providers
- greater use of unpaid volunteers (e.g. parents, peer mentors)
- some financial contribution from parents/carers.

Some schemes referred to the NOF funding having enabled them to purchase capital resources (e.g. sports equipment, ICT software and hardware), which would not need to be replaced for several years, so making any future provision less expensive. (It is worth noting that NOF funding could not be spent on major capital outlay.) Other projects were concerned about the viability of any future scheme because of the ongoing transport costs. This was a particular concern for schemes in isolated, rural areas in Scotland and Wales. Several schemes commented that they were situated in areas where there were no or very few large commercial organisations that would be prepared to fund any future scheme. One or two that did have such organisations commented that they had already been approached many times to fund other initiatives, and suggested that their generosity might be exhausted.

Some schemes mentioned that schools themselves would need to fund summer schools from their own budgets if they were of the view that the provision was actually meeting a need and worth continuing. Across the schemes in England, a range of possible funding sources were mentioned, including 'The Children's Fund', 'On Track', 'New Deal' and 'Excellence in Cities'.

A small number of schemes when asked about sustainability took the view that it was not a concern for them – the NOF funding would have enabled summer holiday

provision to be experienced by some young people, and that in itself was a valuable outcome. Some of these providers realised they were required to produce sustainability plans in the penultimate year of NOF funding but they saw this as a necessary chore rather than holding out any real hope that such plans would bear fruit.

A few schemes talked about 'exit routes' rather than sustainability. For example, provision that was concerned about coaching in a particular sport would be informing the participants about how they could develop their skills further through joining local sports clubs that ran youth sections. The same was also true for music, dance and drama activities. Some projects which had used non-school sites, such as environmental centres, thought that the initial exposure of young people to these locations, which in some cases were quite near their homes, would encourage them to make use of the facility themselves as individuals in the future.

At the time of the research, there appeared to be a likelihood of significant differences amongst the countries in the level of sustainability that might be achieved beyond the period of NOF funding. It appeared that sustainability might be easier in England than elsewhere as there was a greater number of possible funding sources, and generally more commercial organisations that could be approached for funding or in-kind support.

In contrast, the position in Scotland is that much of the country, apart from Glasgow City, is covered by a number of small authorities with correspondingly small education budgets, and a relatively fewer number of commercial organisations. Some of the Scottish authorities that held summer school schemes were some of the least densely populated areas within the UK (e.g. Highland – 8 persons per square km; Orkney Islands – 19 persons per square km), which when compared to figures for authorities within London (e.g. Islington – 11,719 persons per square km) suggest that transport costs for such locations are a severe challenge with regard to the viability of summer school provision. However, it is clear that the Scottish Executive is committed to sustaining out of school hours learning programmes by providing £10 million for such activities in 2003/4 and £12 million in 2004/5.

At the time of the research fieldwork (2000 to 2002), it was unclear to many in Scotland as to the effect the McCrone agreement would have on the delivery by teachers of out of school hours learning programmes, including summer schools. It appears that the current position is that in many education authorities, fewer teachers are now delivering such activities and those that do are no longer being paid (the work being viewed as part of contracted time). The impact of this on out of school hours learning programmes is yet to unfold.

Shown below are some details of the views on sustainability of the coordinators of two of the schemes, one in Wales and the other in England, both of which were in the evaluation sample for 2001.

One of the joint coordinators of the Caerphilly Local Education Authority Summer Schools Scheme in Wales thought that to remain sustainable the scheme would need to seek Objective One funding from the National Assembly for Wales. Also the LEA would *'have to think quite laterally'* in order to acquire future funding. Despite this, she emphasised that if there were noticeable benefits then it was *'likely that schools will have to put summer schools into their own budget'*. Consequently, it was essential that schools were made aware of *'the significant gains for targeted children for a relatively small expenditure'*. On the whole, she thought it was vital for summer schools to continue to be approached from *'an inclusion perspective'*.

The other scheme coordinator thought that funding was all-important as *'teachers are not going to do it in a systematic way on a voluntary basis'*. Consequently *'a lot will depend on central sponsorship'*. The growing funding shift away from primary to secondary schools in Wales would also need addressing in future bids, was his view. He argued that the crucial ingredient to make the summer schools a success was the *'enthusiasm of teachers at school level and enthusiasm at LEA level'*, and that it was imperative to *'get a sense of fun in learning, particularly in the summer'*. Furthermore, the active cooperation of the respective headteachers was central to the achievement of these outcomes.

The coordinator of the Borough of Poole Summer School Scheme in England was doubtful as to whether the scheme would continue after NOF funding had ceased. Various aspects of the different summer schools had been provided on a voluntary basis, and the Study Gallery, for example, had contributed its premises and planning expertise at no cost. There was no hope of the Baden Powell Activities week continuing, unless it were possible to obtain funding from Education and Social Services budgets. The football courses had some prospect of being funded by a local bank, but there were few large employers in the area that would provide substantial support. Experience had shown that small businesses did not have staff to deal with the requests for sponsorship, while some charities were reluctant to fund work they regarded as the responsibility of the local authority.

Chapter 9
Conclusions

The stated aims of the NOF-funded out of school hours learning programme, encompassing both term-time projects and summer schools, were to support sustainable projects that would improve the quality of life of people throughout the UK, address the needs of those most disadvantaged in society, encourage community participation, and complement local and national strategies and programmes.

The summer school schemes that received NOF funding, with these aims in mind, varied considerably in terms of size, age of participants, level of community involvement, staffing, venue, duration and 'curriculum' content. Each project had been planned and delivered to meet an identified need for the schools and young people involved, with particular groups of young people often targeted for participation. Examples across the projects of general needs that were being met included providing additional support for underachieving young people, easing the transfer of young people from one phase of schooling to the next, and the provision of enrichment activities for those who were becoming disaffected with education. Individual projects had their own specific aims and objectives with the intention of addressing these general needs.

With the variation amongst the projects being so wide, and the NFER evaluation sample comprising just 30 schemes (nine in England, nine in Scotland, seven in Wales, and five in Northern Ireland), it is not valid to contrast the level of success attained by each of the four countries in meeting what was frequently a raft of quite specific aims and objectives for each project. However, the research did identify much successful practice in all four countries, as illustrated in this report.

Across the projects, it was evident from objective data that the majority were based in locations that were disadvantaged with regard to a constellation of factors, including high levels of unemployment, poor housing, single parent families, entitlement to free school meals, poor GCSE results, and lack of progression of young people to higher

education. These locations include both urban and rural areas. A few schemes were based in areas where the level of socio-economic disadvantage was not particularly low, but where there were few opportunities for young people to access meaningful activities during the summer holiday.

As such, the NOF out of school hours learning programme did, in general, meet the needs of those more disadvantaged in society. However, it should be noted that a small number of projects reported that they had not been able to recruit those young people who probably would have benefited most from the planned provision. One or two projects had decided not to target the 'most needy' as they felt they would not be able to attract this group. Also, some projects reported that they had not been able to retain such participants, once recruited, throughout the entire summer school. The research methodology was not designed to identify why certain groups of young people had decided not to access the available provision, or why some had ceased participating partway through a summer school programme.

Across the projects, the research identified a great deal of good practice, and a small amount of poor practice (which providers had recognised and indicated they would be responding to in plans for future summer schools) in all four countries. With the variation amongst the schemes being so wide, the identified good practice was typically related to the particular circumstances of the individual summer school and the needs being met by the programme. Some examples of good practice that were common across several schemes included provision that linked with LEA aims or priorities, the use of peer mentors, the involvement of professionals other than teachers, the use of venues that motivated the young people, and the inclusion of celebration events for work and achievement (see Chapter 7).

The level of community involvement in projects was also varied. Many projects, which were mainly school-based, had little or no community involvement, whereas others regarded it as important to make provision outside the environs of the school and for the young people to gain some experience of the facilities available in their community. The latter projects were typically those based at community venues, such as environmental centres, providing enrichment/extension activities, and having input

from professionals, who were either working as freelance professionals or from businesses, or public or voluntary organisations.

The research methodology entailed visits to summer schools while they were operating so that providers and participants could be interviewed and activities observed, leading to a set of case study reports (see 1.3 Methodology). For this reason, it is not possible to discern whether or not the schemes had any significant impact on their local communities during the actual programme, immediately afterwards, or over the longer term. A small number of providers made comments along the lines that the participants may have been involved in crime or would have been the potential victims of crime if they had not participated in the summer school programme, but, of course, such comments do not constitute firm evidence as to any positive effect in this regard.

The picture concerning the likelihood of sustainability beyond the period of NOF funding was mixed at the time of the research – with 28 of the 30 schemes in their first year of operation. Several of the smaller schemes reported that they did not expect to be operating beyond the period of NOF funding, or if they did it would be in a substantially reduced form. Generally, the larger projects were more optimistic about potential sustainability. Some were of the view that NOF funding had 'kick-started' a wider appreciation amongst LEAs, schools and parents/carers that provision of this type was meeting a real need and 'turning around' disaffected young people. As such, it was thought likely that LEAs and schools would find the necessary funding from a range of different sources to continue summer holiday provision along similar lines. As part of any future research into the longer term outcomes of the NOF out of school hours learning programme, it would be informative to revisit the schemes to identify whether or not they have continued and, if so, what strategies and funding sources have enabled this to happen.

Appendix 1
The Summer School Schemes in the NFER Evaluation Sample

England

Langdon School Summer University, Newham
Evaluated in 2000 – the first year of operation

Scalby School Summer School, North Yorkshire
Evaluated in 2000 – the first year of operation

Chorlton Park Primary School/Lancasterian School Summer School, Manchester
Evaluated in 2000 – the first year of operation

Oldham LEA Summer School Scheme, Oldham
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

The Wheldon School Summer School Project, Nottinghamshire
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

Mosslands School Summer Sports Camp, Wirral
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

The Borough of Poole Summer School Scheme, Poole
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

The Leeds Summer Schools 2002, University of the First Age (UFA) and Education Leeds, Leeds
Evaluated in 2002 – the second year of operation

The Impact Summer School Project, Dudley
Evaluated in 2002 – the first year of operation

Scotland

The Carnwadric and Kennishead Pre-5 Unit Creative Summer School, Glasgow
Evaluated in 2000 – the first year of operation

Grangemouth New Community School Summer School, Falkirk
Evaluated in 2000 – the first year of operation

Scottish Ballet Summer School, Glasgow
Evaluated in 2000 – the first year of operation

Orkney Islands Council Summer School Programme, Orkney Islands
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

City of Edinburgh Council Summer School Scheme, Edinburgh
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

Drumming and Percussion Summer School, Renfrewshire
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

Dalmellington Arts Summerfest, East Ayrshire
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

North Ayrshire Summer School Workshops, North Ayrshire
Evaluated in 2002 – the second year of operation

Invergarry Primary School Board Summer School, Highland
Evaluated in 2002 – the first year of operation

Wales

Merthyr Tydfil Summer Literacy School, Cyfartha Junior School, Merthyr Tydfil
Evaluated in 2000 – the first year of operation

Llansilin Play scheme, Llansilin Summer School, Powys
Evaluated in 2000 – the first year of operation

Caerphilly LEA Summer Schools, Caerphilly
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

Blaenau Gwent Education Department Summer Adventure Scheme, Blaenau Gwent
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

Ysgol y Moelwyn Summer School, Blaenaue Ffestniog, Gwynedd
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

Flintshire County Council Summer School Scheme, Flintshire
Evaluated in 2002 – the first year of operation

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council Summer'z Kool Programme, Rhondda Cynon Taff
Evaluated in 2002 – the first year of operation

Northern Ireland

Na Magha CLG Summer School, Derry
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

St Catherine's College Summer Scheme, Armagh
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

Young Women at Risk Programme, Ard Carnet, Dundonald
Evaluated in 2001 – the first year of operation

Share Discovery '80 Ltd, Enniskillen
Evaluated in 2002 – the first year of operation

Donagheady Community Action Group Summer School, Strabane
Evaluated in 2002 – the first year of operation