
Select Committee on Children's Services – 18 June 2009

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Black Country Challenge - End of Year One Review

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - advise the Select Committee of the work and progress in relation to Black Country Challenge activity;
 - highlight resources and activity directly impacting on schools in Dudley;
 - highlight areas of success and slippage and implications for years two and three of the programme.

Background

2. The Black Country Challenge is a three year partnership arrangement between schools, local authorities and national government. It's aim is to boost educational performance in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton and to enable young people in the Black Country to achieve the standards they are capable of achieving. The programme brings with it a budget of approximately £28 million pounds. An overview of the key objectives and goals together with a summary of year one activity for each objective is provided as Appendix One. A budget breakdown is also included as Appendix Two.
3. Challenge activity start up was significantly delayed from the initial project plan timelines, due to the timing of the final sign off of programme proposals and programmes for each pathway school. This led to a delay in the release of funding. Funding was received via the standards fund grant release in September to enable the general activities such as recruitment and retention to get underway. Agreement on the funding for the majority of pathway and pathway

plus school programmes was not resolved until the autumn term, with money not being released until December. Agreements have been reached with each partner local authority and the DCSF on the appropriate methods to get funding into schools and also to pass funding onto BCCSIP for general activity via a formal service level agreement process.

4. Progress Report against each Challenge Programme

4.1 Pathway School Programmes

There are 77 Pathway schools currently engaged in Challenge activity of which 11 primary and 5 secondary are Dudley schools. Of the 16 Dudley schools 8 are intensive and receive significant input from Challenge advisers as well as receiving resources and support as agreed by the local authority, Challenge Adviser and the schools. This additionality is planned to enhance the existing programmes put in place by the School Governors and the local authority. In total these schools received £684,352, as identified in their existing funding proposals. This funding supported activity such as enhanced staffing (e.g. academic coaches, mentors, support staff), or bespoke activity available through the agreed support programme. A key priority for secondary Pathway schools in Dudley has been bespoke consultancy for maths and English. The extent of need identified has been a challenge for BCCSIP and local authorities. Additional expert teachers' posts have now been agreed to support this need. Primary schools have accessed a number of programmes which included Write Dance, Society for the Prevention of Occupancy of Castles & Stately Homes (KS1 writing), Girl Power (Year 6 mathematics programme for girls) and Creative Partnerships curriculum change programmes. Some schools also accessing leadership support and training via National Challenge for School Leadership. Delay in approval of proposals from National Government mean that programmes were only starting to be delivered to schools from November and late release of funding for school action such as enhanced staffing has impacted on initial plans. This meant that Challenge Adviser and School Improvement Partner visits this half term have not been focussed on first monitoring/progress checks as planned but on supporting the speedy responses to approved plans.

- 4.2 Challenge Advisers have spent 23 days in Dudley primary schools. Currently numbers for secondary schools are not available. Relationships between local authorities and Challenge Advisers are

developing well, which is ensuring that the role brings added value to support and challenge for schools. There is still some work needed on the role of local authorities, challenge advisers and school improvement partners in relation to monitoring and evaluation. This is being worked on.

4.3 Pathway Plus Programmes

There are 25 schools that have been identified as Pathway Plus, of which three are Dudley secondary schools and 9 are Dudley primary schools. These schools are recognised as good schools with the potential of becoming outstanding schools and have been given funding to support an agreed action plan against clear targets. The 12 Dudley schools have received £138,096 to date. Pathway Plus monitoring forms will be completed by SIPs and submitted by local authorities.

4.4 Leadership strategy

The key priority for National Challenge for School Leadership activity has been the recruitment, training and placement of local leaders in education. 34 head teachers have been appointed to the role of which four are Dudley primary head teachers and five are Dudley secondary head teachers. Currently four Dudley Local Leaders in Education are deployed. No Dudley school is currently being supported by an Local Leader in Education.

4.5 Three headteachers have been seconded out on a part time basis to directors of the local leadership activity. Two of these are Dudley head teachers. National Challenge for School Leadership are also negotiating bespoke programmes in some schools and have provided RAISE ON LINE training for all Pathway Schools. Staff from three Dudley secondary schools attended training this term.

4.6 Families of Schools Data

The Directorate of Children Schools and Families agreed to fund a pilot families of school facility for 2008 -9 using provisional data. This work was undertaken by Fischer Family Trust. The pilot is in direct response to schools request for earlier access to the families of Schools programme in order that it can be used to its maximum potential. Black Country schools have formally agreed to share the provisional data.

4.7 National Challenge for School Leadership are providing support for

each Family of Schools network to enable them to share practice should they so wish. To date the response from primary schools has been good.

4.8 *Maths and English Transition project*

The allocation of Challenge teachers and progress champions has been submitted by each local authority and shared with Challenge Advisers. A total of £40,000 has been distributed to Dudley schools

4.9 Four lead consultants will be appointed and fully funded by the programme. As lead authority for English and maths Dudley Council are acting as host employers for these posts. Currently two of the four posts have been filled.

4.10 *Narrowing the Gap: 100 Voices and Young Entrepreneurs Learning Portfolio programmes (YELP)*

Walsall piloted both the '100 Voices' and the 'Young Entrepreneurs Learning Portfolio' programmes. Meetings this term have been held with Dudley local representatives to commence activity in the authority. The Young Entrepreneurs Learning Portfolio programme offers personalised support and programmes for 14-19 travellers. The 100 voices programmes works with community members from key minority or underachieving groups to train them as voluntary mentors to support work in schools around raising aspiration.

4.11 *City GATES CfBT Gifted and Talented Programme*

187 pupils in the Black Country are eligible for bursaries and all have been approved. Next stages of the programme are now being planned. Further sessions for all secondary schools have been held to ensure schools are aware of the support and opportunities available. Dudley pupils have received £7,600 in total.

4.12 *Recruitment and Retention activity*

Promotional materials highlighting the benefits of working in Black Country schools is now available for all schools. The newly qualified teacher recruitment drive is underway with over 440 applications received for the primary pool. 318 were shortlisted for interview in early March. Bursaries have been advertised for maths and English secondary NQTs but as yet there has been little response. The recruitment and retention of high quality secondary maths and English teachers remains a significant issue for the Black Country and will be a priority area for year two consideration. Teach First has

reported a successful year in 2007-8 with 21 recruits placed in 7 Black Country schools. (2 in Dudley Schools) They are looking to place further candidates in 2009.

4.13 Curriculum Networks

Fourteen school networks are currently being supported to develop new curriculum models or activity. Fourteen Dudley schools are now engaged in the successful networks. Each network has received £6,000 to support their partnership working. QCA are supporting the programme through providing resources and specialist input at the two key network events.

4.14 Communications and Events

The weekly meetings with local authority representatives, DCSF, NCSL and BCCSIP ensure improved communication and a clear process for both problem solving and forward planning. Peter Cox is Dudley's Challenge coordinator. More work has been done to improve communications to schools and response to Challenge opportunities such as curriculum network support and Royal Shakespeare Company opportunities has been good.

4.15 There has been a significant increase in visits to the Challenge website. The website now has a secure section for key stakeholders and planning groups. Monthly e- newsletters are a continuing feature of the site.

4.16 The Black Country Student Awards programme was piloted with Year 10 pupils and was a great success. 87% of the entries came from Dudley pupils. Of the 5 prizes 3 were awarded to Dudley pupils. Star awards were nominated by head teachers as part of the event. 35 pupils in total received star pupil awards of which 7 were Dudley pupils. This year the awards event will be open to pupils of all ages.

4.17 A maths and English parent campaign was launched in the summer which included an event in the Merry Hill shopping centre where almost a thousand parent packs were distributed. Leaflets to support parents and carers' in helping their children with reading, writing and maths were produced as part of the campaign and made available to all primary schools and Early Years settings.

4.18 An annual Festival of Learning is being planned for this summer. The aim is to showcase innovation and good practice within Black

Country schools, thus facilitating the sharing of effective practice and impacting positively on teaching and learning. 2009 will focus on secondary schools, with the intention to hold a primary event in 2010.

4.19 Monitoring and Evaluation

Agreed monitoring information is sent monthly to DCSF to track progress and potential slippage for each of the key areas of activity. The reports are available to all partners, with local authorities accessing these in relation to impact and activity within their own schools.

4.20 Data is currently being gathered on a school and sub regional basis in order to measure impact against baseline performance. A common collection system has been agreed by local authorities and DCSF.

4.21 Next Steps

Work is currently underway to identify additional programmes for years 2 and 3 of The Challenge. This has included:

- establishment of baseline data for the goals set;
- scrutiny of current activity against goals and objectives to identify potential gaps or overlap;
- anecdotal evidence gathering around Year 1 activity and its potential roll out;
- budget analysis.

4.22 Emerging priorities for the future are:

- recruitment, retention and development of high quality teachers(with a particular focus on maths and English secondary teachers);
- parent and community engagement linked to raising aspiration;
- work to support the performance of underachieving groups as identified through data analysis;
- leadership development;
- business engagement.

Funding for Year 2 (2009/10) of the project will support these priorities. The project is due for completion at the end of the academic year 2010/11. Much of the work being undertaken has sustainability beyond the project as a priority. Consequently, it is aimed at developing the skills of the existing workforce engaged in the learning and progress of Dudley pupils.

Finance

5. Black Country Challenge (BCC) funding will be available from the DCSF over a number of years. The funding for 2009/10 and 2010/11 is yet to be determined.

The BCC funding is a Standards Fund Grant, which must be spent by 31 August 2009. There are two main streams of funding received by Dudley;

- Funding that is passed to schools (Intensive, Improving & Pathway Plus)
- Funding for the Maths & English Leaders for the whole of the Black Country.

In 2008/9 financial year total funding received was £825k. Of this £515k was allocated directly to schools. The remaining £310k received was for the Maths and English leaders and training of staff to deliver the Maths & English Programme; the budget carried forward at 31 March 2009 was £247k.

6. **Law**

The Black Country Challenge is a three-year partnership arrangement between schools, local authorities and national government. It's aim is to boost educational performance in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton and to enable young people in the Black Country to achieve the standards they are capable of achieving.

7. **Equality Impact**

The proposals in this report are consistent with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

8. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Select Committee note the contents of this report and comment as appropriate.

Mark Wyatt

.....
Mark Wyatt
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Jane Porter, Assistant Director
Telephone: 01384 814201
Email: jane.porter@dudley.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Black Country Challenge

To develop the Black Country as a world leader for education, giving every child the support and experiences they need to be the best they can be whatever their talent or background

Objective 1: To decrease the number of underperforming schools by supporting those facing significant challenges

Reach 1% above LA targets For each year of Challenge Activity at KS1

Narrow the gap to meet National average performance At KS2 & KS3 in English & Maths combined – summer 11

Half the gap – as measured By performance in 5A*-C Including English & Maths at KS4 – with the rest of England

Have no primary school where Less than 65% of pupils reach Level 4 in English & Maths

Have no schools in special measures

Have no schools achieving below 30% 5 A*-C including English & maths at KS4

Objective 2: To increase the number of outstanding Schools & their capacity to support others

Reach 1% above LA targets For each year of Challenge Activity at KS1

Double the number of Primary Schools where 90% of pupils Reach level 4 in English & Maths combined by 2011

Double the number of schools where more than 60% of students get 5 A*-C GCSEs inc English & Maths

Objective 3: To narrow the attainment Gap for vulnerable groups of young people By increasing the performance of underperforming groups & to reduce post-16s who are NEET

Reach 1% above LA targets For each year of Challenge Activity at KS1

Reduce the percentage of Students who are NEET to 7.03%

Narrow the gap in Early Years FSP by 7%

Raise the proportion of FSM Pupils reaching level 4 in English & maths combined to 70%

To reduce to zero the number Of schools having significantly Below average CVA (English & Maths)

Raise the attainment by FSM Students at GCSE to 40% at KS4

Increase proportion of FSM Pupils making two levels of Progress year on year

Objective 4: To Foster innovative Approaches To School Improvement & extend the sharing of good practice To spread & sustain the work of the Challenge And improve confidence in schools

Reach 1% above LA targets For each year of Challenge Activity at KS1

Double the number of Primary Schools where 90% of pupils Reach level 4 in English & Maths combined by 2011

Double the number of schools where more than 60% of students get 5 A*-C GCSEs inc English & Maths

Have no primary school where Less than 55% of pupils reach Level 4 in English & Maths

Have no schools achieving below 30% 5 A*-C including English & maths at KS4

To reduce to zero the number Of schools having significantly Below average CVA (English & Maths)

Black Country Challenge

To develop the Black Country as a world leader for education, giving every child the support and experiences they need to be the best they can be whatever their talent or background

Objective 1:
To decrease the number of under performing schools by supporting those facing significant challenges

- Pathway programme
- Leadership development (NCSL)
- Enhanced recruitment drive
- Maths & English

Objective 2:
To increase the number of outstanding schools & their capacity to support others

- Pathway Plus
- Leadership development (NCSL)

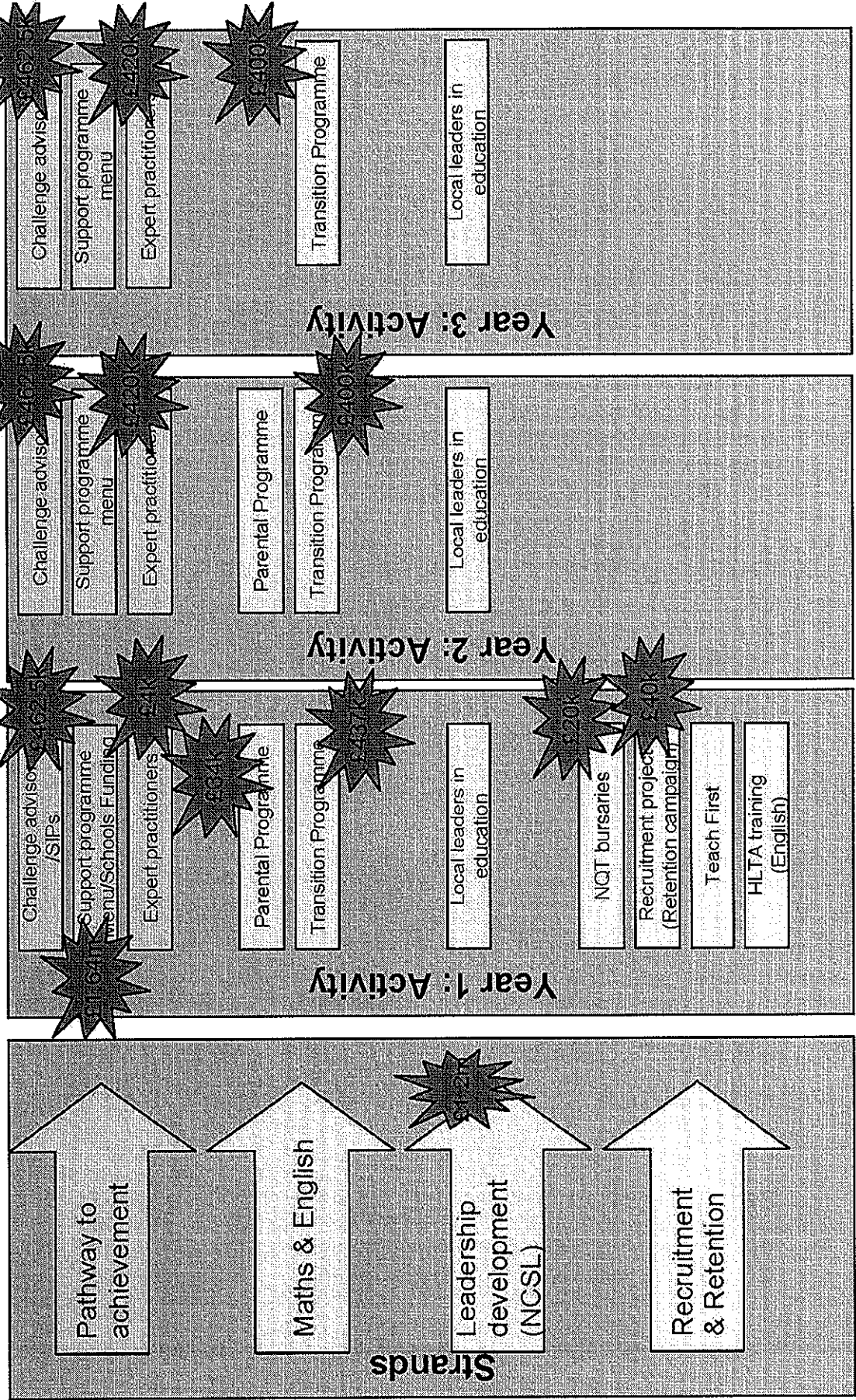
Objective 3:
To narrow the attainment gap for vulnerable groups of young people
By increasing the performance of underperforming groups & to reduce post-16s who are NEET

- Yelp
- 100 voices
- CityGates
- Parental engagement

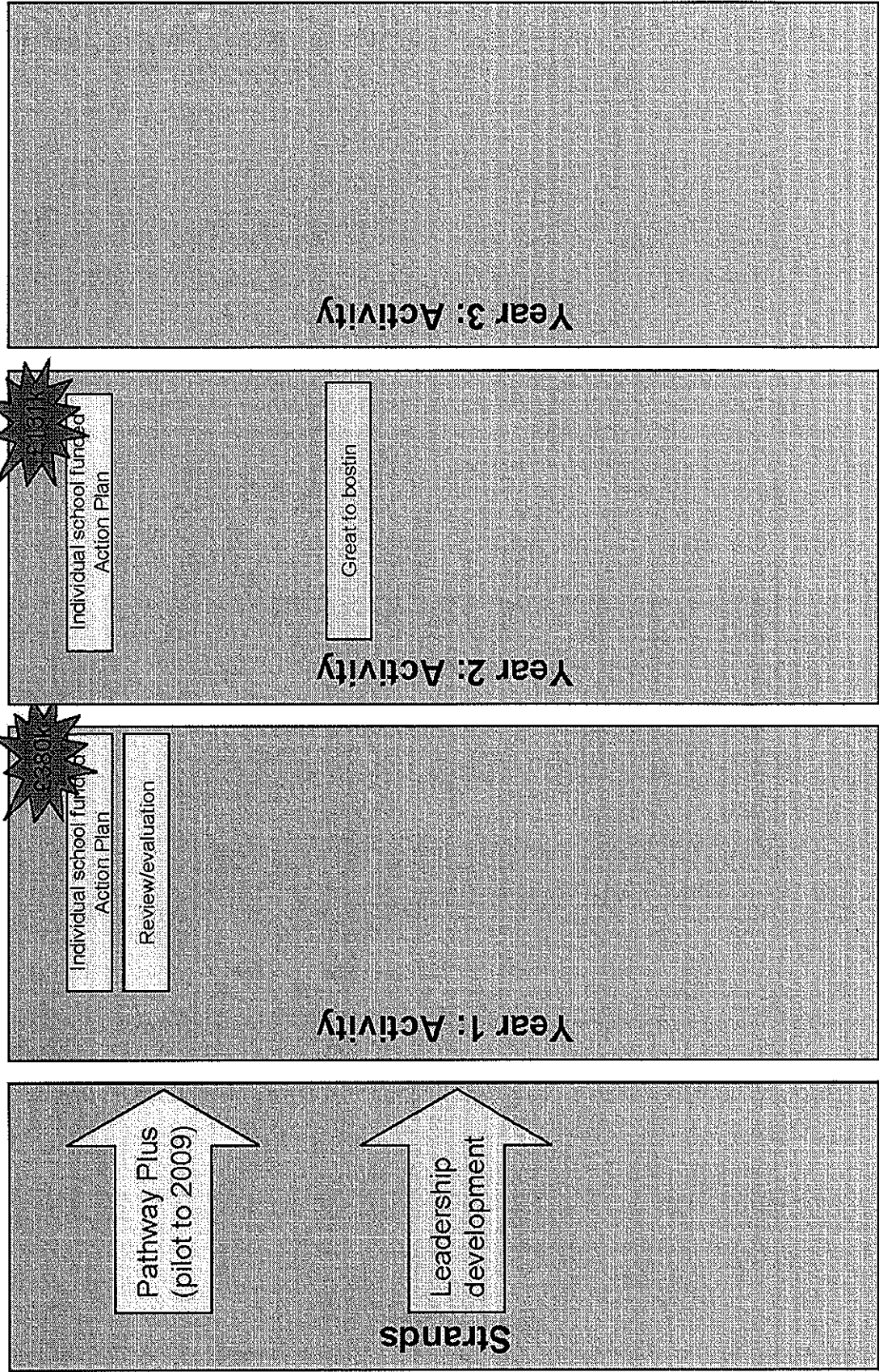
Objective 4:
To Foster Innovative Approaches To School Improvement & extend the sharing of good practice To spread & sustain the work of the Challenge And improve confidence in schools

- Innovation (curriculum networks)
- Recruitment & retention (New solutions)
- FOS networks (NGSL)
- Maths & English
- Input from Private Sector/ Business Partners

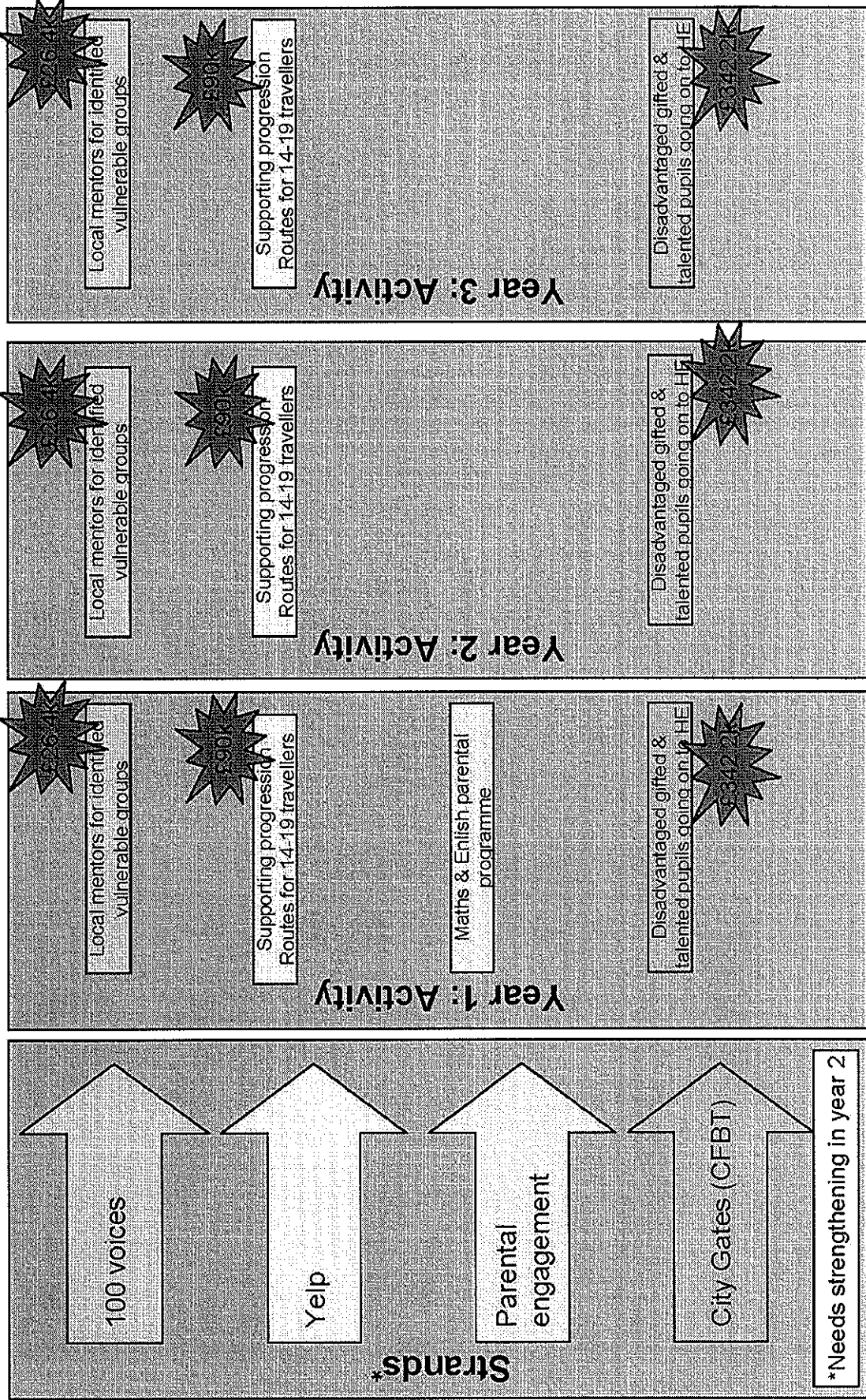
Objective 1: To decrease the number of under performing schools by supporting those facing significant challenges



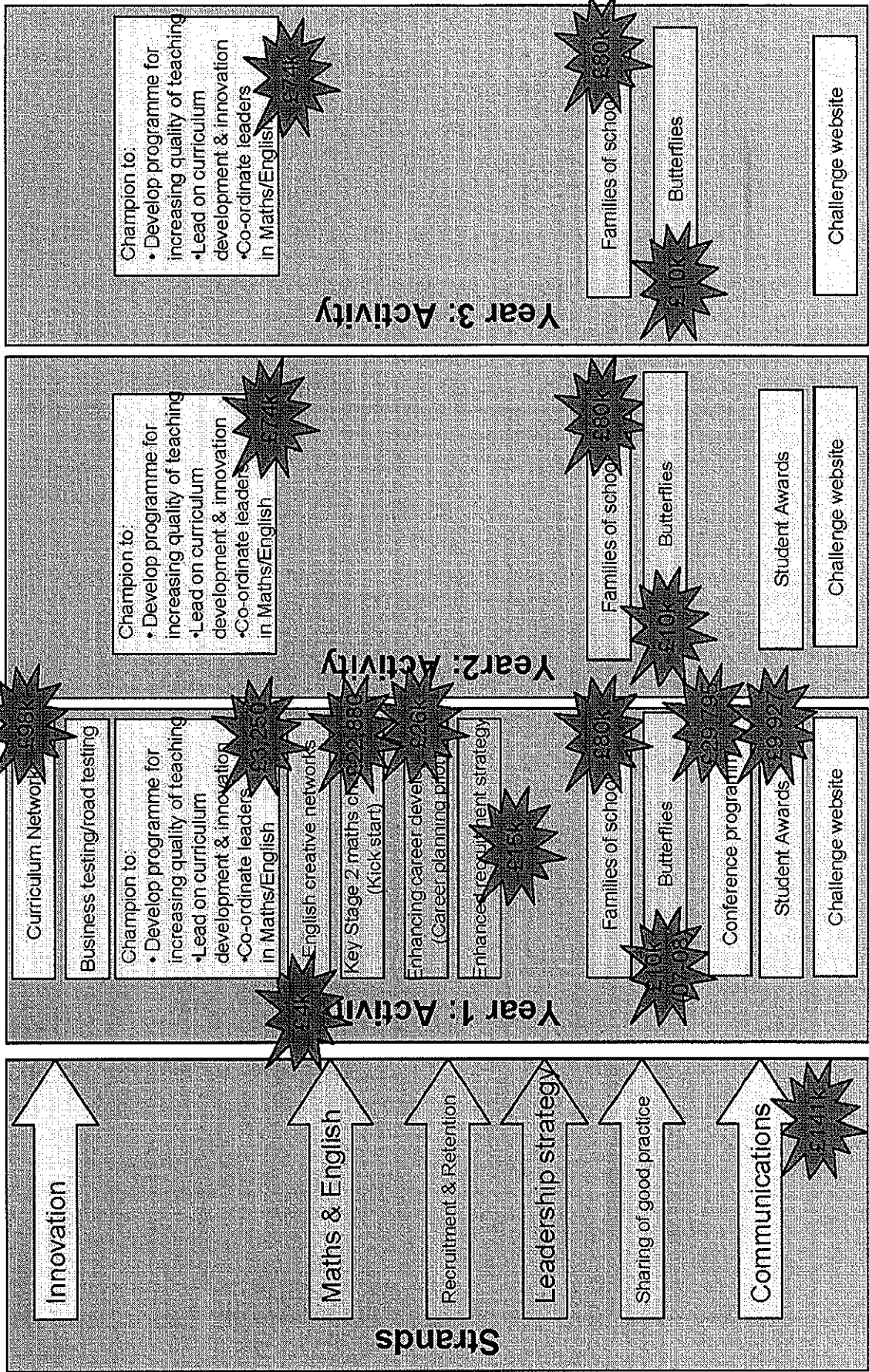
Objective 2: To increase the number of outstanding schools & their capacity to support others



Objective 3: To narrow the attainment gap for vulnerable groups of young people by increasing the performance of underperforming groups & to reduce post-16s who are NEET

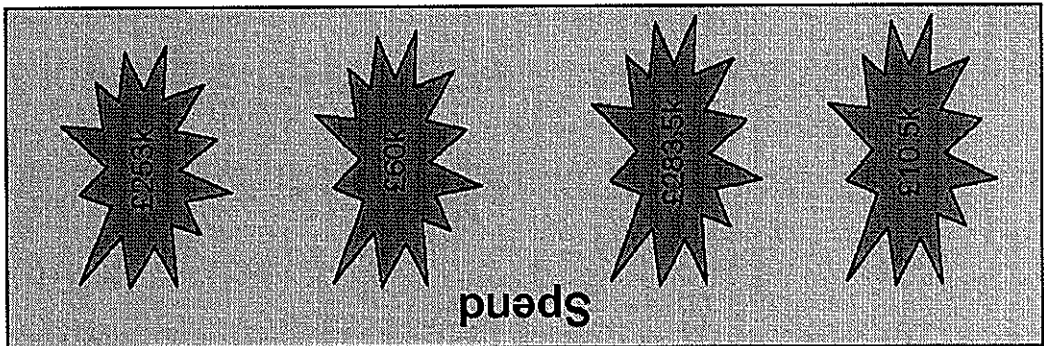
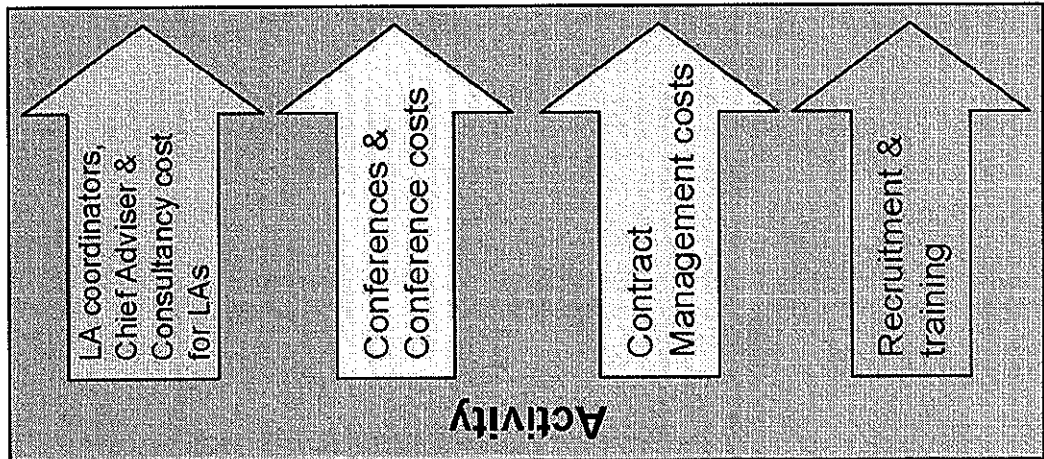


Objective 4: To Foster innovative Approaches To School Improvement & Extend the sharing of good practice To spread & sustain the work of the Challenge And improve confidence in schools

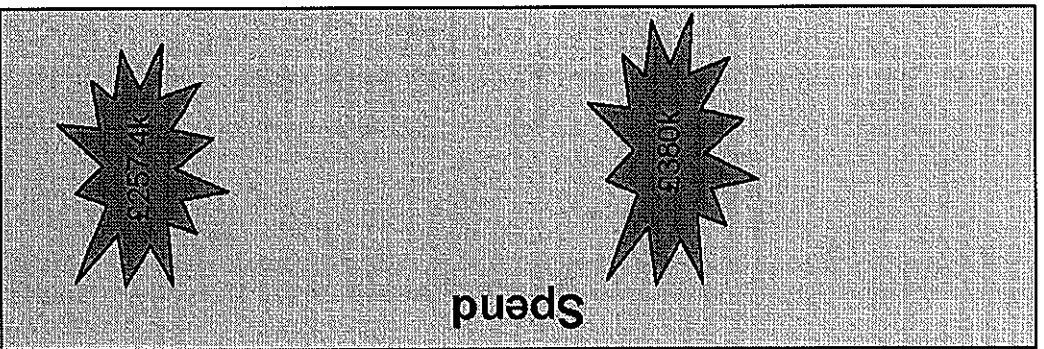
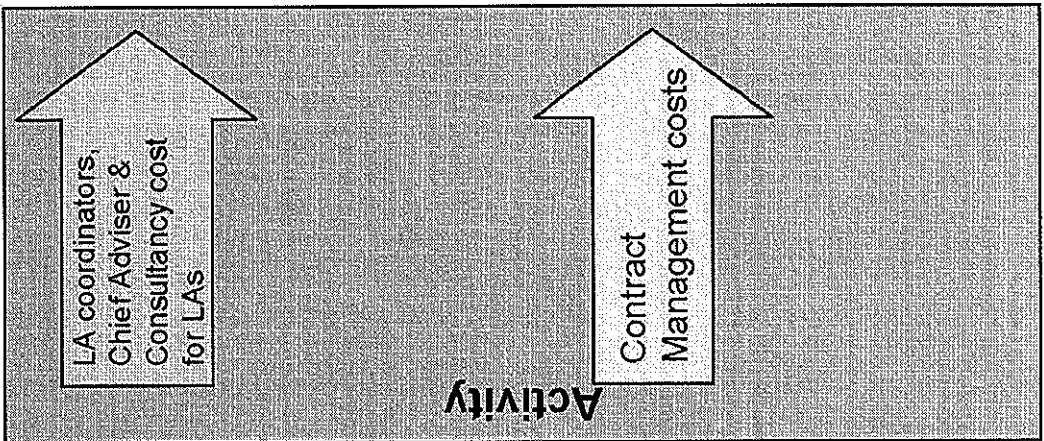


Miscellaneous costs – 2008/9

2008/9



2009/10



APPENDIX 2 – Figures subject final end of year outturn update

2008/09 Spend to date

| To decrease the number of under performing schools | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Budget | £6,288,626 | % of budget |
| Adviser and SIPs costs | £461,754.95 | 7.34% |
| PtA Primary intensive | £642,460 | 10.22% |
| PtA Primary improving | £309,571 | 4.92% |
| PtA Secondary intensive | £1,077,164 | 17.13% |
| PtA Secondary improving | £374,423 | 5.95% |
| Maths and English | £277,000 | 4.40% |
| | £3,142,372.95 | 49.97% |
| To increase the number of outstanding schools | | |
| Pathways Plus Secondary | £83,310 | 1% |
| Pathways Plus Primary | £296,298 | 5% |
| | £379,608 | 6% |
| To narrow the attainment gap | | |
| YELP | £90,000 | 1% |
| BC 100 Voices | £26,240 | 0% |
| | £116,240 | 2% |
| To increase capacity to spread and sustain improvement | | |
| Comms | £140,678 | 2% |
| Gifted & Talented | £342,000 | 5% |
| Recruitment and Retention | £101,000 | 2% |
| Curriculum networks | £98,000 | 2% |
| Kick Start | £22,880 | 0% |
| Revision Aquabrowser | £18,000 | 0% |
| Families of schools | £81,273 | 1% |
| Undergraduate scheme | £9,500 | 0% |
| Business in the community | £30,000 | 0% |
| | £843,331 | 13% |
| Misc costs | | |
| LA coordinators, Chief Adviser and consultancy for LAs | £252,844 | 4% |
| Conferences and conference costs | £60,089.28 | 1% |
| Contract management costs | £283,555 | 5% |
| Recruitment and training | £10,585 | 0% |
| | £607,073 | 10% |
| Leadership | | |
| NCSL | £1,200,000 | 19% |
| | £1,200,000 | 19% |
| Total | £6,288,625.60 | 100% |