Establishment name: Albany Science College  
Lancashire no. 09/105  
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Award granted: Innovative practice  
Project title: Development of a 14-16 Construction course accessible to all Chorley pupils

Project summary

- The project was initiated by Albany Science College in order to give pupils from all Chorley Schools an opportunity to complete a 2 year Construction Course at a venue that did not involve excessive travelling and which met the needs of a growing number of 14-16 pupils.
- Albany Science College provided the venue and resources for the course having developed the support through close relationships with Runshaw College and the other Chorley schools. Runshaw College helped the School access the required funding.
- 50 pupils from four high schools were involved in the first cohort that started in September 2006, giving them an opportunity to follow a course that they would not normally easily access.
- Pupils from other schools are now used to attending Albany Science College for part of their education and this has led to increased collaboration between Chorley schools. Many of the pupils who are on the course were identified as vulnerable in terms of staying at school or achieving reasonable results and this course has contributed to their improved commitment, attendance, enjoyment, success and achievement.

Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?

- Raising the aspirations of pupils who require a more vocational approach to their learning through the provision of a course in Construction and, in providing such a programme, begin to meet local training needs.

Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:

- Be healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

What were you hoping to achieve?

- Provide a relevant vocational course that would enthuse and excite pupils who were struggling with aspects of the traditional curriculum.
• Provide a collaborative approach to the needs of Chorley pupils which involved pupils getting used to attending more than one school to receive education.
• To begin to address the ‘Travel and Learn’ and the Vocational Pathways agendas in a way that was relevant to needs of Chorley pupils and schools.
• To begin to develop facilities and courses which could be easily accessed by all Chorley pupils and reduce the transport costs for schools.
• To provide an opportunity for pupils to follow a vocational pathway into FE and increase staying on rates.

How did you identify the need for this practice?

• Through Chorley Heads’ meetings, Curriculum Deputies’ meetings and Chorley and South Ribble Travel to Learn meetings, the need was apparent that we had to develop courses at a local level to encourage pupils to access them.
• In meetings with Runshaw College, who had also identified the growing gap between need and provision, we identified potential courses that would begin to alleviate the problem and begin to address the reluctance of some pupils to travel to other training providers.
• Runshaw College and Albany Science College identified a particular need to make specific provision for all Chorley pupils in the area of Construction with the intention of investigating the possibility of introducing Motor Vehicle Courses and Engineering in the following years.
• Responding to local Construction Sector Skills shortage

What did you do?

• Met with Pat Jefferson to discuss our proposal and to get support from the authority.
• Met with Mike Sheehan (Principal) and John Morrison (Vice Principal) from Runshaw College to discuss the project and establish need through the 14-19 phase.
• Developed a Business Plan with aid of Runshaw College’s Business Manager.
• Negotiated with the Chorley Heads and Deputies to seek support and establish approximate numbers of pupils who would take part.
• Established through discussions with Ian Philips (14-19 LEA Advisor) how the project would fit into the Chorley & South Ribble ‘Travel to Learn’ initiative.
• Obtained funding through the LSC, AMEC and the Opportunities Fund to start the initiative.
• Appointed Construction Course Tutor.
• Refurbished one room, followed later by adjacent room.
• Built outdoor facility for the brickwork element of the course.
• Established a timetable for the four schools taking part.
• Produced paperwork, agreements and contracts for pupils and schools.
• Established communication system for day to day running of the course for other schools.
• Meetings held to discuss progress and future projects.
• Negotiated with the Chorley & South Ribble LEAD Group on how our project
would fit into the overall ‘Travel to Learn’ Initiative and access IFP funding.

**Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?**

- Headteacher – Mr D Higgs (member of the Chorley and South Ribble LEAD Group)
- Mr G Hewitt – Deputy Headteacher (link between ASC and other Chorley Schools)
- A McKinnell (ASC Business Manager)
- T Hollick (Chair of Governors in the early stages of the Project’s development)
- I Woods (SLT Link to Vocational Education at ASC)
- W Wearden (Coordinator of Vocational Subjects at ASC)
- Y Washington (Vocational Support Tutor at ASC)
- M. Parkinson (Construction Tutor)
- M Sheehan (Principal at Runshaw College)
- J Morrison (Vice Principal at Runshaw College)
- Chorley School Heads and Deputies
- Chorley & South Ribble LEAD Group
- Lindsay Neville (Runshaw Coordinator for Vocational Education)
- John Barnes (Chair of Corley and South Ribble Curriculum Group).

**How has the practice been modified or improved during development?**

- Intention of changing the qualification to a BTEC to enhance the status of the course and provide more points for the pupils.
- Change of Construction Tutor.
- Production of support materials for schools to use to support their pupils.
- Appointment of vocational specialist TA.

**What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?**

- More motivated pupils who enthuse about the course and are proud of their achievements.
- Better attendance by these pupils.
- Increased self-esteem and belief.
- Quality work produced by these pupils.

**What are the next stages in the development process?**

- Commitment to extend project to include Motor Vehicles next year.
- Plans to refurbish a classroom and provide external area to enable a Motor Vehicle course to be taught.
- Plans to get the only other Chorley school not taking part to become involved.
- Further plans to introduce a Level 2 course in Engineering to be available to all Chorley schools in 2008/09.

**What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?**

- This model has enabled a group of schools to develop easily accessible
vocational courses for pupils by taking away the need for pupils to travel great distances to access relevant courses.

- As it is run on existing school premises, the project reduces costs and redirects funding to the practical resources required to run the courses.
- The project has required significant collaboration between local schools which in turn has led to other projects being developed.

At a recent meeting of Chorley Deputy Heads, it was unanimous that the project was having an extremely positive effect on the pupils who were taking part. The administrative burden had also been removed from the participating schools and concentrated centrally at Albany Science College and Runshaw College. The ease of transport enabled other areas of the curriculum at each school to be free from disruption, which made the project popular with other subject leaders.