

**WELSH BACCALAUREATE  
QUALIFICATION**

**INTERMEDIATE DIPLOMA**

**HOW DID THE THIRD EXAMINATION  
(SUMMER 2005) CYCLE GO?**

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## 1. A LITTLE REVISION: WHAT IS THE WELSH BACCALAUREATE?

### What is it?

The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) is an over-arching qualification that recognises student achievement at levels 2 and 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NVQ).

The programme of study is made up of a Core and Options. The Core has four components:

- Key skills
- Wales, Europe and the World (WEW)
- Work-related Education (WRE)
- Personal and Social Education (PSE).

The Options are the subjects and courses such as GCSE, VGCSE, NVQ and BTEC that make up a student's complete programme of study.

In addition, all students work with a personal tutor who provides overall support and guidance.

### What do students have to do to achieve the WBQ?

Students who complete all parts of the WBQ (Core and Options) at the required standard are awarded the Welsh Baccalaureate Diploma at either level 2 (Intermediate) or level 3 (Advanced). The assessment requirements for the Intermediate Award include both the Core and the Options, and are:

Core	Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three key skills at level 2, one of which must be from the first three key skills together with the other key skills at level 1.</li> <li>• Records/reports of Working with Employers, Team Enterprise Activity, and Community Participation.</li> <li>• Individual Investigation at level 2.</li> <li>• Evidence of work on the Language Module and other core curriculum requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>Four grades A*-C at GCSE or NVQ Level 2 or BTEC First at pass level or equivalent.</p>

This report gives information about how this over-arching qualification performed in its second 'live' year and, in the process, provides teachers with advice on those parts of the programme that were successful and those that require attention.

## 2. HOW MANY STUDENTS SAT THE WBQ AND HOW DID THEY DO?

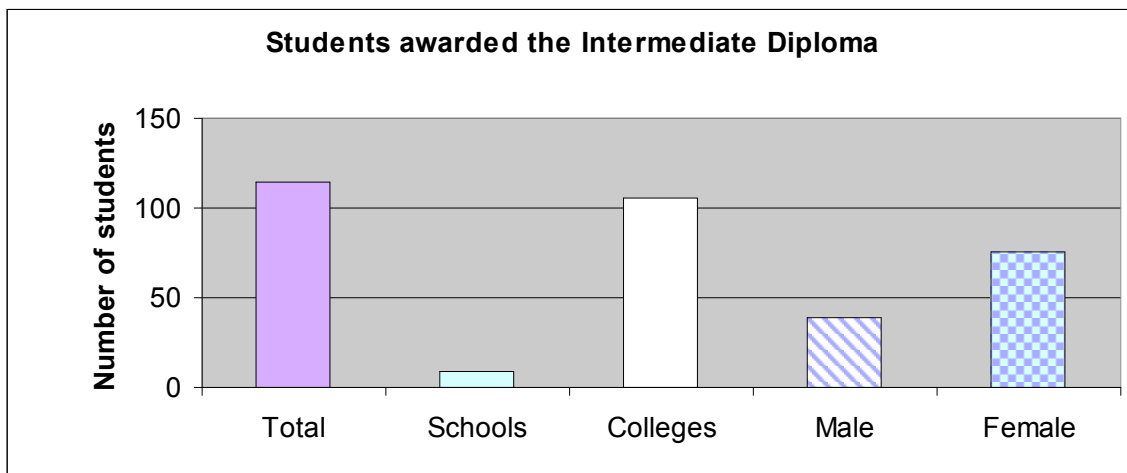
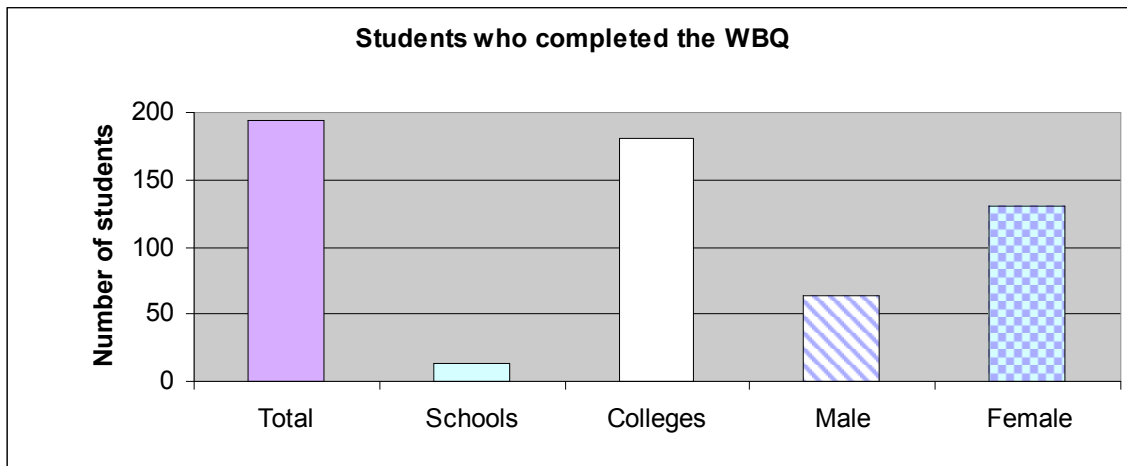
### The Entry

#### A few facts about what was achieved

- The total “entry” for the Welsh Baccaulaureate Intermediate Diploma in 2005 was 404 candidates, of whom 194 (48%) completed the programme. The “entry” figure represents the number of candidates aiming for an Intermediate Baccaulaureate award this year, as indicated by schools and colleges at February 2005.
- 115 candidates have been awarded the Welsh Baccaulaureate Intermediate Diploma, being 59.3% of the 194 who completed the programme.
- A further 9 candidates (in addition to the above 115 candidates) have been awarded the Welsh Baccaulaureate Intermediate Core Certificate; this in itself represents very significant achievement by these candidates, including all 6 Key Skills qualifications. However, at this stage, they still need to fulfil the Options requirement (i.e. GCSE, Vocational GCSE, Intermediate GNVQ, NVQ level 2, or equivalent) in order to achieve the full Diploma. In total, 124 candidates have achieved the Core Certificate, being 64% of the 194 who completed the programme.
- The remaining 70 candidates who completed the Welsh Baccaulaureate Intermediate Diploma programme but did not achieve the Core Certificate or the Diploma have further elements to fulfil within the full range of Key Skills requirements (33 candidates), or within some combination of Key Skills / Options / Individual Investigation (37 candidates). These 70 students have achieved an average of 4 Key Skills qualifications each.
- The completion rate for the Intermediate Diploma has improved very considerably since the previous summer series award in August 2004. At that time, 102 students completed, being 30.6% of the overall entry of 333; this has increased to 48% for 2005. Also, in 2004, only 14 students achieved the Intermediate Diploma, being 13.7% of those completing; this has increased to 59.3% this year. This demonstrates that schools and colleges participating in the project are gaining experience in delivering the overall programme in order to improve the management of the learning experience.
- It should be noted that there is also an award every March, which is an opportunity for students who have not achieved the full Intermediate award the previous summer to achieve their diploma. 31 students achieved the Intermediate Diploma in March 2005.

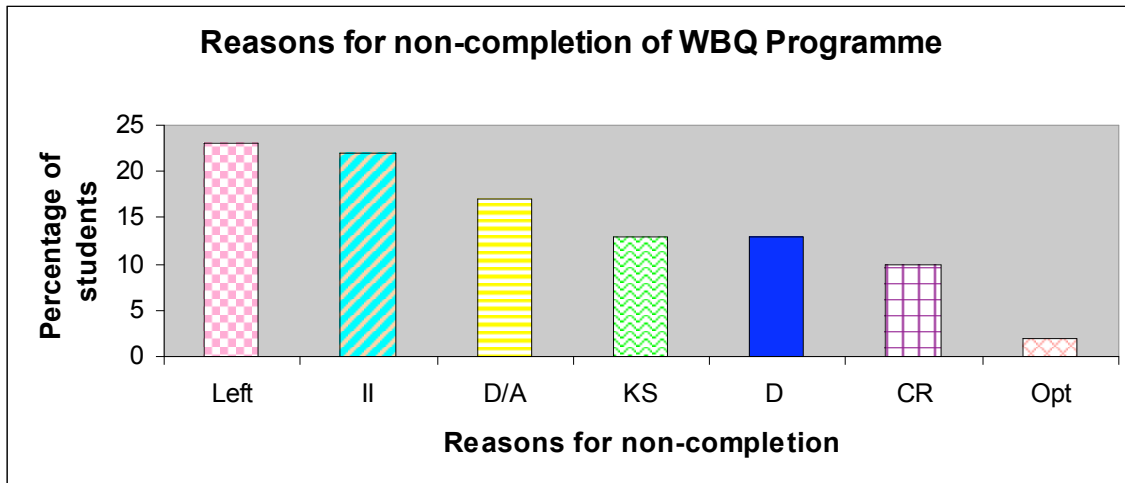
### Did the students come from schools or colleges?

The students entered for the Intermediate Diploma in 2005 were based in 10 pilot centres (8 colleges and 2 schools). The aggregate distribution by school/college and by gender for students completing the programme, and for those awarded the Diploma, are as follows:



### Why did some students not complete the WBQ Programme?

As part of the evaluation of the pilot programme, the centres were surveyed on the 210 students in the overall 'entry' of 404 who did not complete the programme in order to obtain an understanding of their reasons for non-completion. The most prominent reasons for non-completion relate to students leaving their school or college:



- Key:
- Left = Left School or College
  - II = Non Completion of Individual Investigation
  - D/A = Deferred or non-completion due to absenteeism
  - KS = Non-completion of Key Skills
  - D = Qualification too demanding
  - CR = Non-completion of Core Curriculum Requirements
  - Opt = Concentrated on Options

Students leaving their school or college before the end of their educational programme, often as a result of obtaining employment, appears to be a feature of this cohort of students, the majority of whom were college-based and doing one-year vocational courses.

### 3. WHAT WERE THE PRIOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE STUDENTS WHO SAT THE WBQ?

Information was obtained about the prior achievement of students at Key Stage 3 and GCSE, or equivalent, for those who completed the WBQ Intermediate programme in 2005 and for those who did not. The data itself was analysed in terms of:

- total entry for each group;
- males and females;
- schools and colleges.

#### **Students who completed the WBQ programme**

These numbered 194 students, of which 63 were male and 131 were female. 14 followed the WBQ programme in schools and 180 in colleges.

The first set of data obtained was that relating to prior achievement and showed the scores of all the students in Mathematics, English and Science at Key Stage 3 and in GCSE or equivalent courses. As stated above, this data is presented in terms of the total entry, male and female, school and college.

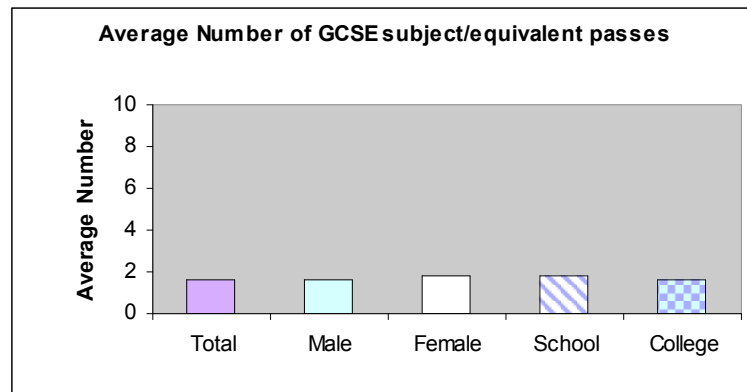
## Key Stage 3

### Mean Key Stage 3 Scores

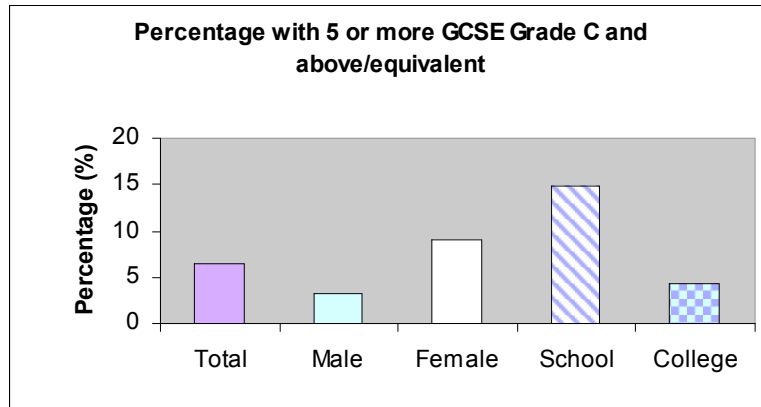
Maths					English					Science				
Total	Male	Female	Sch	Coll	Total	Male	Female	Sch	Coll	Total	Male	Female	Sch	Coll
4.3	4.7	4.3	4.3	4.4	3.8	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.6	3.8	4.4	4.3

## GCSE/Equivalent

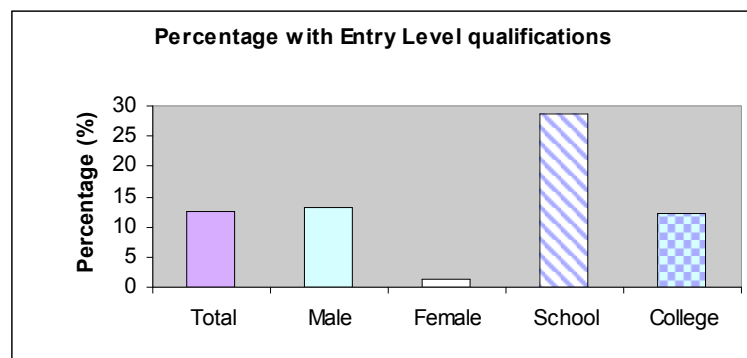
### Average Number of GCSE subject/equivalent passes



### Percentage with 5 or more GCSE Grade C and above/equivalent



### Percentage with Entry Level qualifications



## Students who did not complete the WBQ programme

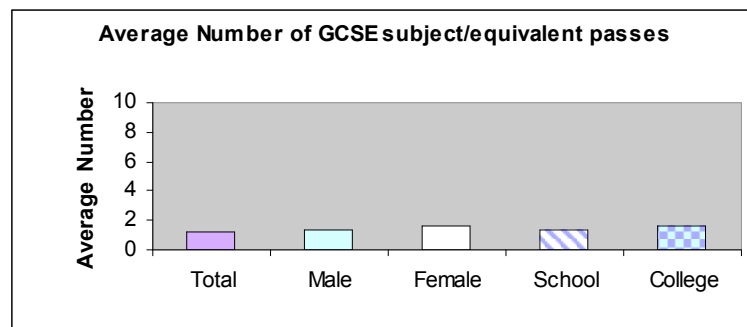
The data relating to this group of 210 students is as follows:

Mean Key Stage 3 Scores

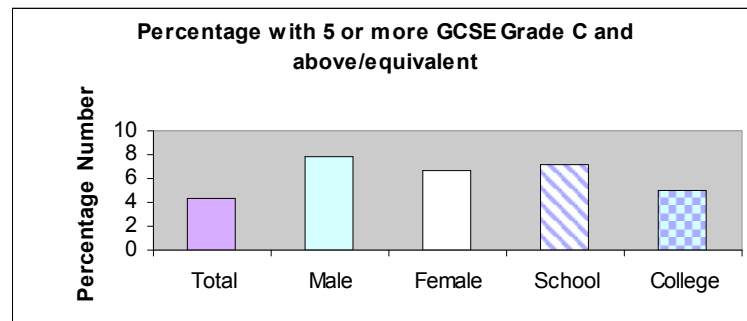
Maths					English					Science				
Total	Male	Female	Sch	Coll	Total	Male	Female	Sch	Coll	Total	Male	Female	Sch	Coll
4.4	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.6	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.3

## GCSE/Equivalent

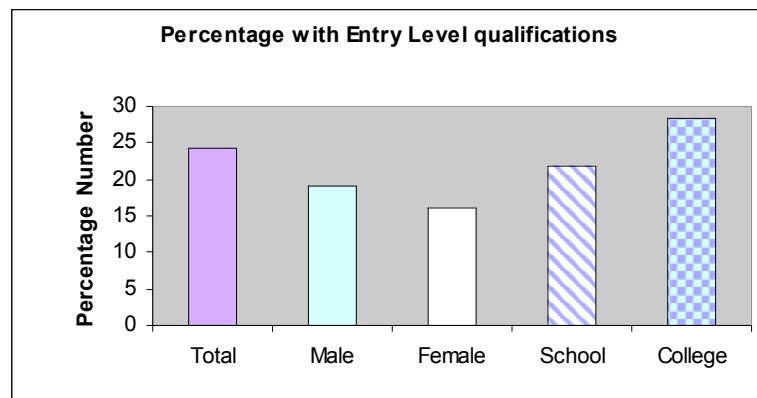
Average Number of GCSE subject/equivalent passes



Percentage with 5 or more GCSE Grade C and above/equivalent



Percentage with Entry Level qualifications

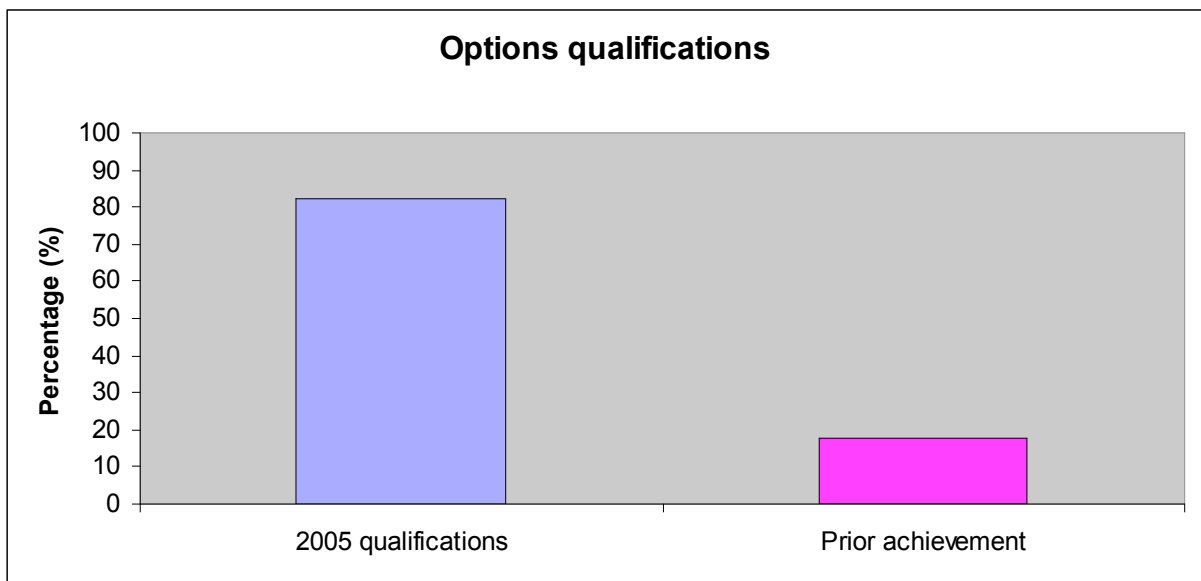


### What conclusions can be drawn from this data?

- The Key Stage 3 data suggests that the whole cohort (completers and non-completers) achieved below average (level 5) scores, but those who completed the programme did not do much better. Within this pattern there were small differences in achievement between male/female and school/college. There were no significant differences between Maths, English or Science.
- There was a marginal difference in the number of subjects passed between the completers and non-completers. However, the percentage with at least 5 GCSEs/equivalent was generally low (only 6.5% in the completing group) and showed a difference of 2.1% between the completers and the non-completers. It is significant that 12.4% of the completers and 24.4 of the non-completers had Entry level qualifications.
- It is interesting to note that both the completing and the non-completing cohort had difficulty at GCSE at Key Stage 4 and therefore might be expected to have difficulty meeting the requirements of the WBQ Intermediate Diploma. This raises the question of whether a proportion of this cohort would have been better suited to a Foundation level WBQ.

## 4. WHAT OPTIONS PROGRAMMES DID THE STUDENTS FOLLOW?

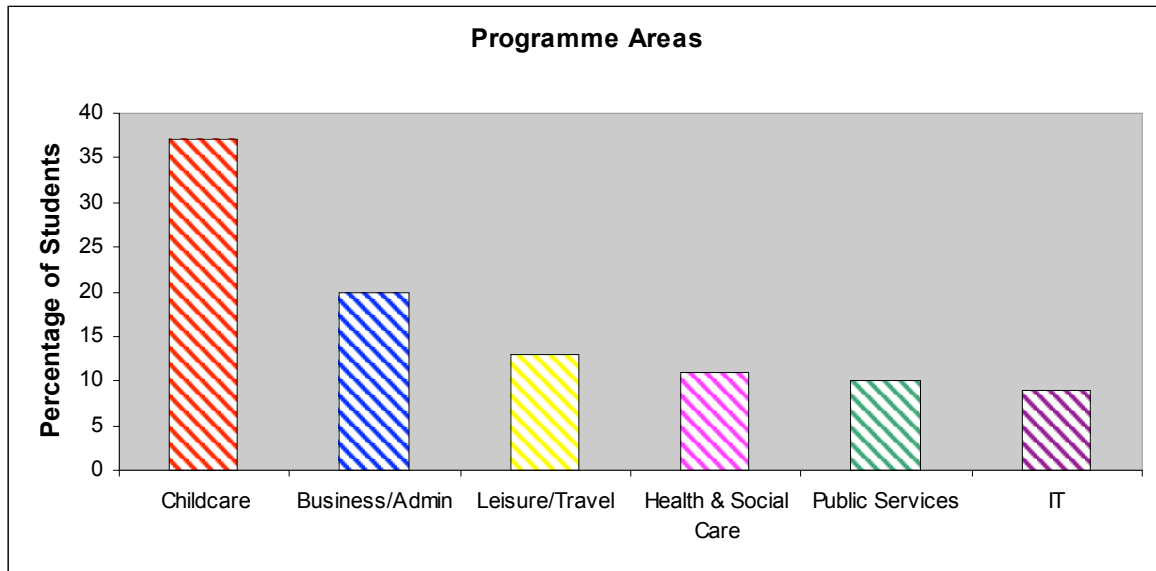
The group of students completing the Intermediate Diploma in 2005 had two sub-groups. One group which took their Options qualification this year, and the other group which had already achieved the Option requirement necessary to claim the Intermediate Diploma prior to this year and had gone on to follow further programmes.



## Courses/programmes followed (%)

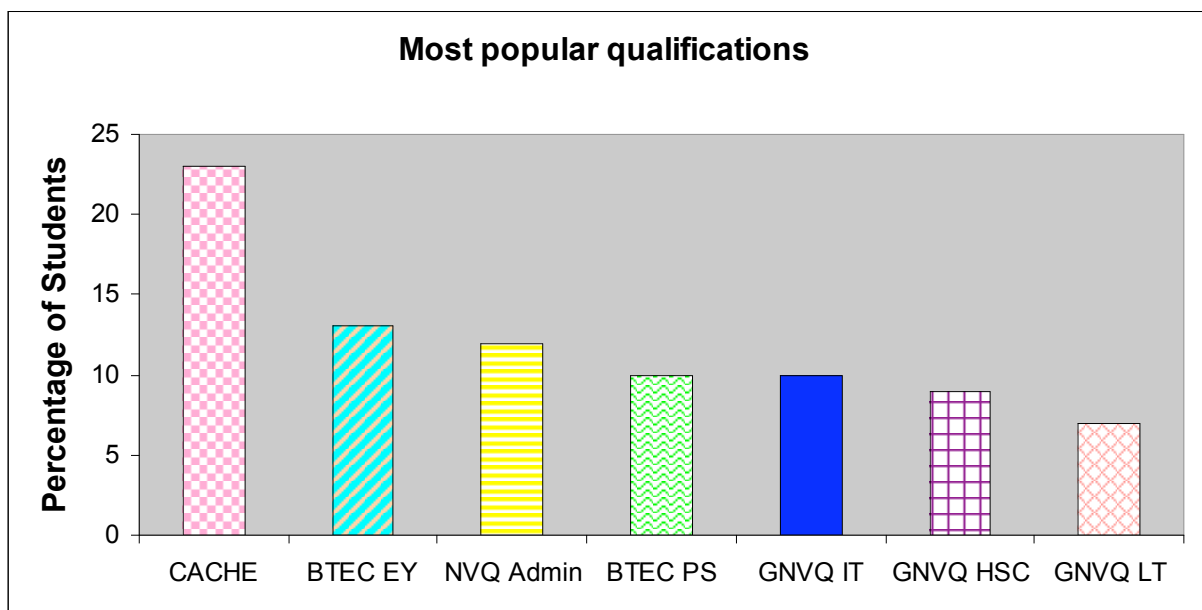
### Most popular programme areas

The 6 programme areas followed were:



### Most popular qualifications

The 7 most popular individual qualifications were:



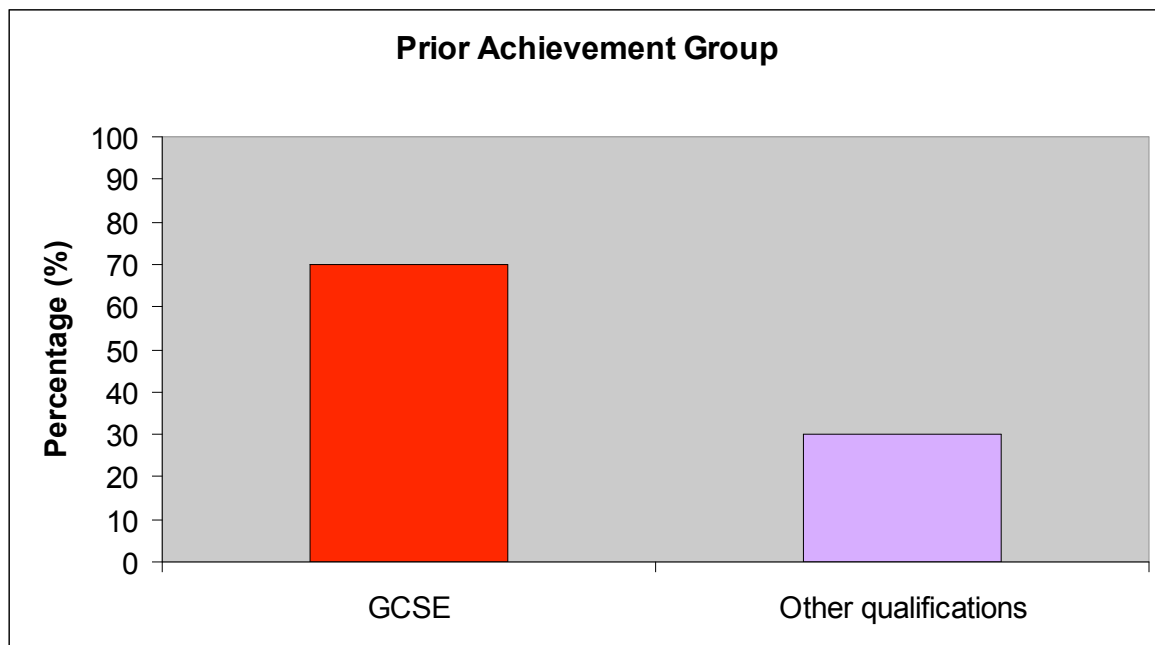
**Key:**

- CACHE - Childcare**
- BTEC EY - BTEC First Diploma in Early Years**
- NVQ Admin - NVQ Administration Level 2**
- BTEC PS - BTEC First Diploma in Public Services**
- GNVQ IT - GNVQ Intermediate in IT**
- GNVQ HSC - GNVQ Intermediate in Health and Social Care**
- GNVQ LT - GNVQ Intermediate in Leisure and Tourism**

The remaining 16% were other types of qualifications in Travel and Tourism, Business, Health and Social Care.

### **Prior achievement group (18% of total)**

Of the group which had already achieved the Option requirement necessary to claim the Intermediate Diploma, 70% had achieved at least 4 A\*-C GCSEs. The other 30% had achieved level 2 qualifications in Catering, Public Services or Leisure/Travel and Tourism.



### **Vocational Options, which are lacking in the WBQ**

The vast majority of the Intermediate students entered for the award this summer were based in colleges and it is striking that there are 6 programme areas, which dominate the Intermediate Diploma in this year's award. The programme areas which feature are the result of the policy of the colleges involved, which chose to start piloting with certain programme areas which they viewed as being most suitable for the WBQ.

Over the past year, the Project Team has been involved in work to draw into the WBQ pilot other programme areas, specifically Construction, Engineering and Land-based studies. Some colleges have plans to offer the WBQ with these courses from September, but there has been some reluctance to involve such areas because they are perceived as difficult to match to the requirements of the WBQ. Working groups in all three areas have been attempting to show how this can be done.

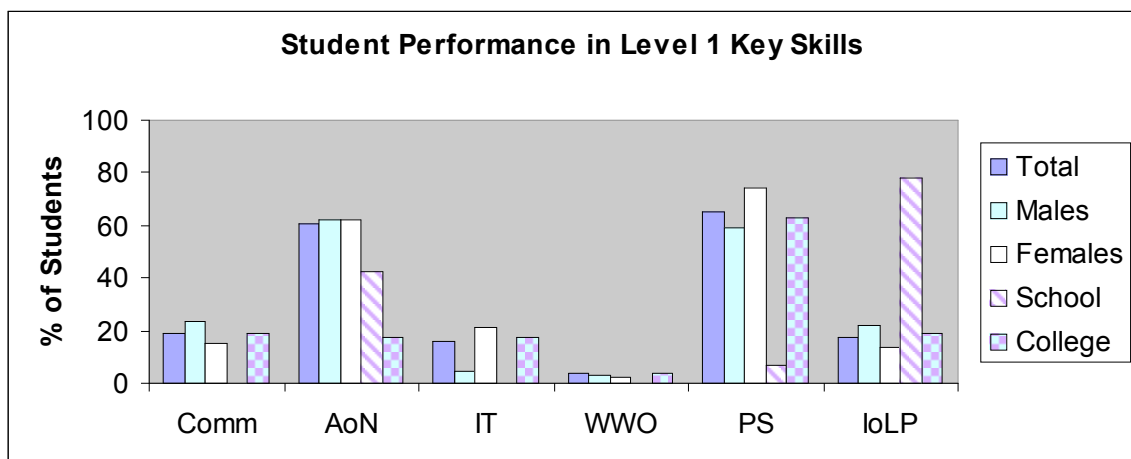
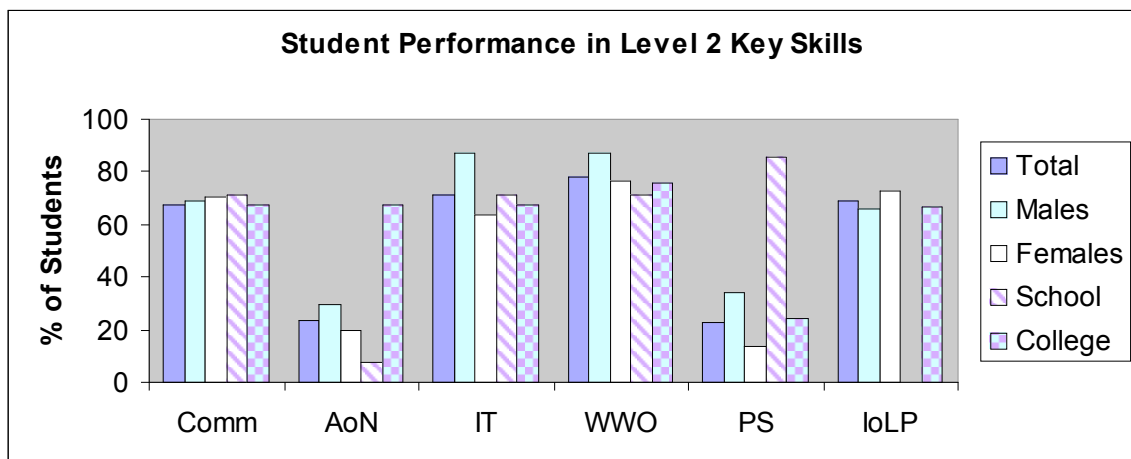
## 5. HOW DID STUDENTS DO IN THE WBQ CORE?

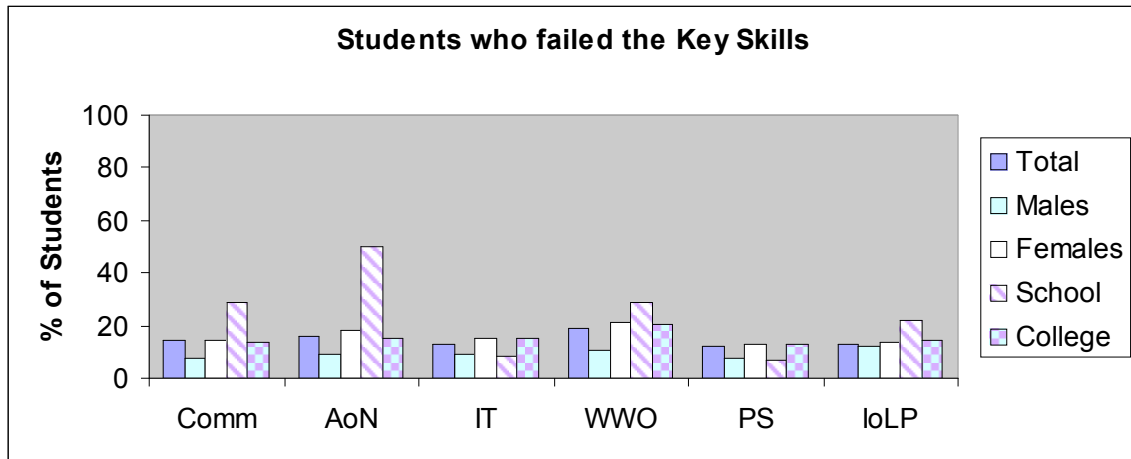
Now that we know something about the prior achievement of the 2004-05 Intermediate WBQ cohort, together with information about their programmes of study, it is time to look in some detail at how well they did in the various assessment components. So, the remaining parts of this section consider performance in the WBQ Core, and the following section, achievement in the Options. This section looks at student performance under 3 headings:

- the Key Skills;
- the Individual Investigation;
- the Diaries/Verification statements.

### KEY SKILLS

The results of student performance in the key skills part of the WBQ Core are shown in the graphs below.





The following points are highlighted by the table:

- The majority of centres and students targeted Working with Others (77.7%), IT (72.9%), Improving Own Learning and Performance (69.2%) and Communication (67.1%) at level 2.
- In comparison, achievement at level 2 in Application of Number (23.4%) and Problem Solving (22.9%) was much lower.
- Most of the students achieved the required 6 key skills, however there was a certain percentage failing in each skill (range 11.9%-18.7%).
- Significant differences emerge between males and females in Application of Number, ICT, Problem Solving and Working with Others.
- Differences between schools and colleges were more significant in Application of Number, Problem Solving and Improving Own Learning and Performance. However, it should be noted that there were only 14 students based in schools.

### **THE INDIVIDUAL INVESTIGATION**

Many students produced Individual Investigations of a high standard, with a pass rate of 90.8%. The work was interesting, varied, relevant and within the spirit of the WBQ. The choice of illustrative material was broadly suitable, manageable and appropriate to level 2.

#### **Skills and techniques**

Use of **maps and diagrams** in the best Investigations was helpful to introduce an Investigation where relevant, and gave the studies a real sense of place and/or context.

**Statistics** were included to varying degrees. In the better Investigations these were effectively integrated into the text and used in the studies and were not included as a 'bolt on' simply to satisfy the assessment criteria. Where Investigations were bare passes or fails, this element was a key determinant.

Simple **graphs** were generally introduced appropriately, and were linked to the text. They did, in a number of Investigations, enhance the studies. However, at level 2, in too many instances, there was an opportunity to introduce observation and

evaluation that was not fully developed.

Inclusion of **tabulated data** was also evident to varying degrees and enhanced the Investigations.

It was pleasing to see the inclusion of **primary data**. It enriched the work and added a valuable source of information from which to illustrate techniques, and from which to arrive at conclusions and evaluations. Several candidates had undertaken simple questionnaires but did not take the opportunity to display the results to maximum effect. This was an 'opportunity lost'. It is important to see the use of charts, graphs, diagrams etc, included as the best evidence to support this criterion.

Where candidates did fall short of a pass in the Investigation, this criterion was a significant barrier.

## Knowledge

Good use of **internet research** in the majority of Investigations.

A **good balance was generally achieved between the Welsh dimension and the 'wider dimension'**. A sense of imbalance in the weaker studies detracted from some Investigations.

**Systematic treatment of the information** was evident in an organised and planned manner from the majority of candidates at the higher level of work.

Few candidates did not fulfil this criterion. Unfortunately, in a limited number of instances, over reliance of 'lifted' information from the internet adversely affected outcomes.

## Understanding

The level of **communication** was broadly in line, acceptable and appropriate to level 2 Investigations.

**Understanding** was demonstrated to varying degrees and was obviously often a reflection of the ability of the candidates. Some were at times a little confused and this again did make them marginal in this criterion.

It was evident that the majority of candidates had tried hard, enthusiastically and had benefited from the experience.

As expected at level 2, many of the candidates were good at describing but less confident in giving **explanations** or indeed **causes and consequences** for material included.

## Evaluation

It is evident that the majority of candidates had benefited from undertaking the Investigations and had improved their **ability to form opinions and arrive at judgements**.

There was, in a significant number, a genuine **appreciation of the issues** associated with their titles.

The **conclusions** were often meaningful and **addressed the titles**, and the best ones were based on both a consideration of the information included and on **personal research** (questionnaire and personal observation). In the weaker Investigations this skill was demonstrated less well.

Some of the **conclusions were a little brief and simplistic** and for some of the weaker candidates there was an over reliance on personal comment and opinion rather than on documented information and fact included earlier in the work.

In addition to a formal conclusion there was, from some of the more able candidates, attempts at **personal reflection and evaluation** throughout the Investigations, for example after graphs, diagrams, photographs etc and this improved the quality of their work.

For those candidates who obtained a 'bare pass' or indeed 'failed' this assessment criterion, the **lack of clear evaluation** was a major determining factor.

### Some further observations on the Individual Investigation

#### Length and Organisation

As a general rule, the Investigations were appropriate in terms of length, conformed to the rubric and were appropriate to the nature of level 2 candidates. The candidates have not only benefited but have enjoyed much from undertaking this assessment and have had the opportunity to develop and extend their knowledge and understanding of the topics selected.

#### Titles

There was a wide range of original innovative and individual titles that reflected the diverse range of options the candidates were taking, but also their interest areas.

Such a range of titles is again entirely appropriate and in the spirit of the WBQ. As a general rule those titles that are hypothesis or question-based tended to be the most effective, in the sense that they naturally arrived at definite and meaningful conclusions.

The advice to students and centres is to **keep titles simple and avoid over complexity**.

## The 'Welsh Perspective' and the use of the 'Wider' scale

This was generally well undertaken. In the better Investigations it was most effectively utilised in selecting, for example, Wales and **one other scale**, rather than using multiple comparisons that often confuse candidates and take them off at tangents.

### Presentation of Information

As stated above, the Investigations showed that a wide range of sources had been used and, in the best examples, sources were not only well researched but acknowledged. Information was generally well presented. Some effective use was made of tables and graphs. Careful use of other imagery generally enhanced the Investigations and improved understanding and sense of context.

### **DIARIES/RECORDS/VERIFICATION STATEMENTS**

The evidence suggested that students had generally worked 'smarter' rather than harder.

In the best examples, students had undertaken personal research and so had enhanced their diaries or files.

Where external speakers were part of the centre's programme they not only met the criteria of the Specification, but also sparked the imagination and interest of the students

Students' commentaries on **WEW** had been undertaken. In the higher attaining students this was thorough and evaluative; in others, it was quite descriptive.

There was a good use of videos and internet sources to address the key issues of **PSE**.

There was a sense that students had enjoyed and understood the **PSE** programme, which, from this evidence, is becoming much more issue based.

**Community Participation** had been well undertaken and enjoyed by the majority of students.

The **Team Enterprise** activity was a consistently good aspect of the WBQ. This has been achieved through a range of such approaches such as Young Enterprise Schemes through to in-house projects. Not only was this work generally well documented and evaluated, but the students had obviously benefited from participation

The content of **WRE** generally, was appropriate and satisfied the criteria. In the best cases, students had gone up to and beyond the requirements of Working with an Employer.

The **Language Module** showed, perhaps, the greatest inconsistency. For some students the content and material were well above the 20 hours required, but for others, the evidence base was a little light. This was acknowledged by some Centre Coordinators during the visits and was already being addressed. It is important that there is security in judgements and that this aspect has been systematically undertaken and that there is evidence to confirm that the student has made progress. In some centres there was evidence of internal accreditation certificates awarded on successful completion of the Language Module.

**Some general points on Assessment  
(application of criteria, consistency of assessment, quality of internal moderation)**

**Application of Assessment Criteria: Investigations**

The comments were, in the vast majority of instances, broadly in line with the assessment criteria of the qualification, and there is evidence that tutors are becoming more comfortable in applying the criteria. The overall comments were also helpful in allowing the external moderators to have reassurance and confirmation in the final judgments. Where the tutor did have concerns or reservations these were not always clearly stated and this was not always helpful in arriving at final judgments.

From the visits, it was also good to have the opportunity for the tutor to refer to something if it was particularly well done or was an example of good practice. It is important that the moderators are made aware of these, in order to share good practice through INSET.

**Application of assessment criteria: diaries**

Standards of internal moderation and verification were appropriate and consistently applied at the course level but were less well applied in terms of cross centre internal verification and this does cause concern.

Generally good assessment of the WRE diary.

Community participation had been generally well assessed and comments from candidates and verifiers were evaluative and helpful.

In some centres, a tutorial record was kept on WEW, PSE and other aspects of the course, and again this was helpful in gaining a secure judgment of the centre.

Third party verifications were in place in appropriate aspects of the course. This again had been overseen by the WBQ Centre Coordinator. In a minority of centres there are issues with 'signing off work.'

Key Skills had, in the more successful centres, been appropriately delivered and developed when opportunities emerged naturally. There are, however, still too many opportunities lost.

### **Concerns**

#### **Language Module.**

More information is required on the amount of improvement and progress made by students, for example, plotting an assessment of their capability before and after the module.

#### **Internal standardisation/moderation**

More information is needed on the procedures for internal moderation or verification. This is important in order to pick up any omissions or aspects or, indeed, simple matters such as declarations or verifications.

### **Conclusions**

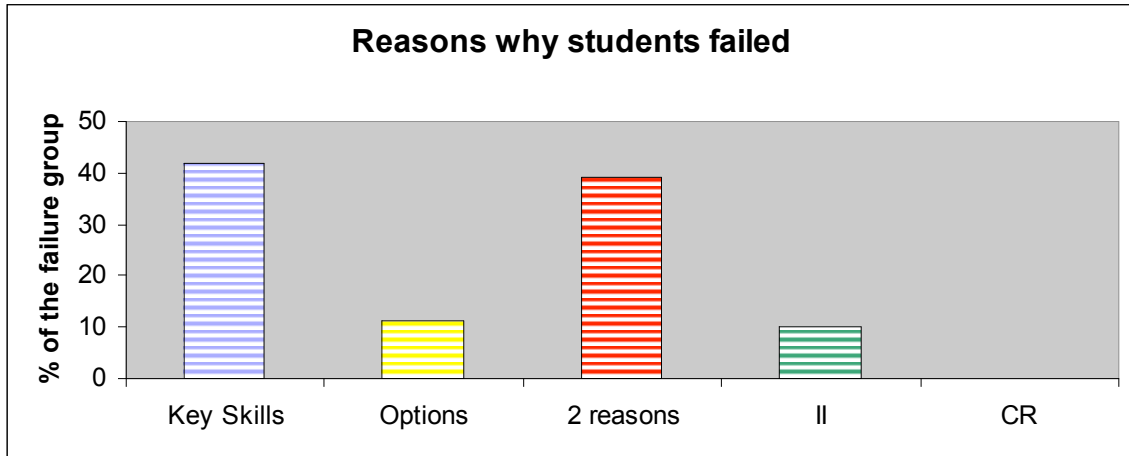
Overall, the students appear to have benefited from following the WBQ Core at level 2.

Centre coordinators are to be complimented for developing the course, for monitoring the learning experiences of the students and for delivering and evidencing the assessment criteria of the Qualification.

All moderators felt that the visits were very useful and were appreciative of the support and welcome received.

## 6. WHY DID STUDENTS FAIL?

Of those students who failed to achieve the WBQ Intermediate Diploma, the following were the 'reasons' for failure (in terms of percentage of the failure group):



- 41.7% because of lack of success in key skills.
- 11.3% because of failure in their Options.
- 10.1% because of the Individual Investigation.
- 39.2% failed for 2 or more of the reasons above.
- None because of the curriculum elements of the Core, i.e. diaries, verification statements.

## 7. SO, WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN WE DRAW FROM THE 2005 WBQ?

- **Aims and achievement:** two of the aims of the WBQ are (a) to increase students' retention rates and (b) to raise levels of achievement. Clearly, the results show contrasting levels of success. The apparent relatively low retention is a cause for concern. Students leaving their school or college before the end of their educational programme, often as a result of obtaining employment, appear to be a feature of this cohort of students, the majority of whom were college-based and doing one-year vocational courses. However, centres have provided information on the reasons why 210 named students registered on the WJEC system did not complete the WBQ programme and this is a large enough sample to provide pointers about where centres and the WBQ Project Team can concentrate their attentions in order to remedy the problem. For example, perceptions about the demands of the WBQ Core, especially the key skills and the Individual Investigation. In contrast, those completing the full programme achieved reasonable success rates with 59.3% gaining the Intermediate Diploma, whilst the success rate in achieving the key skills shows a positive outcome of the WBQ teaching-learning programme.
- **Prior achievement:** the Key Stage 3 and GCSE data suggest that this cohort had a relatively low standard of prior achievement. Nearly a quarter of the non-completing group of students had Entry level qualifications and both the completing and non-completing groups had on average, less than 2 GCSEs. These data suggest that information about prior achievement may well be of value to teachers when deciding if students are capable of following the WBQ programme at Intermediate level or might be better suited to the Foundation level.
- **Courses followed:** the majority of students followed one-year vocational programmes in colleges, although there is evidence that a few students progressed onto other courses after achieving their Options qualifications last year and then topped up their key skills to claim the award this summer. 6 programme areas dominate (Childcare, Business/Admin, Travel and Tourism, Health and Social Care, Public Services, IT) and there is clearly a need to extend WBQ provision into other areas of the college curricula. There is also a need to encourage schools to enter Intermediate candidates and to help them improve their delivery strategies, which would allow more Intermediate candidates to complete.
- **Key skills:** generally, results in the key skills were very good, particularly in the number of students achieving the required six, and in the rate of success in Working with Others, IT, Improving Own Learning and Performance and Communication; these were the key skills most frequently used at level 2. Less satisfactory was achievement evident in Application of Number and Problem Solving. There were also different patterns of achievement between

males/females and schools and colleges in some key skills. The general conclusion to be drawn from the data is that many centres and their students have achieved high standards.

- **Individual Investigations:** even though centres suggested that many of their students found the Individual Investigation difficult and was a major contributory factor in 'drop out' from the WBQ, the majority of students who completed the WBQ submitted good Individual Investigations. An area of concern appears to be the limited use made of skills of analysis and presentation, and the ability to evaluate and draw conclusions: clearly two areas where students could be given more advice. Teachers may find the examples of students' work to be circulated with this report of use in this process.
- **Diaries/records/verification statements:** work submitted showed that most students had completed effective records of their work, whilst Community Participation, Team Enterprise and Working with an Employer appeared to generate both enthusiasm and work of a high standard among students.
- **Language Module:** this was the weakest part of the WBQ Core programme. The main areas of concern are (a) the amount of time spent on the Module, and (b) the lack of evidence of progress made between the beginning and end of the course. The WBQ Project Team will be producing examples of how these two problem areas can be addressed.
- **Why did students fail?** a significant contributory factor to 'failure' was the key skills, especially Working with Others, Application of Number and, to a lesser extent Communication, although some centres achieved success with these. A number of centres found difficulty in adjusting to the administrative demands of the WBQ in relation to the key skills, for example, delaying entry until late in the academic year – earlier submission of portfolios allows resubmission to key skills awarding bodies. Nevertheless, a pleasing number of students achieved the required key skills package. On the other hand, the anticipated difficulties with the Individual Investigation and the diaries/verification statements did not materialise.
- **What is the overall conclusion?** These are an encouraging set of results with reasonable achievement of the Intermediate Diploma (59.3%) in the completing group of students. Of the remaining students in the completing group, 11% achieved the Core Certificate and 89% partially achieved, and this was recognised in the Key Skills and Options qualifications which they gained, reinforcing the fact that the WBQ model safeguards the students.