



LINCOLNSHIRE & RUTLAND

**EVALUATION OF THE  
LINCOLNSHIRE CONNEXIONS PILOT**

**REPORT 4: EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS**

Jim Robson

*Centre for*  
**CGS**  
*Guidance Studies*

April 2001

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## PREFACE

The work of the project could not have been achieved without the help and support of the staff from the following schools. I am greatly indebted to Martin Taylor, Thomas Cowley High School, Donington, Lincolnshire; Kerry Greenwood, The Castle Hill Community School, Stamford, Lincolnshire; Phil Cupit, Belton Lane Community Primary School, Grantham, Lincolnshire for their continuous efforts and willingness to work with the pilot to test out new ideas and approaches. I would also like to thank Joanna Vince, Lincolnshire Careers & Guidance Services Ltd; Helen Peacock, Lincolnshire Careers & Guidance Services Ltd; Sarah Tomlinson, Lincolnshire Careers & Guidance Services Ltd for their contributions to the project.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to staff from Lincolnshire Careers & Guidance Services Ltd and all the young people who have participated in the 11-Up project.

Jim Robson  
Project Team Leader

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the findings from the '11-Up' extension project. This project was selected as a ConneXions pilot, as experiences of the 'parent' project had been positive and the pilot gave the opportunity to extend existing learning and develop additional approaches. The notion of transferring information about potential 'at risk' students between the primary and secondary phase is a simple one. However, when undertaken effectively, it can assist in the provision of focussed support at an earlier stage, as well as ease the transition between phases.

*Section 1* gives the background to both the original project and the pilot extension activity. It details the rationale, aims and objectives and the proposed wider geographical coverage to be included within the pilot.

*Section 2* examines the methodology of both the pilot and the original project and details the additional factors that were to become part of the ConneXions pilot. These included a focus on a primary school with high levels of challenging students and the introduction of the 'Make it Real' game national pilot. Attempts were also made to involve a school in Rutland [due to be covered by the new ConneXions company from April 2001]

*Section 3* details the findings from the project and points up the future role for a Personal Adviser, in facilitating links and communications between phases for the benefit of students and institutions alike. It also highlights the problems that occurred due to the timing of the project and then goes on to discuss the benefits of effective student tracking.

*Section 4* outlines the key lessons, which include the positive attitude of the involved institutions, the benefits of focussing support from an earlier stage, the value of using the 'Make it Real' game and the potential improvement to the transition process due to consulting students.

*Section 5* gives recommendations for dissemination and continuation of the work as well as suggesting a role for ConneXions within the primary phase.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This project was intended to extend the work of the existing "11-Up" Project already operating in four clusters across Lincolnshire. (See Appendix 1 - Project Report)
- 1.2 The aim of the "11-Up" Project is to refocus the role of the Careers Adviser to consider strategies for the early identification of "at risk" students at Key Stage (KS) 2 and explore ways of addressing these issues using existing school processes, Careers Education & Guidance (CEG) and ongoing support and advice in KS3. In order to achieve this, there needs to be an effective exchange of information from the primary phase of education, coupled with monitoring individual student's performance and behaviour. The project seeks to use the traditional skills of the Careers Adviser to facilitate the range of activity needed to ensure the successful transition of student into KS3 and beyond.
- 1.3 The original project established four clusters based on secondary schools and their primary feeder schools. As a result clusters were established based on Ancaster School in Lincoln, St Guthlacs School in Crowland, John Spendluffe School in Alford and Middlefield School in Gainsborough. The new 'extension' clusters were based around Cowley School at Donnington, Castlehills School in Gainborough, Belton Lane Junior School in Grantham and a school in Rutland to be nominated by Leicestershire Careers & Guidance Services Ltd.
- 1.4 The selection of the additional schools was based on their self-referral following the receipt of marketing information relating to the Connexions Pilot in Lincolnshire.
- 1.5 The aim of the project was to:

*'Increase our potential to identify and address the needs of 'at risk' clients at an early stage in the learning process and to increase the potential of their participation and achievements'. (Pilot Project Development Plan, 2000)*

Project milestones:

- Establish a multi-agency project team
- Involve 4 new school clusters in the work
- Identify and apply methods to identify "at risk" students in primary schools
- Extend the work of "11-Up" into Y8 of the original project
- Refine tools used to identify need
- Explore a number of curriculum interventions for "at risk" clients
- Monitor and evaluate the activity

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 The delivery of the project was planned to follow that of the original "11-Up" initiative which had already worked effectively in four clusters across Lincolnshire.

- 2.2 The purpose of the "11-Up" Project was to work with primary and secondary schools to identify those students who are "at risk" in Y6. Information about these students was transferred via a Key Stage Data Transfer document, completed by primary staff and passed to the appropriate secondary school. Once identified, existing school processes and systems were accessed to support the student. The Careers Adviser would facilitate continued liaison with the primary school and give additional support through curriculum interventions. The views of students about their transition would be sought and used to support change within the secondary school.
- 2.3 Through this work those students who are "at risk" would be identified at an earlier stage and supported across the whole of their school career with more time to appropriately challenge any disaffected behaviour. It was anticipated that a similar approach in additional schools would be equally successful.
- 2.4 The extension project included the following changes:
- The work with students would start in Y7, not Y6 as in the original project. This was a direct result of the timing of the project, with schools being included from September and October. This meant that the preparatory work in the primary sector could not take place before transition. It was expected that primary schools would be consulted 'retrospectively' following transition and "at risk" students in Y7 identified using existing "11Up" Project procedures and documentation (Appendix 3).
  - In one case, a primary school was to be used as the central point rather than a secondary and facilitated by a Youth Worker rather than a Careers Adviser.
  - Finally a school from a different careers service area, Rutland, was to be involved.

With the added focus on curriculum inputs the extension to "11-Up" was significant.

- 2.5 In extending the work of "11-Up" in this way, it was anticipated that additional learning could be gained to further promote the early identification of "at risk" students. Additional numbers of students would be exposed to this type of work and significantly, other organisations could contribute to the project. It was also important to establish curriculum inputs and initiatives in order to further support students.
- 2.6 In Belton Lane Junior School in Grantham we were engaging with a school with significantly high levels of challenging students. The local Youth Worker was approached to facilitate the work and members of school staff including the Headteacher were briefed regarding the nature of the project. In addition, the Education Welfare Officer attached to the school became part of the team as did EWS colleagues in other clusters. A link was established with the secondary school and the school became part of the 'Make It Real' national pilot.
- 2.7 The 'Make it Real Game' was a key part of the work as it introduced curriculum materials similar to that of the 'Real Game' programme into KS2. (See Appendix 4 – brief description of 'Real Game' activities in Lincolnshire) Elements of the programme include careers work, motivation and self-awareness. The introduction of this work intends to prepare the students for transition; so that when more focussed activity in the summer term commences, students will be better prepared. Additionally we introduced the 'Opening Doors' curriculum pack into the school for use in KS2.
- 2.8 Contact was made with Leicestershire Careers and Guidance Services Ltd., to identify an appropriate school in Rutland.

- 2.9 The secondary schools participating in the project were briefed and key members of staff identified. All attended a planning session involving the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and staff from LC&GS Ltd. where documentation was agreed, the involvement of feeder primary schools discussed and a list of key tasks identified. All clusters were asked to agree roles, responsibilities and complete an action plan. (Appendix 5)
- 2.10 Staff from the secondary schools attended training provided by LC&GS Ltd. staff on the delivery of the 'Real Game' curriculum programme, which we regarded as a fundamental curriculum input for KS3.
- 2.11 Two specific areas for evaluation were agreed:
- to explore the establishment of an agreed process for the transfer of data from primary to secondary schools
  - to explore the dissemination of good practice to other schools and staff.

### **3 FINDINGS**

- 3.1 Each secondary school produced an action plan of activities, which had been worked through over the past previous two terms. In real terms this amounts to fourteen weeks of possible activity. In that time they worked with partner primary schools to establish the sharing of information and agree the protocol for the sharing of this information (Appendix 6) and explored Y7 to identify which students were potentially "at risk".

The method used to identify these students was simple yet effective. The crucial factor was that of existing information held on students by the school. The learning from the existing "11-Up" Project indicated the following areas of information were often identified and was essential to the identification of "at risk" status.

The data itself reveals valuable yet often disturbing information. Typically those students identified as "at risk" show multiple contributing factors. On most occasions this results in bad behaviour and impaired achievement. Issues raised in the documents include:

- low ability
  - exclusion
  - poor key skills
  - poor home conditions (i.e. diet, living conditions)
  - the existing involvement of a wide range of support agencies
  - self harming tendencies
  - history of violence or abuse
  - low self esteem
- 3.2 These students will be tracked, but at this stage no students are withdrawn from classes and all processes are applied to class sized groups. Care was taken at all stages not to label students, although identification and support were encouraged in the same measure.

- 3.3 It is easy to see how a Personal Adviser could facilitate this process, by working cross phase identifying "at risk" students, tracking them through KS3 and facilitating the input of a multi-agency team to meet their individual needs. This is a strong and effective model of operation, but is currently outside of the Connexions Service age range and therefore a commitment will need to be made by Connexions Lincolnshire & Rutland Limited to continue to support the work of "11-Up".
- 3.4 All schools involved are delivering or planning to deliver 'Real Game' or 'Make It Real Game' curriculum materials. A case study of the effect of 'The Real Game' in a secondary school is attached (Appendix 7). Further evaluation of the 'Make It Real Game' in primary schools will be available on completion of the national pilot in May 2001.
- 3.5 The original "11-Up" project is a project about transition from KS2 to KS3. There had been significant success in this approach but the timing of the Connexions Pilot meant that work with the 'extension' schools could not take place until October. Due to the busy nature of the autumn term, schools were slow to identify key members of staff to lead and undertake the activities required. However, the secondary schools have recognised the potential benefits of the initiative and entered into the project with enthusiasm. The active involvement of the primary phase will take effect from next (Summer) term and only after then will real impact on the targeted students be measurable.
- 3.6 Better liaison with the LEA Special Needs Service as well as Social Services has also allowed us to obtain data regarding special needs requirements and identify those students who are in care. These key groups will continue to be tracked and supported.
- 3.7 The primary school involved - Belton Lane Junior School - was also slow to become involved in the work. Initially very keen, the Headteacher was concerned about the impact on school staff, added administration and the issues of data protection. Additionally, the Area Youth Worker who was to lead the cluster activities was unable to be involved and ultimately dropped out. The schools EWO took over as facilitator and the project for this school eventually became live in December.
- 3.8 The main reason for these delays was due to the timing of the project. The value of working with the students in Y6 prior to transition is significant and schools recognise that it can lead to extensive benefits for both students and institutions. Having lost that element of the process, trying to work with junior schools retrospectively was next to impossible and lacked impact. The involved secondary schools identified partner primary schools to work with and plans are in place to implement the whole process from May 2001, in line with the original project. To try to change the timing within the extension phase proved to be ineffective from both secondary and primary perspectives, even though the value of this work is inescapable.
- 3.9 The link with Leicestershire Careers and Guidance Services eventually petered out, as they were unable to identify either schools or staff to enter into the project. This fact was finally evident in mid-January when Leicestershire Career & Guidance Services cancelled the last in a number of arrangements to involve Rutland.
- 3.10 The role of other organisations in the project opened up opportunities to widen the base of involvement. Initially, EWS were able to nominate two members of staff to join the project team. Their understanding of where the project could support their work was extremely useful and will continue to be so.

Unfortunately, they were not attached to the schools in the project and other EWOs came into the team later. However, the unfortunate timing of the project meant that the contribution of these latter members has, so far, been limited.

- 3.11 To assist the tracking of this group the LC&GS Ltd. Management Information system, ASPIRE, will be utilised and the first student records for Y7 and Y8 students are being created. This will form the basis of the future monitoring process.
- 3.12 Y7 students completed personal questionnaires regarding their views on transition through the "About Me in Y7" questionnaire (Appendix 8). This information will be fed back to schools following close analysis of the findings early next term.
- 3.13 In the secondary schools a group of students has been identified as "at risk" in Y7 and each school is planning to explore the current Y6 group next term with facilitator support. This proposed activity demonstrates their commitment to the overall process.

#### *Process*

- 3.14 All three schools indicated the problems of a transition based project starting so late in the day i.e. October. This caused a number of extremely lengthy delays in bringing the work of the project together. The timing of the project gave no urgency to the work being undertaken by schools. As a result, when compared to those schools in the original "11-Up" Project, progress was slow.

The reasoning of the teachers involved is understandable, as from an early stage they formed the view that this work is best suited to the summer term. The school plans (see Appendix 5) changed the timings of the project to suit the needs of the school. Where stress was laid on looking back to primary school information, the schools actually looked forward to the next cohort and plans are in place to run the full "11-Up" process next term.

However, benefit has been gained from profiling the current Y7 group and valuable information has been obtained from the personal questionnaires completed. During a structured feedback session with Thomas Cowley School (see Appendix 9) the school revealed that a group of 12 "at risk" Y7 students have been identified and are already being tracked by the school.

#### *Dissemination*

- 3.15 Interest has already been expressed from a range of other organisation i.e. Emotional Behavioural Support Services, Social Services, Youth Service and EWS as a result of both the original "11-Up" project and this extension.

Within schools there has also been the opportunity to involve a range of staff in the process:

- SENCo
- Head of Y7
- SMT
- Y7 tutors
- Primary/secondary liaison staff

In the 2 secondary schools, there are 15 members of staff involved along with primary feeder school staff from 20 schools. Joint activities include identifying and completing relevant paperwork, organising liaison meetings, working with students and developing induction processes.

The amount of informal dissemination so far among staff, even though the full weight of the project is yet to be exerted, indicates the value they place on this project.

#### **4. KEY LESSONS**

- 4.1 The first lesson is that schools want to be involved in this work. All schools, both secondary and primary, see the potential and value of the early identification of "at risk" students. Additionally, once identified the liaison between the schools should continue and form the basis of tailored individual learning plans for students.
- 4.2 Tracking students through KS3 allows the opportunity to address individual "at risk" student's needs effectively.
- 4.3 The timing of the work is vital to success. The work must start in the final term of Y6 or earlier. This allows time for primary and secondary schools to co-ordinate their responses to transition. The transfer of key data can be achieved and initial discussions can take place regarding individual students.
- 4.4 Student views on transition can be captured and used by the secondary school to plan possible changes and amendments to transition preparations.
- 4.5 The use of curriculum materials in KS2 such as the 'Make It Real Game' offers considerable benefits in terms of the preparation for transition. Where it can link to the 'Real Game' programme in KS3 it has significant potential.
- 4.6 The work leads to an increased focus of resources and staff awareness on these students. Schools can utilise existing schools processes in order to support students as well as introduce new techniques and programmes.
- 4.7 Careers Advisers/ Personal Advisers are well placed to facilitate and drive forward this work. The role of other professionals can be integrated and delivered under "11-Up" processes.
- 4.8 Students who are potentially "at risk" can be identified early and then supported. This has been achieved in all "11-Up" schools. In fact work with primary schools suggests that some "at risk" students can be identified much earlier. The early identification and support of "at risk" students enables the opportunity to, in some cases, reduce the chance of students becoming "at risk".

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 That the work of "11-Up" under the Connexions Pilot is continued next term in order to chart the success of the full process in pilot schools and its impact on individual pupils.
- 5.2 The work of the "11-Up" project is disseminated to all schools in Lincolnshire as a model for consideration.
- 5.3 Discussions take place with LEA representatives to ensure the benefits of early interventions are understood and their active support obtained.
- 5.4 Connexions Lincolnshire and Rutland commit to extending this work.
- 5.5 That the policy of Connexions to work with students 13 to 19 be reconsidered to allow key identification of "at risk" students in KS2/3.
- 5.6 Where "11-Up" work is undertaken then the model and timings of the original model should always be applied.

**APPENDIX 1**

**11-UP DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
JUNE 2000**

A copy of the '11-Up Development Project' End of year Project Report (June 2000) is available from:-

Jim Robson  
Operations Manager (East)  
Lincolnshire Careers & Guidance Services  
30 Roman Bank  
Skegness  
PE25 2AL

Telephone: 01754 762595