

Education and Training Inspectorate

# An Evaluation of Extended Schools

July 2010

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## **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- inform the Department of Education's (DE) intention to revise the Circular and to provide guidance on Extended Schools (ES);
- identify indicators of effective practice for ES which reflect the improvements evident since the findings of earlier Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) reports; and
- identify illustrative examples of good practice.

## **2. METHOD**

2.1 The findings of this survey are based on evidence of effective practice from schools identified by District Inspectors and Education and Library Board (ELB) personnel for this purpose. Visits were conducted in 20 schools including seven primary schools, two nursery schools, one special school and ten post-primary schools. (Appendix 3) In addition, further evidence was derived from the inspection programme in the first half of 2010.

2.2 During the schools visits:

- a range of documentation was inspected, including School Development Plans (SDPs), action plans, performance data, monitoring and evaluation forms from parents, pupils, non-teaching and teaching staff, and from outside agencies;
- annual reports both within schools and online were analysed;
- interviews were conducted with Principals, teachers, ES coordinators, support staff, parents, pupils and, in a few instances, with members of Boards of Governors and representatives of external agencies;
- interviews took place in participating schools within cluster groups;
- some activities including outreach support, numeracy and reading sessions were inspected; and
- discussions also took place with stakeholders from across the education service, including officers of the ELBs.

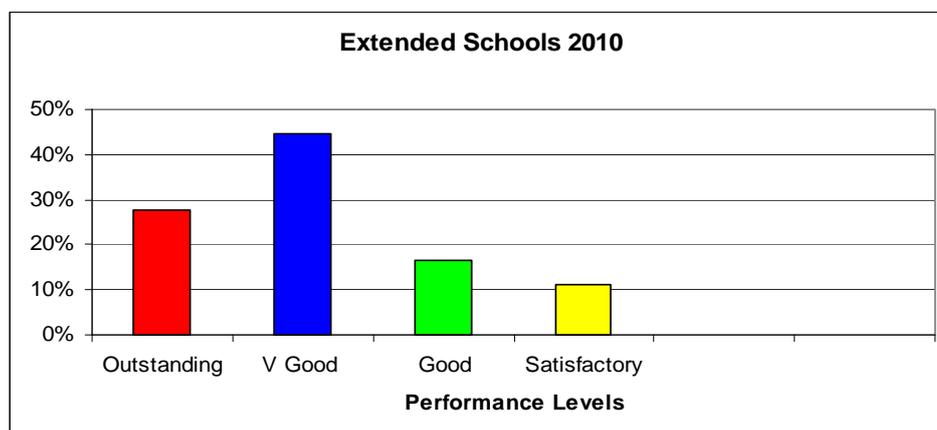
## **3. SUMMARY OF ISSUES FROM EARLIER INSPECTIONS**

3.1 The first inspection report in November 2006 indicated that ES was in its very early days. Subsequently, in 2008-09, the Inspectorate reported (Appendix 1) that there was a widening range of programmes, targeted more closely than previously on the specific high level outcomes, with better collaboration and improved consultation and planning evident amongst the stakeholders. The quality of the majority of activities inspected was very good or better. With respect to areas for improvement, the Inspectorate reported that only in a significant minority of schools were action plans effectively integrated with whole-school improvement planning. It was recommended that more attention needed to be given to the key aims of ES, namely: raising standards and promoting the specific high level outcomes.

While the monitoring and evaluation of the provision was recognised as improving, it was recommended that schools needed to make a more systematic, rigorous assessment of the learning outcomes.

#### 4. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FROM 2010

4.1 Based upon the evidence gathered for this evaluation; the strengths reported in 2009 remain valid and there is, since then, evidence of significant further improvement.



**Figure 1: Performance levels in schools visited specifically for this survey.**

4.2 In almost 90% of cases (Figure 1), where ES are serving disadvantaged communities effectively (ie performance levels are good or better), significant improvements are evident in the educational outcomes and the personal and social well-being of pupils. Extended Schools activities are frequently improving the lives of parents and helping them in re-engage with education following their own, often poor, experiences and perceptions of schools.

4.3 While the schools involved in the survey are already heavily committed to and active in addressing disadvantage and in removing barriers to learning, the resources from ES have enabled them to be more flexible, creative and effective in enhancing their provision and in raising achievement. The schools have improved in their ability to demonstrate confidently improvements in the pupils' learning.

4.4 In the examples of outstanding practice observed, ES is most successful in transforming the life chances of individual pupils, thus providing good value for money.

4.5 The indicators of effective practice in the following table characterise the improvements and strengths which are most evident.

4.6 Even in the best practice, there are remaining needs for improvement:

- while funding for ES has continued, the Department of Education needs to communicate this clearly in order to resolve the uncertainty reported by schools, which inhibits them from planning programmes with confidence;

- where there is good practice in recording and analysing both quantitative and qualitative evidence this practice needs to be disseminated more widely by ELBs; and
- there is a need to reduce the bureaucracy of ES to ensure a clear focus on the strategic planning and delivery of programmes and the evaluation of the outcomes for learners.

## 5. INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE WITH EXTENDED SCHOOLS

5.1 In Appendix 2, there are lengthier case-studies which illustrate a range of particularly effective and outstanding practice inspected during visits to schools which have engaged well with the key elements of the programme. The table below which summarises the characteristics of Extended Schools reflects the structure of the Inspectorate's publication, 'Together Towards Improvement'.

5.2 Based on inspection evidence in 2010 and 2008-09 the following are key characteristics of effective (and less effective) practice in Extended Schools.

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

<i>The leadership and management of Extended Schools in raising achievement and supporting learners is most effective where:</i>	<i>For Example (while the illustrations are real, they are not attributed)</i>
<p><b>Strategic Leadership</b></p> <p>There is a clear vision for ES.</p>	<p><i>The strategic vision of the cluster is to build bridges into the community and work with the families through the employment of family support workers, shared across the schools in the cluster.</i></p>
<p>The leadership and support of the Principal is crucial.</p>	<p><i>The Principal, ES and the Literacy co-ordinator work effectively as a team.</i></p> <p><i>A strong feature of the ES provision is the considerable amount of time and commitment from the Principal who co-ordinates the ES programmes. The work is well documented, monitoring and evaluation is of a very high standard; communication and sensitivity and discretion are important elements in ensuring success.</i></p>
<p>The SMT has a clear understanding of how ES leads to improvement, rather than seeing it as an initiative to provide extra-curricular activities.</p>	<p><i>ES is integral to the SDP and linked to the whole-school aims. The associated action plans are detailed and focused, with success criteria, outcomes and clear strategies for monitoring and evaluation signposted.</i></p>

	<p><i>In many schools, the ES co-ordinator is a member of the senior leadership/management team and leads a steering committee (at times, across the school cluster) and provides strategic leadership and clear direction in achieving high quality outcomes through ES for those most in need of additional support.</i></p> <p><i>The Principal of a post-primary school reports that Extended Schools has helped to bring about school improvement. The planning for ES is an integral part of the school development plan and, instead of seeing it as another funded initiative, many of the initial programmes started under ES are now funded and continued directly out of school funds because of how SMT have monitored and evaluated the return from these programmes and their contribution to school improvement. They have proven to be sustainable assets to the school's provision.</i></p>
<p>There is a collective responsibility within the school for ES.</p>	<p><i>There are regular updates for staff on the progress of ES and a range of staff are involved in the ES programmes. This includes sharing of expertise in order to deliver a worthwhile service for the pupils and the community.</i></p> <p><i>The ES co-ordinator links with the literacy, numeracy and SEN co-ordinators in the school to evaluate the impact of ES programmes on the attainment of pupils.</i></p> <p><i>One school provides 24 after-school clubs; another runs 30 such clubs. Each club is provided by subject teachers from the majority of subject departments. In one school, all departments will provide a club by 2010-11; in another school, teachers are proposing more enhancement activities than can be supported.</i></p>
<p><b>In the less effective practice</b>, there is a lack of ownership of ES by the whole staff; the co-ordination and delivery remains solely in the hands of a few willing people. At times, the lack of effective and regular whole-school communication is a barrier to success.</p>	
<p><b>Action to Promote Improvement</b></p>	
<p>ES activities are clearly embedded into SDPs and associated action plans.</p>	<p><i>Subject departments identify, through their action plans, how the activity in the after-school club contributes to raising achievement in the subject. In the best practice, for almost all clubs, there is at least one quantitative measure, as well as a range of qualitative measures which includes building self-esteem, motivation and effective teacher/pupil relationships.</i></p>

<p>Schools are able to demonstrate success through more robust and systematic evidence.</p>	<p><i>An evaluation of the Cluster's work in 2008-9 was conducted. The conclusions were very positive as far as qualitative evidence was concerned, but the report recognised that some of the programmes aimed at improving learning were difficult to evaluate. It was decided to conduct 'baseline' tests so that the progress of the learner could be measured and outcomes monitored over time.</i></p>
<p>Evidence from self-evaluation informs planning to ensure more targeted support for individual pupils.</p>	<p><i>Through the tracking of individual pupils, the support for pupils provided through ES has become more focused on literacy and numeracy. Individual pupils entering year 8, as well as pupils targeted as underachievers in years 9 and 10, are offered support in the KS3 literacy and numeracy after-school clubs. In addition, the reading partnership programme takes place during the breakfast club and the school reports improvement in the reading scores of all pupils who gain this support. After three years, the ES co-ordinator, in discussion with the SMT, felt that it was necessary to place greater focus on supporting pupils in KS4 through ES because of a fall in standards attained by the pupils in GCSE.</i></p> <p><i>A school uses an online survey to help pupils reflect on improvements in their literacy and numeracy and to suggest ways to develop the support further. The school reports that a high percentage of returns show that pupils are aware of the increases in their standardised scores. The pupils, however, would like further support in literacy and numeracy through ICT. This evaluation has helped to inform the planning for the support for literacy and numeracy for next year.</i></p> <p><i>Through robust self-evaluation processes the co-ordinator has refined the programmes on offer through ES to meet the diverse needs of as wide a range of pupils as possible.</i></p>

	<p><i>Following an audit of the provision after the first year of ES, the co-ordinator recognised that too great a proportion of the school's population was not involved in ES programmes. The programmes offered were broadened to promote the involvement a wider range of pupils. The ES co-ordinator is also involved in the timetabling within the school and noted that there had been a dramatic reduction in the number of pupils choosing double award science. As a result, a science club was developed to foster a greater love of science: the uptake for double award science increased as a result.</i></p>
<p>The uptake and use of the ELB-designed web-based monitoring and reporting software makes the planning, monitoring and reporting of the programmes more efficient.</p>	<p><i>A school incorporates the electronic report into the school's annual report to governors.</i></p> <p><i>The ES co-ordinator provides a simply worded questionnaire to pupils following each funded activity. The questions test all of the relevant aspects of the High Level Outcomes (HLOs) related to each activity. Later in the year level two questionnaires are provided to teachers to assess the medium-term impact of the activity against the same HLOs.</i></p>
<p><b>In the less effective practice</b>, some schools continue to find it difficult to demonstrate the link between the programmes and outcomes for children and young people. This is particularly problematic where they find it difficult to measure the outcomes quantitatively as well as qualitatively.</p> <p>There is an over-emphasis on bureaucracy, with a number of causes. These include: a lack of understanding of the processes; an over-emphasis on documentation, which diverts co-ordinators and others from a more strategic delivery of the ES programme.</p> <p>Club and ES sessions are mentioned briefly in related subject department action plans, but are not related to an explicit learning outcome and therefore their effectiveness cannot be evaluated.</p>	
<p><b>Staffing</b></p> <p>There is effective capacity building amongst staff, including the non-teaching support staff. This in turn, proves to be cost-effective, sustainable and results in heightened morale, leading staff developing their professional roles and seeking further training and qualifications.</p>	<p><i>Many of the non-teaching staff play a key role in delivering and co-ordinating programmes. In a number of schools, strategic ES expenditure is used strategically to train learning support assistants in the Reading Partnership programme. ES has resulted in staff development, career enhancement and progression for teachers in, for example: sports tutoring, refereeing, counselling skills and suicide awareness.</i></p>

	<i>In one primary school, all staff had received professional training in occupational therapy activities to assist them in supporting children who display emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school reported that the use of these activities has created a calm environment leading to greater receptiveness and a much better level of engagement with learning amongst the children. The staff development has led to greater levels of confidence and of increased empowerment for teaching and non-teaching staff.</i>
The ES co-ordinator supports and engages with the local community.	<i>A number of schools have employed a parent-liaison officer with high level skills in engaging parents and making them feel valued.</i>
Schools benefit greatly from the effective use and deployment of community based support workers and/or cluster co-ordinators who possess strong community links, local knowledge and credibility.	<i>One post-primary school has made effective links with local Youth Service and Youth Projects. This has led to the development for parents, staff and students of a range of services including parenting skills, behaviour and anger management, confidence building, voluntary work in the community, first aid, sign language, local history exploration and support for early learners.</i>
<p><b>Resourcing</b></p> <p>Schools are conscious of cost effectiveness and value for money which improves their decision-making.</p>	<p><i>Schools report that funding to engage with parents and the local community has the clear benefit of giving the school a more positive image in the community, promoting good parental role models and, in a number of examples, the work has improved family life. One school reported that in five years acts of vandalism had decreased dramatically because of vandalism as the parents and the local community are highly protective of the positive reputation of the school.</i></p> <p><i>In one school, ES funding is being used to subsidise the counsellor's 3-year diploma (NVQ Level 3); the school feels that this is a valuable investment, with very clear benefits for the school. Currently, the counsellor provides services every day at lunchtime.</i></p>
Schools use their expertise gained from managing ES to access other sources of funding to sustain programmes.	<i>Some of the more successful initiatives originally started under ES are now funded through community groups, neighbourhood renewal schemes, local and global funds or through private providers. These include: homework, arts, craft and sporting clubs; music, dance events and diversity evenings.</i>

<p>There are clear benefits to the school in improving the accommodation and physical resources through ES.</p>	<p><i>A school reports that the investment in footballs for the pupils through ES has a direct quantifiable link to the reduction in misbehaviour during breaks in the school day. In addition, the refurbished ICT room has enhanced the quality of provision for the pupils during the school day. The sixth form pupils benefit from increased access to electronic notebooks and digital cameras purchased for the community and skills developed in specialist digital video classes are used by pupils in other curricular areas.</i></p>
<p><b>In the less effective practice</b>, schools do not have a clear focus on value for money through ES and programmes continue to run with poor attendance or limited impact on pupils' achievements and standards.</p> <p>Schools report that accessing funding to pay for services is time-consuming and inefficient; leading to unacceptable delays in payment for external providers.</p>	
<p><b>Links and Partnerships</b></p> <p>Clusters are well focused with greater agreed and shared understanding of purpose and of what can be achieved.</p> <p>Clusters are generally more successful when established by the schools themselves.</p>	<p><i>Clusters disseminate ideas and practices which benefit schools through the sharing of information at the key transition stages and about involvement of social services. Furthermore, the professional debate between different management types and schools breaks down negative perceptions and has the potential for close working relationships in keeping with the philosophy of learning communities.</i></p>
<p>ELB officers provide schools with highly effective, efficacious and prompt support: offering advice; making contacts; assisting in financial matters and in supporting schools to be creative and flexible in meeting the needs of their pupils in difficult circumstances.</p>	<p><i>Collaboration within the cluster is greatly helped by the attendance of the ELB ES officer, and representatives of the community. The community representatives provide access into the community which the schools find difficult, so their inclusion at cluster meetings is crucial.</i></p>
<p>Schools are adept in liaising with external agencies and organisations to meet needs effectively and in monitoring and evaluating the value of this support for the pupils and their parents.</p>	<p><i>Many schools have done much to target younger and/or first-time parents, many of whom had a negative experience of school life. Breaking down perceived barriers to education and to educational establishments is important in preventing parents from compounding the pupils' poor experiences. Schools run, often with appropriate external support, courses in parenting skills, conducted in a relaxed, open and supportive atmosphere. To remove any negative image of 'parenting courses' the schools have been imaginative in the design, title and format of the courses.</i></p>

	<p><i>The school staff are teamed with, and trained by, the external providers; they then deliver subsequent courses themselves, with the original trainer returning to monitor the activity and produce a written report. There is further evaluation by children and by their parents and examples are provided of the impact of the programme.</i></p> <p><i>A school has gained more understanding of the work of the counselling service through ES. This has led to examples of joint parent and child counseling sessions.</i></p>
<p><b>In the less effective practice</b>, the clustering arrangements are not effective. Within a few clusters, some schools are isolated and the benefits of the arrangement for them are less discernible. In one example, the cluster was reported as being less effective because the link was set for them up by the ELB. In one instance, a school reported that the lack of agreement between and continuity in the personnel of the cluster group hindered the progress and strategic development of the cluster. Furthermore, the school's own priorities were focused on improvements at KS4 whereas, within the clustering arrangements, the aims of the primary schools had to be met.</p>	

## QUALITY OF PROVISION

<p><i>The effectiveness of ES provision in meeting the needs of the learners and the wider community and in caring for, guiding and supporting them is most effective where:</i></p>	<p><i>For Example (while the illustrations are real, they are not attributed)</i></p>
<p><b>Planning</b></p> <p>Schools demonstrate creativity and flexibility in the planning of activities and services for pupils and parents.</p>	<p><i>In one school the ES provision is now extended on some days of the week from 7.30 am to 9pm as well as weekends and holidays. For example, the school provides early morning sports activities: 'A Sunrise Soccer Programme' starts at 7.30am; the school reports that this contributes to measurably improved attendance, behaviour and educational performance and enables positive pupil-to-pupil friendships to be formed. After three years of ES activities, some 50% of the pupils and 50% of the staff (teachers and classroom assistants) have engaged in ES activities; almost all on a voluntary basis.</i></p> <p><i>In some areas of high social deprivation, some schools have focused on developing the creative skills of the pupils through providing access to music. For example, providing access to musical instruments has resulted in a higher uptake of music and, in many cases, individual and sustainable success through public performances. Schools report that this has also led to higher levels of motivation, attendance, increased self-esteem and improved academic achievement. Schools also reported that ES, in these instances, is helping to close the gap between less advantaged children and those from more affluent backgrounds.</i></p> <p><i>A primary school is sensitive in targeting and meeting needs of parents in promoting parenting skills. It offers a broad range of ES programmes to parents, including personal development courses for parents to address issues of assertiveness, emotional, health and well-being; information sessions for newcomer parents including details of local amenities, Dads and Sons/Daughters sessions, arts and crafts sessions, a 'Journey with your child' programme which explains the Northern Ireland Curriculum to parents including practical activities to support literacy and numeracy at home, and the primary movement initiative.</i></p>

<p>A 'can-do' culture has emerged in ES where schools make decisions about arranging programmes which will work.</p> <p>They are able to demonstrate creativity and independence in decision making without fear of criticism or of not adhering to restrictive working parameters.</p>	<p><i>The post-primary cluster provides hired buses which pick up the pupils after school and deliver them either to a central location, or close to home. This is a major financial outlay, but considered vital in providing for those learners who need support and who generally come from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Three of the schools represented in the cluster were able to produce class lists which recorded marks in English or mathematics before and after their pupils entered one of the ES programmes; the difference in achievement was notable in most cases.</i></p> <p><i>In planning the delivering of ES programmes, the SMT prioritised the development of a homework club which ensured that twice a week pupils could attend a structured, supervised homework club after school. This included making sure that pupils gained good access to ICT facilities. This approach was extended within the school beyond the provision funded by ES to open the school on a Saturday morning for revision sessions and to develop a structured revision programme for year 12 pupils prior to their GCSE examinations. To assist with the drive to raise standards at GCSE, the school introduced a GCSE reward system which sought to reward pupils who were showing effort with their studies at GCSE. The school reports that this was crucial in creating a culture of wanting to achieve amongst its GCSE pupils and that effort was rewarded with initiatives chosen by the pupils. For example, a group of pupils were rewarded with a plane flight.</i></p> <p><i>Some school use school hours for some of the ES activities, specifically those dealing with children's welfare and support for aspects of their day-to-day learning. The freedom to timetable services/activities where they most suit the school and pupils was felt to be a great advantage.</i></p>
<p>Schools are targeting support, which delivers clear and discernible outcomes to meet the needs of individual pupils and discontinuing those which do not provide acceptable outcomes for the resources invested.</p>	<p><i>In a nursery and primary school cluster, individual pupils' needs are being addressed in a progressive manner through the sharing of information, advice and support and in ensuring good continuity in the type of support as the child transfers to another school.</i></p>

	<p><i>In one post-primary school, the identification of learners with most urgent needs and/or underachievers was facilitated by the contributory primary schools using tests in English and mathematics; these pupils in P4 and P5 were supported by volunteer pupils from the local post-primary school. The exchange is two-way; primary pupils come to the post-primary school, with their teachers, for practical maths sessions in which the post-primary pupils act as learning assistants.</i></p> <p><i>In one urban post-primary cluster, the IT technicians and teaching staff are alerted to prioritise pre- and post-school access to those pupils who have little or no access at home.</i></p> <p><i>In a post-primary school, there is close communication between the SENCO, the subject teachers and the ES co-ordinator to identify pupils who would most benefit from the additional help. The SENCO ensures that the relevant pupils attend the homework club and literacy or mathematics support sessions.</i></p>
<p><b>Curriculum provision</b></p> <p>The ES provision supports specific aspects of the curriculum clearly.</p>	<p><i>In a number of schools, several of the after-school clubs have introduced provision for GCSE qualifications in, for example English, art, photography, technology and design and engineering. The success of some clubs is also measurable in terms of significant improvement in the uptake numbers of related subjects.</i></p>
<p>Schools plan for a breadth of experiences offered through ES.</p>	<p><i>In a number of schools, ES activities have extended and supplemented formal teaching through, for example, biology and geography field studies, drama residentials, Irish-language residentials, music theory classes and language conversation classes in, for example, Italian. A broadening of competitive sports has been facilitated by the hire of sports halls and community centres.</i></p>
<p><b>Care, guidance and support</b></p> <p>The strong links between the ES programmes and the pastoral care systems within schools ensure that the needs of individual pupils are being addressed in an holistic manner.</p>	<p><i>A post-primary school's breakfast club has resulted in an increase in punctuality for the boys; through active involvement in football and table tennis, the boys are more settled in coming to registration, there is a reduction in fights before school between the pupils and there are no longer any complaints from local shopkeepers about the misbehavior of the pupils before coming to school. The breakfast club contributes to the development of the boys' personal and social skills through opportunities for greater social interaction with pupils from</i></p>

*different year groups. The skills of taking turns, learning from each other and learning to manage frustration in an appropriate manner are also developed. Furthermore, the breakfast club ensures that the boys get a healthier breakfast in the morning which impinges on their learning. The SMT report that supervision of duties by staff is now enjoyable because the pupils are more engaged in worthwhile activities during breaks in the school day.*

*The year 8 induction programmes ensure that each pupil is provided with a year 11 mentor to help with the settling-in process. This in turn helps to develop a sense of responsibility and the personal and social skills of the KS4 pupils.*

*In seeking to bring about a reduction in the suspensions within the school, an audit by the school revealed some drug abuse. Through ES, the school was able to conduct drug awareness sessions and link more closely with the PSNI in helping to overcome drug addiction as a major barrier to learning. In addition the school linked with two other post-primary schools and the local YMCA to form a Pupil Support Programme. The project was established in response to an identified need for a suitable centre to cater for pupils at risk of disengagement and to provide support in literacy and numeracy, in order to re-engage these marginalised young people in mainstream education. The school targeted those young people who most required this support. Furthermore the school targeted pupils who were in need of additional support because of their background and provided them with access to a programme with the Youth Trust.*

*In a number of schools visited, ES has enabled Counselling Drop-In Sessions to be provided for parents through day-time, lunch-time and evening sessions: this is of particular value where such a service is not commonly available or is under pressure. Additional to this counselling, there is often Suicide Awareness training where there is a clear local need and concern.*

Improved communication between teachers, parents and external agencies which ensures that important information is shared between all those who support the children.

*A post-primary school reports that ES has helped with links with the primary sector. Through science workshops aimed at promoting the STEM agenda, the school has raised its profile amongst feeder primary schools. The school's enrolment has increased by approximately 100 pupils in 6 years. The science workshops also enable the year 8 pupils to develop their mentoring skills in working with primary children. Greater curricular links are also developed to ensure that the post-primary curriculum in science builds on the prior learning and attainment of the primary children entering year 8.*

**In the less effective practice**, there is a need to plan for the future in order to sustain ES programmes which can be delivered as normal good practice linked evidentially to school improvement. There are a number of programmes that could be built into normal school practice such as homework clubs, exam revision support and curriculum support for parents, which should not have to depend on ES funding but could be provided through, for example, more imaginative and flexible timetabling and staff deployment.

In the less effective practice, there is a need to ensure that partners involved in the transition between phases learn from one another in terms of pastoral and curricular information and maintain, as far as possible, a continuity of support for the most vulnerable pupils and their families.

In some schools, whilst there has been a good level of active involvement in the community, the management finds it difficult to engage the parents in a sustained way in meetings and in attendance at events.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

<p><b>The effectiveness of ES provision in securing high quality achievements and high standards is most effective where:</b></p>	<p><b>For Example (while the illustrations are real, they are not attributed)</b></p>
<p><b>Skills, attitudes and dispositions</b></p> <p>ES programmes are explicitly linked to a positive impact on children's learning.</p> <p>Schools are able to demonstrate that ES activities have a direct link to better engagement of pupils with classroom learning.</p>	<p><i>In one school, there is a very good joined-up approach to care, guidance and support for both parents and children. This has resulted in improved behaviour, greater engagement in learning, and improved personal and social skills for the children in terms of motivation, aspiration, attendance and self-confidence.</i></p> <p><i>Through ES, the pupils have acquired good dispositions, skills and attitudes to learning. For example, the development of the School Council through ES has provided pupils involved with necessary skills to function in an increasingly more democratic society. The pupils have gained skills in putting forward a manifesto, voting, representing peers on the council, keeping to a set agenda, experiencing a meeting that is chaired and reading minutes of agreed points of action.</i></p> <p><i>Pupils who offer to act as mentors gain a great deal, in terms of inter-personal skills and grow in confidence in their own learning.</i></p> <p><i>Enrichment activities organised for Year 13 include opportunities to work with physically and mentally handicapped people, whom, the pupils said, "gave us a new perspective on life". The Year 13 pupils are also given the opportunity to work with senior citizens by teaching beginners' classes in IT. They reported that they "loved it".</i></p>
<p>Improved levels of attainment related to higher levels of motivation, attendance and more positive feelings of self-worth, together with a sense of belonging to a community through involvement in ES programmes.</p>	<p><i>The pupils talk confidently with adults, they interact well with each other and they are developing an increasing sense of responsibility. They are able to learn in an atmosphere of mutual respect and the ES Co-ordinator feels that ES has been crucial in developing a sense of 'having a go' amongst the pupils.</i></p> <p><i>Some excellent examples were observed of high levels of individual achievement through</i></p>

	<p><i>acquiring new skills in drama, art, photography, outdoor activities and games. The ability to achieve recognised awards, such as the Duke of Edinburgh or President's Award, to engage in competitions, participate in internal and external plays and musical productions and to succeed in sporting events, have all resulted in high levels of personal success for many pupils. For some pupils, this has been a life-changing experience and for others a distinctive career path.</i></p> <p><i>Pupil and parental evaluations, staff comments, high and sustained attendance and extensive photographic records are evidence that the learners are very satisfied with the activities offered and are benefiting from them.</i></p>
<p>There is a sharp focus on ensuring that the programmes all contribute to, or are focused both directly and indirectly on, raising measurable attainment and performance in classrooms and at end of year examinations.</p>	<p><i>As a result of one of the GCSE booster classes in mathematics, nine pupils from fourteen increased their grade to a "C".</i></p> <p><i>As a result of the Reading Partnership Scheme, run as part of ES, a classroom assistant trained parents after school to support their children; the reading scores of all children targeted increased. Furthermore, the book borrowing scheme has increased engagement in literacy amongst the children.</i></p> <p><i>One school improved whole-school examination results matched to the three-year period of ES; improved subject results in, for example, English, history, Irish, mathematics, science, Spanish, and in technology competitions (such as the Formula One competition) for example, winning international status; in this school a number of staff and students achieved external certification, awards, prizes, esteems and recognitions.</i></p>
<p>Participants in ES programmes gain accreditation.</p>	<p><i>Suicide Awareness training, which is recognised through credit accumulation and transfer points, has been provided for fifty parents. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the President's Trust and the Prince's Trust all offer awards which motivate learners.</i></p>
<p>The children engage in their learning and attain better because their parents are being supported to assist them in their learning.</p>	<p><i>In a discussion with a group of parents, they found the benefits of the ES programmes as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• increased practical skills such as ICT, gardening and flower arranging;</i></li> <li><i>• increased self-confidence through a sense of achievement;</i></li> <li><i>• greater bonding with children through joint activities;</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>emotional support through counselling;</i></li> <li>• <i>increased awareness of how to support children's learning;</i></li> <li>• <i>an understanding of how to support linguistic phonics and how to promote comprehension and recount skills;</i></li> <li>• <i>a number of parents have progressed to classroom assistants, gaining Level 1 or 2 NVQ; and</i></li> <li>• <i>parents now see themselves as learners.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The school reports that children now value their school more because they see their parents accessing it more. Increasingly as a result of ES programmes, the parents realise that they have an important role in their child's education. The teachers report that parents are now noticing what their children don't know or find difficult; this has led to more targeted support for the children.</i></p>
<p>The pupils surmount barriers to learning.</p>	<p><i>The school has a clear focus on the need to improve outcomes by focusing on individual pupils. This involves an analysis of the biggest obstacles to learning faced by the pupils and ensures that the school, as an ES, helps to overcome these barriers. In introducing ES, the SMT completed a questionnaire with pupils. The responses from the questionnaires indicated that 28% of pupils were coming to school hungry and that the transport issues in outlying areas meant that a significant minority of pupils could not access enrichment activities after school. In addition, it revealed that too many pupils could not access proper study areas at home, including appropriate access to ICT in supporting the completion of GCSE coursework. In this school in 2004, only 14% of pupils achieved grades A*-C in five or more subjects at GCSE. This increased to 59% of pupils achieving grades A*-C in five or more subjects at GCSE in 2009. Furthermore, suspensions have declined from 52 in 2003/4 to 10 in 2008/9. The enrolment of this school has increased from 298 in 2003/4 to 396 in 2009/10.</i></p> <p><i>The after-schools club helps children to overcome barriers to learning. At the after-school club the children have the opportunity to play in a structured environment. The after-school club also helps to contribute to community regeneration in trying to support those parents returning to work.</i></p>

**In the less effective practice**, standards and attainment are not increasing for the pupils.

There is limited opportunity for the pupils to progress in the acquisition of skills or dispositions. For example, in one school there a Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award programme available, but no means of progressing to Silver or beyond.

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INSPECTORATE EXTENDED SCHOOLS SURVEY PUBLISHED MAY 2009

“The inspection of the Extended Schools Programme in 2008 found significant improvements and strengths:

- in most of the schools visited, the quality of Extended Schools is good or better, and in a majority is very good or better;
- in a majority of schools, action plans are attached to the school development plan; in a significant minority of schools integration with whole school improvement is particularly effective;
- there is a greater range of programmes, which are targeted more closely on specific high level outcomes, although a variation remains in the extent to which all five HLOs are targeted;
- there is improved consultation and planning with stakeholders; and
- almost all schools are working in a collaborative way with local agencies, and many schools are working in clusters, although the degree of creativity varies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Inspectorate identifies a number of areas for improvement which they recommend should be addressed through actions plans drawn up by the various stakeholders, as shown in the following table.

The following actions should be taken to effect improvement:

- More attention needs to be given by schools to the key aims of Extended Schools which are: raising standards, promoting social inclusion and the regeneration of communities.
- Extended Schools need to embed development planning processes as an integral part of their self-evaluation so as to provide contexts for improvement and a rationale for sustainability.
- The targeting of pupils in need to raise their standards (including adopting a longitudinal study of the impact of the programmes on the pupils over time) needs further development.
- There is a need to disseminate examples of effective clustering (in local learning communities in the case of the post-primary sector) and to improve cross-community collaboration and working with neighbourhood renewal initiatives and the Youth Service in order to reduce duplication.
- The reporting requirements need to be streamlined, a more efficient online means of data-gathering implemented and the methodology for evaluating and reporting outcomes applied more rigorously.

- The Department needs an analytical report on the developing capacity of schools to undertake monitoring and self-evaluation and to effect improvement; school reports which do not provide adequate measurable evidence of the outcomes of Extended Schools are not acceptable.
- An agreed approach to auditing the quality and effectiveness of agencies providing services and activities to the schools is required.
- The Department needs to resolve the discontinuity and uncertainty in funding to ensure that schools can plan with confidence.”

## GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

### ES OUTREACH SUPPORT

As part of its ES provision a Special School organises after-school support classes for year 3-7 children with specific learning difficulties. This takes place in the Special School, over a fourteen-week period, on one afternoon each week. The children come from the school itself and from mainstream primary schools. All are transported to the school by their parents. Currently, sixty children avail of this additional support and there is a significant waiting list.

The children are taught in small groups of around six by a specialist teacher and learning support staff. The programmes are highly differentiated to match the specific needs of the children. Lessons are varied and well designed; learning is activity based and is fun. A major focus is on literacy which is addressed through other areas of the curriculum such as art, cookery and ICT.

The Special School, working closely with the participating schools and their SENCOs, conducts assessments before and after support to measure attainment. Consultations with schools and parents are regular and information is shared.

Evidence from the parents interviewed at the time of the survey, as well as from teacher and parent evaluations, reveals a very high level of satisfaction with the provision. The reported qualitative and quantitative improvements are impressive and demonstrate improvement in reading, motivation, self-esteem, confidence, personal organisation and independence; these achievements are transferred to mainstream classes and built upon. Parents also report improvements in the home life both for them and their children, many of whom had been underachievers and reluctant school attendees.

A strong feature of the ES provision is the high level of time and commitment from the Principal of the Special School who co-ordinates all of the ES programmes. The work is well documented; monitoring and evaluation of a very high standard and communication, sensitivity and discretion are important elements in ensuring success.

#### **COMMENTS FROM PARENTS AND TEACHERS**

*It increases the social and inter-personal skills of the pupils.*

*The testing of the pupils before and after the programme provides a clear measure of success for all.*

*The level of consultation is outstanding.*

*There is a strong element of fun and enjoyment through the employment of a multi-sensory approach to learning, involving: games, listening activities, discussion, giving presentations, listening to and relating stories, practical work and through the use of attractive resources including ICT.*

*The small groups ensure good individual attention and an improved learning environment. The less formal and relaxed settings are valued by parents and the children want to come, so their attendance is extremely high.*

*There is better awareness of the different educational provisions and of what each has to offer.*

*They meet and work with children from other schools with similar or even more complex difficulties and this makes them feel more confident and self-assured in that they can do better and can improve.*

*The children are being taught by teachers who have real experiences of dealing with pupils with special needs.*

*Many of the children have not, as yet, been assessed by an educational Psychologist; this support helps to identify specific needs and begin to address them.*

## **ES AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is clear about the role of ES in raising standards within the school. Furthermore, there is a very good understanding of the school as an 'Extended School' serving its community and benefiting from strong links within the community; this is an integral part of the school's ethos. The school feels proud of what it can offer its pupils as a result of Extended Schools and the programmes have helped to build up an atmosphere of mutual respect between staff and pupils.

The ES co-ordinator is a member of the SMT and this helps to contribute to the clear focus by SMT on promoting respect for diversity and good relations through the ES programmes. For example, the school hosts Diversity evenings for the local ethnic minority groups within the area. The school reports that these evenings have led to more parents from certain ethnic minority groups choosing the school as first preference for their sons. The school benefits from its clustering arrangements with a local primary school which helps to ease the transition for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds into the school in year 8. Moreover, through the clustering arrangements, the sixth form pupils, in particular, benefit from opportunities to engage in cross-community learning activities. For example, the cluster identified the need to develop mentoring skills amongst its sixth form pupils. The pupils were trained by a professional mentoring company and exercise these practical skills with targeted year 8 pupils in the school. The post-primary schools within the cluster tracked their leavers' destinations and noted that there was a high drop-out rate of pupils attending a local university. The schools, through ES, were able to design a programme to consider the reasons for these drop-out rates and to prepare their pupils better for the demands of independent learning required at higher educational institutions.

The school is clearly aware of the ES provision contributing to community regeneration. The co-ordinator sees that, in order for the ES provision to have meaning and breadth, it has to be a community resource. As a result, the school has run an ICT club for over 55s and this has developed in 2009-10 to a Moving Image Arts class. The school also offers an art club which focuses on teaching specific skills requested by participants and conversational French classes. From evaluations of these classes, the participants report the benefits of the social interaction and the therapeutic and aesthetic values gained. In addition, there is strong evidence of the self-confidence gained by individuals as a result of completing the classes and the skills they develop.

The learning experiences, programmes and activities of ES within the school meet the needs of the learners well. The school reports that, without the ES programmes, it could not meet the pupils' learning needs as effectively; the school is now open from 7:45 to 9:30pm and ES provides safe transport for boys going home after school. Through discussions with pupils the boys were able to reflect on their experiences through ES with maturity and clarity. They provided the following examples:

### **COMMENTS FROM PUPILS**

*As a result of the peer mentoring programme, I have learned how to communicate better and to listen more carefully to what people are saying. I have greater confidence and I am much more aware of how people feel.*

*Through the ICT club, I am now an editor of the school website. This means that I know programmes such as Dreamweaver well and have developed other skills in editing. I work with lots of different pupils listening to their ideas for the school website and how it can be improved. My experiences will help me when I leave school as I want to work in the ICT industry.*

*Through the drama club, I have gained great confidence in acting. I have performed in school productions and I now am a member of a drama company outside school. Through the drama club, I have gained experience of writing as well as performing scripts.*

*I really love learning about science through the practical activities we do in the science club. We have worked with another school in developing our Eco garden and we have made exploding volcanoes. I have gained a Crest bronze award for attending the club.*

*Through attending the technology and design booster class, I want to be entered for the higher tier paper at GCSE rather than the foundation tier. This will help me in my future career.*

*Through the mathematics booster class I was able to raise my grade in GCSE mathematics from a D to a C. I learned a lot of useful techniques through completing past papers at the class and you were able to ask the teacher about any aspect you did not understand.*

### **ES AND LINKS WITH PARENTS IN AN INNER CITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The school had a clear understanding of the importance of being an ES before the initiative began. The school is positioned in an area of social deprivation; 47% of pupils are entitled to free school meals; 20% of children are newcomer children and approximately 45% of children require additional support with their learning. In this context, the school was clearly aware of the need to harness greater support from parents, external agencies and the community in order to meet the needs of the children more effectively.

The school had clear strategic leadership with regards to the development and implementation of ES. A steering group was put in place; this comprised community workers, parents, a psychologist, an EWO, and a representative from NSPCC. The school prioritised the need to address behavioural problems as a priority in order to ensure that the children could overcome these barriers to learning so that the school could focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. The school appointed a Parental Support Officer (PSO) and this person became the ES co-ordinator. The PSO met with the Principal, SENCO and school psychologist to target pupils who presented major behavioural problems and identify strategies to be put in place to address the behaviour. Parents were invited to discuss the progress of their children and the school was surprised at the level of gratitude expressed by the parents, as well as the distress felt by many parents in handling the behaviours of their children.

There is creativity, initiative and flexibility in the planning for and co-ordination of ES. For example, the school has been designated as the charity school by a major retail store. This has resulted in discounts on goods and £500 in play equipment.

The school gives high priority to promoting equality of opportunity, diversity and good relations. A group of parents and their children from the maintained school attended a residential at Corrymeela with a group of parents and their children from a local controlled PS as part of a cross-community peace and reconciliation programme. Such challenging and pioneering work looking at issues of diversity and inclusion, could only have come about as a result of the very strong links with the parents which had been developed through the ES programmes.

As a result of this work on behaviour, the links with parents and support from external agencies has become a key component of the ES provision within the school. The school reports good turnout from parents for events organised through ES. The school is an example of effective practice in linking with the parents and community for the following reasons:

- there is a strong and welcoming ethos reflected in the open access to the school for the parents;
- the planning for the ES programmes is based on flexibility and focused on responding to the needs expressed by parents;
- the parents feel valued, the Principal has a very open relationship with the parents and constantly seeks their views; and
- there is progression planned in the support to parents; for example, a number of parents have progressed to classroom assistants gaining Level 1 or 2 NVQ

## **ES AND MENTORING IN A POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The school's mentoring programme which began three years ago through ES resourcing has been subject to continuous review and evaluation and, as a consequence, has been amended and adapted to develop its effectiveness. The programme was identified as a strategy to raise levels of pupil achievement and focused on those pupils unlikely to realise their full potential. In the first year this focused on those pupils who were sitting on the GCSE grade C/D border; this was identified through a range of strategies including Yellis predictions<sup>1</sup> but, most importantly, by the teachers' knowledge of their pupils. Face-to-face consultation with the parents of the pupils identified as suitable for mentoring took place and the personalised programme received unanimous support from parents resulting in increased levels of support for the work of the school and progress of their child.

Those pupils identified as potentially benefiting from mentoring undertook a series of self-reflective exercises including identifying their own predicted GCSE grades and their current grade. The same exercise was undertaken by their subject teacher and, in many cases, there was a significant difference in the comparison of current levels of achievement. This process and the subsequent discussion between pupil and mentor formed the basis of the personal target-setting process.

In the first year of the programme, teachers were asked to self-refer or volunteer to become mentors; twenty volunteered, sacrificing at least one non-teaching period to undertake mentoring duties. However, evaluation of the first year of the programme found important shortcomings in the scheme: the process was too slow and insufficiently responsive; some

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<sup>1</sup> Yellis (Year 11 Information System) is a value-added monitoring system that provides performance indicators for students in the last two years of compulsory schooling. See: [www.cemcentre.org/yellis](http://www.cemcentre.org/yellis)

teachers did not teach their mentees and did not have enough personal knowledge of the pupil resulting in poor attendance at mentoring sessions and exacerbating pupils' poor levels of motivation. It was identified that excellent relationships between pupil and mentor were crucial. In the second year of the programme, the pupils were given a choice of mentor, although this process was subtly managed to ensure appropriate levels of deployment. Again, serious shortcomings were identified, most importantly the fact that the mentoring sessions had an overly strong focus on counselling. Subsequently, a dedicated mentor was appointed, but again the outcomes were not satisfactory, primarily due to lack of time for face-to-face communication with teachers to gain the necessary feedback regarding pupils' progress and identifying constraints or barriers to the realisation of their full potential.

Finally, the post of mentor was reviewed and a recently-retired head of department and head of pastoral care from within the school was appointed to the post. Key factors, such as the mentor's in-depth knowledge of the pupils, (58% of whom are entitled to FSM) and excellent relationships with both staff and pupils has provided a firm basis for the high level of communication required to undertake this role effectively and ensure prompt follow-up to issues arising from mentoring sessions. Initial evaluation indicates that this strategy is proving to have a positive impact on pupil progress and achievement and also on developing pupils' increasingly mature attitudes to their work, as well as raising their self-confidence and progression aspirations. As part of the evaluation and in addition to the analysis of examination results, the pupils will undertake an online survey prior to taking study leave, to record their views of the mentoring programme.

**SCHOOLS VISITED DURING THE 2010 SURVEY**

Ashfield Boys' High School, Belfast

Ballykeel Primary School, Ballymena

Beechlawn School, Hillsborough

Edmund Rice College, Glengormley

Good Shepherd Primary School, Poleglass

St Brigid's High School, Armagh

St Colmcille's Primary School and Nursery School , Downpatrick

St Dominic's High School, Belfast

St Joseph's Primary School, Slate Street, Belfast

St Mark's Primary School, Twinbrook

St Mary's High School, Newry

St Patrick's High School, Lisburn

St Patrick's Primary School, Armagh

St Paul's High School, Bessbrook

St Paul's Junior High School, Lurgan

St Peter's Primary School, Cloughreagh, Bessbrook

St Rose's High School, Belfast

St Therese's Nursery School Poleglass and St Kieran's Primary School and Nursery Cluster

Thornhill College, Londonderry

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