

Education and Training Inspectorate



An Evaluation of
EXTENDED SCHOOLS

May 2009

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	THE INSPECTORATE SURVEY	1
3.	ISSUES EMERGING FROM INTERVIEWS WITH THE EXTENDED SCHOOLS OFFICERS	2
4.	MAIN FINDINGS EMERGING FROM SCHOOL VISITS	6
5.	CONCLUSION	13
6.	RECOMMENDATIONS	14
	ANNEXES	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The concept of the Extended School is at the core of “Children and Young People Funding Package” launched by the Secretary of State in March 2006. The overall objective of the C&YP is to “reduce underachievement and improve the life chances of children and young people by enhancing their educational development and fostering their health, well-being and social inclusion through the integrated delivery of the support and services necessary to ensure that every child has the best start in life.”

1.2 The aim of the programme is to establish a network of Extended Schools across Northern Ireland supporting:

- the raising of school standards;
- fostering the health, well-being and social inclusion of children and young people; and
- the regeneration and transformation of local communities.

The vision of the programme is that schools will be “hubs of their local community, offering a range of activities before, during and beyond the traditional school day, engaging with their local community, connecting local people with local services.” (The Honourable Maria Eagle, MP, Minister with responsibility for Education in Northern Ireland. 2006.)

2. THE INSPECTORATE SURVEY

2.1 In November 2006, early in the programme, the Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) published a baseline report on the schools’ state of readiness for Extended Schools, based on visits to 65 schools conducted in October 2006. The main findings are given in Annex 2.

2.2 In October 2007, the Inspectorate audited the first year reports submitted by the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and provided feedback which indicated ways in which the annual reports should be developed to become more criteria-based and evaluative in nature.

2.3 Between June and October 2008, the Inspectorate visited a sample of 39 schools (Annex 3) involved in Extended Schools; 24 of these schools were visited originally in 2006. The purpose of the visits was to evaluate the development and impact of the programme and to investigate the emergent issues¹. The Inspectorate held discussions with principals, co-ordinators and other relevant members of staff in the schools.

2.4 At the same time, detailed interviews were conducted with ten extended schools officers deployed to Extended Schools by the five ELBs. The interview was structured, in most cases, by the draft report produced by the officers, which itself

¹ The questions structuring the school interviews are given in Annex 4

was based on monitoring reports from the schools for the financial year 2007-2008 and the end of year report which schools were expected to submit to the ELB by 23 June 2008. The statistics which follow in paragraph 3.13 are those reported in the ELB reports to the Department of Education (the Department) for 2007-2008.

3. ISSUES EMERGING FROM INTERVIEWS WITH THE EXTENDED SCHOOLS OFFICERS

ELB REPORTING

3.1 The ELB reports to the Department, which are prepared by Extended Schools officers based on returns from schools, for 2007-08 are an improvement on those produced in 2007, particularly in their analysis of the data reported to them by schools and in the identification of lessons learnt from the programme. They are explicit about the issues confronting the success of the programme. However, limitations in the extent and quality of self-evaluation conducted by schools and the general absence of quantitative data reported by schools, undermines the ability of the ELBs' Extended Schools officers to provide a measurable analysis of the benefits of the programme. In one ELB report, percentage gains have been assigned to some of the intended benefits of the programme. While this is a useful start, the methodology needs further development as the current results are insufficiently rigorous. The insufficiency of such data in ELB reports generally, limits their ability to show measurable improvement in standards arising from Extended Schools, ELB management, monitoring and support arrangements.

3.2 In all ELBs the Extended Schools officers make detailed monitoring visits to all of the schools, providing support to help them to develop the programme and to improve their planning, monitoring and self-evaluation. As a consequence, the officers are in a good position to judge the developing capability of schools to carry out target-setting, meaningful monitoring and self-evaluation. They should report systematically to the Department on the improving capability of the schools in their ELB area.

3.3 The involvement of other ELB officers in the Extended Schools programme varies from ELB to ELB, but in all cases it is under-developed. All ELBs have officers who work as link officers to support schools with a focus on management and leadership issues. While the Extended Schools officers brief the school link officers on the details of the engagement of their schools, the link officers are not actively engaged in helping the schools to make more explicit links with school improvement. Given the variation in the understanding of schools reported in paragraph 3.11, an opportunity is being missed to help schools to integrate more effectively their planning and management of the programme. A contributing factor in the issue of involvement of ELB link officers with schools described above is that the line management of the Extended School officers is not consistently part of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services in all five of the ELBs.

3.4 In each ELB there is a Project Board comprising an appropriately broad range of representatives from a number of organisations such as Playboard Northern Ireland (NI), National Children's Homes NI, Health and Social Services Boards, Investing for Health, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Department for

Employment and Learning and the Department for Social Development; all of whom are actively involved in reviewing and approving school action plans. The involvement of these agencies is reported to have improved cross-sector understanding and coordination between agencies on the ground. Evidence from the school visits indicates that there is scope to develop further cross-sector liaison.

3.5 The co-ordination support role provided initially by the Regional Training Unit (RTU) ceased in March 2008 when the officer was appointed to another post. Since then the ELBs have agreed discrete areas in which each takes the lead. Inter-ELB cooperation is generally very good and has resulted in some innovative work which has benefited, and has the potential to benefit further, the entire programme. However, there is some uneven development from ELB to ELB, in, for instance, the use of web-based recording and reporting of progress.

3.6 Collectively and individually, the ELBs provide a coherent programme of support for schools which includes community focused workshops, regular support sessions, dissemination of examples of effective practice through DVD and, in some cases, jointly-provided sector specific workshops and online support for cluster co-ordinators. Co-ordination across the ELBs is a strength which has enabled them to address effectively the issues identified by schools, and by the Inspectorate, in the baseline reports. It has the potential to ease transition when the new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) comes into operation.

FUNDING DISCONTINUITY AND THE REPORTING BURDEN

3.7 Extended Schools has experienced discontinuity and uncertainty arising from significant reductions and increases in funding from the Department over a short timescale. A reduction in the front-line funding from £10 million to £5.8 million in February 2008 necessitated a change in eligibility criteria to target the most socially disadvantaged schools using the Multiple Deprivation Measure. This meant that school allocations had to be reduced significantly. While 71 new schools entered the programme, 137 schools exited. The Education Minister continued to press the Executive and the Finance Minister for additional funding and received an increase in Extended Schools funding of £5 million in late July 2008. This meant that previous funding levels were restored and selection criteria reintroduced that identified the most deprived electoral wards. As a result, 15 new schools were brought into the programme, and 45 of the 137 previously exiting schools were reinstated.

3.8 The requirement on schools to report twice a year (in March as part of the monitoring visit process and in June for the end of the school year) with similar evidence is believed by officers to be one of reasons why a minority of schools did not submit their returns by the end of June 2008. There is an urgent need to rationalise and simplify reporting. The lead taken by one ELB to develop and pilot a web-based reporting system is a good start.

CONTINUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.9 The funding discontinuity is having an adverse effect on Extended Schools and needs to be addressed by the Department to ensure that schools can plan with confidence for 2009-10. At the same time, greater attention needs to be given by the ELBs to help the schools to focus on the aim and vision for the programme (paragraph 1.2) and to plan for sustainability.

ELB REPORTS ON SCHOOL PLANNING, MONITORING AND SELF-EVALUATION

3.10 ELB reports indicate that the quality of school planning, monitoring and self-evaluations is slowly improving. There is an improved understanding that Extended Schools is not a short-term scheme for funding 'extended activities' but the planned re-positioning of schools in order to connect people better to their community services, for the purpose of raising standards.

3.11 The understanding in schools about how to relate Extended Schools to the school's development plan (SDP) ranges from those schools which attach their Extended School plan to their SDP as an annex, to those which fully embed the activities as one of a number of methods of tackling specific educational objectives.

FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK

3.12 The Inspectorate's view of the evidence of the ELB reports is that it indicates that the ability of schools to identify the needs of individuals at risk, and small groups in need, with the explicit purpose of raising their achievement and improving their life-chances, remains a poorly-understood and under-addressed purpose of the programme. Officers report a misplaced reluctance on the part of a few school principals to be seen to be 'singling out' individual pupils. Where ELB officers have identified individual schools and clusters which have addressed this issue effectively, they have disseminated these examples of good practice.

YOUTH SERVICE

3.13 This evaluation uncovered little evidence of collaboration between Extended Schools and the Youth Service, despite the potential benefits for both.

FOCUS ON HIGH-LEVEL OUTCOMES AND ON ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

3.14 Overall the number of activities and services provided has grown by 44% since 2006-07 from 1504 to 2176 across all ELBs. The first two of the five intended high-level outcomes² (HLOs) (Being Healthy & Enjoying, Learning and Achieving) remain the most readily addressed by schools.

² 1 Being Healthy: 2 Enjoying, Learning and Achieving: 3 Living in Safety and with Stability: 4 Experiencing Economic and Environmental Well-Being: 5 Contributing Positively to Community and Society

HLO	BELB %	SEELB %	NEELB %	SELB %	WELB %
1 2007	24	33	34	36	34
1 2008	22 (-2)	29 (-4)	29 (-5)	27 (-9)	33 (-1)
2 2007	40	44	46	46	53
2 2008	39 (-1)	42 (-2)	42 (-4)	64 (+18)	51 (-2)
3 2007	9	6	1	2	3
3 2008	12 (+3)	11 (+5)	8 (+7)	1 (-1)	3 =
4 2007	7	3	6	2	3
4 2008	10 (+3)	6 (+3)	4 (-2)	2 =	3 =
5 2007	19	15	12	13	7
5 2008	17 (-2)	12 (- 3)	17 (+5)	6 (-7)	10 (+3)

Figure 1 Percentage of activities attributed to high-level outcomes

The figure shows for each ELB the percentage and the change in the percentage of activities assigned to each of the five HLOs for 2007 and 2008

3.15 The ELB officers report that the small increase in programmes which address the three remaining HLOs (Living in Safety and with Stability & Experiencing Economic and Environmental Well-Being & Contributing Positively to Community and Society) represents a slowly growing understanding of the broader nature of the programme by schools and their local communities. Instances of good practice in addressing under-represented HLOs are identified and promoted by the ELBs. A central database of examples would assist in the purpose of promoting good practice.

3.16 The convention adopted in reports to the Department of reporting each activity under the heading of only one HLO, while in practice the activities often address more than one, is resulting in an undercount. This reporting anomaly should be addressed.

3.17 The original Extended Schools document³ set out twenty four expected benefits, grouped under headings for all pupils, for the school, for families and for communities (Annex 2). However, the ELB reports make use of only three of these headings, omitting benefits “for the school”. As a result, an important aspect of the programme to bring “greater opportunities for staff for flexible working and career development” is not being recorded as a significant gain from the programme, despite the inspection evidence in paragraph 4.14 which indicates the nature of some of these gains.

SCHOOL CLUSTERS

3.18 The clustering of schools has improved significantly since the start of the programme, and schools are reported to be considerably more open to cooperation and its benefits than was evident initially. However, few of the clusters have developed sufficiently to appoint a cluster coordinator who can bring added value to

³ Pages 5&6. Extended Schools: schools, families, communities working together. DE Bangor. 2006
http://www.deni.gov.uk/extended_schools_-_revised_18-9-06.pdf

the programme. Often this is because the clusters are too small to resource an individual, even part-time. As many teaching principals have commented on the burden of managing and supporting the programme, it would be beneficial for schools, in conjunction with ELB support, to form the smaller clusters into larger groups to make the employment of a coordinator viable and to reduce the workload on principals and other school staff.

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF AGENCIES

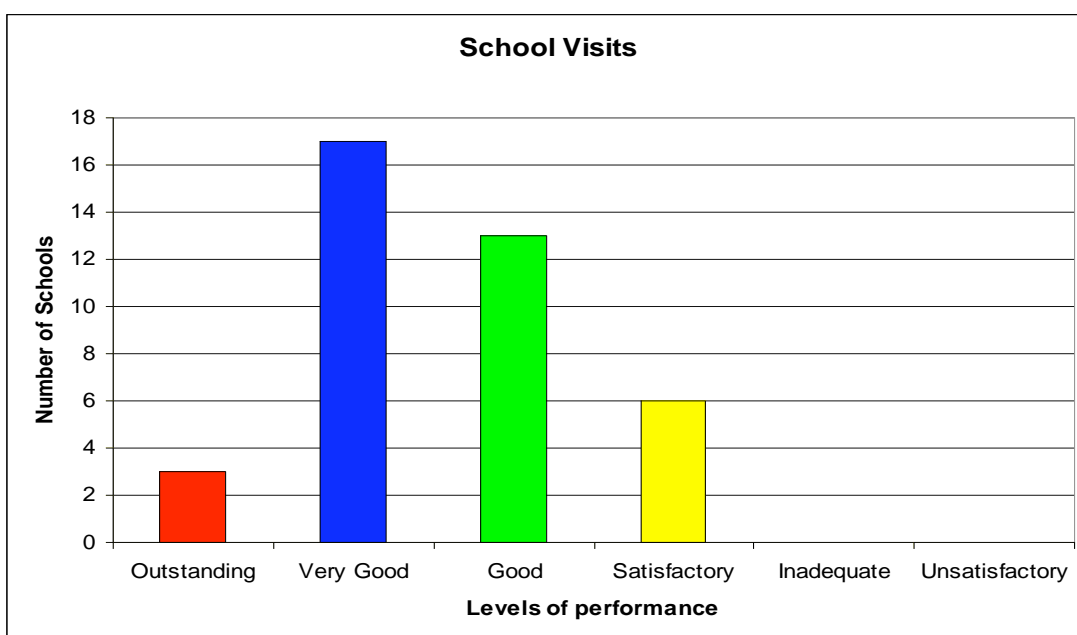
3.19 There has been a very significant growth in the use of local agencies to provide activities for Extended Schools. Officers report that schools, as customers, provide effective quality control of these agencies by ceasing to use those which prove ineffective. There is, however, no sampling mechanism to check and quality assure their provision.

4. MAIN FINDINGS EMERGING FROM SCHOOL VISITS

4.1 The findings of school inspections uses the table immediately below as a basis for the evaluative comments which follow.

almost/nearly all	- more than 90%
most	- 75%-90%
a majority	- 50%-74%
a significant minority	- 30%-49%
a minority	- 10%-29%
very few/a small number	- less than 10%

4.2 In most of the 39 schools inspected by the Inspectorate in autumn 2008, the quality of Extended Schools is good or better and in a majority of schools it is very good or better. This report contains examples of effective practice reported to inspectors.



CO-ORDINATION IN SCHOOLS

4.3 In all schools, the principal's enthusiasm and commitment is paramount in ensuring a successful programme. In most schools, a co-ordinator manages and organises the extended schools provision. In the best practice, the choice of co-ordinator is often excellent, for example an exceptional choice of a youth worker with local knowledge, already engaged in community activities. In another example, a younger member of staff, engaged in the Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH), brings drive and creativity to the work.

Three post primary schools, two controlled and one maintained clustered with a maintained school and the local YMCA formed a successful Shared Education Facility. The project was established in response to an identified need for a suitable centre to cater for pupils at risk of disengagement. The YMCA is seen as a neutral environment providing an open and welcome atmosphere for pupils of different religious backgrounds. Teaching is provided by the staff from the three schools with the aim of re-engaging marginalised young people and to maintain and build upon their levels of literacy and numeracy achieved through mainstream teaching.

4.4 There are many examples of hard working co-ordinators, both teaching and non-teaching, who devote considerable time and effort to provide an imaginative range of activities, generally in liaison with other agencies.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

4.5 Most of the schools reported significant difficulties at the start of the programme in 2006 in establishing protocols and arrangements for finance, insurance, transport, remuneration, contracts, vetting, equipment and resources, developing links in rural areas with support agencies and for ensuring the attendance of parents. In 2008, the majority of co-ordinators report that a high level of support from the ELBs' Extended Schools officers has resolved these problems and, as a result, they are better placed to offer more successful programmes. Concerns remain, however, about the lack of alignment between the academic and financial year.

CONSULTATION

4.6 In most schools, there is good consultation, with the staff, parents and pupils, in drawing up relevant programmes. Often, the level of consultation is supported with audits, surveys and cost benefit analyses, some of which have been revisited and reissued in the second year of the programme. There are some good examples

A school offering a modular GCSE science course identified pupils who were attaining well in modular examinations yet scoring poorly in the practical element. Extended Schools funding established a Science Booster Club targeted at pupils in year 12 attaining D or less in their practical work to develop their experimental techniques. The club attracted interest from a wider range of pupils. Of 22 pupils voluntarily attending 18 improved their grades. The school documented pupils who moved from grade E to B and, in addition, enhanced considerably their confidence and self-esteem. The improvements were disseminated and a number of departments are exploring how to incorporate such target setting into their teaching.

of pupils, through their School Councils, having an input to decision-making and planning.

4.7 In the most successful co-ordination, there are strong links with parents, grandparents and others in the community to provide them with skills directly and indirectly related to supporting the children's learning. A notable strength in a majority of

schools is the co-ordination of the programmes through effective teamwork. In an example of good practice, a co-ordinator briefs the school staff on a regular basis and provides updates on strengths and outcomes

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

4.8 In a majority of schools, Extended Schools action plans are linked to the school development plan; in a significant minority of schools these links focus appropriately on improving standards in areas such as attendance, motivation, behaviour, underachievement, English as an additional language (EAL), numeracy and literacy. In a minority of schools, activities have an insufficient focus on raising standards or on school improvement. The inspection evidence confirms the view expressed by ELB officers (paragraphs 3.10 and 3.11) that there is considerable variation in the effectiveness of embedding of Extended Schools into school development planning and improvement.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.9 Evidence from the schools indicates that organising, monitoring and evaluating is complex. A majority of the schools produce both qualitative and, to a lesser extent, quantitative criteria with which to evaluate the outcomes of the programme. In the short timescale, it is difficult for schools to demonstrate a link between the activities and benefits for the progress of individual pupils. Evidence further confirms the view of ELB officers that schools need to address more explicitly the three key Extended School aims of raising standards, promoting social inclusion and the regeneration of communities.

A 'Raising Aspirations' programme was targeted at year 11 pupils at risk of disengagement from learning. Through targeting setting and mentoring, linking with the University of Ulster and the Catering Industry Training Board for visits, workshops and meeting successful career role models, the programme encourages pupils to pursue home economics, by producing a career action plan through a range of pathways to apprenticeship. The pupils speak of their growing confidence and self-worth and state that they would not have considered home economics but all now aspire to go to university.

4.10 In schools where Extended Schools targets are linked effectively to the school development plan, the monitoring and evaluation is robust. In the best practice, monitoring and evaluation is built into action plans and draws upon a range of evidence including, for example, a member of senior management observing the impact of the activities to assess the level of engagement and to evaluate the sessions. Self-evaluation forms are provided to parents, pupils, staff

taking the programmes, members of the community and external agencies. There are interesting examples of tracking individual pupils and small groups of pupils over time, in aspects such as attendance, behaviour, level of uptake, and in academic progress as measured by high-stakes examination results. In a small number of schools, teachers are asked for feedback on the progress of pupils who obtain support outside the formal curriculum. Where monitoring and evaluation is systematic the schools provide clear quantitative evidence of the impact of the programme on individuals or groups of pupils based on a range of criteria. For example, in one school 25 out of 26 pupils who attended a GCSE study club gained five A*-C grades or more at GCSE; in another example the development of a pupil

learning mentor centre contributed to a reduction in pupil suspensions from 80 in 2006/7 to 31 in 2007/8 (by 60%).

4.10 Where the practice of monitoring and evaluation is less effective it is characterised by a combination of the following:

- no systematic evaluation of the programmes nor of the outcomes;
- a failure to make links between the programme and achievements;
- a very partial evidence base reliant on anecdotes;
- poor planning for progression in the development of programmes;
- targets which are not clearly defined nor measurable;
- a lack of monitoring and evaluation of activities;
- and absence of reporting to the school's Board of Governors.

4.11 The annual ELB reports should in future make clearer the links between implementation and improvement in pupils' attainment and, in turn, set higher standards for schools reporting.

A Learning Mentor Centre is a successful aspect of the pastoral development plan in one school. Its work is linked directly to the reduction of suspensions from 80 in 2006/7 to 31 in 2007/8. Such provision within the school, rather than through an external alternative educational provision, is believed to be better for the pupils and parents because pupils can enter the centre for short periods of time with a programme specifically designed to meet individual needs of the pupil with swift and effective re-integration.

4.12 Key areas for improvement emerging from inspection which need to be addressed by schools with the support of the ELBs are: where there is no specific target for addressing underachievement amongst individual pupils; activities which are 'one-off' events rather than a programme sustained over time which has the capacity to lead to improvement, and, the need for schools to move to a longitudinal analysis of the benefits of the programmes on pupils.

IMPACT ON LEARNING

4.13 Inspection visits provide evidence of a range of positive outcomes of the Extended Schools programme. In a significant minority of schools, there is clear evidence that the targeting of pupils through homework clubs or study skills classes has a positive impact on achievement. In most schools, activities have a positive impact on behaviour and attendance of the pupils who participate in various activities, such as breakfast and after-school clubs. In most schools, improved links with parents result in closer working partnerships, both in supporting the parents and in motivating the pupils. There are good examples of improved relationships between staff and pupils as a result of before-school and after-school activities. A significant minority of schools report successful outcomes for children for whom English is an additional language (EAL), in increasing esteem, language

competence and improved home-school liaison. A majority of schools report a more inclusive environment involving parents, pupils, staff and the wider community which has an enriching impact on the school's ethos. Overall, almost all schools can provide qualitative evidence of improvement for a majority of pupils in promoting confidence, self esteem, engagement and increasing motivation through their participation in Extended Schools.

BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL STAFF AND PARENTS

4.14 Other benefits identified across schools include staff development opportunities for teaching and non-teaching staff. A key feature is the enhanced personal development for non-teaching staff in taking leadership roles to co-ordinate aspects of Extended Schools. Further, opportunities to gain expertise for the pupils, parents and staff from professional bodies in areas such as counselling, parenting, speech and language, health, arts and in sports is a strong feature in those schools demonstrating best practice. In a minority of schools, parents achieve accreditation in examinations or in skills-based courses such as cookery, first aid or information and communication technology (ICT). The majority of schools provide resources and access to premises for use by parents and the wider community, for example, school libraries, ICT suites and sporting facilities. In the best practice, the schools report that these enhanced links have a positive impact on parents' engagement with their children's education. A significant minority of schools, however, report limited uptake in programmes targeted at parents.

IMPROVEMENTS SINCE 2006

4.15 In 2008, 24 of these schools originally visited in 2006 were revisited to evaluate progress over time. Reports indicate significant progress for many in the establishment of Extended Schools and an improved rigour in its management and the identification of intended outcomes. Many of the constraints apparent in 2006 have been addressed and the schools are now better placed in planning effective, targeted programmes with a higher anticipation of successful outcomes. Across these schools, certain activities are more easily managed and supervised for a wider range of pupils and have proved successful. These include support classes, additional tuition, breakfast and homework clubs, classes for parents and sporting activities.

4.16 The schools report that the following issues and concerns, identified in 2006, remain issues for them:

- the multiplicity of education 'initiatives' and the impact of these on the work and life of schools;
- the large amount of paperwork associated with the programme;
- some difficulties for rural schools in linking with external agencies to deliver programmes or recruiting staff to run programmes, such as in sport;

- problems with the funding arrangements, and in particular, the uncertainty over the funding arrangements for 2008-9; and
- the divisive effects of paying some staff for work associated with Extended Schools.

4.17 Most of the schools adopt an inclusive approach to the development of Extended Schools and therefore the outcomes benefit all pupils including pupils at risk. In the best practice, schools have monitored and evaluated the impact of the programmes on individual, targeted pupils. In the less effective practice, pupils in need were neither targeted nor their progress monitored. More attention must be given to the needs of pupils at risk.

The 'Accelerate Reader' programme addresses low motivation for reading amongst boys in KS2. It promotes reading outside class in a fun and competitive way, supporting learning across the curriculum. Books are banded, colour coded and linked to computer-adaptive tests. Pupils progress when they have successfully completed online quizzes on a number of banded books. The school reports that the pupils interest in reading has been enhanced. A 'Star' reading test provides additional assessment information to indicate progress and to guide future reading. Additional funding secured by the co-ordinator provide an outstanding space within the school grounds, incorporating an outdoor classroom, wilderness area, sensory garden, willow walk and wormery to support curricular topics and provide a 'chill-out' zone for pupils with additional needs.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

4.18 Despite reduced budgets, the special schools visited are benefiting from clustering arrangements with local mainstream schools which have resulted in more peer interaction between the pupils from both schools. The access to programmes in special schools has afforded development, especially in health and well-being, as many pupils are not able to attend activities once they are home from school. Transport difficulties remain a barrier for special schools which run activities outside normal school hours. In one case, the parents were so supportive of value of the programmes that they provided the transport for the pupils.

NURSERY SCHOOLS

4.19 Nursery schools see improved relationships at all levels, such as in the one-to-one quality time that parents spend with their children, resulting in increased bonding between parent and child. Parents gain from the pastoral connection to the nursery school, are more confident about coming to events and speaking with teachers which, in turn, raises the self-esteem of the pupils. For example, the use of 'story sacks' (books) enhances both language skills and social skills. In some schools, better use is made of the outdoor play and garden areas. There are challenges for some principals in accommodation, additional resources and planning to ensure that activities are different from their normal routine in the nursery school. In a small minority of nursery schools, reductions in funding have made breakfast clubs unsustainable because of the small numbers.

A child in a nursery school with severe speech and language difficulties, whose parents were not able to attend therapy sessions in the community, benefitted from working with a speech and language therapy (SALT) assistant for over a year. The child, became happier and more settled, joined increasingly in games and social interaction and was discharged from the SALT case-load. The nursery school reports that the child's communication skills and social interaction have also improved.

4.20 HIGH LEVEL OUTCOMES (HLOs)

The schools report that the adoption of improved monitoring arrangements by the ELBs' Extended School officers has helped them to focus more explicitly on the HLOs.

The following are the main changes since the original visits in 2006:

- improved links between the activities on offer and pupil achievement;
- a more discerning approach to the types of activities which can be organised efficiently and effectively;
- an increase in the range of activities as the schools have gained in confidence and experience;
- a greater focus on underachievement, linked to initiatives such as literacy and numeracy support programmes;
- examples of more confident and innovative practice; and
- a greater focus on community participation and stakeholder consultation in schools.

A majority of schools have moved away from providing a narrow range of activities such as sports and homework clubs to looking at the specific needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

COLLABORATION

4.21 Different kinds of clustering partnerships have been developed in the majority of schools. These arrangements provide value for money and engagement with voluntary and statutory organisations. In the best practice, schools report that links with other groups and agencies has resulted in more 'joined up' approach to education in their local area. The multi-agency approach supports the pastoral dimension of schools by providing a deeper understanding of relationships with the parents and the range of external support available to meet the individual needs of the pupils. For example, primary schools work with local SureStart personnel to enhance links with parents in promoting learning for the children. In contrast, a small number of primary schools are not exploring links with the local pre-school provision and other external agencies. Furthermore, links with neighbourhood renewal groups, where they exist, are not sufficiently developed. There is also a need for better integration with the initiatives for addressing underachievement: 'Achieving Belfast' and 'Bright Futures Derry'.

4.22 A significant minority of schools report that there are difficulties in the organisation and maintenance of clustering arrangements with other schools, Further Education colleges and community groups, due to time constraints, competing priorities, diversity and uncertainty with funding arrangements. In addition, there was little evidence of cross-community collaboration across the schools visited.

ELB SUPPORT

4.23 The majority of schools report good levels of support from the ELBs' Extended School officers. In particular, they find the individual support to schools and the clusters helpful and the Extended Schools sections on the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services websites are proving to be a useful source of information when processing monitoring forms and providing examples of good practice. In a significant minority of schools, the support provided by the ELB officers has helped to improve the level of collaboration. A small number of schools report difficulties in communication with ELB staff due to change in personnel.

SUSTAINABILITY

4.24 Schools have concerns about the long-term duration of Extended Schools. Some senior managers are preparing to target resources to maintain activities which they perceive as having the most significant impact. Through clustering with other schools and community groups, some schools believe that they will be able to sustain the activities. In these cases there is support from parents, staff and volunteers to enable some of the programmes to be run despite the fluctuations in funding by sharing the costs. In the more forward-thinking schools, the management is considering ways of retaining programmes by seeking external funding, using other agencies and by redeploying staff. Where the monitoring and evaluation is robust, the schools are able to identify what is worthwhile sustaining. In contrast, a minority of schools have not considered long-term sustainability.

4.25 The schools report that greater precision in funding details and a guaranteed commitment to funding over a 3 or 4 year timescale would enable them to plan more effective programmes. They report that any reduction in

A primary school is situated in a socially deprived area where parents can be reluctant to become involved in school activities because, as the Principal comments "they can feel exposed." The Principal works with the local SureStart project to approach parents who do not normally attend functions or workshops or encourage their pupils. Sensitive to the parent's own level of education and literacy, the Principal approaches on an individual basis and outlines the benefits of becoming involved in the Reading Club or Extended Nursery Unit activities.

Extended School activities are all an integral part of the school development plan and include:

- A Reading Club which complements class reading programmes in direct response to comparatively poor KS1 and standardised test results. Throughout the school teachers and classroom assistants consult with each other on suitable levels of material for targeted pupils.

- The school targets pre-school pupils by extending the nursery day with the specific intention of developing and enhancing language experiences for the pupils. The Nursery Unit teacher discusses regularly with the principal the impact of the extended day on the pupils language experiences. Significant improvements in the pupils reading scores result from tracking progress from baseline results and regular monitoring through standardised reading tests.

After one year the proportion of pupils transferring from the Nursery Unit to the primary school rose from 40% to 84%. The principal attributes the increase to improving contact with parents, taking parental views into account and providing appropriate services.

funding could result in valued services, such as counselling, being discontinued.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The November 2006 inspection report on Extended Schools concluded that:

- many schools had still to engage systematically with the requirements and implications of Extended Schools;
- the majority of schools had still to produce coherent action plans and arrangements for monitoring and evaluating their extended provision;
- it would take time and confidence for schools to get used to thinking and working in a more creative and collaborative way, and
- a significant minority of schools need to articulate more specifically how their extended provision will lead to improvements in the pupils learning and achievement.

5.2 The inspection of the Extended Schools Programme in 2008 finds 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;
- 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.

6. 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:	Action should be taken by:
6.1	More attention needs to be given to the key aim of Extended Schools which is: raising standards, promoting social inclusion and the regeneration of communities.	Schools
6.2	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.	Schools with ELBs
6.3	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.	Schools
6.4	There is a need to disseminate examples of effective clustering (in local learning communities in 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 and increase inclusion.	ELBs Schools Department
6.5	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.	Department ELBs
6.6	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.	ELBs
6.7	An agreed approach to auditing the quality and effectiveness of agencies providing services and activities to the schools is required.	ELBs Department
6.68	The Department needs to resolve the discontinuity and uncertainty in funding to ensure that schools can plan with confidence.	Department

Collectively, across the ELBs' support for schools, there is sufficient understanding, expertise and ability to help the schools to address effectively all of these areas for improvement.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS FROM ETI NOVEMBER 2006 REPORT

1.1 Where the schools showed a good state of readiness for engagement with the Extended Schools Programme, the following features were in evidence:

- the commitment of management at all levels, the teachers, ancillary staff and parents to the aims of the Extended Schools Programme;
- the schools' commitment to extending their existing provision;
- the schools' action plans are predicated on extensive consultation with their staff, pupils, parents and the wider community in order to identify their interests and needs and the activities that could be provided to meet them;
- the schools have a planned range of activities and services which seek to improve the pupils behaviour, health, well-being, learning and academic performance;
- the activities address the social and learning needs of the parents and the wider community;
- the schools are committed to collaborative working through partnerships with other schools, organisations, agencies and the wider community;
- the schools have established clear arrangements, with regard to both procedures and personnel, for the management of their extended provision;
- the schools have drawn up clear procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of their extended provision, based on action plans containing specific targets and success criteria; and
- the schools have carefully considered plans for spending the Extended Schools Programme funds.

1.2 Where the schools were less ready to engage with the Extended Schools Programme, the following aspects were in evidence:

- the schools lacked the enthusiasm to engage fully with the programme due to the perceived difficulties associated with the Extended Schools Programme;
- the leadership in the schools is poor; the principals have not discussed the programme with the staff and there is a lack of creative thinking and motivation to extend provision into the community or beyond what is familiar;

- the schools have not consulted on the Extended Schools Programme with their staff, parents and the wider community;
- the schools have not begun the action planning process or their action plans are sketchy and speculative and are not founded on a systematic analysis of need within the school or the wider community;
- the schools are unwilling to form links with other schools, outside agencies or organisations;
- the schools have not worked out their organisation and management arrangements for the Extended Schools Programme;
- there is a lack of strategic thinking about what constitutes successful outcomes of the Extended Schools Programme and what these outcomes might look like;
- the schools do not have any plans and procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Extended Schools Programme;
- the monitoring and evaluation arrangements do not focus sufficiently on the impact of the Extended Schools Programme on the pupils behaviour, well-being, learning and academic performance; and
- there is a need for more well-targeted support from the ELBs and RTU for the schools in the Extended Schools Programme;

1.3 The schools identified the following issues and concerns about the Extended Schools Programme:

- there are concerns about the multiplicity of programmes and the lack of clarity about how they link together coherently;
- the problems the timing of the Extended Schools Programme has caused for schools;
- the increase in workload, especially of principals, caused by the introduction of the Extended Schools Programme;
- the problems associated with the funding of the programme;
- the potentially divisive effects of paying some staff for their work in relation to the work associated with Extended Schools; and
- the lack of available space, in a small number of schools, to extend their provision.

BENEFITS OF AN EXTENDED SCHOOL

Benefits for **all pupils**:

- Improved learning and achievement.
- Increased motivation and self-esteem.
- Improved access to specialist support to meet pupils' wider needs.
- Increased positive attitude towards learning.
- Enhanced opportunities to learn new skills and talents and develop existing skills and talents.
- Improved health and well-being.

Benefits for the **school**:

- Additional facilities and equipment.
- Greater opportunities for staff for flexible working and career development.
- Improved collaboration with neighbouring schools and youth provision.
- Enhanced partnership working with the community and statutory agencies.
- Greater awareness of the community and pupil diversity.
- Greater appreciation of the parents' role within education.

Benefits for **families**:

- Improvements in child behaviour and social and health skills.
- Better understanding of families' backgrounds, cultures, concerns, goals and needs.
- Greater parental involvement in children's learning and development.
- Opportunities to develop parenting skills and to discuss parenting issues with other parents and professionals.
- More opportunities for local adult education and family learning.
- Greater availability of specialist support for families.

Benefits for **communities**:

- Improved community planning and better access to essential services.
- Improved local availability of sports, arts and other facilities.
- Local career development opportunities.
- Improved outcomes for families and children.
- Better supervision of children outside school hours.
- Closer relationships with the school.

Pages 5 & 6. "Extended Schools: schools, families, communities working together"
DE Bangor. 2006 http://www.deni.gov.uk/extended_schools_-_revised_18-9-06.pdf

SCHOOLS VISITED FOR THIS EVALUATION BETWEEN JUNE AND OCTOBER 2008

BELB

Elmgrove Primary School, Belfast
Holy Cross Boys' Primary School, Belfast
La Salle Boys' School, Belfast
Shaftesbury Nursery School, Belfast
St Joseph's College, Belfast
St Rose's High School, Belfast
Taughmonagh Primary School, Belfast

SELB

Ceara Special School, Lurgan
Drumcree College, Portadown
Holy Trinity College, Cookstown
Kilkeel Primary School
Lismore Comprehensive School, Craigavon
Railway Street Nursery School, Armagh
St Anthony's Primary School, Craigavon
St Clare's Convent Primary School, Newry
St Colman's Primary School, Kilkeel
St Mary's Primary School, Aughnacloy
St Paul's Junior High School, Lurgan

NEELB

Ballee Community High School, Ballymena
Ballycastle High School
Ballysally Primary School, Coleraine
Edmund Rice College, Newtownabbey
Maghera High School
Monkstown Community High School
Sandelford Special School, Coleraine
St John's Primary School, Ballymena

SEELB

Belvoir Park Primary School, Belfast
Christ the King Primary School, Drumaness
De La Salle High School, Downpatrick
Dunmurry High School
King's Road Nursery School, Belfast
St Colmcille's Primary School, Downpatrick

WELB

Belmont House Special School, Derry
Drumahoe Primary School, Londonderry
Foyleview Special School, Londonderry
Limavady Nursery School
St Comhghall's High School, Lisnaskea
St Mary's Primary School, Newtownbutler
St Ronan's Primary School, Newry

PROMPTS PROVIDED TO SCHOOLS IN ADVANCE OF DISTRICT INSPECTOR'S VISITS, JUNE-OCTOBER 2008

- What are the links between the extended school programme(s) to the school's development and improvement planning?
 - What is the quality and robustness of related action planning? How does the school consult, promote inclusiveness, conduct cost-benefit analysis, and evaluate the impact of the programmes? Is there planning for progression?
 - What is the nature and quality of evaluation of the programmes? Are there improvements in outcomes? How do they know? Are the measures sufficiently SMART⁴?
 - What evidence does the school have for the impact on children's learning-social-emotional-academic improvement?
- What evidence does the school have to demonstrate that:
 - it has targeted children in need in its Extended Schools activities?
 - children in need have remained engaged in the ES activities?
 - children in need have benefitted from the ES activities?
- What has improved since 2006? Has it moved to the less well-covered High Level Outcomes? Has the school done what they planned to do? If not, any reasons for the changes? Has it modified its targets?
- What is the sustainability following loss/reduction of funding? What does the school plan to continue to run, and why?
- To what extent is the school collaborating with other agencies, schools and organisations? (clusters, neighbourhood renewal group, parents, local community groups, other schools, counselling services, creative learning centres, etc)
- What is the quality of any support received (from the ELBs, RTU, CCMS)?

⁴ SMART: Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound



© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2009

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk or may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR.