

Good practice in extended schools

A short survey to examine effective practice in a small sample of the most successful full core service extended schools serving disadvantaged communities

A small survey of effective extended schools serving disadvantaged communities found that they were making important and substantial improvements to the educational outcomes and personal well-being of pupils. These schools were also improving the lives of parents and carers, including their economic well-being, and therefore helping to compensate for past shortfalls in their education.

Age group: 4–16

Published: June 2009

Reference no: 080242

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 080242

© Crown copyright 2009



Contents

Executive summary	4
Key findings	5
Recommendations	6
Background to the survey	7
Extended schools	7
Fully extended school programmes	8
Personalised programmes	10
Parents and the community	13
Managing resources	16
Working with partners	19
Further information	22
Publications	22
Websites	22

Executive summary

A small survey of effective extended schools in particularly disadvantaged areas was undertaken to determine whether their extended provision was a significant factor in explaining their success. This report contains many examples of good practice found in these schools, emphasising the successful attention to detail in meeting challenges and overcoming barriers to achievement.

Inspectors visited 13 primary and 10 secondary schools that provided a full programme of extended services. Additionally, four secondary schools with similar characteristics were visited to look at issues related to pupils' transfer. The schools were in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage and had been judged to be good or better in their most recent Ofsted inspection. Almost all the schools had made important and substantial improvements to the educational outcomes and personal well-being of pupils. Most had also made equally valuable differences to the lives of some parents through the direct provision of educational programmes. These schools took on the responsibility for breaking down barriers to learning and raising the aspirations and self-esteem of individuals in their communities. Already committed to tackling disadvantage, they used the additional resources for extended schools effectively to improve provision and raise pupils' achievements. These schools successfully compensated for the barriers to learning that their pupils encountered. In addition, they removed barriers for parents whose own circumstances sometimes made it difficult for them to cope with family responsibilities.

Individual provision often focused on the use of learning mentors; these were most effective where they had the capacity to win the confidence of children and parents made vulnerable because of their circumstances, and were supported by committed leadership from their school. Supporting these important personal contacts were enjoyable activities, planned before and after formal school hours, which provided a close match to the needs that had been identified. In many cases, sessions for parents ran during the school day. However, finding an appropriate and comfortable space on school sites to accommodate parents was a challenge for some schools; and this requirement, as well as for community provision, was not always considered in the programmes for building new schools.

The headteachers of these effective schools saw the importance of tackling the learning needs of children and their families. They identified needs thoroughly and showed great flexibility and initiative in developing programmes to meet them. Their extended provision was comprehensive, going beyond general provision such as the use of breakfast clubs or homework clubs and providing activities explicitly designed to meet particular identified needs. However, the successes of pupils in school did not always transfer significantly to their life outside it.

Key findings

- The extended schools visited on this survey grasped the opportunities of their status to challenge disadvantage and overcome barriers to learning. They identified children and young people who might otherwise fail; they enabled pupils to stay at school, and achieve national expectations or beyond; and, in the secondary schools, ensured that pupils achieved worthwhile qualifications, enabling almost all of their target pupils to progress to further education. It was in transforming the life chances of individual pupils that these extended schools were at their most successful and cost-effective.
- The schools visited understood their pupils' needs in detail and put in place whatever was necessary to help them cope with, and learn in, school. Attendance increased, exclusions fell and achievement rose.
- Close monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress enabled support to be matched closely through the provision of activities and specialist interventions.
- In the survey schools some parents held negative views of education, often because of their own poor experience of school. A small number of parents from different cultural backgrounds were unfamiliar with English educational traditions, which made them wary of initial contact with the school. The schools visited dealt sensitively with parents' concerns, recognising that it would be difficult to succeed with their pupils if they did not engage positively with their parents.
- Extended provision in these successful schools was well managed, especially financially, to ensure the sustainability of appropriate provision and resources. The close coordination of external services and agencies was essential.
- The primary schools visited reported that transition to secondary schools often resulted in the loss of the knowledge about a family and its circumstances that had been built up by extensive personal contact over time. Families had to start afresh with new staff, and this renewed contact was not triggered until the pupil slipped behind and became 'noticed' again by the receiving school. Most of the secondary schools visited were unaware of the work the primary schools from which their students were drawn had been doing to combat disadvantage.
- The main drive for successful provision and outcomes came from within the schools themselves. While external agencies and the local authority were able to help, they were not creating the impetus to make a difference. The schools in this survey had no connection, direct or otherwise, with their local Children's Trust and knew very little of its strategy or work. In one area visited, newly assigned Parent Support Advisers were not integrated into the existing school-centred networks for supporting families.
- There was no substantial evidence that the common assessment framework was a major driver for changing and improving practice at the time of the survey, although isolated examples indicated that some good practice was beginning to develop.

- The successes of pupils in school did not always transfer significantly to their life outside it. The schools visited reported that their pupils appeared to change their behaviour according to the environment outside the school rather than sustain the acceptable behaviour they showed inside.

Recommendations

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) should:

- continue to promote the development of extended schools by sustaining the funding of existing provision, and maintaining the dissemination of strategies that build on the best practice
- seek to integrate the successes of extended schools with wider regeneration programmes in run-down communities, so contributing to improvement of the general environment for children and families.

Local authorities should:

- audit current extended school provision in their area and ensure that their schools learn from local and national successful practice on using extended school provision to narrow the attainment gap
- help schools to coordinate the work of learning mentors and other school-based support staff so that the secondary schools to which pupils transfer build upon the good work of primary schools more effectively
- ensure that the work of the Children's Trusts is more widely shared with schools, so that extended school services are included as effective vehicles for meeting the most challenging of needs
- ensure that current and future programmes for building new schools cater fully for community provision and out-of-hours use, particularly in the primary sector
- align new family support services with existing local networks where possible.

Schools providing extended services should:

- ensure that partners involved in transition between phases maintain the continuity of support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Schools not yet providing extended services should:

- consider the good practice in this and other Ofsted reports, about how extended school services re-engage reluctant or vulnerable learners¹

¹ See further information, p.22.

- recognise the importance of building relationships with parents whose circumstances make them hard to reach, using learning mentors or other specialist parent support workers.

Background to the survey

Extended schools

1. Schools with full extended schools programmes are required to provide supervised activities on site for children from 08:00 to 18.00 in term time. These activities can range from breakfast clubs to specialised sessions to meet individual pupils' needs. The bigger goal, however, is to provide on-site activities for children in primary schools for 48 weeks a year; and in term time plus some holidays for secondary schools.
2. The extended schools identified for this survey were all situated in circumstances of considerable disadvantage, with higher proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals than the national average. All schools had been judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness in their previous Ofsted inspection. The survey sought to identify examples of good practice in extended provision that contributed to the schools' success.
3. The contexts to which these schools had responded included poor social circumstances on the local estate where pupils lived, often compounded by poverty resulting from entrenched unemployment in many of the families. Family care of the children was often poor with inadequate and unhealthy diets, particularly breakfasts. The estates were often run-down, vandalism was rife and crime rates were high. Some estate communities often comprised high numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, but this was not always the case. Some estates were inhabited almost exclusively by those of white British heritage with a tradition of low-wage, low-skill employment or unemployment.
4. On the first cycle of the survey, 23 schools (13 primary and 10 secondary) were selected to be visited. The fieldwork was designed to accommodate two separate visits. The first focused on each school's provision and any extended services available at the time of the visit; inspectors met pupils, talked to staff and parents, and identified particular features of a school's extended provision that might be worth following up on a second visit.
5. The second visits allowed inspectors to meet more parents and local community representatives, and to visit some of the out-of-hours activities that were thought to be particularly important in promoting positive outcomes and tackling disadvantage.
6. During the first visits, primary schools identified transition to secondary school as a potential weakness for vulnerable families. As a result, inspectors

undertook visits to four further secondary schools to evaluate how they managed transition for pupils from effective, full core offer primary schools.

Fully extended school programmes

7. Commonly, the schools surveyed accepted that they had a responsibility to challenge the effect of social disadvantage on their children and young people; the belief that the school could and should overcome barriers to learning was central to the school's ethos, and personified in the attitude, drive and determination of the headteacher. Their belief, encouragement and strong leadership were shared by senior staff managing the extended school programmes, and by the teaching and support staff providing the activities. They all thought the schools could and should make a difference for the better, and were fully committed to playing their part. The extended school programme played an important part in realising these ambitions.
8. The reasons that these successful schools decided to become extended schools varied but, overall, they focused on improving their pupils' life chances. There was a deep-rooted recognition of the role of a school in doing this. In each school visited, this was based on a secure understanding of the varied needs of its pupils. Commonly, the school leaders understood that the physiological needs of children had to be secured before they could start to tackle their learning needs. They began by introducing strategies such as breakfast clubs, or even simply giving all pupils toast when they arrived in school if that was the only way to ensure children were fed as they started the day.

A primary school with a transient migrant population, mostly from Eastern Europe, who are temporarily housed in the local area, identified that some parents do not or cannot provide breakfast. Children are unsettled at the start of the day and some become even more so as the day goes on. Some parents work night shifts and are not able to give their children much time and attention before school. The school therefore provides breakfast in a safe and secure environment, using suitably qualified staff (with level 2 and 3 Teaching Assistant National Vocational Qualifications). These staff provide activities which stimulate children from the outset of the day in readiness for school work. The breakfast club is very successful. At least 24 children, aged 3 to 8, regularly attend from 08.00 to 08.45. But the breakfast club provides more than food: it is boosting the development of children's social skills through talk and eating. The children are happy, settled and able to concentrate on school work.

Other strategies followed on from this. The schools set out successfully to provide a safe haven, meeting their targeted pupils' need to feel secure.

When basic levels of care were in place, better attendance, as well as improved attainment, personal development and well-being were evident.

A breakfast club was set up that now serves about 100 pupils a day (about a third of the total roll). The headteacher uses some school resources to pay a small fee to staff to provide many different activities for pupils to meet all kinds of identified needs. These include:

- fitness sessions
- sports activities
- music therapy
- mathematics clubs (including for parents)
- an allotment club.

The provision began with activities for gifted and talented pupils. Later, more staff wanted to offer other activities, which now number over 19 a week. The school also runs at least two off-site trips each term for every pupil and this provides experiences of new and different environments.

The allotment club has played a big part in making contact between pupils and older adults. Local community groups use the school minibus and pay only the cost of fuel. It was reported that 'its windows were shot out early on, but there has been no trouble for four years now'. This mutual benefit is a result of the headteacher's strong advocacy for the school, its pupils and their parents.

Because of these opportunities, achievement in this school is now outstanding and there is no more vandalism. A local community representative said, 'The school is ours and the community works to protect it.'

9. It was common for most schools to offer sports and performing arts activities. These played a vital part in the lives of many pupils and students and were sufficient to help them cope with school. But such opportunities did not meet all needs; in one of the secondary schools visited, students who did not like sports or the arts were provided with other more suitable opportunities: 'games' clubs, chess, and a library club. These met the needs of those who preferred quieter, less physical activities.
10. Another of the secondary schools visited had developed its out-of-hours activities from a low base as a result of the new headteacher bringing her vision of inclusive education to bear upon outcomes for students.

Using extended school resources as 'seed' funding, the school provides a mix of the usual extra-curricular activities and a large number of clubs, designed to match individual students' needs. These were identified from school progress data, school behaviour records, special educational needs individual education plans, parental concerns, and the students themselves.

In a three-year period, activities have grown from a handful of after-school sporting clubs to over 90 different activities a week. These involve over 90% of the school's staff and four in every five of the students. Staff are paid a nominal fee to run these clubs, and the programme is coordinated by a teacher in charge of the extended school programme. Students are involved in evaluating the usefulness of groups, since the school will not fund activities that do not meet students' needs.

The school leaders monitor how the activities promote learning for particular students and change the activities to match needs.

The school also runs summer schools, focused on primary pupils who may find transition to secondary school a challenge, weekend working facilities for students and parents, and support for particular students' learning needs. This includes:

- a group of students studying for a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualification in food where the group sells its products
- art classes that lead to early examination entry, including A levels before 16
- a Year 7 parent/pupil homework club to continue the work of family learning from the primary phase
- extensive work by community professionals based at the school to engage with parents at the feeder primary schools.

The school also uses its extended school resources to partially fund an effective programme of learning mentors. Although these are based in the secondary school, they work with the primary schools in the cluster. The staff run parents' classes in a range of subjects including counselling to help parents to manage their children's difficult behaviour, and vocational qualifications that lead to work for parents as classroom support assistants.

Personalised programmes

11. A common feature of the good practice observed was the very close monitoring and tracking of individual pupils' progress, including personal as well as academic development. This was at the heart of the effective tailoring of activity to need, and benefited pupils' engagement, personal development and, ultimately, their attainment. The schools were not keeping their doors open simply for the sake of extended supervision but were providing activities that matched individuals' personal and academic development needs.

12. The challenge facing schools in meeting individual needs can be considerable. In one of the schools visited, significant reconstruction was carried out to allow access for a student using a wheelchair. In another, two students with behavioural difficulties were able to succeed through the support provided by the school and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and a flexible approach to their individual timetables.
13. The flexibility and ingenuity of school staff in setting up activities that met pupils' individual needs and interests were essential features of the successful extended school services. In doing this, schools were supplementing their taught curriculum with additional activities that were designed for specific pupils, but also enjoyed by others whose circumstances were more fortunate.

A nine-year-old girl, recently transferred from another school, had difficulties in relationships with established friendship groups at her new school. Her arrival triggered conflict between three other pupils, and caused some serious disruption.

In response, the school set up a 'craft club', targeting by personal invitation these four girls, but also adding others by open invitation. The intention was always to use the activity to develop the social skills of the challenging child, under the pretext of making Christmas cards. Resources to help pay for the activity leader came from the extended school finances. Within a term, all conflicts were resolved, and the mother was astonished by the change for the better in her daughter's demeanour, enthusiasm for school, and new-found positive attitude and friends.

A Key Stage 3 student, returning from being abroad for her pre-school and primary education, had lost her English-speaking skills, and found secondary school life very challenging socially as a result. Her speech and language skills were tackled by her English teacher, but she was also encouraged to join in with a dance programme called 'rock challenge'. Over time, she has become socially confident, improved her English language skills to higher grade GCSE level, and has developed very good dance skills. The school carefully managed the time she spent on extra activities by insisting that she attended numeracy club as part of the 'conditions' for continuing with dance so that she would gain higher grade mathematics GCSE. As a result, she has stayed on into the sixth form and is likely to be accepted for a teacher training course. Her parents are thrilled at the way the school has enabled the recovery of their daughter's confidence and language skills from the low point of her return to England.

A secondary school identified a number of Year 7 boys of Black Caribbean heritage as being at risk of disaffection and underachievement. The concerns grew throughout the year: the students started to fall short of expected academic targets and some began to trigger warnings in the school's system for behaviour and sanctions. The school, through its learning mentor, arranged a 'playing for success' programme. Based at a local international athletics training facility, this mixed athletics training with classroom work in literacy and numeracy. The school funded the provision itself, including transport to and from the facility. Although the school received some external funding for extended school services, it actually spent about five times this amount on the full provision of activities, because it saw the effectiveness of this work in retaining students' interest and motivation to learn.

Students on the programme said they had completely changed their approach to school as a result. They recognised the importance of education, and the value that others placed on it, such as international athletes. A mother and father of one of the students said that as a result of this project they 'had got their son back again'. One white boy referred himself to the learning mentor and also joined the group as he felt he was equally at risk of misbehaviour – and the school agreed.

14. One of the secondary schools visited addressed identified weaknesses in attainment and progress by extending the school day with the introduction of '11th sessions'.

Almost all the Year 11 pupils stayed on for revision sessions and for additional tutoring, and many then went to the later '11th sessions'. Many of the students said they found working at home difficult. The long opening hours of the school allowed the students to work independently but with access to the school's library and information and communication technology resources.

One barrier that has been hard to overcome in some schools is a sense of danger that parents and students feel about staying late at school because of recent criminal activity on nearby streets. As a result activities finished earlier but these schools felt there was little they could do to improve the situation beyond their boundaries.

15. Schools in the survey were able to offer data to show the effect of such initiatives. In one school, for example, extended school provision was aimed at reducing the gap in attainment between its largest minority ethnic group (Pakistani) and the whole school. In 2006, 8% of Pakistani students attained five A*–C grades at GCSE level, including English and mathematics. In 2007, this proportion rose to 29% and, in 2008, it exceeded the school's overall figure at 58%. Other analyses in the same school showed how the gap between attainment by minority ethnic pupils and white British pupils had narrowed

since 2006 and, on some measures, the gap had been closed. While it is not possible to isolate the effect of single interventions, it is clear that overall school improvement and the better performance of minority groups could be attributed to the individual support some pupils in need received, and the increasing personalisation of the curriculum.

Parents and the community

16. The extended schools in the sample had an excellent understanding of the needs, challenges and traditions of their communities. Often, those traditions were of low aspirations and low expectations. In other cases, communities had their roots abroad and the school knew how to encourage those communities, for example by providing English and information and communication technology courses for adults, and ensuring that their children could gain qualifications in their home community language.

A primary school identified parents' lack of proficiency in English, which prevented them from engaging fully with the school. The parents' preconceptions about the British education system were that teachers did everything and the parents' role in education was not important. Some of the parents had been in the country for less than a year; others for over three years.

At the time, the school had no crèche facilities. To gain the trust of parents (from Bangladesh, India, Portugal, Poland and Italy) and remove their perceived fears about the nursery and school, they invited a group of parents to meet in the nearby Sure Start setting because it was a less daunting place for anxious parents; this proved to be successful. The school was tackling parents', mainly mothers', concerns directly. They wanted to learn English and have childcare facilities to make going to work possible. The school deployed a learning mentor who knew the children and was known to the parents. A crèche using extended schools funding was set up and links were made to an adult education college to bring an English language tutor to the Sure Start location. The English lessons were very popular, with four classes a week for parents.

As a result of this, the learning mentor has also shown parents how they can support their children with homework, by explaining the way mathematics is taught in the school. Parents join sessions in the nursery after school and this shows them how to encourage learning through play, talk, stories, and reading. Although there is little direct evidence to link this support with attainment, staff said that, because parents were better informed, more proficient in English and had good working relationships with staff, the children benefited through gains in confidence and progress in their literacy and numeracy skills.

Another school uses the extended core offer for parents by supporting them to gain access to learning. This is designed to help them to support their children at home. For example, the school has established childcare provision for Asian women and a support group for parents who have children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The latter helps parents gain a better understanding of their children's needs and to share support. The effect is seen in the partnership between the home and school to ensure that pupils do not fall behind. The most significant resources are the after-school clubs, which use the extended school's opportunities and resources, including outside specialists. The majority of the pupils participate in these clubs.

17. The survey schools systematically sought to re-engage adults, particularly parents, in education. Beginning with simple meetings between school staff and parents on the playground (usually at the Foundation Stage, as parents first brought their children to a school), friendship was established. Learning mentors or other specialist support staff were best placed to give the time to these parents. Coffee in school, in a comfortable setting, led to discussion about what parents wanted or would like support for. Over time, these informal sessions led to formal programmes that included parenting and literacy classes, which progressed to national vocational qualifications and beyond.

In one primary school, a parent spoke of how the school invited her to meet a learning mentor when her daughter first started school. She had failed at school herself, and said she was very lacking in confidence and nervous of school. Initially she joined in a school-run arts and crafts course. This led to formal short courses in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Success in these studies sparked her interest in further education and re-established her self-confidence. With the school's help she enrolled on a further education access course for nursing. She subsequently qualified and has just started her first job as a professional nurse. She said, 'At last, I have fulfilled a childhood ambition that had been affected by my own poor experience of school, but have been rescued thanks to the support offered through my daughter's extended school.'

Now at work, she finds the breakfast club very helpful, particularly as she now has another child in Year 1.

18. In some cases the approach to parents was made through projects such as Sure Start where some parents found the location, in a more informal setting, less threatening.

A primary school's important contribution to promoting community cohesion was through its clubs. An Indian dance group and various religious celebrations were used as a way of including all pupils and parents. They saw the school as providing a very good model for racial

harmony which the community valued. A parent said, 'We are bringing up the next generation to get on with each other.' Pupils said that the clubs made them look forward to coming to school. The school had evidence, for example, that the 90 pupils who were members of the choir had rates of attendance which were one percentage point higher than those of the rest of the school.

19. Poor attendance by some individuals was an almost intractable problem where schools struggled with lack of parental support for actions they were taking. In the best examples, provision included parenting courses that helped those who found it difficult to deal with their children. In combination with learning mentors, and in some cases parent support advisers, those parents in even the most difficult to reach circumstances could be re-engaged.

A home/school liaison officer established strong relationships with parents, particularly of the vulnerable pupils, by visiting homes and acting as a link with many agencies. The aim was to keep children in school and relatively happy so that they were able to learn. In one example from many at this primary school, a boy transferred from another school where his attendance was 40%. It rose to 98% and he gained Level 4 in all his end of key stage national tests. Without the home/school liaison officer, this would not have happened. The parents of potentially vulnerable pupils at the school endorsed this. One said, 'Without the help of the school, my children would not be here and I would be unable to carry on.'

20. There are early signs that parent support advisers are contributing significantly to improving the outcomes for pupils in the schools participating in the pilot scheme. But inspectors also found evidence that, in at least one area, advisers were being deployed without clear briefs or any consultation with schools, so that they were not linked effectively with existing networks.
21. Finding appropriate and comfortable space on a school site to accommodate parents was, however, a challenge – and one that did not seem to be acknowledged in the programmes for building new schools and serving community needs. At best, it depends upon a school's own ability to influence planning for a new building. For example, at one newly built primary school, there were no meeting spaces; in order for it to continue its successful family learning programme, the school had added a temporary building on the playing field. The bigger primary schools and the secondary schools visited during the survey were able to use small meeting rooms, although access to information and communication technology had to wait until the end of the school day. Yet, for many parents, sessions during the school day, when they are free from responsibilities for childcare, are the most convenient. A more effective approach, however, might be to ensure that community provision is accommodated into the building of any new school in line with a local strategic plan to widen access to extended services.

22. Despite the efforts of the schools visited, community leaders acknowledged that the wider communities they served had not substantially changed their aspirations. Low-paid employment, or endemic unemployment, meant that some parents did not see the value of gaining educational skills and qualifications and could not envisage opportunities when they might use them. The schools reported that many families still saw education as a threat to the tradition of families remaining in the locality; indeed, most of the schools visited were in areas of low socio-economic activity, with a very low demand for skilled work.
23. Local community leaders understood the pressing need to ensure that local people had the skills that would attract employers to the area. In one area, through far-sighted governance of their community school, community leaders had ensured that the school sustained its extensive out-of-hours provision for all ages, despite the high cost. This was justified when young people were able to participate productively in society; it was doubly so when their parents were also brought back into employment through adult learning programmes.
24. The most significant beneficial outcomes occurred where there was a successful four-way partnership between children, school, parents and the community. The community strand was essential in maintaining the will to sustain extended school services over a long period of time.
25. The potential of sustained provision was shown in one school that had been working successfully through extended activities for many years. Figures for students not in education, employment or training had fallen to 2.5% compared to a national mean of 7.5%.

Managing resources

26. All the schools appointed staff as coordinators for the extended school provision. In larger settings, these roles were full-time because of the breadth and volume of provision. In one of the secondary schools visited, a full time deputy headteacher/business manager took on this role and was able to devote considerable time and energy to putting the extended provision on a sound business footing that enabled the facilities to be broadened.

In 1999, a large secondary school was in very poor accommodation. Only 13% of pupils gained 5 A*–C grades at GCSE. It was regarded as the local 'sink' school on a very poor estate with considerable vandalism at the school and in the local environment. A new headteacher focused on

removing barriers to learning – the school took an approach based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, meeting the basic needs first.²

This started with basic hygiene to enable pupils to be clean and provided food for those who needed it at the start of the day. First, the school established a self-funding breakfast club. The main practical thrust for developing the extended provision came from the school’s business manager. From a business background she had worked her way through the requirements needed for qualified teacher status and became the deputy headteacher as well as the business manager. She realised that the school had to generate income and so tapped into every available funding stream, from inside and outside education, especially those aimed at supporting disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The school was rebuilt through the Private Finance Initiative and is consequently charged £44,000 a year to open and service the building out of hours for use by the community. The business manager pursued a vigorous programme of outreach work, including visiting all the local community groups where people met in order to find out their needs.

The school identified provision in terms of accessibility for parents and focused its work on two fronts: meeting the immediate needs of the pupils and preparing their parents for the future. The initial approach was to engage parents through ‘embedded learning’. The school offered a ‘nail art’ course, embedding the course with teaching about basic hygiene.

The school now provides an annual income stream of £120,000 that contributes to on-site provision and helps towards the running costs of an on-site pupil referral unit, as well as adult education services on the site.

The buildings are now rarely vandalised, parents trust the school and the staff, activities do not stop over the holidays, relationships with further education colleges are also improving as the students’ standards improve to 37% gaining higher grade GCSEs. The on-site nursery extends care from birth to 16, and the school fills the gap between education and social care. Provision includes a permanent youth worker; bully busters; ‘no limits’ (counselling and contraception advice); financial support; ‘hip-hop’ clinic (all health-related issues); police surgery (safer neighbourhood police teams); and NHS ‘quitters’ (a ‘stop smoking’ clinic).

² Between 1943 and 1954, Abraham Maslow developed his theory of a hierarchy of needs. He suggested that individuals must satisfy each level of need before moving to the next. He proposed five levels. These were: physiological needs (food, shelter, those needs needed for basic survival); needs for safety (the need to feel safe within your environment, as well as emotional and physical safety); social needs (for love, friendship and the need to belong); the need for esteem (for self-respect, status and recognition from others); self-actualisation (the point of reaching one’s full potential).

27. In all the schools visited, the after-school activities ranged from voluntary sports and music clubs through to paid programmes tailored to the needs of individual pupils. These specialist activities were funded in part by additional resources from the extended schools national programme. The school managers ensured that these programmes were worthwhile and not simply hobbies with no educational plan. They required leaders of such activities to submit details of planned activities to the headteacher and to provide evaluation. Pupils were also consulted in these reviews, so that provision could be refined and developed.
28. The long-established secondary extended schools invested time to ensure that their programmes were advertised widely, and had well-organised handbooks to help parents work out what was offered.

A secondary school published a 27-page catalogue, edited by its full-time participation worker, whose salary was funded in part by the schools in the cluster pooling their extended services budget.

All the schools in the cluster were represented, and the catalogue was organised by type of provision, for example, all the schools offering breakfast clubs; all the playgroups and nurseries; all the after-school clubs and youth services. A standardised information board in each school was the main feature in the reception area; common artwork (designed by primary pupils) made it easy to recognise information. All the local parents therefore had easy access to the information through their schools, as did the pupils.

The catalogue also contained contact details for non-public services, such as sports clubs, Scouts and Guides, and dance schools.

29. In contrast, a city local authority provided a simple summary of services available across schools in a district. This was not as user-friendly, and the schools had no common display to draw attention to the services offered. Some of the secondary schools in the area were not aware of the provision offered by their local primary schools.
30. The best practice, in terms of engaging parents and children in hard to reach contexts, remained centred on the school and its on-site provision. For many of the learners, travel to a different school or setting was a step too far; their engagement derived primarily from the trust built up with a particular member of staff based at the host school. This is an important factor when considering the pooling of resources to maximise efficiency; it risks compromising the local access of parents and pupils to a service.

Working with partners

31. The DCSF's prospectus states:

'An extended school works in partnership with its local authority and Children's Trust, as well as with other local schools and partners from the voluntary, community and private sectors, to offer access to a range of services and activities which support and motivate children and young people to achieve their full potential.'³

32. Local authorities' influence in driving the success of their extended schools was variable in this sample of schools. Some of the schools had relied heavily on local authority support teams but others had had limited contact. The schools in this survey had mixed experiences of using the common assessment framework. In those where local support was well organised, services were readily available and schools did not need to use the common assessment framework to mobilise specialist support. Nevertheless, one school reported that the common assessment framework was seen as a lifeline and the best way to initiate appropriate support for individuals.

33. The following exemplify successful work by parent support advisers employed by a local authority. They highlight the importance of school-based provision: as far as the users are concerned, the support is centrally coordinated and provided by their child's school.

A five-year-old Czech Roma boy was living in poorly maintained rented accommodation. He spoke no English, had serious medical needs and had no pre-school experience. The parent support adviser was instrumental in arranging an admission meeting with an interpreter, the assigned social worker and the school's health adviser. This meant that the school quickly became aware of the boy's problems and could arrange suitable support for his health and language needs. A needs assessment was established for the family which improved the home circumstances. The boy settled happily into the Reception class and had a very good attendance record, while his mother attended sessions at the school's newly opened children's centre with his younger sister.

In the same school, an eight-year-old girl came to the attention of the parent support adviser when her punctuality and behaviour deteriorated. The adviser made a home visit and encouraged the mother and the stepfather, who was seeking asylum, to talk to her about the pressures they were feeling. These included depression and their squalid accommodation. The adviser helped them in several ways, for example, by referring the stepfather to a local support network for asylum seekers

³ *Extended schools; building on experience*, DCSF, 2005.

and by helping the mother to complete a housing application so that they could move to more appropriate accommodation closer to the school. She helped the girl by suggesting some school clubs for her to join, encouraging her to become a playground helper (or 'zone ranger'), including her in a small group of other girls whose self-esteem she was building, and arranging for her to attend the school's summer school. As the home circumstances became more settled, the girl's self-confidence grew and her punctuality and behaviour improved.

34. All but one of the schools visited were effective in calling on a wide and diverse range of agencies. Typically, these agencies had different ways of working, recording evidence and acting on received information. Coordination of the work of different agencies was therefore essential in ensuring that actions benefited children. By understanding these different systems, the most effective extended schools coordinators could connect specialist support with particular needs.
35. However, many of the extended schools visited for this survey found it hard to deal with the various agencies involved with children and, on occasions, consistent provision was hard to achieve. This was mirrored by a lack of liaison between the local institutions that pupils attended. The schools were unclear about the role of Children's Trusts and partnerships were limited, as was the success, so far, of the common assessment framework.

A secondary school in an area of high deprivation said it knew little of the work of the Children's Trust. The deputy headteacher with responsibility for extended services was critical of the local partnership which, in his view, was not doing enough to integrate fully the various forms of local provision (such as the church/community centre and the YMCA) with the local community. He was frustrated by not being able to realise his ambition to have a small strategic group working in the locality to identify needs and coordinate diverse services and projects. At present, the initiatives were mainly 'top down' and he heard about some projects almost by chance, such as the appearance, at the end of the school day, of five beat policemen 'for a trial period'; he had not been informed of the initiative.

In a different school, information was gathered in partnership with the parents, including agencies that should be involved in the process of the common assessment framework. But it was left to the school to do this; other agencies were not sharing this time-consuming activity. There appeared to be an unwritten expectation that the school would do this job. The paperwork was held centrally, so that, in theory, all agencies could have easy access and parents did not need to be asked more than

once for the same information. But the central location had changed two or three times so that, when the school telephoned for data, it was difficult to get information.

Other agencies experienced the same problem, such as at a meeting where a paediatrician saw the paperwork for the first time and took a photocopy of it on the spot. This indicates poor communication across agencies charged with participating in the common assessment framework.

Agencies are supposed to meet to agree the targets from the plan. But the school reported that many key agencies were not represented at these meetings, so no agreement could be reached about targets. Even if the meeting decided that an agency needs to intervene, for example to provide speech therapy, often the agency did not have the capacity to do so.

36. The following illustrates how agencies working together to provide extended services met the needs of pupils and students.

A student with attendance of only 55% was helped by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services through counselling and personal support at the start of the school day. As a result, her attendance last year rose to 96% and, at the time of the survey, it was 100%.

A boy at risk of permanent exclusion was helped by the preventions team and, with an adapted curriculum provided away from the school site, achieved a satisfactory attendance record and maintained his school work. This is likely to have enabled him to gain some qualifications in basic skills this summer.

37. Good partnerships between primary and secondary schools are essential if momentum is to be sustained. In too many cases, excellent relationships built up in the primary school with families who were hard to reach because of their circumstances were lost when the pupils transferred to secondary school. All but one of the secondary schools visited were not aware of the detailed work of the primary schools offering full core services from which their pupils transferred. In most cases, information about pupils was passed via paper records, and sometimes in a meeting between the partner schools' special needs coordinators. There was only one example in the schools visited of learning mentors working across a pyramid or cluster of schools. When a pupil transferred within the cluster, knowledge about the family was retained by the secondary school, but this important knowledge was lost if a child attended a school outside it. This made it more difficult to maintain continuity of support for families. Parents had to begin again to re-establish relationships with the school. Unless parents took the initiative, often no supportive contact began until the pupil showed renewed signs of underachievement. Sharing learning

mentors, or family support workers, across phases within a cluster might resolve at least some of these concerns.

38. One of the secondary schools visited suggested that primary schools providing the full core offer caused problems, explaining that, because pupils had been so well looked after and nurtured, the primary school had not found it necessary to apply for a statement of special educational need for the pupil. This provided strong evidence of the potential value of extended schools, as well as reflecting the relatively poorer support for pupils when they transferred to this secondary school. Rather than looking to replicate the effective provision of their primary schools, the secondary school believed that a statement of special educational need would bring resources to support them.

Further information

Publications

Extended services in schools and children's centres (HMI 2609), Ofsted, 2006.

How well are they doing? (070021), Ofsted, 2008.

Extended schools; building on experience, DCSF, 2005.

The extra mile: how schools succeed in raising aspirations in deprived communities (DCSF-00447-2008), DCSF, 2008.

Websites

Information about extended schools is available at:
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/extendedschools.