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**National College**  
for Leadership of Schools  
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**Schools and academies**

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# The 2009 inspection framework: well-being and community cohesion

**Resource**

# Six schools inspected in September or October 2009

## Case study

Some school leaders have always been concerned about the balance they need to find between the priorities of teaching and learning on the one hand and their school's contribution to students well-being, partnerships and community cohesion on the other. This is often caricatured as a tension between the drive for narrowly defined attainment and responsibility for a wider range of outcomes for children and young people. In autumn 2009, some of that concern and tension became focused on the new Ofsted inspection framework which had been published that September<sup>1</sup>. The national press and other outlets picked up a number of stories in which schools reported that the balance in their inspections had not reflected their work and achievements fairly.

Section 5 of the Education Act 2005 had required Ofsted inspectors to report not only on the teaching, learning and leadership of schools, but also on wider aspects of a school's work, including the contribution made by a school to the well-being of its pupils and to community cohesion. The framework for school inspection introduced in September 2009 described how those wider aspects were to be inspected and balanced in the overall judgement of a school's performance.

The six schools contributing to this case study were all inspected under the new framework. The College asked researchers to identify schools which had been judged to be at least good overall and at least good for achievement and for their contributions to partnerships for well-being and to community cohesion. These six were chosen to offer a spread across phases – one special, two secondary and three primary schools – and across the country including the south east, the south west, the north west and the Midlands.

The six schools were chosen from those which were inspected very soon after the new framework's introduction and before the autumn half term in 2009. The overall description of each of these six met the criteria for being at least 'good'; some had outstanding features. The narrative in the six inspection teams' main findings confirmed that each of the schools was judged to have improved since its last inspection and was well placed to improve further.

Professor Denis Mongon from the London Centre for Leadership of Learning at the London University Institute of Education, was asked to read the inspection reports and school self-evaluation forms and to talk with the headteachers. To follow is his summary of the learning points from the inspections reports and the leaders' accounts.

Following this introduction, there are six further case study sections, each of which summarises the approach at one of the schools. These are arranged in alphabetical order.

## Summary of key learning

The key learning from this project can be organised into four areas:

1. **The leaders' profound sense of community.**
2. **Engaging parents and the wider neighbourhood.**
3. **Making effective links with other schools and services.**
4. **Managing the relationship with the inspection team.**

<sup>1</sup> A summary of the main judgements in the 2009 inspection framework is provided in Appendix 1 at the end of this case study

## 1. The leaders' profound sense of community

The outstanding feature of this project and, in particular, the conversations with the headteachers was their recurrent use of the word 'community', first to describe their own school and then the school as part of a geographical, neighbourhood community and as part of a wider professional, service community. The word 'community' derives from two older words: 'com' meaning together and 'munus' meaning a gift. There was a great deal in the leaders' commentaries which was evocative of the idea of groups whose members are capable of bringing gifts, and of three communities, which far from being a problem, had the potential to be a gift to one another:

- The school community where everyone could contribute to learning and be a learner whatever their age or status, so benefiting both the neighbourhood community and also other children's services.
- The neighbourhood community whose adults could be offered learning experiences and who could contribute to the learning of their children and young people, so benefiting both the school and also other children's services.
- The service and professional community whose members could learn from one another and contribute to one another's objectives, so benefiting the school and neighbourhood communities.

In each of these three overlapping areas, these six school leaders appeared to see their role as making the participant's experience, irrespective of age or status, effective and so far as possible, enjoyable. Their intolerance of a second rate contribution, particularly from the adults, meant that the experience was not always comfortable. That approach permeates the learning points listed below.

- The governors and professional leaders of these schools believe that the 'hard' attainment outcomes and 'soft' care, well-being and community cohesion outcomes are inextricably linked.
- They repeatedly wonder why anyone would want to apply a greater priority to one rather than the other: "Our commitment has to be to the whole child, helping them to become accomplished and comfortable with themselves".

- They repeatedly wondered how anyone could separate the work in that kind of way: "Working with parents and the community, is how you create the right atmosphere. It's not just the encouragement parents will then give their own children, it's the contribution different adults make, in different kinds of ways, to our curriculum offer."
- Nonetheless, these leaders all regard the quality of teaching and learning as their first and non-negotiable responsibility. Some who moved into schools which were underachieving spoke about the quick and hard decisions they had to make if staff did not respond to otherwise supportive efforts. Some who had led and developed their schools over a longer period spoke about the relentless concentration needed to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is maintained.
- For these leaders, being a school community means treating the pupils with constant respect: "They have to know that you do like them. There has to be enough of that so that when you do have to be tough with them, there is a relationship to get back to." Pupil voice, student council, pupil self-evaluation, pupil lesson evaluations, student leadership, student evaluation of the service offer are activities regularly acknowledged by the inspectors for their positive impact. Valuing and nurturing the student contribution to their own learning and the development of the organisation permeates each of these schools, whatever the age or abilities of the young people.
- For these leaders, being a school community means that the medium is the message. The way that the adults are treated and treat one another cannot be different from the way in which they are expected to treat the pupils. Their care for the staff does not prevent these leaders having high expectations of their colleagues. Staff who could not improve to an acceptable standard with the available support were helped or even required to move on. At the same time, these leaders acknowledged the contribution and value of their colleagues. Their fundamental respect and concern for staff showed itself in many different ways, from the school funded end of term lunch (for the adults, once the pupils had left), through formalised lifestyle policies and on to a professional development commitment which was common to all six schools.

## 2. Engaging parents and the wider neighbourhood

These six school leaders saw their parent community and the wider neighbourhood as contributors to their work, either directly by providing time, venues, placements or other resources which would broaden the curriculum, or indirectly by their ability to influence the attitudes and ambitions of the children and young people. The leaders approached this in ways which reflected their local circumstances but which contained some common threads:

- By creating opportunities to have positive encounters with parents – then when there are difficult issues there is, just as with the pupils and staff, a good relationship to fall back on.
- Through parenting classes and other events to build parental skills and confidence – a common feature of the provision around these schools.
- Most of the schools had arrangements with local providers to offer adult learning classes including, but certainly not limited to, basic skills.
- All of the schools had used workforce reform to recruit an increased number of local people in non-teaching roles and had then provided learning and career opportunities for them.

## 3. Making effective links with other schools and services

These six leaders worked purposefully at placing their schools inside local networks of providers. Sometimes this was at the centre or head of a network and sometimes off-centre, in either supportive or receptive roles.

- Sometimes these networks are built around a group of schools: for example, education improvement partnerships and learning communities.
- Sometimes they are built around a wider range of service and locality planning: for example, locality partnerships, children's area partnerships and excellence clusters.
- Sometimes they are built around ad hoc arrangements with individual providers and services, including the voluntary sector.
- Extended schools co-ordinators could play a key role in these network developments.

## 4. Managing the relationship with the inspection team

These six leaders and their governing bodies were active in managing the inspection process. They report that the six inspection teams were thoughtful about the range of their work and the contexts in which they were working.

- Their management began with the self-evaluation form. These leaders recommend careful reading of the framework and SEF and then a loading of every scrap of evidence for activity and impact into the appropriate sections. "It needs to be a working document. Use it as an audit and check list for yourself and the school as much as it is for Ofsted. Then there won't be any surprises or disappointments".
- They recommend "transparency and frankness... Fabrication is really unlikely to work".
- They recommend having narrative accounts to hand from pupils, parents or other professionals as supplementary evidence to the SEF.
- Their experience of the new, more shared approach, was positive. "This was an inspection 'with us' not 'to us'", reported one headteacher. "I enjoyed my interview with the lead inspector", said one chair of governors: "The questions were reasonable and they did take our context into account."
- They recommend taking the evaluation schedule into every meeting with a member of the inspection team. In cases of disagreement, they referred to the evaluation schedule: "I did not try to sell our approach to them: I followed the guidance documents, I went through sentence by sentence and produced the evidence in advance. When we disagreed, I went through that again, sometimes adding to the material, sometimes helping them to find it in the existing pile – the evidence is what they want."

# Hilldene Primary School, Havering

## Case study

Hilldene Primary School in the London Borough of Havering is much larger than average with almost 700 pupils. The number from minority ethnic groups is higher than average and increasing. Almost 20 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language and overall there are 34 mother tongues represented in the school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than local or national averages and the proportion of pupils from crowded housing is also high. The locality has high rates of crime and domestic violence. Amongst its extended services, the school manages a breakfast club and a private provider runs an after-school club. Brian Davy, the Chair of Governors, describes Hilldene: "We're a school with many challenges, which do not get easier as the years go by. The area has a very wide social mix. The headteacher and her team deserve credit for our success."

## Summary

Extracts from the 2010 Ofsted report illustrate the school's success and some of the reasons behind it:

"This is a rapidly improving school where the inspired and determined leadership of the headteacher has led to the provision and the outcomes being transformed since the last inspection."

"Pupils achieve well in the classroom and enjoy learning across all subjects."

"The school is a cohesive society and it works well with the local community to extend the pupils' understanding of the world in which they live."

"Very good contributions are made by the home school support workers and the learning mentors to support both pupils and their families."

"[The school] has recently invested in a parent and toddler group that gives families a warm and friendly start to their children's school life."

"The school operates as a harmonious community, with good relationships clearly apparent."

"The school shows a strong commitment to promoting cohesion within and outside the school community. The school has a good understanding of its own community through its strong links with other local schools."

## Key learning

Jane Davenport, the headteacher at Hilldene, describes herself as overwhelmingly committed to equalities and the full range of Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes for each child. The chair of governors, Brian Davy shares that commitment and has a deep respect for Jane's leadership.

Jane is clear about:

- the importance of assembling a team of governors and senior staff who share the commitment, "otherwise, it would be impossible to get this far..."
- the value of parental contributions even when those are complaints: "Parents' complaints can be one way of monitoring how well we are doing. Our parents used to complain about social and behavioural things, mostly about nits, lost jumpers, fair discipline and so on...we've worked hard to move that on to questions about teaching and learning, about standards and outcomes
- building networks: Hilldene is one of two local extended schools in the locality with a children's centre on site. It works very closely with its partner schools and other providers of children's services, particularly on extended services and matters of well-being and community cohesion. These networks and their collaborative work have been built on relationships developed over the past eight years as part of an excellence cluster

## Hilldene's approach

Jane Davenport and Brian Davy do not see the school's contribution to well-being and community cohesion as an addition to their core work but more of a thread running through it. Brian says, "To me, it is just what you have to do."

Hilldene's success is built on the increasing strength of its teaching and learning. This has been a priority for the head, governors and senior leadership. The appointment of an assessment manager to improve assessment for learning and consequent tracking have played an important role in that. The staff have also worked hard to create a warm, safe and stable environment for learning. This has been, in part, by promoting shared language and behaviour to bring the school's vision into day to day activity. Jane Davenport says: "For example, we don't tell pupils what they have done wrong. We want the children to take responsibility for their own behaviour so we ask them to tell us which rule they have broken and whether this is what happens in good schools? You have to let the children know that you don't like what they have done, but you still like them."

Hilldene has also used the opportunities created by the introduction of teaching and learning responsibilities to restructure its work and to use learning mentors and home support teachers to create the spaces where parents can be drawn into conversations about teaching and learning.

Alongside that approach to the core of teaching and learning, Hilldene has reached out to its community and parents as well as to the network of other services.

For the community and parents, the school has provided:

- the founding impetus for a 'Friends of Hilldene' group
- weekly 'read together' sessions where parents can come into school, read with their children and have some informal contact with teachers, mentors and home school support workers
- termly parent assemblies where parents can accompany their children
- a toddler group for 20 parents who are, at the same time, developing informal contacts with the school

- family learning programmes, organised through the local adult college and supported by a school based crèche
- home school support workers, with a case load of around 40 families
- NVQ placements for parents on childcare courses
- a visit by nursery staff to every child's home
- employment for over 30 support staff, overwhelmingly local people

Reaching out to partner other schools and services, Hilldene has:

- an inclusion manager, who manages the school's learning support assistants and organises its 'provision map', the picture of its links and liaisons with other providers
- a locality partnership and excellence cluster of schools and other agencies. The partnership, in turn, collaborates well with the primary mental health team
- working arrangements with local speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, education welfare services, the family information service, the safer neighbourhoods team, Women's Aid and Job Centre Plus, amongst others

## Further information

The local contact for Hilldene School is Jane Davenport: [jdavenport@hilldene.havering.sch.uk](mailto:jdavenport@hilldene.havering.sch.uk)

The school's 2009 Ofsted report can be accessed at: [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_providers/full/\(urn\)/102325](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/102325)

# Joseph Leckie Community Technology College, Walsall

## Case study

Joseph Leckie Community Technology College serves an ethnically diverse area of Walsall. It is a little larger than average and two thirds of its students are from minority ethnic groups, mainly from Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi backgrounds. Almost one fifth of those on roll are at an early stage of learning English. Social deprivation measures for the area are relatively high and a well above average proportion of students, approaching 40 per cent, are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The school gained specialist technology college status in 1999. It provides a full range of extended services to the community, including parental support, adult learning, and support to promote achievement among ethnic groups. Joseph Leckie was National Secondary Extended School of the Year in 2008.

## Summary

Extracts from the 2010 Ofsted report illustrate the school's success and some of the reasons behind it:

"This is a good school that has improved in key areas since its last inspection. A strength is the high standard of care provided by a dedicated staff."

"The school is led very well by an experienced and highly respected headteacher whose vision, for a school at the hub of the community it serves, is reflected in its work. The school is outward-looking and innovative."

"Attainment on entry to year seven is typically considerably below average and in some years, such as in year 11 in 2009, it was well below. Most students achieve well and attainment in year 11 currently is on course to be a little below average by 2010... One factor contributing to the improving picture of achievement is the breadth of the curriculum, where the school has used its partnerships to provide a more diverse range of courses and training for 14 to 19 year olds. This has resulted in a considerable drop in those leaving year 11 who are not in education, employment or training."

"Students from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds contribute much to their school and local community."

"The school works hard to communicate and consult with parents and carers... The school attaches great importance to its communication with parents and employs several ways in which staff meet and consult parents and listen to their concerns."

"Partnerships with local business groups have enabled the school to provide alternative pathways,

including work-based learning opportunities for those who would benefit most."

"Standards of care, guidance and support are high... The school has very well developed links with outside agencies and partners to ensure that the range of learners' needs is met and to promote good behaviour."

"A very good range of extended services places the school at the heart of its community, promoting sports, dance and many community activities, including business mentoring schemes. Well developed links with local business and the range of ethnic groups locally promote community cohesion well."

## Key learning

Keith Whittlestone, headteacher at Joseph Leckie School believes that the school's success with student's attainment is inseparable from the work it does to care for their well-being and to promote community cohesion: "Some people might say they do that work because Ofsted expects them to, but I don't think that can be the case. Those things are an issue for any school which takes children from its local community. Parents and community, parents in particular, are crucial to a school's success. It's something I've always believed and that we've worked at since I came here."

Keith also believes that the quality of teaching and learning within the school is "crucial". If there is a virtuous circle in which classroom activity benefits from the work on other ECM outcomes and they in turn benefit from classroom success, it cannot get away, Keith argues, from the basic quality of teaching and learning.



Keith gives a high priority to working with parents and the community so they can support their children's learning. Sometimes that means supporting their own child, although Keith also uses the school's community contacts as a powerful source of enrichment and enhancement of the curriculum. He says: "Students benefit from the reality, the real life experiences that people bring in to school. For example, when they listen to someone who is running a business, talking about what that is like, it does come to life for them."

Keith also locates his school actively in the networks of local providers and support agencies.

## Joseph Leckie's approach

The approach at Joseph Leckie starts with its commitment to a high quality classroom experience. Keith Whittlestone sets great store by the capacity of his staff to support one another's professional development and to push constantly for improvement. Advanced skills teachers, a teaching and learning group and use of the Teaching and Learning Academy are some of the tactics adopted at the school alongside shared lesson demonstrations. He also cites the development of student lesson evaluation as useful approach which draws students into a reflection about their learning opportunities as well as providing feedback to teachers.

The school builds strong links with parents and families including:

- a full range of extended school services
- specialist services including an education welfare officer and home school liaison officer
- regular surveys of parental attitudes and opinions with visible responses to the evidence
- success centre staff including learning mentors and dedicated teaching assistants.
- nurturing a strong parents, teachers and friends association which can critique and contribute to new developments
- a single point of contact for families through the house vertical tutorial system

The school develops and uses links with the community to a wide variety of ends, including:

- 'Time for change' - a residential programme which empowers young potential leaders to challenge racist tendencies
- home language teaching offered as an option at the weekends
- using visiting speakers and external placements to create curricular breadth, including 'applied science in the workplace' sessions and local companies working with individual students on their A-level design technology coursework on leather, engineering, security systems
- links with the Design and Process Innovation Centre at Birmingham City University
- year 10 students working with year five pupils from partner primary schools on community cohesion projects
- sixth form students making a positive contribution to the community as youth leaders on the summer activities programme

The school is an active participant in a range of local partnerships which bring together a variety of providers and stakeholders. These partnerships include the:

- children's area partnerships, where the headteacher chairs a community cohesion working group which includes representation from primary and secondary educational establishments, the police, community leaders, parents, residents' and tenants' management associations.
- tenants' management association local meetings
- local authority's 'next practice network', whose members are headteachers and officers
- school also encourages services to operate from the school site, successfully with the behaviour support team, the local police, social services and the youth offending team

## Further information

The local contact for Joseph Leckie School is Keith Whittlestone at [st-whittlestone-k@j-leckie.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:st-whittlestone-k@j-leckie.walsall.sch.uk)

The school's 2009 Ofsted report can be accessed at [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_providers/full/\(urn\)/104243](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/104243)

# Mayfield Community and Special School

## Case study

Mayfield School in Cumbria educates pupils and students between the ages of 5 and 19 with severe and complex learning difficulties. Pupils and students join the school at different times of their school lives and Mayfield has a wide catchment, with some learners travelling up to an hour each day. There are around 90 pupils on roll, about a quarter of them in the sixth form. Boys outnumber girls almost two to one. About one fifth of the students had statements for profound and multiple learning difficulties, the rest for specific learning difficulties. Almost all require help with communication and many are assisted with mobility. All the pupils are white British and 34 receive free school meals.

Mayfield has specialist status for special educational needs and has accreditations in Activemark (2008), Eco Schools Bronze Award, Investors in People (2008), the Sports Mark (2008) and the Inclusion Charter Mark 'Enhancing Gold' status (2009).

## Summary

Extracts from the 2010 Ofsted report illustrate the school's success and some of the reasons behind it:

"Mayfield is a good and inclusive school with many outstanding features. It is extremely well led and managed...The school meets the educational needs of pupils and students well and provides outstanding care and support...The headteacher has taken the lead in making significant improvements to the provision since the last inspection..."

"Despite the physical and other needs of the pupils and students, Mayfield focuses on learning so that all can achieve...pupils' progress compared to pupils and students in other similar schools is at least good...the curriculum is outstanding..."

"Much has been done to try to ensure that good links with learners' homes are maintained. For example, specialist software has been introduced that is designed to help parents and carers communicate with school staff through the internet."

"...pupils and students rely on the strong and positive links with outside agencies to support their medical and other needs. Without these links they would often be unable to attend school."

"The post-16 classes make excellent use of facilities and partners outside of the school to enable students to gain access to work related opportunities such as supported work experience and college courses."

"Community cohesion strategies are outstanding when considered in the context of the work undertaken to engage the young people with the wider community. It is also very well embedded into

the curriculum through citizenship and personal social and health education."

## Key learning

Lynne Brownrigg, headteacher at Mayfield School is very clear: "All the students at our school have a range of abilities which need to be harnessed and used to their maximum potential in our school community, in the community around school and in the communities they come from." Students join the school at different times of their school lives and Mayfield has a wide catchment area, so Lynne also draws a comparison with mainstream schools around her in Cumbria whose students travel from several village communities: "Those schools have similar challenges to make community connections..."

The quality of teaching and learning "is incredibly high on Mayfield's agenda" and is the foundation on which the school builds all its other work. It places great emphasis on personal, social, health and economic education to define the ethos of the school.

Lynne is convinced the way that people in a school treat one another, whatever their age or status, has an indivisible quality. High expectations, avoiding confrontation, offering alternatives ("we can show our students alternative ways to manage their behaviours positively") and investing in everyone's learning and well-being are recurring phrases in her conversation (and endorsed by the 2008 IIP Report). "There is", said one governor, "a positive culture of learning for staff and pupils."

## Mayfield's approach

Mayfield's approach to teaching and learning is based on personalisation and what the headteacher describes as "a punchy curriculum" managed by the two departmental assistant headteachers. The school is moving beyond individual education plans designed by teachers for students who might or might not know where the experience is leading. The staff are working to draw the students into the design of their personalised curriculum and into taking ownership of their learning. The school is proactive to improve communications between the school and home so that parents and carers have a better understanding of the work done with their children. Lynne Brownrigg describes this as an important step, but deeply challenging when students have a range of complex difficulties: "Our students have the same right to know what their personal targets are as any others", Lynne says. "The school's expectation therefore is for curriculum and lesson planning of a very high order."

Educational visits and adventurous outdoor learning residential programmes are used to enhance the students' self-esteem and confidence so that they can contribute well to the school and wider communities.

Mayfield is the hub site for the local Copeland Schools Sports Partnership and Mayfield's school sports co-ordinator has the overriding responsibility for inclusion across that partnership for two days a week. This is one of the ways, along with attendance at the local headteacher meetings, Lynne ensures engagement with a range of schools: "I have a responsibility to ensure that I engage with headteacher colleagues across all phases of education – special, primary, secondary and further education – in developing collaborative relationships."

The school hosts the extended school co-ordinators who support schools in the Whitehaven extended schools cluster group and Mayfield itself is delivering the full core offer.

The school provides a base for health professionals including a physiotherapist and occupational therapist. The school's 'reach out service', led by the inclusion co-ordinator, supports mainstream colleagues with, for example, advice, training, observations, planning and assessment, to enhance the curriculum in facilitating a range of differences in their schools. The reach out service also extends the schools expertise into the local community working alongside the Specialist Teaching Advisory Service and the Cumbria Primary Care Trust.

The transport demands prevent some pupils joining in after-school activities on the Mayfield site. The school also offers multi skills clubs off site at the local leisure centre, art club, multi-gym club, school choir and a youth club.

Connectivity and networks are a vital part of the school's work. For example the stakeholder group, convened to support the school's application for specialist status, included parents, Connexions, specialist teachers, governors, local authority advisors, partnership development officers, school sports co-ordinators, community coaches, adult services managers, Sure Start and Howgill children's centre.

Local community groups, for example a stroke survivors' group using the gym, have access to the school's specialist facilities. A local day centre, Hensingham, has drawn on specialists at Mayfield to introduce 'MOVE', an approach to independent movement, for adults using the centre.

## Further information

The local contact for Mayfield School is Lynne Brownrigg at [lynne.brownrigg@mayfield.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:lynne.brownrigg@mayfield.cumbria.sch.uk)

The school's 2009 Ofsted report can be accessed at [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_providers/full/\(urn\)/112464/\(type\)/65536/\(typename\)/Special%20schools](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/112464/(type)/65536/(typename)/Special%20schools)

# Middlewich High School, East Cheshire

## Case study

Middlewich High School serves the small town of Middlewich in East Cheshire local authority. It is a smaller than average 11 to 16 comprehensive school with almost 700 students. Most students live either in Middlewich or the neighbouring town of Winsford, four miles away. About eight per cent of the mostly white British students are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of students with special educational needs and disabilities is average although the number of students with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The school is a designated centre for the hearing impaired and also provides specialist autistic support. The school is a designated specialist college for mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and science. The school holds the Inclusion Quality Mark (2006), Investors in People (2006), Sportsmark (2007 and 2008), The Intermediate International School Award (2008) and is in the process of applying for Eco School Status and the National Healthy Schools Award.

## Summary

Extracts from the 2010 Ofsted report illustrate the school's success and some of the reasons behind it:

"This is a good school that offers outstanding care for its students in an exceptionally safe environment. Consequently, students attain above average results in examinations and make good progress."

"Students enjoy and are proud of their school. This is evidenced in outstanding attendance, their good behaviour and their very positive contribution to the school..."

"Outstanding care and guidance systems, combined with good partnerships with support agencies and local providers, ensure that all students feel very safe and that their particular needs are met."

"Good partnerships with local providers and colleges enable the school to secure a personalised curriculum in the upper school. This has been particularly successful with some students who were in danger of disengaging with school."

"For example, individual students, who in other circumstances may have fallen out of education, are now doing well at college and have real and achievable ambitions for their future employment. The school is deservedly proud of these achievements alongside its growing academic success."

"The school rightly has a high reputation in the community and with its parents and carers who show very high levels of satisfaction in all that it offers for their children."

"Work with the local community is strong, as evidenced by the support provided for the local traveller community, the access to the school for adult and community learning, and specialist college work in the primary school. This school is genuinely at 'the heart' of its community."

## Key learning

Martin Forster, headteacher at Middlewich, points to a range of factors which are contributing to the school's success, including:

- treating every participant in the school's life with the same respect and expectation -student, staff member, parent and community representative
- an emphasis on engaging with parents, responding quickly to their concerns and promoting their role
- the importance of nurturing students into being contributors to their own education and leaders in their own school
- the value which teaching assistants and learning mentors add to the quality of learning and behaviour around the school

## Middlewich's approach

Teaching and learning is at the core of Middlewich's work. As part of his promotion of staff development, Martin Forster has an associate assistant headteacher role in the leadership team, responsible for a wider teaching and learning group. That group plays a leading role in the school's drive for further improvement of classroom activity.

Martin is convinced that partnerships which the school can create with people outside have a deep impact on what happens inside the school. He says: "That is important to creating the right environment so that staff and students can then be in the right frame of mind. They can't perform at their best otherwise."

For students, Middlewich High School:

- finds time and funding to make the school council, the educational improvement partnerships and student council vital elements of the school culture
- has responded to student initiatives with projects including refurbishment, curriculum development, a town-wide 'boredom busters' website, establishing the Middlewich youth support team of peer counsellors
- provides a strong team of mainly locally recruited teaching assistants and learning mentors, to support the teacher led classroom activity

For parents, Middlewich High School:

- uses informal contacts as well as annual meetings, consultation days, a termly parents' forum and regular surveys to monitor parental views and to help parents contribute to curricular and organisational changes
- involves parents closely in curriculum development and changes to the school day
- deploys home school liaison officers, funded by the local EIP, to help build a better relationship between the school and the least engaged parents
- offers on-site courses for parents and other adults including accredited courses in maths, languages and computing or non-accredited courses in art, pilates, street dance and yoga

For its wider community and partnerships, Middlewich High School:

- conducts an annual survey of stakeholder views
- works closely as a member of the local Middlewich EIP with two main primary school partners and 13 smaller schools, as well as being a member of the East Cheshire schools' collaborative of eight secondary schools
- established a virtual learning environment for use with travellers and pupils at risk and provision on-site for post-16 and adult learning, variously with the Learning and Skills Council, the local sixth form college and the local further education college to share good practice
- encourages pupils to support a wide range of communal activities including charity fund raising the GCSE catering groups support for the senior citizens' Christmas party and summer cream tea, Remembrance Day service and local historical pageants, and working with the Middlewich Clean Team in large numbers to promote recycling and a reduction in litter
- developed a strong partnership with the local cross-service community action team to enhance the support and guidance for pupils and parents, including awareness raising on the problems of teenage excessive alcohol intake and organising out of school activity which promotes personal development and reduces anti-social behaviour

## Further information

The local contact for Mayfield School is Martin Forster at [maforster1@aol.com](mailto:maforster1@aol.com)

The school's 2009 Ofsted report can be accessed at [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_providers/full/\(urn\)/111410](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/111410)

# Parkside Community Primary School, Kent

## Case study

Parkside Primary is a fairly small primary school with around 160 pupils age 3 to 11 on roll, including more than 40 who attend the nursery on a sessional basis. Most pupils come from the area immediately around the school, which also includes a settled travellers' site. More than half the pupils take free school meals and about a third are on the SEN register at School Action Plus and a quarter at School Action. A little over 10 per cent of pupils are on the child protection register. The turnover of pupils is a little above average. Only very few pupils, however, have a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils do not have English as their first language. The school, which has achieved Healthy Schools and extended schools (established) accreditations, is working towards advanced accreditation for the latter. It also holds the Primary Quality Mark, the modern foreign languages bronze award and the Early Years Kitemark.

## Summary

Extracts from the 2010 Ofsted report illustrate the school's success and some of the reasons behind it:

"Parkside has made significant strides forward since its last inspection and is now a good school which strongly harbours the ambition to develop even further... Key to its success is the outstanding care, guidance and support which it provides for its pupils and, increasingly, for parents and carers who find difficulty engaging with school."

"Pupils' learning and progress is outstanding because of their enthusiasm for learning and keenness to please their teachers and do well... [they] achieve outstandingly well from very low starting points..."

"The pupils' outstanding progress over several years results primarily from the school's ability to address the profound and often multiple needs of its many vulnerable pupils so skillfully."

"The school has a good capacity to sustain its continued improvement. The headteacher's drive and vision for the school is outstanding."

"The school has worked hard to achieve more stability in staffing, including effective professional development for all adults."

"Excellent liaison with the local police, breakfast and after-school clubs and many other initiatives are all making a significant, positive impact in addressing the issue..."

"Vulnerable pupils, whatever their concerns, receive excellent support and the school makes outstanding use of external agencies... Links with external agencies, other schools and partners are outstanding in promoting the well-being of pupils. They also broaden opportunities for learning and open pupils' eyes to opportunity, culture and traditions in the wider world."

"The school engages well with the Gypsy/Romany community and these pupils are doing better than these pupils do nationally... Staff treat all with great dignity and respect."

"The school's contributions to tackling discrimination and to promoting community cohesion are also outstanding."

Parkside's safeguarding procedures were judged to be outstanding.

## Key learning

Irene Nierzwicka, headteacher at Parkside, aims to make everyone who walks through the school door feel welcome, important and able to recognise first at a glance and then on further examination that it is a place with visibly high standards. That, Irene asserts should apply to everyone: pupil, parent or carer, staff or other visitor. For Irene, there is no distinction worth making between work focused on attainment, well-being and community cohesion. They are too interdependent for that. To achieve the effect she is seeking, Irene talks about four key factors:

- creating the atmosphere – image is important and what the school looks and feels like is a priority for Irene
- establishing the systems – by observing, tracking, monitoring and analysing the quality of teaching and learning, then focusing development and support where it is most needed
- driving the vision – every effort at Parkside is focused on outcomes for the children and Irene, for whom teaching is a second career, says, “the big wide world is tough so why would we teachers offer, still less accept, the second best for children?”
- building communications – this, Irene says, is a two way process: she and her colleagues need to hear what parents and carers and professional partners have to say as well as communicating their hopes and expectations in return

## Parkside’s approach

Irene Nierzwicka’s ambition is that every child in the locality should attend Parkside and to achieve that she has to overcome some resistance to education: resistance based on the parents’ and carers’ own poor experience at school and some based on the school’s formerly disappointing reputation.

- Irene’s first approach has been to raise the quality of teaching and learning. “I and the leadership team have had to be decisive in tackling underperformance when a teacher has not responded to support and guidance. It is really not comfortable but our pupils can’t afford for us to tolerate anything second rate.” Rigorous systems to monitor teaching, learning, standards and progress sit alongside a responsive professional development culture in which the role of everyone as leaders is a major feature. All senior leaders and subject leaders receive externally sourced coaching, mentoring and training so that they develop their leadership. Support staff have been given responsibility for key areas including aspects of speech and language support, early years, additional educational needs, ICT and specific learning difficulties.
- The environment is another priority. “This is such an important place in children’s lives,” says Irene, “It just has to speak quality to the pupils and parents and carers at every turn. We are in an area renowned for violence, drugs and alcohol

abuse and it often looks like that. The school always looks good. We use corporate colours, blue and green, for everything from the chairs to the school uniform. We have landscaped areas outside and fresh flowers inside. The plastic cutlery and airline trays have gone from dinner time, replaced with individual plates, bowls and proper cutlery. I insist on all the breakfast and after school club crockery being quality china.”

- The school adopts an ‘open door’ policy for parents and carers. The extended school leader is a member of the school’s leadership team alongside the headteacher and two assistant headteachers. Her role, entirely pastoral, includes line managing the teaching assistants, working directly to support some families and developing Parkside’s extended services offer. The current extended school leader is a former teaching assistant who, in Irene’s words, is “another member of staff who has worked her way through the ranks. Most of those are local people too.”
- For adult learning, Parkside has helped to establish parent and carer training sessions, ICT training, teaching assistant training, art lessons, dance classes and women’s health sessions. A popular weekly coffee morning is held for parents and carers. A re-invigorated parent teacher association has been reformed under the guidance of the extended school leader (ESL). Irene explains: “Many of the adults around here don’t have good memories of school and we need to persuade them onto the site and offer them good experiences when we do. We think that will begin to build some sense of ambition for themselves and of course for their children.”
- Irene describes Parkside’s liaison with other children’s services as “huge”. She describes it as including attendance and behaviour service, cognition and learning service, child and adolescent mental health services, educational psychology service, speech and language therapist, educational welfare officer, social services, traveller support and the school counselling service (and, Irene Nierzwicka points out, a few more besides). The two police community support officers visit the school on a regular basis, provide talks on a range of safety issues and help when necessary in diffusing issues between parents and carers as well as young people on the estate.

- There are also close links with the community including social services provision on the estate, the local church and local Northgate community centre. The on-site newly created Woodside Centre has a breakfast club and after school club, conference room facilities and reception and office areas for the community. The conference room facilities are now being regularly let to outside agencies and community groups.

## Further information

The local contact for Mayfield School is rene Nierzwicka at [headteacher@parkside.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@parkside.kent.sch.uk)

The school's 2009 Ofsted report can be accessed at [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_providers/full/\(urn\)/118536/\(type\)/4096,2048/\(typename\)/Nursery%20and%20primary%20education](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/118536/(type)/4096,2048/(typename)/Nursery%20and%20primary%20education)

## Stoke Hill Junior School, Devon

### Case study

Stoke Hill Junior School serves a suburban area to the north of Exeter. It is larger than average with a little over 300 pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities is average as are the proportions from minority ethnic heritages or at an early stage of learning English.

In 2005, Stoke Hill Infant and Nursery School and Stoke Hill Junior School were formed from the pre-existing first and middle schools. The great majority of the junior school's pupils have received their early education at the nearby infant school. Many of those who did not attend the infant school have parents undertaking assignments at the University of Exeter. The enrolment of these pupils, some of whom have English as a second language, often follows the cycle of the university year, starting some time into the school's autumn term and ending abruptly the following June.

The governors manage a breakfast club and have recently taken on the management of the after-school club. The school holds a number of awards, including the International Schools and Healthy Schools awards.

### Summary

Extracts from the 2010 Ofsted report illustrate the school's success and some of the reasons behind it:

"This is a good school, as it was at its last inspection in 2006. It has improved in a number of respects."

"Pupils consistently make good progress in their learning and hence attain standards that are above average..."

"[2009 results] are above average standards from pupils' broadly average starting points, and represent good progress."

"The good teaching is founded on the very good relationships and behaviour that are evident in all classrooms. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, and generally plan work that is matched well to their needs..."

"...good features of the curriculum include good opportunities to learn about the range of world cultures, such as through cooking demonstrated by parents from minority ethnic groups..."

"The school has developed good partnerships with parents, with the partner infant school, and with external agencies such as the education welfare service. As well as their excellent forward vision for



the school, the governors are rigorous in ensuring that statutory requirements are met. For example, all requirements to keep pupils safe are in place and are of good quality, and the understanding and respect shown by pupils to others and to adults, further enhanced by the International School Award, demonstrates the school's good contribution to community cohesion."

"The excellent governing body has taken active steps to enhance collaboration with other schools, especially with the partner infant school."

"Governors have audited the school's good contribution to community cohesion and are preparing an action plan to improve this further."

## Key learning

Roy Souter, headteacher at Stoke Hill Junior School and who had been headteacher at the predecessor middle school, describes the school's catchment as a testing mixture of university families and deprived areas. "More than a quarter of the children live in areas where all the indicators of deprivation – income, employment, health, education, housing and services, crime and such like – are towards the most deprived nationally. On the other hand, more than a third come from a relatively comfortable ward, relative even by national standards." In those circumstances, Roy says, acquiring and keeping the confidence of all the families is a critical matter: "You need to create a calm, focused environment, and to do that you have to give equal emphasis across the ECM spectrum."

Roy's conversation emphasises three key points:

- The responsibility of every member of staff for every child.
- The importance of engagement with parents and the wider community.
- The value of the local learning community of schools.

## Stoke Hill's approach

Stoke Hill's approach is built on what Roy Souter calls "a rigorous programme" to evaluate the quality of the school's teaching and learning. This includes lesson observations, work sampling, questionnaires, interviews and data analysis. This, in turn, is translated into priorities for the development plan

and specific school improvement roles and responsibilities for each member of the leadership team.

The school then builds on that foundation to meet the full range of extended services within the core offer, including a breakfast club and after school club, established after consultation with parents.

Parts of the school's extended services offer and parts of its other collaboration with children's services are brokered through the Beacon Learning Community, a local partnership of one special, three secondary and ten primary schools. A key partner in that, of course, is Stoke Hill Infant and Nursery School. Parent support advisers and parenting classes have been introduced and promoted by BLC. Parents are asked every term about what types of adult learning they need and what the best times for providing those would be. ICT, modern languages and child development are included in the offer.

Stoke Hill often draws parents and local people into its work, but not only as volunteers. Roy explains: "We have parents, grandparents and other local adults working as volunteers in school. Then, workforce reform has changed the way we organise our staffing. Most of our staff can walk to work. That gives us chance to bring role models into classrooms and reflect our community. We can live our multi-cultural work day in and day out."

The school also builds social capital with its community when its facilities are used by a local groups such as the slimming club, youth club and martial arts groups. "We also," says Roy, "have good links with local churches and the mosque."

## Further information

The local contact for Stoke Hill Junior School is Roy Souter at [rsouter@stokehilljunior.devon.sch.uk](mailto:rsouter@stokehilljunior.devon.sch.uk)

The school's 2009 inspection report can be accessed at [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_providers/full/\(urn\)/113087](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_providers/full/(urn)/113087)

# Appendix 1: 2009 inspection framework

## Main judgements

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The seven main judgements relating to student outcomes are:

1. pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning, taking into account:
  - pupils' attainment
  - the quality of pupils' learning and their progress
  - the quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress
2. the extent to which pupils feel safe
3. pupils' behaviour
4. the extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles
5. the extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community
6. the extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being, taking into account pupils' attendance
7. the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The three main judgements relating to the effectiveness of the provision are the:

1. quality of teaching, taking into account the use of assessment to support learning
2. extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships
3. effectiveness of care, guidance and support

The eight main judgements relating to the effectiveness of the leadership and management are the:

1. effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement, taking into account the effectiveness of the leadership and management of teaching and learning
2. effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met
3. effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents
4. effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being
5. effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination
6. effectiveness of safeguarding procedures
7. effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion
8. effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

# Publications and resources focusing on the ECM and extended services agenda also available from the National College:

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## Advocating Every Child Matters

This booklet presents the experiences and learning of nine headteachers and assistant headteachers in their role as ECM advocates. It offers their reflections and links to the materials and tools they developed as prompts for users' own thinking and planning on ECM. It also offers some key lessons on leadership learning as it applies to the ECM agenda.

## BEST case scenario

This case study of effective multi-agency working provides insights for school leaders wanting to establish collaborative working in a multi-agency context. Read about collaboration across a cluster of schools that generated capacity and funding and helped create a bespoke multi-agency team that was of benefit to all.

## Building effective integrated leadership

In January 2009, the National College and the Children's Workforce Network brought together leaders of schools and children's centres and their multi-agency partners to discuss what effective integrated leadership means, what it looks like in practice and how it can be fostered and supported. This report is a summary of the materials that informed the discussions, the learning that took place and the findings that emerged.

## Co-location, continuity and community

This publication is based on research in 11 communities in England and shares the experiences of school leaders, children's centre managers, children's services staff, third sector workers, local authority officers, parents and children who have been involved in the co-location of one or more services for children. It outlines five themes which have emerged so that leaders can reflect on the potential benefits and challenges for similar approaches in their communities.

## Community cohesion online tool

The National College has developed an interactive online resource which allows leaders to gain a greater understanding of community cohesion and evaluate the provision within their setting.

## ECM Premium

This resource presents an overview of the findings of a study into school leadership, the ECM agenda and school standards. It provides evidence for a link between ECM and school standards – known as 'the ECM Premium' – and identifies the leadership characteristics that underpin this link. The study involved a literature review plus original research in schools.

## Emerging patterns of school leadership: ECM perspectives

This publication, with accompanying DVD, is a celebration of the ability of school leaders and their colleagues to find the local approach to collaboration and service design which offers their school its best possible grip on local opportunities and difficulties.

## Engaging schools in sustainable Every Child Matters and Extended Services

This practical resource has been produced by the Training and Development Agency for Schools and the National College to help local authorities and school leaders develop sustainable extended services and meet the goals of ECM for children and young people.

## Leadership of parental engagement

This publication and toolkit are based on research in 10 extended services clusters across the country to discover more about the ways in which school and children's centre leaders engage parents in working towards ECM outcomes. The toolkit helps schools, children's centre leaders and cluster leaders to audit and evaluate their current practice in the leadership of parental engagement, enabling its users to identify where they are now and where they want to focus future development.

## School improvement planning framework and case studies

The school improvement planning framework was produced in 2008 by the National College and the Training and Development Agency for Schools. It is a suite of tools and techniques designed to improve ECM outcomes, raise standards of achievement for all and maximise and demonstrate potential.

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