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## TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXTENDED SCHOOLS

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### Introduction

In January 2002, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and National Union of Teachers (NUT) commissioned NFER to undertake a study examining the extent and efficacy of the 'extended school' model in England. This study comprised a literature review of existing research evidence and literature concerning 'extended' or 'full-service' schools and an audit of schools currently offering extended services. Telephone interviews were undertaken with staff from 50 secondary, primary and special schools in England that were cited as providing extended provision, as well as staff from 78 LEAs. This was followed by case-study work in ten schools where a range of extended services was particularly prevalent. Issues covered included the perceived impact on pupils, families and community; as well as professional roles and teacher workload. Views on key success factors and challenges associated with the extended school were also audited.

### Key findings

- The NFER audit (which collated information on some 160 schools) identified six main types or 'arenas' of provision operating within the concept of the extended school. These were:
  - additional schooling provision offering curriculum and leisure opportunities to pupils beyond the traditional school timetable;
  - community provision offering learning and leisure opportunities, or general community facilities (e.g. drop-in or advice centres);
  - early years provision, such as crèches or pre-school facilities;
  - family and parent provision involving support relating to their child's learning or to a more general parenting or family role;
  - other agency provision (e.g. from Health, Youth or Social Services); and specialist provision, offering high calibre facilities in areas such as sports, arts IT or business.

The audit revealed there was great variety amongst schools in terms of the numbers of arenas covered and the degree of investment in them.

- Extended school delivery was said to impact positively on pupil attainment, attendance and behaviour, offering activities and facilities to increase engagement and motivation. Education and learning was said to be enhanced as the school became regarded as a site of resources and support for the community. Multi-agency input on site was also felt to more readily meet a range of pupil and family needs.
- Most interviewees said that the extended school approach led to levels of organisation and the provision of additional staffing and resources which reduced the burden on teachers. Some interviewees, in contrast, felt that workload could rise. Morale could increase as a result of an improved ethos generated by the extended schools approach.
- In the USA literature, the full-service school concept was often regarded as a grassroots movement, representing a local response to problems, placing the school at the centre of the community. A wide variety of interpretations of the extended school as a model of service delivery also emerged from the USA: ranging from fully integrated and reconceptualised systems of Education, Social and Health service delivery, to smaller-scale extensions or additions to the traditional remit of individual schools.

- UK literature and previous research would suggest that models of extended schools here conformed more closely with the latter interpretation, often appearing to adopt a more educationally focussed approach (e.g. family literacy) rather than the socio-economically driven approach (e.g. family therapy, drug counselling) more prevalent in the USA.
- The examples of extended schools emerging from this research indicate a similar 'grassroots' phenomenon as that noted in the USA. The audit of schools showed that there is considerable variation within the 'extended school' model. This, in part, was underpinned by an array of traditions and also innovation, ranging from the pre-war Community Schooling movement to new initiatives and funding streams arising from policy such as the Inclusion agenda, Community Regeneration, Lifelong Learning and specialist schools.

### Aims

The aims of the research were to:

- examine current extended provision within schools
- assess the perceived impact of extended schools on pupil attainment and related outcomes
- investigate professional perceptions of what constitutes the extended school
- assess the potential capacity for developing extended schools across English LEAs
- identify those factors that may enhance or impede the development of integrated services for pupils and families in extended schools
- assess the perceived impact of extended schools on professional roles and on continuing professional development needs.

### Background

As in the USA, in the UK there has been growing recognition that schools cannot solve the problems associated with social exclusion and multiple disadvantage on their own.

The White Paper 'Schools: Achieving Success' (England, Parliament, House of Commons, 2001) recommended that legislation be introduced which would remove the barriers schools might face in seeking to provide more support to pupils, families and communities and urged the development of pilots to 'test out such "extended schools"' (England,

Parliament, House of Commons, 2001). As a first step in doing this, 'extended' school demonstration projects were set up in three areas of England and further pilots are being funded in the current academic year.

The Education Act (England and Wales, Statutes, 2002) gives governing bodies the power to provide community services and facilities. This supports the Government's commitment to the concept of 'extended' schools. Recent guidance from the DfES on extended schools (DfES, 2002) (see [www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools)), explains the new legislation and provides advice on many practical issues.

### Methods

The research had four phases:

**Phase 1** A literature review of existing research evidence and literature concerning 'extended' schools, utilising sources from the UK, USA and Australia;

**Phase 2** An audit of the extent and types of schools offering 'extended' services in England, through telephone interviews with 79 LEA officers from 78 different LEAs, and analysis of proformas they returned itemising examples of extended schools in their authority. Analysis of these proformas led to the development by the research team of an audit of different types or 'arenas' of the 'extended school';

**Phase 3** Telephone interviews with key personnel in 50 schools (25 primary, 20 secondary and 5 special) displaying evidence of an 'extended' school approach (the selection was made according to size and type of LEA and the arena of provision); and

**Phase 4** Further case-study work in ten of these schools (five primary, four secondary and one special).

### Other findings

- In the early stages of the research (January 2002), just over a third of LEA interviewees saw the extended school approach as one that was not prevalent, or one that was in the preparatory or initial planning stages, and slightly more than a quarter felt that it was an approach that was developing within their authority. In 24 LEAs it was seen as prevalent or quite prevalent. However, perceptions of prevalence could well be

linked to a lack of clarity about what the term 'extended' actually means in practice.

- In the early stages of the research (Spring 2002), almost half of those LEA officers responding stated that, in their view, there was no generic term in use for the approach, although just under a third referred to terminology including the word 'community', for example, community schools/colleges or education. The terms 'full-service schools', 'learning community' or 'learning village' and 'extended schools' were also evident in some authorities. Several interviewees at that time referred to a lack of definition and intimated that they found the term 'extended' confusing.
- A range of management structures for an 'extended' school was evident within the sample: extended school activities might be overseen solely by the headteacher; specially appointed managers may be in place; or there may be dual management between agencies. Expanding roles and increased responsibilities were seen as having major implications for school governors. The fact that governors were themselves part of the community and were supportive was often considered influential in the success of the approach.
- Interviewees were asked about the difference between 'co-locating' and integrating services on a school site. Although the integration of services was sometimes perceived as a more effective model and therefore something to strive towards, co-location of services was also seen as a move towards integration and therefore was considered a step in the right direction, as well as being more easily achieved. Some interviewees, however, felt that both models had their merits and that which was appropriate often depended on the type of service involved or the type of school.
- The extended school approach was believed to impact positively on parents by increasing their involvement with the school and with their children's learning.
- Such an approach was said to work towards promoting attitudinal shifts amongst parents, so making them more likely to access the facilities and services available on site. Hence, this approach had the potential to increase access to services and to assist parents in increasing their skills, leading to greater empowerment within their community.
- It was thought that the extended school approach could increase parent/child interaction and contribute to greater levels of family stability and cohesion, as well as meeting particular needs through access to specialist interventions.
- The extended school approach was believed to impact positively on the community by providing a focus and a dynamic base to which other organisations may become affiliated. Community services and provisions could be clustered, co-located and integrated around the core of an extended school, leading to more efficient service accessibility and delivery.
- The impact of the extended school model on the LEA was reported as positive in the majority of cases. There were seven main positive impacts on the LEA, including improved service management and coordination, improved standards in school, the extension of existing services or provision of new services, increased access to services and more effective service delivery; increased school autonomy; as well as meeting children's needs.
- LEA officers did have some concerns that the extended school model could lead to increased workloads for LEA officers, funding reductions within the LEA, fragmentation of existing provision, the loss of strategic steerage, a loss in protecting the core function of schools and the capacity to support the approach.
- From a school perspective, many interviewees felt that the LEA had an important role in providing access to funding for the extended school approach (either directly or indirectly), as well as access to other services, support and advice. However, some also suggested that the LEA's role was limited. The majority of school-based interviewees felt that their LEA had been supportive: indeed, some felt that the LEA's support had been crucial in the success of extended schools.

- The most significant facilitating factors associated with extended school provision were the 'vision' of the headteacher, access to resources, commitment and joint working. However, different key factors were associated with varying phases in the development of extended schools, with vision and commitment particularly associated with the 'extensive' extended school, where services were being implemented in most arenas.
- Conversely, the most significant inhibiting factors associated with extended school provision centred around lack of resources, lack of space and low levels of community interest and involvement. Whilst strategies had been found to overcome these, it nonetheless remained the case that concerns still exist at school level about the extent to which schools can, or should, become fully 'extended'.
- The majority of both school- and LEA-level interviewees professed themselves to be in favour of the application of an extended school approach. At the same time, a number of key messages would appear to be evident in their discourse, namely the need for: appropriate resourcing and management; effective discussion and communication with partner agencies re roles and partnership working; and a model grounded in the contexts and needs of its particular community, not a 'top-down' imposition.

#### **Conclusion**

- This study, which began in early 2002, has seen a marked rise in the interest and prominence of the concept of the 'extended school' during its lifetime. Indeed, the terminology itself was not always in common usage a year ago. It was from other countries - the USA and Australia particularly - that research evidence and exemplars were largely available.
- The research has attempted to plot the enormous range and richness of activity actually underway in English schools and confirms how they can, and do, function as far more than providers of a mainstream curriculum to their pupils on roll during the school timetable. The categorisation of six additional 'arenas' of provision is an attempt to convey this variety of opportunity, although it is important to acknowledge how holistic and intertwined these

arenas often are felt to be in practice. Equally, school- and LEA-level views on the impact of extended schools, as well as future developments, have been outlined in detail.

- The variation within an 'extended school' model captured by the research is no doubt underpinned by the array of traditions and also new funding streams or initiatives of which schools are now a central part. From the pre-war Community Schooling movement, through to current innovations around the Inclusion and 'joined-up service' agendas, Community Regeneration initiatives, Lifelong Learning and specialist schools, this study shows how schools are already significant - indeed crucial - resources for whole communities. The enterprise, vision and energy that has gone into these developments, often in schools in difficult circumstances, has perhaps not been fully appreciated. Fragmented funding opportunities have been seized upon and moulded into single visions by dedicated school, LEA and other agency staff. In this way, it could be said that extended schools, like their US counterparts evidenced in the literature, have been a genuine 'grassroots' 'bottom-up' movement. A quiet revolution has perhaps indeed been in operation.

#### **Additional Information**

*Copies of the full report (RR408) - priced £4.95 - are available, at the end of April, by writing to DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ.*

*Cheques should be made payable to "DfES Priced Publications".*

*Copies of this Research Brief (RB408) are available free of charge from the above address (tel: 0845 60 222 60). Research Briefs and Research Reports can also be accessed at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/>*

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