

Extended schools



In association with the TDA

25.09.07 A greater role in the community

“ This isn't a soft option. It's about kick-starting self-help and community pride ”
Richard Thornhill, comment, page 7



Dance class at Penryn college, Cornwall: there's strong evidence to show that extended services can make a difference to children's educational achievements Sam Morgan-Moore

Introduction

Balancing act

For years many schools have been fulfilling a challenging dual role combining normal teaching and other academic duties with increasing pastoral responsibilities – picking up the pieces from broken homes, drug abuse, bullying and many other social problems affecting pupils, families and communities.

But then in 2003 the government launched its Every Child Matters agenda, designed in part to recognise and support the pastoral work shared by schools with outside agencies such as health, social services and the police – work that hitherto had been done on a case-by-case basis. The new policy makers wanted to recognise the central role schools were playing. To do this, they called on schools to extend their teaching and learning services, to open up their expertise and facilities to their communities, and to play a central yet – most importantly – supported role in helping to raise standards and enrich the lives of pupils, families and the local community. The government's target for all schools to offer extended services is 2010...

This supplement asks just what makes an extended school, explains the core offer to pupils, families and communities that all schools will be expected to meet and examines the many ways schools can do and are already doing this. Of course, one size does not fit all. Some will be able to offer more services than others but all schools, from the tiniest rural primary and the all-age special school through to the huge inner-city comprehensive, can offer something extra to their pupils and communities.

We examine how to set up an extended school, a process in which prior consultation is the key to success – offer something the community wants and you'll be loved forever but give it something else and you'll be wasting your time. And we also ask how offering extra services will affect staffing, resources and funding. Extending a school is a balancing act. Get it right and the benefits can flow in.

Richard Doughty

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Is the extended schools programme the initiative to transform education?

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Step out and get connected

The government wants all schools to offer an extended range of services by 2010 that will benefit everyone in the school community, especially the vulnerable. **Sarah Jewell** reports

The boys had been very nervous before setting off. They had to navigate 10 miles of waterway and 15 locks and yet they'd never canoed before. What's more, they were a "vulnerable group who had low self-esteem and we wanted to do something exciting to give them a real boost," according to their assistant headteacher, Susanne Fisher.

But their preparation paid off. "They came back from their trip on a real high; they were buzzy and self-confident," says Fisher. They had successfully completed their journey, which they had planned at their after-school club run by a local youth and community agency with John O'Gaunt community technology college, Hungerford, Berkshire.

Raising the self-esteem of children, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, by giving them enjoyable activities at after-school clubs is a central mission of the government's extended schools programme. "All children should have the chance to learn new skills and have fun out of school hours – and extended schools will give them those opportunities," says children, schools and families minister, Ed Balls.

Extended schools are at the heart of the Every Child Matters agenda, which aims to improve outcomes and raise standards of achievement for all children and young people. "You cannot raise standards and close achievement gaps without focusing on all the needs of every single child and tackling every obstacle to their learning," says Balls. "Extended schools do just that – improving children's lives, boosting their attainment and placing schools at the heart of their communities."

The government wants every school to be an extended school by 2010, and to achieve this they have to meet the "core offer" of services. This consists of a varied range of pre- and after-school activities, combined with childcare in primary schools; swift and easy access to specialist services; parenting support; adult and family learning and community access to facilities.

Caroline Coles, extended schools lead at the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), explains the aim of the programme: "It's about narrowing the attainment gap so all children, regardless of background, are provided with personalised support and services that will impact on their ability to learn in the classroom." You can't look inside the classroom, she says, without looking at what's happening outside as well, "and you ignore what goes on outside the classroom at your peril".

Schools are not expected to provide these services alone but in partnership with their local authority, local providers and other schools. Initially, in 2003, the idea was to have one full service extended school (FSES) in an area of disadvantage in every local authority. Researchers from Manchester and Newcastle universities carried out a three-year study of these first full service extended schools and the results, published in June, were very promising.

According to Manchester University's Professor Alan Dyson, who led the research: "The good news is that we found very strong evidence to show that in the best case scenario extended services can make a real difference to children's educational achievements and life chances, and particularly for children who are facing significant difficulties. Extended provision was not a distraction from the stand-

ards agenda, but a way of ensuring the best possible outcomes for all learners."

The research found that the number of pupils getting five good GCSEs at extended schools rose by five percentage points between 2005 and 2006 – compared with a national average of 2.5 points.

Key to success

The key to the success of these schools was their commitment to extended provision as part of the core business of the school, says Dyson. "If you are serious about improving children's achievements, particularly children with difficulties, you have to look outside the classroom at what these children are facing in the rest of their lives, in their families and in the community."

The research also suggested that the FSES had a positive impact on the wider community, with parents and other adults beginning to see themselves as learners and becoming more involved with what was happening in schools.

Helen Fisher, headteacher at Dedworth Green first school in Windsor, will be providing the full core offer from September and is looking forward to the impact extended services will have on Dedworth: "I realised we were never going to raise standards with the children unless we could raise aspirations with their parents," she says. "Extended schools take the pres-

'We were never going to raise standards with the children unless we could raise aspirations with their parents'

sure off parents and provide a one-stop shop. Parents have more emotional energy to help their children if their basic needs are being met and they know their children are safe and being well looked after."

The obligation for schools to develop extended services is not defined in a single piece of legislation but implied in a range of requirements covering LAs, schools and school governors. Ultimately, the onus is on local authorities to support schools to meet the core offer by 2010. According to a recent survey by Headspace, 72% of schools are already offering some ES.

Dyson thinks the programme is in the middle of a "very tricky phase and we need to help school leaders sort out what kind of services they need to provide". He cites three types of reaction to the ES programme: those keen to get on with it; those who are compliant; and those who are struggling with the idea "and are very worried that this is yet another task they have to take on that's a distraction from the things on which they are primarily judged".

This is where local authorities have a key role to play and, as the TDA's Caroline Coles says, "the success stories have been where local authorities have a complete, strategic overview and have involved their schools so they know what part they are playing in the bigger picture".

Overall, Dyson is optimistic about the programme's national rollout: "This is a wonderful opportunity to re-think what schools are about and how they work and how they link in with everything else we want to happen for children, families and communities. If we look at how attainment links to this broader agenda and if we keep pushing down this line, we could be in for some very interesting and positive times."

Extended schools The core offer

A school-centred network that joins us all up

The philosophy behind extended services is to make schools the focus of the community – but what exactly does this involve?

Jerome Monahan

The days of the school as a hermetically sealed unit are gone. No longer are parents kept at a polite but firm distance, facilities placed out of bounds at weekends and holidays, and children left to stand shivering in playgrounds waiting for the doors to open. In the last three years there has been a revolution in which the old barriers to schools engaging with the community have been breached.

Currently, some 7,000 schools are geared up to offer the full range of extended services, while over half of all English schools are on course for the same target. The clock is ticking. By 2010 all primaries, secondaries and special schools are expected to have achieved this goal.

But what is an extended school? The idea arose out of the government's commitment to reduce child poverty and champion the government's Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda. The benchmarks against which to judge all extended school provision are the five ECM targets, namely that children remain healthy and safe, can enjoy their lives and achieve, are encouraged to make a positive contribution to society, and enter adulthood equipped to ensure their economic well-being. For many people, particularly those from the most disadvantaged or hard-to-reach communities, schools are also recognised as the ideal place to access broader support, health advice and training.

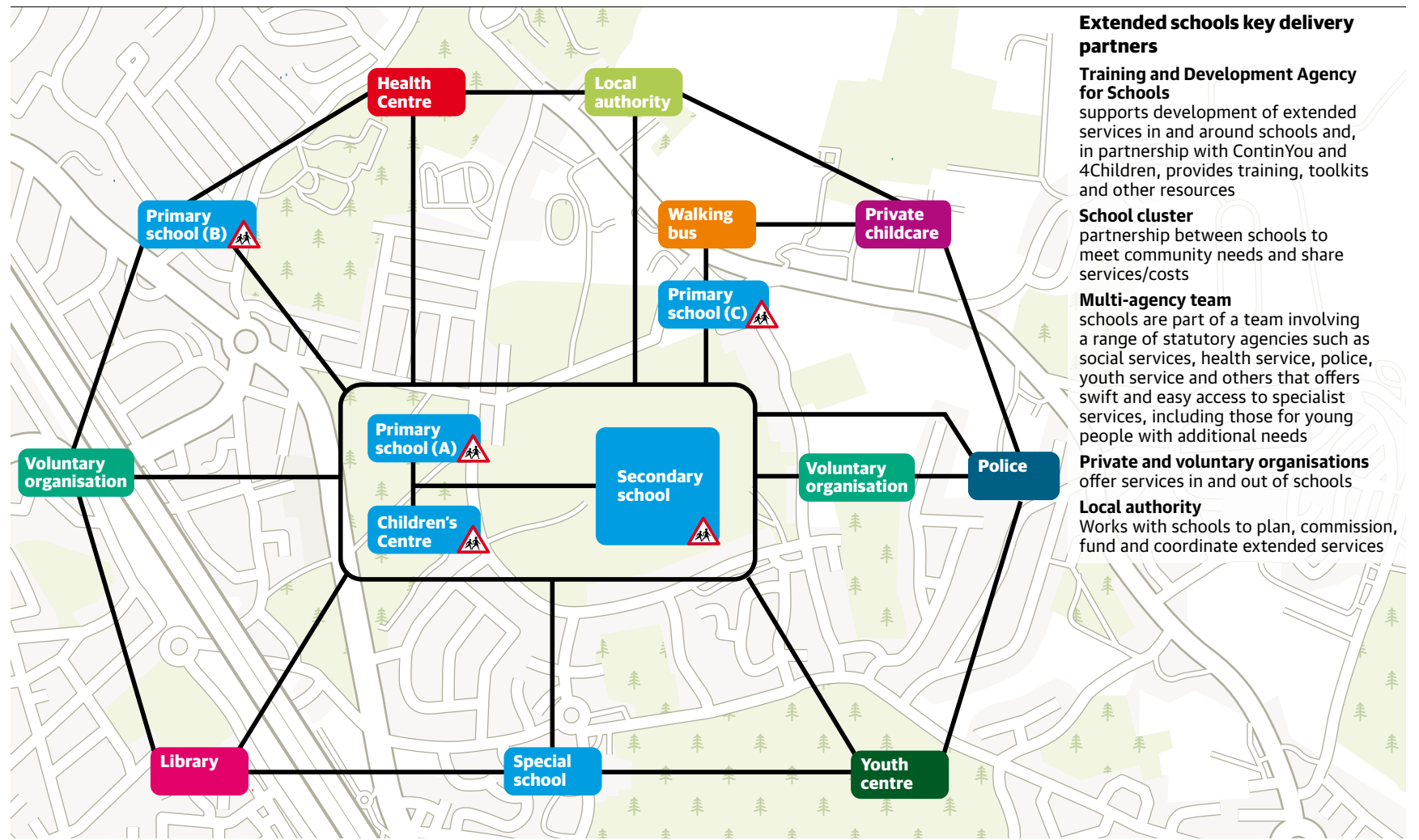
But achieving these goals needs careful preparation and, in particular, close consultation between schools, governors, parents and outside organisations to find out how best to meet their needs. The first part of this process is likely to be an assessment by the school about where it stands in terms of its local authority's Children and Young People's Plan. Ideally, this should set out existing local provision to meet ECM obligations and what more is needed. Post-2008, all local areas will have clearly established patterns of multi-agency working and schools will be expected to integrate their extended services into this.

Many institutions meet their extended school obligations by knowing enough about local provision to offer streamlined signposting to other health, education or leisure services, without the need to bring them in house.

Schools do not need to offer all services. But it's recognised that schools will often best fulfil their extended role by working in clusters and by sharing facilities and strengths. Some schools however, such as the Hadley Learning Community in Telford, can provide pre-school provision on the same site as primary, secondary and special school settings alongside community learning and leisure facilities.

Extended schools come in many shapes and sizes, but a primary school's "core offer" encompasses high-quality childcare, 8am-6pm, five days a week, 48 weeks a year, combined with a varied menu of "catch-up" and "stretch" activi-

Extended schools How the services work across a community



Primary school A

Shares site with a Sure Start children's centre, offering fully integrated services and on-site access to a wide variety of specialist therapists and health services. Emphasis on preventative and early-intervention work to improve well-being and standards of achievement

Primary school B and C

Parental feedback showed after-school childcare needs were being met by high-quality private provision, including childminders, so schools signpost parents to these providers and organise a walking bus to a private playgroup

Secondary school

Offers full range of extended services, including drop-in health centre for teenagers; wide range of after-school activities from sports clubs to study support (some open to primary school pupils); plus two family support workers who co-ordinate parenting support and family learning

Special school

offers wide range of extended specialist services, including individualised support

Private childcare an Ofsted-registered provider closely linked to several primaries

Police

based at several local schools to improve relations with young people and families, and to support PSHE curriculum work. Also run a popular holiday activity programme with a local football team

Health service

liaises closely with schools as part of multi-agency team to offer services

Youth centre

runs after-school clubs and holiday activities for several schools

Extended schools key delivery partners

Training and Development Agency for Schools supports development of extended services in and around schools and, in partnership with ContinYou and 4Children, provides training, toolkits and other resources

School cluster

partnership between schools to meet community needs and share services/costs

Multi-agency team

schools are part of a team involving a range of statutory agencies such as social services, health service, police, youth service and others that offers swift and easy access to specialist services, including those for young people with additional needs

Private and voluntary organisations offer services in and out of schools

Local authority

Works with schools to plan, commission, fund and coordinate extended services

A key element is offering pupils access to a varied menu of study support and enrichment activities

ties (study support) to raise achievement and broaden interests.

At Goddard Park primary, Swindon, a fully-integrated children's centre on site offers a whole range of health and other services to parents. This includes Allsorts – a drop-in session for parents and toddlers two afternoons a week where children can start to get used to socialising with their peers and parents can meet one another. The school's extended schools facility is also a hub for training and advice for parents and local adults.

Another key element across both primaries and secondaries is offering pupils access to a varied menu of study support and enrichment activities. In Middlesbrough, Easterside primary has successfully promoted healthy eating among students and parents by running an after-school cookery club, while the rural Writhlington school, north Somerset, has pioneered study centres in local villages based in a number of feeder primaries.

Advice and support

The extended schools agenda has seen both primaries and secondaries broaden their offer to parents and pupils, such as information sessions for parents about their children starting reception or transferring to secondary school; signposting to national and local sources of information, advice and support; and access to parenting groups and family learning sessions.

Beauchamp college at Oadby, near

Leicester, offers a broad range of family services, including parenting classes and provision for those children identified as being carers within their families because of a sibling or parents' disability or sickness. For schools such as Lister primary in Newham, south London, catering for minority ethnic communities can open access to wider services and training for parents and other adults. Lister has set up specific Bengali and Somali parents' groups to help share information on school policies, curriculum issues, and adult learning.

Another means of delivering the ECM agenda is provision by extended schools of swift and easy access to other services – health, social services and benefits. By working closely with other statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector, schools can ensure children with additional needs are swiftly identified and supported. One example is Kidbrooke

secondary school in Greenwich, London, where a drop-in service offers students both health advice and counselling.

The final goal of an extended school is opening up its facilities to the wider community. By doing this nationwide, schools are helping to drive other initiatives, not least improving public health by making their resources available to everyone locally. At Writhlington school in north Somerset, the sports centre operates as a revenue generating entity in its own right, ensuring long-term financial stability and greatly enriching the facilities available to children. At Goddard Park in Swindon the community hub is the primary's cyber cafe, which has opened up internet access for the entire community. Meanwhile at recently-built Beckstone primary the success of an on-site community development centre has enabled the school to bid and win contracts to run similar facilities across West Cumbria.

Q&A Our panel of experts answer teachers' most frequently asked questions

What key staff do I need to run extended services? What are their roles and responsibilities?

Schools offering any form of out-of-hours childcare need to employ a senior worker qualified to a minimum NVQ level 3 in Working with Children. To comply with Ofsted, schools must have an adequate staff-to-child ratio. You must have two staff on duty at any one time. Our recommendation is that schools remodel their staff to take account of extended services rather than employ additional people. This gives them greater flexibility. **RB**

How do extended services rely on multi-agency working and what does this mean in practice?

Multi-agency working is essential to the success of the extended services programme at both school and local authority levels. We have worked collaboratively with partners to align strategic local planning, schools have entered into successful partnerships with a range of agencies to develop extended services across a cluster of schools. Partnerships

with voluntary sector youth providers have been particularly successful. **RB**

What help can I expect from my local authority?

The local authority's extended schools manager or coordinator will play a proactive role by contacting the school at an early stage in the process. They will talk through with the head and senior management the core services the school can offer parents and the community. The local authority can match your school with others in the locality to form a cluster. Clusters offer schools the chance to network and pool resources. A small primary, for example, may find it impossible to provide the core offer itself, but splitting the costs with the local secondary enables them to provide a more comprehensive range of services. **CO**

Local authorities can provide start-up funding to help schools and clusters fulfil their core offer. Their human resources and governor support services can provide advice on employment-related

issues such as contracts and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. **JP**

What employment/legal issues are raised by running an extended school? What extra duties does it mean for the head and staff at the school?

There are some complex legal issues around running an extended school which is why we asked the teachers' review body to look at the remuneration heads should receive. It is a considerable addition to their contract.

Even though the head does not have to be physically present when the school extends its opening hours from 8am until late, the extra hours of opening means it is the school and governors' duty to ensure the premises are safe and secure at all times. Who else carries the can?

Criminal Records Bureau checks are another area of added responsibility. There is a long list of providers of after-school activities but, ultimately, it is the head's task to ensure they have passed all the relevant checks. Heads need to make sure the school is adequately insured for after-school activities. If a

third-party provider is hiring a room, they should make sure a proper lettings form is completed that includes insurance as part of the deal. Normally, lettings come under a local authority's insurance, but foundation schools need to ensure their insurance policies extend to after-school activities. **MB**

What is the best way of marketing your extended school to parents and the wider community?

Parents need to feel ownership of the core offering so we conducted verbal interviews and a questionnaire with pupils, parents and staff to find out what services they wanted most.

The most effective publicity is word of mouth. For example, children come to an after-school activity, enjoy it and tell their friends. Parents tell each other about activities and office staff will pass the word around.

We also use flyers and leaflets distributed in local libraries and on the mailing shots of local tenants' associations.

Eighty per cent of our parents have home internet access. We are gathering

as many email addresses as we can to do an email shot and we post details of activities on the school website. **JP**

How do you work with other schools in a cluster to provide extended services?

Headteachers of schools in the cluster take it in turns to be head of the cluster for a year. Heads meet six times a year at the start of every term and half-term. The cluster employs a part-time partnership coordinator to work on fundraising – searching for voluntary organisations, grants and charities to fund extended school activities. The partnership administrator's role is to work on communications, making sure extended services are coordinated across the cluster.

All schools in the cluster meet the full core offer but schools tailor services to suit their particular needs, whether parenting classes or after-school curriculum enrichment activities. **JP**

What are the benefits of being in a cluster?

One is better value for money. Serving a dispersed rural community, our

Extended schools Inspections/Clusters

Planning for when the inspector calls

Dorothy Lepkowska

Extended schools are inspected in very similar ways to other schools, under the national framework laid out by school inspections watchdog, Ofsted. But they are expected to promote their additional provision and show how they are helping to raise academic standards, promote personal development and improve the well-being of their pupils under the Every Child Matters agenda.

Typically, inspectors will want to know why the school set up its particular type of services, what the expected impact of this is likely to be, and what evidence the school has of any impact already felt.

Since September 2005 all schools have been expected to fill in an online, self-

evaluation form as part of the inspection process, giving a complete picture of the school. Information about how and why it set up extended services is crucial to that procedure.

"What we are looking for in an extended school's self-evaluation is a description of what services they provide, and an indication of why they decided to offer those particular services," says Adrian Gray, Ofsted's divisional manager of institutional inspection and framework.

"We will be looking for evidence that they understand their local community's needs and are structuring provision accordingly. We would also expect them to have some idea of what aspect of their extended services is having an impact in terms of pupil achievement in personal development.

"We want schools to have a sense of their own purpose, and examine why they became an extended school and whether this is working. If it isn't working, then we want to see how they might change this and what alternative services they might provide instead."

Inspectors visiting schools will go in equipped with the school self-evaluation commentary, as well as other important statistics and data about the school relating to its intake and performance.

"The inspector's objective is to form a view of the impact on achievement and personal development," says Gray. "The focus is on the outcomes because inspectors will not inspect all the different services themselves."

The last major Ofsted report on the impact of extended schools, published in



Ofsted's Adrian Gray: 'We will be looking for evidence that schools understand their local community's needs' Martin Argles

July 2006, found no single blueprint for success. But the most effective schools had a plan that considered standards, value for money, affordability and long-term sustainability.

Ofsted has been working with the Training and Development Agency for Schools on how extended schools should present themselves effectively in self-evaluation. "Schools can get the inspection off to a good start by submitting good, detailed information under self-evaluation," says Gray. "But part of the process is that the inspection itself verifies the self-evaluation, so they will be asked to prove what they are claiming."

"If the school is particularly keen to feature an aspect of its extended services, it can arrange for the inspectors to view this as part of the inspection."

Let's get our heads together

Forming an extended services 'cluster' with nearby schools puts teachers in a better position to evaluate the needs of the area's youngsters

Dorothy Lepkowska

It made perfect sense for the schools in Castle Vale to set up an extended services cluster.

The five primaries, one secondary and a nursery school, were already offering a range of services individually, from wrap-around care to after-school clubs. But it was clear there was an overlap and duplication in provision.

Castle Vale is a mainly white, socially deprived area of Birmingham, with high unemployment and low achievement, particularly among boys. The sprawling estate is part of a housing action trust which has undergone wholesale regeneration and rebuilding in recent years.

Where dilapidated houses once stood, there are now new homes, and improvements in the social fabric of the area have complemented the creation of extended services in local schools.

The cluster was set up in September 2006 after headteachers decided that they could coordinate services better if they worked together. Many services were already running – the challenge was how to encourage inter-school cooperation.

Clive Owen, head of Castle Vale secondary school, a performing arts college, describes extended facilities as the "scaffolding" on which pupil performance should improve. Creating the cluster offered a structure and allowed the schools to formalise existing networks.

"We already had some youth support, limited social health and care services, but these were fairly ad hoc. Becoming a cluster and talking to each other about the specific needs of the area gave us all a strategic view of what children and young people needed."

"Castle Vale is a fairly self-contained and parochial area, almost like an island within the city, where people know each



Joining forces: working in a cluster has helped schools in Castle Vale, Birmingham, serve the needs of their community Alamy

'Becoming a cluster gave us all a strategic view of what children and young people needed'

other. The steering group often discusses individual families when it meets, because many will have children here and at one of the primaries. This kind of strategic, pro-active approach is more cost-effective than trying to react to problems as they occur."

The cluster was set up with almost £100,000 in local authority funding for initial costs and buying in services, with

a further £20,000 being made available from organisations for specific projects.

Rebecca Gunning, cluster coordinator, was employed by the local authority to bring all the strands together. "The initial set-up grants were really a carrot to encourage involvement of other agencies in partnership with schools," she says. "When the money stops this year, the expectation is that they will continue their

work by factoring it into their own budgets and operating plans."

Steve Holloway, head of Chivenor junior and infant school, says schools had previously worked in isolation, trying to meet the needs of their own pupils: "Each primary had a breakfast club, for example, but now pupils collectively use a local community centre for that purpose and then the children are walked to their respective schools for lessons."

Forging partnerships

As the heads began to meet and thrash out their plans for the future, partnerships were forged with local social services, housing associations, youth workers, Connexions and other agencies. Today, the schools jointly buy in some services, including a language expert, after discussions revealed the extent of language problems among the pupils. Social workers and other agencies spend about half a day in each school, or visit as and when necessary.

"During the holidays we jointly stage activities, such as canoeing and climbing, and we have organised projects aimed at raising pupils' aspirations," says Holloway. "A scheme called Hear by Right allows children to inform us about what they want from their extended services so we can be sure we are providing what is needed."

The link with the secondary has helped pupil transition from primary school. Shared projects and workshops provide opportunities for pupils from the different schools to meet and mix, making the prospect of starting a new, bigger school far less daunting.

"The whole point of extended schools is to remove barriers to learning, and for schools no longer to have to work in isolation. I believe we are achieving that," says Holloway.

The challenges to sustaining the cluster come in terms of funding and maintaining the momentum, however. Specific funding is only available for a year, after which schools must meet any expenses themselves or rely on other agencies to factor the work into their budgets. "We need to keep moving," says Holloway, "not get too comfortable in what we are doing, and continue to find new ways of involving and engaging pupils."

schools cluster is able to pool staff training and arrange transport for parents and children to outlying villages when they want to stay after school to take part in clubs, sports or other enrichment activities. The cluster involves secondary schools working closely with feeder primary schools, thus smoothing the transition of pupils at age of transfer. The biggest benefit for all cluster members is that they are better able to fulfil the Every Child Matters agenda. That dictates what we do as a cluster. **JP**

What changes will an extended school mean for the governing body?

Services to children, parents and the community should be the primary focus of the governing body. In our school we have restructured the committees of the governing body to reflect the demands of running an extended school. We have achievement and curriculum, teaching and learning, leadership and management, and a childcare committee that covers all of the school's childcare provision including out-of-

hours wrap-around care. All committees have full, delegated powers so we do not need to debate or revisit decisions at the governing body. **DW**

Governors bring special expertise to bear, such as more of a business focus. For example, in the childcare committee we have an educational welfare officer, a parent governor and the vice chair. We have appointed our local bank manager as an associate governor to provide financial advice. **DW**

The school listens to customer feedback through the committee structure. It's important to find out what parents want in the way of services and what they think of the quality of provision. **GM**

How will schools manage to keep their extended services going once the initial funding runs out?

We are looking at the whole issue of sustainability across our local authority. Clusters of schools pool their extended services funding into a pot and we get additional funding from the local

authority. Some of what we're doing is free but much isn't. One way forward is to start charging parents a modest fee or to apply for different funding pots. In our cluster we run parent evening classes in first aid, IT and career development and will probably have to start charging a small amount for this. **PH**

Some authorities cross-subsidise wrap-around places by charging families the market rate and also by aiming to provide a generally higher quality of care than private providers. **CO**

How can schools make childcare more affordable to parents on a low income?

One of the most difficult parts of the core offer is wrap-around childcare at the beginning and end of the school day. It is expensive to provide and there often isn't high demand. The government's intention was that extended schools would enable more parents to return to work, but childcare has to be affordable. Parents in low-paid employment cannot afford daycare unless it is free or subsidised.

Care is often provided by a grandparent, neighbour or member of the extended family who drops children off in the morning and collects them after school. **CO**

How are extended services evaluated?

The local authority collects a lot of qualitative evidence through regular monitoring visits. As a local authority we can tell you how many childcare places we have in extended schools, the take-up of childcare or parenting classes in a particular area and the number of children and young people participating in activities and the change year-on-year. When a school receives regeneration funding to provide services such as adult training, it is expected to provide output data – numbers being trained, their pass rate and so on. What local authorities do not have as yet is the means of measuring the effect of extended services on pupil attainment at an individual pupil level. **RB**

We are monitored and evaluated by the local authority about how well we are

meeting the core offer. The LA passes the information on to the TDA, which supports and advises us. In addition, each school does a self-assessment. We have a management team that evaluates all activities and we have a development plan agreed by all the heads in the cluster as well as the local authority. Heads meet each term to review progress. **PH**

Panel of experts

Ruth Barker, extended services manager for Sunderland
Mick Brooks, general secretary, National Association of Head Teachers
Patsy Headlam, coordinator of Hatch End "Children First" cluster, Harrow
Gary McKeating, chair of governing body, Beckstone School, Cumbria
Caroline O'Neill, senior primary inspector of schools, Gateshead
Jo Philips, extended schools partnership coordinator, Chipping Norton Partnership
David Warbrick, headteacher, Beckstone school, Workington, Cumbria

Extended schools Primary and infant

'It's about empowering the community'

Extended services can range from 'catchup' classes to 'stretch' activities, encompassing everything from maths clubs to sports workshops. **Sarah Jewell** finds out what's being offered at primary and infant level

Pprimary schools across the country are offering a huge range of extended services as they aim to meet the core offer. The "varied menu" of "catchup" and "stretch" activities covers everything from fencing to foreign languages to volunteering, business studies and basketball. Many of the activities are offered in partnership with voluntary or private sector providers, and schools are working in clusters to share out their services and signpost to parents what is available.

Improvement partnerships

Portsmouth local authority has taken the strategic lead on extended services so that all its schools now deliver the full core offer, either by themselves or by signposting to other schools. The schools are divided into five community improvement partnerships that range in size from 7-22 schools.

Mark Scarborough, extended services manager for Portsmouth city council, says they have succeeded because, "we see extended services as an opportunity, not a burden for schools". Some schools, he says, are apprehensive of taking on the extended services programme but "we go to them and say this is what's happening in your area already and this is how you can join together – the most important thing is to have effective partnerships."

Once the services are up and running he finds schools come back to him saying: "We want to start these activities for ourselves because they are so popular with our parents and pupils." Communication is key, he says. "It's all about empowering the local community by identifying their needs and priorities and then telling them what's going on."

Charlotte Taggis headteacher at Charles Dickens infant school in Portsmouth, serving 186 children aged 3-7. The school is attached to a Sure Start centre and a nursery, and has worked hard to bring the parents on board. "We are in a very deprived area," says Taggis, "with lots of lone parents, teenage mums and parents who've had bad school experiences. We do a lot of counselling, self-esteem work and helping parents get back to work and we are beginning to see the benefits."

Parents are now "popping in and out all the time and are very supportive and appreciative of what we are doing". It will take time, but "we are beginning to see the impact of linking our extended services to the main core priorities in school."

Gateshead local authority has also taken the strategic lead on its extended services. Schools are providing the core offer in clusters and there are 10 clusters centred around 10 secondary schools. Caroline O'Neill, senior primary inspector for schools for Raising Achievement Service, says schools have generally welcomed the programme: "Schools in Gateshead are traditionally very



Charles Dickens infant school, Portsmouth, has worked hard to bring parents on board

positive and embrace change. We haven't had any negativity because schools are very keenly focused on doing anything to raise standards for their pupils."

Schools offer various models. "They all look very different as they try to meet the needs of their communities in innovative ways," says O'Neill.

Maths clubs

One innovative approach has been the maths clubs at Kells Lane primary school. Deputy head, Pam Nagle, started a maths club before school to boost the confidence of year 6 pupils. "It wasn't compulsory," she says, "and I tried to personalise it to the children of lower ability."

The lessons involved "fun maths" using ICT so children were more engaged, and the programme was tailored to suit individual needs. The lessons showed significant improvements: "Fifty per cent of children progressed by 10 or more months in a four-month period," says Nagle – an average ability girl who attended regularly made "20 months' progress on the RM maths programme in four months". It was a real confidence-booster and the school now wants to start the maths club for year 5.

Kells Lane also offers clubs in drama, dance, German, African drumming, sports and more. Headteacher, Diana Hewitson, admits that when she first heard about the school putting on activities until 6pm she, "had a horror about it", but because of the way the local authority has worked with the school and the energy that everyone has put into it, "it's been wonderful for the children and we've seen them make real gains in their learning because of the confidence they've gained through their clubs."

Holiday programmes

Many schools offer activities during the holidays as well as term time. In 2005 New

Silksworth infant school and Barmston primary school in Sunderland were allocated £427,000 for extended school activities from the Lottery Young People's Fund to share between them. The fund was to target children and young people from 0-25 and the schools consulted on what young people wanted.

New Silksworth head, Gillian Mitchell, says the young people wanted more sporting activities so the school set up a holiday programme with the voluntary sector to include canoeing, cycling and camping for teenagers aged 13-19 from the local area. Mitchell says that as an extended school they wanted to support young people: "We had the funding so we are the facilitator for these activities; we fund the youth workers and we are the hub for our cluster area with other schools."

After-school clubs

Phil McAloon, area youth worker for Oxclose and District Young People's Project, which delivers these holiday activities for young people, is impressed with what the primary schools are doing: "They had a lead in this situation and they could have spent the money on the junior age range, but they spent it on an older age range and it was a daring and unusual step."

Primary schools don't usually get involved in the wider community, says McAloon, but he can now hold after-school clubs in the primary schools that can be "life-changing" for some children. Instead of hanging around the village centres and getting drunk, teenagers are diverted away from "nuisance activities". They can use the primary school facilities to get recognised qualifications, advice on drugs and health issues and training around college work. "It's very rewarding to see the impact these clubs can have on young people," says McAloon.

Turnaround Thongsley Fields, Cambridgeshire

Thongsley Fields primary and nursery school offers the full core offer of extended services including a free breakfast club, a children's centre on site, speech and language groups, playgroups, parenting classes, family learning, ICT courses and first-aid courses. It's a new school following the amalgamation of Thongsley infant and junior schools in 2002. Rachel Myer, who joined as headteacher in 2003, says everything the school does is in response to the needs of the school community. "We look after children from pre-school up to 11."

In one of the highest areas of social deprivation in the country, the school has "large families with low incomes and all the deprivation indicators that go with this set-up". Many pupils have five or six siblings and parenting classes focus on issues such as managing the transition from home to school, illness at home, bedwetting and bedtime routines. Advice is also given on drug and alcohol abuse.

Thongsley was in special measures when Myer took over but is now seen as an effective school that gives good support to the community. Myer says parents and children feel "valued and secure, and they have renewed trust in the school. Best of all, their self-esteem has been raised." She attributes improvements to the success of the extended services. Parents now understand, she says, that "their children

need to be healthy, happy and secure to access learning, and extended services were the only way to make the jigsaw puzzle – called learning – complete."

Myer says the school tries to make sure the children come in "ready to learn and leave supported for learning" and, in the process, is "raising their self-esteem and self-worth". At first she had difficulty getting to know the parents and they were reluctant to talk to her, but now "they are happy to come through the door with smile on their faces to share their problems".

Thongsley has worked hard to engage parents with their children's learning. "Speech and language is a big issue," says Myer. "We have a low level of speech and language ability and we are trying to develop social interaction skills." One way they do this is with "chatter sacks" – cloth sacks with books and tapes and toys inside, all linked around a theme. The sacks are used to build up discourse between the parents and children as part of a speech and language project.

Many services for parents and children are delivered through partnership working, with the local primary care trust, speech and language therapists, other schools and the local children's centre project manager. Overall, the core offer of extended services is going well because it is "embedded into everything the school does", says Myer. "It reaffirms our community approach." **SJ**



A healthy start to the day at Thongsley Fields' free breakfast club

Inclusion Jesse Boot, Nottingham

Jesse Boot primary school is a large three-form entry school delivering the full range of extended services for its 525 pupils. It has 200 children attending some form of club or musical activity. There are also parenting and family learning events, where children and parents work together. "We provide wrap-around childcare and have a real range of activities to extend and enrich learning," says headteacher Lynda Valentine.

The school has a health suite and a prescribing nurse who works for the whole school community. Parents, staff and children visit her and she has as many as 15 drop-in cases a day. Why is she so popular? "A lot of children prefer to see the nurse here because they feel anxious about going to the doctor," says Valentine. "They are more comfortable about popping along the corridor to get their medication." The knock-on effect of this is that attendance has improved because children are spending more time in school.

Valentine says a belief in inclusion is at the heart of what Jesse Boot offers. The school is developing personalised, integrated services that put the child and the family at the centre of everything. "Everyone comes to school and we want all the health and community services to



Perfect prescription: Jesse Boot primary school, in Nottingham, boasts a health suite with a prescribing nurse Fabio De Paola

be here; if a child has a problem we can access a range of services immediately, including speech and language therapy and advice from the child and adolescent mental health services and the multi-agency locality team."

The school works to draw all the services around the child with the help of the Common Assessment Framework lead professional. "We can't do everything ourselves," says Valentine, "we need the support of other agencies."

The school also works with the voluntary sector. The charity Relate provides a weekly drop-in service for families, with counselling on family relationships and play therapy for children. Valentine was unsure about how this service would be received but says that "on the first day a parent walked up to me and said 'this is so fantastic, it's just what I need' and there has been very positive feedback."

Extended services have also raised the school's standards, improved attendance by 1.1% and "exceeded its targets", and improved the attitude and behaviour of pupils. The children feel the school is at the heart of their community, says Valentine: "There is a good buzz, and I fundamentally feel that what we are doing is right." **SJ**

Extended schools Secondary and special

A new name for good schooling

Despite the proliferation of new initiatives in secondary schools, extended services are often seen as essential by many heads and governors. From skateboarding to leadership courses, **Julie Nightingale** finds out what's on offer

Secondary schools are faced with a continuing barrage of initiatives and, to some, "extended services" is just another one to add to that pile. But there are many heads and governors who, long before the idea was framed by policy-makers, were already pursuing their own form of extended services – without extra cash – in the belief that after-school clubs, parenting classes, adult education and activities that take their reach beyond the school walls, are part and parcel of what a modern school should be.

Community links

There's nothing "innovative" about the extended services on offer at Serlby Park school, Bircotes, near Doncaster, if innovative equates to "radically new"; rather, it's a continuation of what has existed in the community for years, says principal David Harris.

"To us, 'extended school' is just a new name for something we would define as good schooling. It's something that's appropriate for your community. If you do it just because the government says you should, it would be a disaster."

Serlby is a specialist business and enterprise college and, since 2005, one of the first "all through" schools, taking children from three to 18. It is at the heart of a large council estate in an area still recovering economically from the pit closures of the 1980s and early 1990s. The number of children who are eligible for free meals is above the national average, as is the proportion with special needs, and few parents went through higher education.

The area has its problems, says Harris, but there is still a keen sense of community pride here that the school taps into.

"There's deprivation but there's also loyalty and desire to want to do something for themselves, so what we provide as services must be shaped by local need. It's not my philosophy that the school has to control and direct. In a vibrant and proud community, that's the worst possible thing you can do."

"One of the first projects we supported in 2002 was the creation of a skateboard and BMX track to give children somewhere to play. It was initiated by the Bircotes Action Project, a community group. We set up a bank account to hold the money raised and did some of the admin. It came out of a community need and the school acted as conduit."

The roster of activities today is huge, much of it is geared to families. There is a drop-in advice and support service for parents and children with special needs, family learning where parents learn games and activities to develop children's basic skills and a "seven steps to stress-free parenting" course.

Funding is via an assortment of project grants and other temporary sources plus school budget for things like the homework club. It can be a struggle, Harris admits. "But you come back to what the community needs. And some kids need somewhere to do their homework after school in peace and in safety."

Jan Smith, the school's extended services coordinator, sees part of her role as signposting people to what is already on offer locally, which they may be unaware of, as well as talking to them about potential new services.

Study support

Penryn college, in Cornwall, has used its sports college status to develop extended services that go well beyond after-school football or tennis.

An 11-16 comprehensive in the small town of Penryn, it serves the surrounding rural area with several villages and some pockets of deprivation. Its study support programmes for students include Playing for Success, the national literacy and numeracy scheme aimed at raising attainment through sport. Penryn children who have participated have emerged with better than expected Sats results.

Activas (Activities out of school) is run in cooperation with social services, Connexions and local police and aimed at students at risk of exclusion or otherwise vulnerable. It offers skateboarding, gardening skills, a beauty course, and surfing in summer. Allied to these is an extensive range of pupil leadership programmes, which can take place during or after school and in the holidays.

In year 10, for example, students can take on a leadership role in any subject,



Flexible friends: Penryn college, in Cornwall, has used its sports college status to develop extended services that go well beyond after-school football or tennis

Special school Kirkleatham Hall, Redcar

The experience of this 4-19 special school in a small village near Redcar shows how vital consultation can be in developing extended services.

The school wanted to expand its extensive after-school programme of sports and activities by arranging for children to attend similar clubs at other schools nearer to their homes

"We believed the way forward was to integrate our young people into their local community so they could perhaps start to build friendship groups there," says headteacher Gill Naylor. "But only two-thirds of the parents said that was what they wanted. The rest wanted more diverse activities within the school itself."

Past experience of bullying in mainstream schools made some parents wary of allowing their son or daughter to go anywhere other than Kirkleatham, even for after-school activities. The school is now rethinking its plans.

Consultation with parents has brought other changes. The school



Kirkleatham Hall head, Gill Naylor

offers signing (sign language) tuition from primary to FE level and has added classes for adults after parents said they were worried their children were leaving them behind.

Extended services also bring some specific challenges for special schools. For Kirkleatham pupils, many with severe learning difficulties, continuity of staffing is important, says Naylor. Under workforce remodelling, the school has increased teaching assistants' hours to cover after-school activities so that the children are with people they know and feel comfortable with.

"It takes years to build up real relationships with our children and it's why special schools who have gone to outside providers have found it difficult," says Naylor. "But the after-school and other activities are not an add-on to us. It's a means of keeping young people engaged and providing social interaction. It's giving them something to do after school where, quite often, they have nothing to do." **JN**

from maths and music to outdoor education and dance, working towards a recognised leadership qualification in that subject or towards a generic one in sports leadership. Students add on a stint of community work of up to 30 hours during the school year, completed by a final leadership training course covering team work and communication skills. With that under their belt, they can be employed by the school on its holiday programmes and they can lead after-school activities.

Sophie Rollason, 15, completed her leadership training in the summer and works with the local primary school on after-school dance clubs. "Leading the five-year-olds and the junior kids makes you more adult," she says. "I understand how the teachers feel now when someone doesn't want to learn."

For some children, the leadership programme has turned their lives around, says Ros Bastian, the assistant head who leads community work. "Some of our leaders have excelled in lots of ways. One boy who was a difficult pupil became one of our key leaders after doing a leadership programme – and his test scores have risen too."

Swift and easy access

Extended services is generally understood to mean schools remaining open after their normal hours, but it also embraces easier access, rather than just "more".

Whitstable community college in Kent hosts a multi-agency project that brings together professionals from all local education, health and social services in one place. It serves an area of high unemployment where the number of looked-after children in school is well above average. As such, there are some acute social problems.

The multi-agency group acts as an early-intervention service, aiming to tackle the problems within a family before they become more serious for the children. They meet regularly at the school, with teachers, education welfare officers, local authority travel officers, social services and mental health teams all involved.

Based permanently in the school is Macs (multi-agency cascade service), a network of specialist services for pupils – school-based social workers, counsellors, and child and adolescent mental health and special needs staff. Funded by the county council, their presence on site has been fundamental in helping wider multi-agency working to flourish, says Carol Torode, the school's children and families support leader.

"The huge thing is that, as a group of professionals, we are trying to develop a common language and a common knowledge," says Torode.

Inner city Swanlea school, Whitechapel, London

In the beacon inner-London borough of Tower Hamlets, Swanlea comprehensive in Whitechapel serves a mainly Bangladeshi- and Sylheti-speaking community. Swanlea became a pilot extended school in 2003, working to offer a range of services for its pupils, their families and the wider community.

The school's Youth Project, an after-school club that runs from 7-9pm, supports the Every Child Matters agenda through organised sports, healthy eating and drugs awareness workshops. Run by teachers paid through the School Standards Fund, Swanlea's Saturday Club attracts 250 pupils of all ages with sports, revision and a coursework completion club.

The school remains open during the summer holidays and half-term breaks when pupils take part in fun and study support activities. It runs a maths, science and literacy summer school for primary-aged children identified by their teachers as needing additional support.

Curriculum enrichment and study skills are popular with parents who



Swanlea comprehensive, in London, became a pilot extended school in 2003

have high aspirations for their children and want to extend their learning beyond the school day. "We are helping to raise standards and aspirations through a twin approach of working with families and

establishing closer ties with feeder primaries," says extended schools manager, Vanessa Chadwick.

Swanlea has provided classes for parents and the school and worked with Tower Hamlets college and the City Lit (adult education college) to run ICT, language and literacy classes. "Classes for parents have helped them support their children's school work and improve skills," says Chadwick.

The school is well supported by a network of local agencies and values support from the local business community of the City of London, which provides reading mentors and work placements.

In its Fading Boundaries project, paid for with a grant, Swanlea works closely with three feeder primaries – Stewart Headlam, Kobi Nazrul and Canon Barnett – to ease transition. Swanlea teachers work alongside primary colleagues on targeting pupils to boost literacy and numeracy. "This approach succeeds and is feeding into the pupils' confidence," says Chadwick. **Stephen Hoare**

Extended schools Getting started/Funding

'Focus on what's really important'

If your school is thinking about – or in the process of – extending its services, here are some key issues to consider

Julie Nightingale

For a programme of extended services to be meaningful, rather than developed solely to fall in with government policy, it needs genuine commitment from the headteacher – but the governors also have to be onside.

Governors

Given that governors are – justifiably – preoccupied with the needs and the performance of their own school, they may need some persuasion.

When Pia Kerridge, head of The Parks special school in Oakham, Rutland, proposed expanding the school's outreach work as part of a programme of extended services, three of her governors resigned. The remainder were won over by her argument that it was in the school's interest to share their special needs expertise around.

"I said that it was about the changing role of special provision, that before we used to be focused on our children only, but that, nationally, special schools now have a much wider role.

"Now the governors are very supportive and there is a group on the governing body that focuses on extended services. But unless you have the governing body behind you, it's a struggle."

School improvement plan

If you are not just paying lip service to extended services, they have to be incorporated into the school improvement plan. Effective school improvement planning helps schools maximise the wellbeing and learning potential of all children, extended services must be well designed and targeted as an integral part of this.

Staffing

Heads shouldn't feel obliged to assume responsibility for extended services – strategic or operational – by themselves. Much of the leadership and management is often delegated to a coordinator at middle management level and/or a member of the senior leadership team. Extended services may also be part of the remit of the school business manager, or bursar.

In terms of delivery, you need "a hands-on operational team," says Julie McGee, extended schools manager for Middlesbrough council. "Whoever takes on the management role needs to have the organisational skills to be able to manage, for example, 15 different organisations operating on the school site, and have the community development skills to build relationships with other groups and agencies."

Consultation

Consult the community, staff and other stakeholders about the kinds of services

they think are needed or they would like to see the school hosting and supporting. Don't overlook the children: use the school council, activities in class or, for older pupils, questionnaires to get their views and ideas.

Do your research to determine what services already exist, find out where there are gaps, and, at the same time, it's vital to get to know the organisations and people, says McGee. People in local authorities involved in the local children and young people's strategic partnership could also be brought in to help. "Think about duplication between schools, too," she adds. "That's where the local authority can help as they will have that bigger picture of what's happening where."

Building partnerships

Working with independent providers, multi-agency collaboration, sharing responsibilities for children with other schools... extended services is all about partnerships, though they don't happen

'Some of our families are on the breadline. Being cheap or free has been the key to getting people in'

overnight. But it helps if you can build on existing links, says David Tansey, head at Stanley high school in Southport, which has capitalised on the links developed with other agencies through its status as a sports college to build up its community side.

Listening to others and finding out what their agendas are is important, he adds. "You can make sure their agendas are being followed as well as your own and the partnership is more likely to be productive."

One of his team's first steps was to bring all potential partners together at a breakfast meeting with the Every Child Matters agenda as their common theme. "We talked to them about what our vision was of being a school at the heart of the community. We knew that ECM was important for others as well as us. We then discussed the five core themes and talked in groups about how we could work together – making parents' evenings more multi-agency, for example, so that school nursing services could attend."

Funding

Money is always the biggest problem and at least some funding will have to come from the school budget. A good first step is to contact your LA to explore funding. Partnerships with other agencies mean some costs can be shared; it also helps to have a good contact at the local authority

who can alert you when new grant programmes come up.

Links with business can provide sponsorship or help in kind and this is an area where governors might be especially useful. Berrybrook primary school in Wolverhampton persuaded Greggs, the bakers, to sponsor its free breakfast club, and has worked closely with the Co-op, whose staff have helped out at the school.

Colin Haynes, Berrybrook's chair of governors, points to organisations such as Business in the Community as a way to find business help. "Engagement with businesses is a two-way process and the business partners get great value from the relationship, too, so don't be afraid to ask for help," he says.

The question of whether to charge for activities depends on a school's circumstances, but free classes or clubs can be the only way to kick-start interest.

One of the most successful projects at Ormsby comprehensive school in Middlesbrough has been the free, after-school What's Cooking club for children and their families. Originally aimed at children who had struggled in primary school and were on the brink of exclusion, it has since expanded to other families. It costs the school around £500 a year in ingredients and general materials, with time given free by partners from local family learning and healthy eating initiatives.

"Some of our families are on the bread-

line," says Jenny Stanton, assistant head and extended schools coordinator. "Being cheap or free has been the key to getting people in."

Transport

For rural schools, in particular, transport presents significant problems. Why would children opt to stay behind for after-school events – and why would pupils from other schools opt to travel there – if it means a two-hour wait for a bus or inconvenience for parents who have to pick them up?

In Bedford, Sharnbrook upper school has struck an agreement with its local bus company that could be applied elsewhere. Rather than contracting a vehicle for a specific route, the school has use of a bus for four-and-a-half hours in the afternoon to cover the school's staggered leaving times of 3.30pm and 4.30pm.

Besides being more convenient, it is saving around £200 a day on travel costs for the school and the county council.

Finally...

Avoid being overwhelmed by the scale of the agenda and the range of new roles and responsibilities involved.

School governor Colin Haynes also warns against over-ambition: "Be prepared to focus on a few things that are really important to the community. Don't start something you can't carry forward. Anything you do has to be sustainable."



David Tansey, headteacher at Stanley high, in Southport, challenges pupils from the school's youth club to a game of table football Christopher Thomond

Networking – the key to financial stability

Gaining funding to deliver the full range of extended services is all about forming close partnerships

Sarah Jewell

To help every child access breakfast clubs, out-of-hours tuition and after-school clubs, the government is to invest £1.3bn in the extended schools programme over the next three years. This includes a £265m subsidy scheme to ensure that children from disadvantaged families can access the full range of extended services. Local authorities will learn this autumn how much funding is to be released.

In addition to funding capital projects and running costs, this new investment will support extended service coordinators in secondary schools and clusters of primary schools. To deliver the full range of extended services, schools need to work in partnership with their local authorities, other schools and the private and voluntary sectors, and extended services coordi-

inators have a vital role to play in setting up and developing these partnerships.

Jo Phillips is the extended services coordinator for Chipping Norton school and its cluster of 10 feeder primary schools and a Sure Start children's centre. She works one day a week with an administrator on the extended services programme and has been successful in resourcing and distributing funds. Her main priority, however, is to make sure the after-school clubs are sustainable.

Under the extended schools core offer schools are expected to charge for after-school activities but, as Phillips says: "If a club is running and doesn't have enough children in it, it has to stop; all the time I'm thinking: have we got enough children in each club and how much should we be charging?"

The school charges for its clubs that run from 4.30-6pm. "The charge is always kept as low as possible to maximise access and increase sustainability," says Phillips. However, the school also offers a huge range of free clubs run by staff in the lunch hour and from 3.15-4.15pm. "They encourage the habit of extra-time activities and, once they have the habit, students will continue to take the opportunities on offer year on year. It's really important to offer



Thirsty work: youngsters at Charles Dickens infant school, Portsmouth

'We are starting to see the effect of children moving confidently from the nursery to the school'

students the extra dimension of learning outside the classroom."

Phillips thinks the key to making after-school clubs sustainable is networking. She is in charge of publicising activities for 3,000 children and 1,600 families in the Chipping Norton cluster – "it would cost an awful lot of money to send out fliers to everyone," she says. To make the clubs work, families need to know what is going on, and they also need to be consulted and she spends a lot of time checking to make sure the school is meeting the needs of all stakeholders. "I try to keep my finger on the pulse."

To help set up extended services, "start-up" funding of £680m was allocated for the period 2006-08. Some of this funding has been routed via local authorities through the Standards Fund and the general Sure Start grant (GSSG). Schools have also secured funding from other sources, including charities, the lottery and private sponsorship.

Local authorities have a key role to play in helping schools to plan, commission and fund their extended services. "I'm in constant touch with our ES schools coordinator for Oxfordshire," says Phillips. "They know what funding is available and will tell us what we can apply for."

Schools have spent their capital funding on new buildings and on making their premises suitable for extended services. In Portsmouth, for example, the newly built Charles Dickens centre includes a Sure Start centre and a neighbourhood nursery. This community-focused project is located at the heart of Portsmouth's most deprived district and helps to serve the many needs of the local neighbourhood. Facilities include a community sports hall, an arts space and performing arts studio. A full youth service also operates from the building, utilising a recording studio with rehearsal rooms and a video-editing suite.

Charlotte Tagg is headteacher at Charles Dickens infant school, which is attached to the Sure Start centre and the Charles Dickens centre. She manages all three. The nursery is self-sustaining through charging and she sees the benefit of the school and children's centre working together: "It's wonderful because we are getting to work with the children from when they are new-born, and all our ethos revolves around parental involvement from a very early age. We are starting to see the effect of children moving confidently from the nursery to the school, and parents are a lot more keen to get involved with what we are doing."

Extended schools Future/Comment



Professor Alan Smithers urges schools not to get overly distracted from the main task of teaching and learning Don McPhee

Is this the way ahead?

The extended schools programme isn't lacking in ambition, but can it deliver? We ask experts on the ground about their hopes and concerns

Dorothy Lepkowska

Extended services in hundreds of schools have become part and parcel of pupils' everyday lives. The sight of the local bobby walking down the corridor does not necessarily mean that someone is in trouble, nor is it unusual for adults other than teachers and classroom assistants to be working with children.

But how bright is the future for extended schools, and how can they contribute to the success of the myriad of other initiatives being implemented by the government?

Graham Holley, chief executive of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), believes the nature of the multi-agency approach to learning will offer faster help to the pupils that need it.

"By 2010 we will see schools being the hub of the local community in ways we have not done before, reflecting and serving the needs of children and the community in a multi-professional and holistic way," he says.

"Schools will no longer just be providers of academic and vocational excellence. It will be about standards sitting alongside the Every Child Matters agenda, achievement sitting alongside well-being and growth alongside children's safety.

"Extended services will be the back-

drop to what happens in schools, offering a different structure and climate and different aspirations. I have no doubt that it will narrow the achievement gap.

"We already know from Ofsted that it has a positive impact where it is being delivered well."

Professor Alan Smithers, director of the Centre for Education and Employment Research at the University of Buckingham, says extended services have created the right environment to allow schools to implement other key initiatives. But he urges schools not to get distracted from the main task of teaching and learning.

"It is significant that Gordon Brown divided up the education department to include children, schools and families, and this shows his desire to give all children the same chance in life," he says.

"The challenge now will be to ensure the primacy of teaching and learning and not to allow schools to become overly distracted with the other aspects. Another issue is funding and where the money is going to come from to allow schools to open 52 weeks a year, when already they are relying on teachers' goodwill to a large extent."

David Dixon, head of Bowbridge primary in Nottinghamshire, where extended services have been in place for the past 11 years, agrees there is a danger of teachers becoming over-burdened.

"We approached extended services by looking at the needs of the children and because a significant number of them have basic needs that are not addressed outside school. By running a breakfast club, for example, you have children who are receptive to learning.

"The government needs to make more money available for some of the remedial measures for dysfunctional families. If you made schemes available earlier [you]

would not have to deal with the consequences of disadvantage and social problems later.

"But I remain concerned that we continue to rely on the goodwill of teachers to run after-school clubs beyond their normal working hours, and I think this is true in many primary schools."

Time consuming

Other headteachers were also concerned about the amount of time additional services took to organise. Mike Ainsley, head of Frederick Gent school, in Derbyshire, says extended services have allowed the school to tackle some of the "external factors" that prohibit children from learning, such as poverty and mental health problems within families.

"These are the barriers we have to tackle before we can even begin to implement other initiatives," he says. "Extended services are sustainable, but there must be a political will to enable this. Supporting children and families cannot be maintained without adequate time and resources within schools devoted to that purpose."

Hilary Emery, executive director of the TDA, says the creation of extended services is a key part of public sector reforms, and cooperation between schools and other agencies should lessen the burden on teachers trying to implement improvements in standards.

"There is a substantial amount of money in the public sector that is no longer being spent on individual silos but used where it is most needed to address the most important problems," she says.

"There is a future for extended schools precisely because there is a wealth of experience and talent out there among people who are all working together to focus on learning and provide the right environment for pupils to succeed."

It's about kick-starting community pride



Richard Thornhill
Comment

Extended schools are about raising children's educational aspirations and expectations by boosting their social capital and underpinning the role of the family.

My experience of extended services really started in September 2000 when I came to Loughborough primary to fresh-start the school and raise standards. I could see right away that the conventional approach of concentrating on teaching English and maths wouldn't work. The school's catchment area is one of the most deprived in Europe with broken families and a range of challenging issues from drug dependency to gun crime.

We saw extended services as a way of developing the social capital of the children and their families – to provide the support infrastructure that would enable them to engage successfully with education. Children lacking social skills and a stable family life have few reasons to work hard.

So we began in a small way offering sports clubs and activities in the evenings after school and at weekends – things like football, basketball, gymnastics and cricket. The message quickly

'Children lacking social skills and a stable family life have few reasons to work hard'

We need to assure the quality of service



Patsy Headlam
Comment

Our priorities are extra-curricular sports for children, lifelong learning through engaging parents and young adults to improve their skills and employability, and counselling, therapy and support for our vulnerable children. We fill our remit pretty well.

We do not offer wraparound care as there is no demand. Local families largely make their own provision. Adopting the core offering has added significant extra duties, and diluted our original focus.

What we have done is to try to make the extended model fit. Under our lifelong learning remit, for example, we reach the wider

'I think that schools, the local authority and the voluntary sector need to work closer together'

caught on that this was a lot better than wandering the streets.

We organised visits to Premier League football academies like Chelsea, Fulham and Arsenal and from having no aspirations, children – particularly boys – could see they could achieve. The training and self-discipline they were developing began to have an impact on attendance and Sats results. One child on the verge of being excluded has moved on to secondary school where he now plays football for South London and has represented his team overseas.

We ran coffee mornings for parents two days a week – providing free coffee and biscuits and giving them a room in the school to meet. We started running courses they would find useful like nutrition, first aid and quitting smoking. Once trust had developed we moved on to helping parents with the bigger issues – drug misuse and unemployment.

You have to persevere. An extended school is a hub where parents can contact social services, health and community care. You can start asking parents about sensitive issues such as setting their children's bedtime and providing a quiet room for homework.

I believe the government has got it dead right that school is the best place to lead community regeneration and break the cycle of deprivation. But change cannot happen overnight. It happens slowly, one step at a time. A consistent approach to extended services means not having to reinvent the wheel in an attempt to patch up the social ills of each generation.

Schools need to realise that extended services are not just about providing childcare. You have to have a planned programme and clear expectations for children. The aim has to be to build social capital – giving children a stake in society and reinforcing the message that while you're in school you need to work hard. This isn't a soft option. It's about kick-starting self-help and community pride.

Interview by Stephen Hoare

Richard Thornhill is executive headteacher of the Loughborough/Kings Avenue primary school federation, London borough of Lambeth

community by advertising our courses in local libraries and mailings to local housing estates. Our cluster of 13 schools catering for 6,000 pupils has brought economies of scale. Our adult classes on subjects such as ICT, back-to-work and starting a small business are invariably full to capacity.

But being part of a cluster means that some services are not those that individual schools would have chosen to provide. Extended schools are not about the teaching staff doing everything. It's about buying in the services we need from third-party suppliers or agencies. What we do need to do is to assure the quality of service and to make sure the school's interests are protected.

My biggest criticism of extended schools is that they do not engage enough with the local voluntary sector. We are not talking about cosy relationships with well-heeled national charities, but rather tiny, ad hoc and often fragile community groups that need nurturing.

Voluntary groups often can't afford the fees we're forced to charge for our facilities. It could be a small group of Somali mothers or a disability group that performs a vital role in community cohesion. What is wrong with letting groups have free use of a room? For extended services to achieve their full potential, I think that schools, the local authority and the voluntary sector need to work closer together.

Interview by Stephen Hoare

Patsy Headlam is community learning coordinator for the Children First cluster in Harrow, Middlesex

Resources

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) works with local authorities to support schools as they develop extended services, providing training, support and other resources. The TDA has developed a **School Improvement Planning Framework** to help schools design extended services to deliver improved standards and Every Child Matters outcomes. Support for **extended schools in rural areas** is also available, as are resources supporting the development of early intervention work and **swift and easy access to services**, and more than 100 case studies. Links to all these resources can be found at: www.tda.gov.uk/guardian

ContinYou runs the **Extended Schools Support Service**, offering focused support for schools and local authorities: www.continyou.org.uk/extendedschools

Information and resources about **childcare in extended schools** at: www.4children.org.uk. **Childcare Link** provides information about individual

childcare services throughout the UK at: www.childcarelink.gov.uk

DCSF toolkit for schools can be downloaded at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/workingwithparents/ipratoolkit. The DCSF guidance on ES and school improvement is at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=10747

Extensive resources about **setting up and managing extended services** and activities in schools: www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools. See information on developing good quality study support opportunities at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/studysupport

Information on **employing staff**: www.dfes.gov.uk/a-z and from the **Criminal Records Bureau** at www.crb.gov.uk. For **training, qualifications and support** for those working with children and young people, see Children's Workforce Development council at: www.cwdcouncil.org

Every Child Matters: Change for Children – programme spanning all children's services aiming to improve outcomes for all children and young people. See www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Updated DCSF prospectus – Extended Schools: Building on Experience – sets out core offer of extended services the government wants all schools to offer by 2010: <http://tinyurl.com/2pf9y2>

Information for governors on **governor responsibilities** and regulations at: www.governornet.co.uk and on planning and funding extended schools at: <http://tinyurl.com/24kcks>

DfES/Sure Start Unit **research on extended schools and childcare** at: www.surestart.gov.uk/ensuringquality/research/earlyyears

Final report on the **Evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools pilot**: www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR795.pdf