

Extended schools and adult learners



What is an extended school?

'An extended school is one that provides a range of services and activities often beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community'. (DfES 2002). A particular model being promoted by DfES is the 'full-service' school, which offers childcare, study support, family and lifelong learning, health and social care services and access to school facilities including ICT, and embodies the principles of integrating children's services. Other schools can develop the 'extended' idea in different ways – which or may not involve adult learning.

This is the fifty-third in a series of briefing sheets, which aim to provide an introduction to a variety of lifelong learning issues

Also available:

- 52. Adult participation in learning
- 51. The NLN and adult and community learning
- 50. Fees charged to part-time adult students 2002-2003
- 49. Sources of funding for adult learners
- 48. Older people and mentoring
- 47. Young adult learners, disaffection and social inclusion

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The Policy Context

The idea of extended schools builds on a wide range of existing practice. Increasingly, Government has encouraged and funded schools to provide learning opportunities and other services to their communities. National programmes such as Sure Start, Excellence in Cities and Education Action Zones have significant elements of adult learning, particularly through family learning, and the city learning centres of EiC. Specialist status schools and technology colleges and secondary schools are required to spend a proportion of their additional budget on community activities including adult learning.

The 2002 Education Act clarified and strengthened the legal position of schools wishing to provide services beyond their core task of educating pupils. It made clear that school governing bodies can:

- provide facilities and services which benefit families and the community as well as pupils;
- make agreements with other partners to provide services on school premises;
- charge for services.

The Act does not alter the requirement that a school's delegated budget may only be spent on the education of pupils; additional activities must therefore be financed from other sources.

Since the Act, DfES has actively promoted the principle of extended schools as an aspiration ultimately for all schools - see 'Teachernet' - Resources, below. DfES is now funding LEAs in England to develop extended schools: by 2005/6 each will have a coordinator to promote practice across its area, and at least one 'full-service school' located in a deprived neighbourhood. The focus on children's services in the 'full-service school' links to the proposals

in the 2003 Green Paper *Every Child Matters*, the 2004 *Children Bill* and the accompanying *Next Steps* document, for integrating the work of education and social services departments, health services and careers agencies in the interests of children, and the development of Children's Trusts. Extended / full service schools are seen as a key means of delivering the Government's new agenda for children.

Raising children's attainment is the dominant theme in the Government's educational thinking; adult learning through extended schools is often presented as mattering because it contributes to this. But extended schools also respond to other government priorities for adult learning:

- Widening participation through access to local learning
- Adult literacy and numeracy, particularly via family learning and the 'Skills for Families' programme
- Access to ICT and e-learning through UK Online and local learning centres
- Neighbourhood renewal – building reengagement and community capacity
- Specifically, the 'Building learning communities' proposal in the *21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential* White Paper 2003: local partnerships including schools to raise aspirations, develop the 'collective base of skills' and re-engage adults in learning.

Early research suggests that extended schools have been successful in offering adult learning programmes, possibly where they can build on existing strengths such as family learning, or on partnerships within the 'education family'.

Issues

- *Who else should be involved?* Schools without a long-established community role may not have the expertise to develop an adult learning programme and should be encouraged to work with others for this purpose. In addition to LEA ACL Services, colleges could take a lead in planning and delivery, and voluntary and community organisations might also contribute. There is no single model for how such partnerships work and both schools and providers may need to develop their own capacity to work productively together.
- Learning Partnerships, Local Strategic Partnerships and similar networks should be involved to ensure that provision through schools is part of an integrated strategy for meeting local aspirations and is adequately supported. Local LSCs may be directly involved depending on their priorities, and will expect LEA ACL services to include extended schools in their planning.
- *Governance and 'ownership'*: school governing bodies are responsible for extended school activities and are expected to represent their community's views. Extended schools need to address both the formal lines of accountability to governors and to partners, and how they create a sense of ownership by the wider community – for example through management groups, neighbourhood forums, special interest groups, community activists and learning champions. Active involvement of the school's governing body is important and links with governor training services can be used to raise governors' awareness and understanding.
 - *What kind of learning?* In line with the policy context, extended schools are likely to focus on family learning, basic skills, IT skills, or learning for employability. Schools need to be helped to create a broader programme which engages adults in learning for their own purposes, with routes for continuing learning or progression. LSC Strategic Area Reviews need to reflect the potential of extended schools to meet adult learning needs.

- *Funding*: funding sources available directly to schools are usually time-limited. Partnerships will be needed for sustainability, the likeliest being with LEA ACL services or colleges. Although this may be limited by the pressure on funding for programmes which do not meet the *21st Century Skills* priorities, family learning or neighbourhood renewal funding streams could be used productively.
- *Quality assurance and evaluation*: the current Ofsted inspection framework for schools includes a section on how the school works with the community, and Ofsted reports will explicitly deal with extended schools activities. However, school strategies for looking at the experience of adult learners are likely to be under-developed. School self-evaluation within the Ofsted framework needs to be complemented by the tools used for provider self-assessment in further and adult and community learning and to meet Common Inspection Framework requirements - for example, means of recognising and recording achievement - if LSC-sourced funding is used.
- *Equality and Diversity*: schools need to be aware of the implications of equal opportunities legislation and what their duties in relation to adult learners are under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. The Disability Discrimination Act and SENDA apply to opportunities for adult learners in schools, and access audits and action plans need to take account of this.
- *Security*: schools need to make a judgement about levels of risk and practical measures to minimise these if adult learners are on school premises during the school day and do not use a separate suite. CRB checks would not normally be required for adult learners, volunteer helpers or tutors, unless they are working directly with children or vulnerable adults, or having unsupervised access to them.

For legal issues concerning the use of school premises, see 'Teachernet' – Resources, below.

NIACE's View

Extended schools are a significant development in enabling the community to benefit from public investment in schools and widening participation. To make this work, the following issues need to be tackled:

- *Coherence*: schools need to work in cooperation with others to create a coherent system of local learning opportunities for adults. Activities planned in isolation may also detract from existing provision rather than using resources well.
- *Maximising potential*: both in full-service schools and those considering other kinds of extension, there should be attention to exploiting all the opportunities for adult learning.
- *Capacity*: funding and support is needed to build schools' capacity to work with adults, and capacity should be tested more rigorously when development proposals are considered and delivery is evaluated.
- *Funding*: legal restrictions on the use of school budgets and the nature of teachers' workloads mean that schools need funding for development and organisation, as well as delivery.

NIACE would advocate a presumption that all schools should work to widen access and participation, in partnership with planners, providers and the community, and where a need or community aspiration has been identified.

NIACE Contacts

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Development Officer

Lenford White – Race Equality/Neighbourhood
Renewal Development Officer

References and Useful Resources

Childcare in Extended Schools: Providing Opportunities and Services for All. DfES 2002. (Available via the Teachernet website)

Children Bill. House of Lords 2004. The Stationery Office, 2004
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cm200304/cmbills/144/2004144.pdf

Continyou - provides the Extended Schools Support Service (TESSS) for DfES and organises a community schools network

www.continyou.org.uk
Email: extended.schools@continyou.org.uk

Every child matters. Green paper CM 5860. The Stationery Office, 2003. ISBN 0101586027 £22.00
www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters/pdfs/EveryChildMatters.pdf

Every Child Matters - for information on the Green Paper, Children Bill and implementation.
www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters

Extended Schools: Providing Opportunities and Services for All. DfES 2002 (Available via the Teachernet website)

Local Government Association - for information on local government support for extended schools and pathfinder projects.
www.lga.gov.uk

Ofsted - site for school inspection frameworks and reports including school and community issues.
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Teachernet - DfES site to support schools: the extended schools pages contain DfES guidance, research studies and contacts. Other teachernet pages cover management issues.
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/

NIACE Publications

Learning for the future: neighbourhood renewal through adult and community learning: a guide for local authorities. Bryan Merton, Cheryl Turner, Jane Ward and Lenford White. NIACE 2003. ISBN 1862011486 £60.00

Opening up schools for adult learners : Lifelines 16. Judith Summers. NIACE, 2004. ISBN 1862011923 £6.95

Schools are for adults too: schools, adults and communities in the learning age. Judith Summers. NIACE, 2002. ISBN 186201154 0 £8.95

Starting points in developing wider family learning. Clare Chisholm, Jeanne Haggart and Jackie Horne. NIACE, 2004

Talking it through: a practitioners' guide to consulting adults in adult and community learning. Sue Duffen and Jane Thompson. NIACE, 2003. ISBN 1862011893 £24.95

Walking ten feet tall: a toolkit for family learning practitioners. Jeanne Haggart. NIACE 2001. ISBN 186201132X £60.00

NIACE, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, has a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training. It aims to do this for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties or disabilities, or insufficient resources.

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