



Evaluation Report of Extended Schools funded through Neighbourhood Renewal Funding

Client: Extended Learning Service and
Neighbourhood Renewal

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Executive Summary

Background

Schools are seen as major part of the delivery mechanism for the Every Child Matters agenda. Schools and nurseries are non stigmatising universal services, and therefore capable of reaching local families in Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) areas through an extension of their current role. For most families, their main relationship with 'the state' is with the nursery, health centre or school that their children attend. These act as portals to a range of mandatory and voluntary services for children. This places a special responsibility – but also gives an enormous opportunity – on those institutions and the range of professionals working in them.

For these reasons and others, neighbourhood renewal pump priming has been used to trial new services and ways of working in target areas that mainstream funding is unable to support. Such pump priming is necessary as the weight of the standards agenda (focusing on children's attainment and the OFSTED framework) can mitigate against school's capacity to engage. School leaders – both staff and governors - need support and assistance to develop plans, strategies and skills to implement the extended schools agenda.

The approach used to address the need

In order to address the need that some of the schools in the most deprived areas may have and also to pilot an approach that may be adapted more widely in the future, the Extended Learning Service (ELS) has undertaken the following activities funded through NR:

- work with schools and local stakeholders (parents, governors, School Effectiveness Service etc) to develop plans with 10 – 12 schools that are appropriate for their particular needs and communities,
- enabling of school staff and volunteers to access appropriate training and development to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to develop their particular 'brand' of extended school
- development of an appropriate infrastructure using mainstream funding and other funding sources (commissioning).

Purpose of the evaluation

The project is being evaluated with the purpose of learning what has worked about the process, in particular to understand whether it has helped schools understand their roles and how to plan for their communities. This is to allow learning about how this has worked to be used by ELS and NR to support the development of Extended Schools across Kirklees. The learning will inform the support given by ELS to planning extended schools in the future.

Scope of the evaluation

This evaluation is not about measuring the outcomes of the extended school activity, as it is far too early to do this and it is possible that systems may well not be in place. Rather it is about applying the lessons learned in the evaluation of the national pilot of full service extended schools to see if the systems put in place locally address the issues that the national pilot evaluation highlighted. In particular the effectiveness of the planning process that ties schools into their local community and enables them to address needs affecting those communities including children.

Evaluation questions

In order to limit the scope of the evaluation we have focussed on understanding the extent to which one of the project objectives has been addressed. This is: **To enable schools to develop their capacity, to embed new opportunities and practices and to change the scope of their work beyond the statutory education agenda**

From this we have developed two questions that the evaluation seeks to address to see if this objective is being met. These are set out below:

To what extent have schools felt able to understand and engage with the extended schools agenda in a meaningful way that addresses the needs of their local community and allows them to deliver services beyond education?

How have they been supported in doing this and what value has this been?

Evaluation Methodology

A mixed method approach has been used including an initial review of the evidence base, documentary analysis of school's plans and monitoring information provided to NR and in-depth interviews with school and ELS staff and consideration of the Extended Schools Strategy. The analyses from these have been used to develop a model of the development of extended schools.

Review of the evidence base

The planning, training and infrastructure aspect of the approach used in this project have been adopted on the basis of evidence from the evaluation of the Extended Schools Pilots.¹ This evaluation does not provide robust evidence of the effectiveness of Extended Schools in breaking established cycles of disadvantage. However it provides important evidence around the difficulty of embedding the extended schools principle of meeting the needs of the school's

¹ Cummings, C. Dyson, A. Papps, I. , Pearson, D, Raffo, C. Todd, L, 2005, Evaluation of the Full Service, Extended Schools Project: End of First Year Report, DFES 2005

local community. The evaluation suggests that the 'underlying rationales for school's approaches often focus on their own concerns and imperatives which may or may not be identical to those of local communities'.² The evaluation found that schools were involved in a range of initiatives, sometimes seen as conflicting and a common response was the need for a wider strategic approach. There were mixed experiences of multi agency working, but the findings suggested that considerable time and investment was needed by both partner agencies and schools to ensure this happened.

The evaluation also aimed to apply a Theory of Change approach to help schools articulate how they saw the relationship between their particular problems, the outcome that they would like to achieve and the activities that they would use. This aims to identify short term measures to see if the change is on the 'right track' to meet the longer term outcomes. A limitation of the Extended Schools pilot is the lack of reference made to the evidence base upon which schools base their theories. The Theory of Change approach to evaluation would be strengthened if it asked schools what strength of evidence they had for thinking a particular activity would lead to a particular outcome.

The evaluation was undertaken among full service schools in Behaviour Improvement / Excellence in Cities areas, which tend to be areas of high levels of disadvantage with associated high levels of poverty, unemployment, poor health and social dysfunction. In this respect the findings are applicable to the schools in Kirklees NR areas. The evidence from this evaluation presents what the issues and difficulties of developing extended schools have been. This does present valuable learning and the findings seem to resonate with local experience in relation to addressing need and partnership working. On the basis of this it would seem that there is an evidence base to the approach outlined above. Although some weaknesses in applying the Theory Change.

Analysis

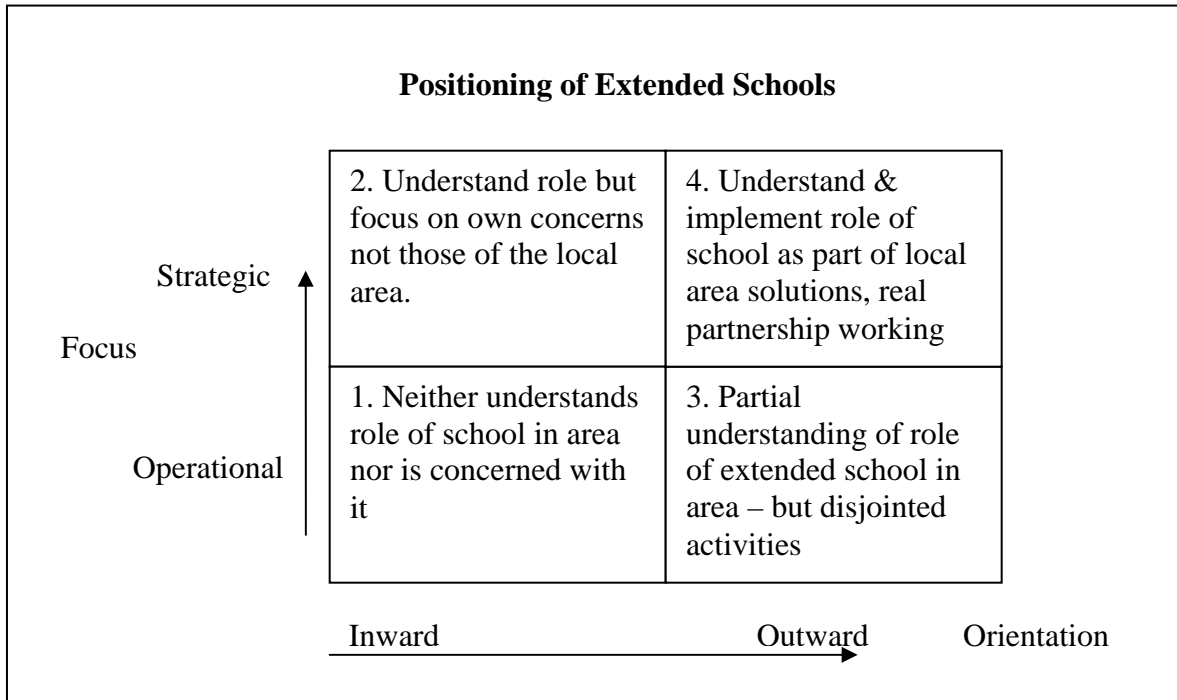
The analysis of the interview and documentary analysis used the following structure to understand the level of engagement that schools have with the extended schools concept including

- the planning process that schools have gone through and how this fits with area planning
- Extent to which schools are engaging with external agencies to provide joint solutions to common problems.
- Resources and support schools have available
- Use of evidence and evaluation capacity

A positioning matrix was developed to provide a conceptual framework for the analysis of the information collected from schools. Positioning of schools along

² Cummings, C. Dyson, A. Papps, I. , Pearson, D, Raffo, C. Todd, L, 2005, Evaluation of the Full Service, Extended Schools Project: End of First Year Report, DFES 2005

the horizontal axis depends upon whether a school's focus is inwards to its own concerns or out to the concerns of the local area. Positioning along the vertical axis depends upon whether this concern is sufficient to drive work at a strategic level with partners or in a more disjointed fashion on individual problems. The analysis is not quantitative and does not seek to allocate schools to specific quadrants; rather it provides a framework for expressing school's development.



Conclusions

Schools were found to display quadrant 2 or 3 behaviour with some approaching quadrant 4. This suggests that there is a good understanding by schools of their role, but that some schools are engaging in disjointed activities that do not necessarily tie into local area needs. This is supported by the findings of the Dyson evaluation. It does take time for schools to become aware of their role in contributing to the delivery of regeneration within their area and to build relationships with partners.

We have found that schools are aware of the needs within their local area, but need to be firmly connected into local area planning and the use of objective data. Working with other agencies in this way will help clarify needs, and see needs from a range of perspectives rather than just the school's. We have found that not all schools were engaged with local area planning and that although schools may invite stakeholders to 'their' planning days; they need to be part of the planning process for the local area and take this higher level perspective into their organizations. As a result of this learning the ELS which

has an influential role in supporting schools with their planning has developed the planning process to bring schools together to plan in pyramids.

Schools have expressed the need for support in engaging with other agencies that may be able to help them deliver on their own priorities. We have found one example of where a school and a health agency have been able to identify shared objectives and develop a way of working collaboratively to their mutual benefit. It is expected that as part of the pyramid approach schools will be able to work collaboratively to approach agencies together facilitated by ELS staff. An example of this has been the role ELS has taken with developing childcare in the Hanging Heaton area.

Schools are engaged in a range of activities, some of which receive support at an operational level. We have not been clear that schools are familiar with the underpinning evidence that would suggest particular activities lead to specific outcomes. This is a weakness in the Theory of Change model of evaluating the effect of extended school activity. Although schools benefit from operational support in delivering these activities they would benefit from advice around the evidence base of the likely value of activities in generating given outcomes. This would help schools make more informed resource allocation decisions.

Schools tend to evaluate the effectiveness of activities through numbers participating in and satisfaction with programmes. As evaluation tools these are appropriate in answering questions around reach and any operational concerns that need addressing. However they are often not appropriate in establishing links between activities and outcomes. There may be value then in working with partner agencies who may be more familiar with the evidence base. The pyramid approach and involvement in ELS may support this through access to research services and also through the inclusion of rationales for activities in school's planning proformas.

Recommendations

Recommendations are made on how to address the planning issues identified during the evaluation and how schools could be supported to improve multi agency working. This has implications for leadership at a local area level in order to ensure schools can influence local priorities and be influenced by others. ELS has a role to play in supporting schools with the planning of their extended offer, in understanding needs and accessing the evidence for activities in order to create strong rationales that underpin plans. It has a role to play in facilitating and brokering multi agency working and specialist services within the Childrens' Service infrastructure through the processes developed by the LPIGS. It also has a role to play in encouraging awareness and participation by governors.

Introduction

Extended Schools is part of the Government's delivery mechanism for the policies set out in the white paper Every Child Matters, which became the Children's Act 2004. Kirklees Council using Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) has implemented a pilot process for supporting schools in the most disadvantaged areas to develop their own brand of extended school. Implementation of the project began in April 2004 and finished March 2006. It is part of a larger bid which included funding to develop two Children's Centres in Fieldhead and Windy Bank. The total value of the bid was £435,662. The majority of the expenditure in relation to the Extended Schools part of the bid was £300,000 for commissioning. Evaluation of this expenditure has not been included in the scope of this evaluation.

The purpose of the evaluation presented here is to understand whether the funding provided by NR has helped schools understand their roles as extended schools and how to plan for their communities. Lessons from the evaluation will inform the development of processes to support extended schools across Kirklees.

The structure of the evaluation report

Initially the background to the project explains what the purpose and objectives of the NR bid are, what need the project seeks to address and describes the approach used. It considers the project objectives, scope of the evaluation and key evaluation questions.

The second section reviews the evidence base upon which the approach to the project has been based.

Thirdly the methodology is described. Next the findings of a documentary analysis of key plans, monitoring information and interviews with schools and the Extended Learning Service staff are discussed. A model of stages that schools may go through in developing their extended activity is presented. Finally conclusions are drawn in relation to the evaluation questions set and recommendations made.

Background and Rationale

Purpose of the Extended Schools Project

Schools are seen as major part of the delivery mechanism for the Every Child Matters agenda. Schools and nurseries are non stigmatising universal services, and therefore capable of reaching local families in NR areas through an extension of their current role. For most families, their main relationship with 'the state' is with the nursery, health centre or school that their children attend. These act as portals to a range of mandatory and voluntary services for children. This places a special responsibility – but also gives an enormous opportunity – on those institutions and the range of professionals working in them.

For these reasons and others, neighbourhood renewal pump priming has been used to trial new services and ways of working in target areas that mainstream funding is unable to support. Such pump priming is necessary as the weight of the standards agenda (focusing on children's attainment and the OFSTED framework) can mitigate against school's capacity to engage. School leaders – both staff and governors - need support and assistance to develop plans, strategies and skills to implement the extended schools agenda.

In order to deliver on the ECM outcomes schools need to be able to identify and address needs within their local community that enable them to cover the core offer required of Extended Schools. This is defined as:

- high quality 'wraparound' childcare
- a varied menu of activities:
 - homework clubs and study support
 - sport
 - music tuition, dance and drama, arts and crafts
 - special interest clubs
 - visits to museums and galleries
 - learning a foreign language
 - volunteering, business and enterprise activities
- parenting support
- referral to a wide range of specialist support services
- wider community access to Information Communication Technology (ICT), sports and arts facilities, including adult learning³

³ Extended Schools Prospectus, Access to Opportunities and Services for All. A Prospectus, DFES 2005

Schools need support to develop this set of additional activities that are tailored to local need. Support is needed in understanding the needs of the local community beyond just the educational needs of children. Many factors outside schools may impact on children's attainment and if we are to look more holistically at this, we need to address broader issues within the local community. Once schools are clear about the needs they wish to address locally it is likely that they will need to work in partnership with other local agencies to deliver on their plans. Schools need support to make these connections and ensure they lead to effective partnership working.

The need the project seeks to address

The need that this NR funded project has sought to address has been around the support required by schools to extend their activity to effectively impact on broader issues within their local community, that may ultimately affect the progress made by their pupils. It is likely that schools in areas of deprivation or which take in children from deprived areas (i.e. NRF areas) are likely to have the greatest issues to tackle and therefore need greater support in developing appropriate services.

This is born out by the statistics on children living in NRF areas or attending schools in those areas.

- 30.8% of the children attending NR area schools are eligible for free school meals. The Kirklees average is 18.5%
- 45.2% of all children in NR area schools are of ethnic minority heritage (almost double the Kirklees average of 24.9%).
- 47.7% of 16 year olds achieved 5 GCSEs in Kirklees last year. In the NR schools, this figure was 34.1%. Newsome High is the only NR secondary school achieving above 40%.
- The Average Points Score for Key Stage 1 children in Kirklees is 15.7. the NR area primary school rate is 14.9.
- The Key Stage 2 average in Kirklees is 27.1. In NR area schools, the children achieve at the lower rate of 26.2.

The approach used to address the need

In order to address the need that some of the schools in the most deprived areas may have and also to pilot an approach that may be adapted more widely in the future, the Extended Learning Service (ELS) has undertaken the following activities in NR areas:

- work with schools and local stakeholders (parents, governors, School Effectiveness Service etc) to develop plans with 10 – 12 schools that are appropriate for their particular needs and communities,

- enabling of school staff and volunteers to access appropriate training and development to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to develop their particular 'brand' of extended school
- development of an appropriate infrastructure using mainstream funding and other funding sources (commissioning).

The planning aspect of this has involved providing schools with an audit tool, based on one developed by Rochdale Local Authority to identify what activity is already undertaken, dialogue with schools about their strategies for extending their school, support through a conference and planning days, support to develop and implement plans. This has been targeted at staff with responsibility for extended schools. The extended activity has been implemented by the ELS using existing resources and a co-ordinator funded through NRF who has provided support to individual schools. Also consultancy type staff have been brought in for specific things such as the Extended Schools Conference. Apart from this schools are staffing the planning from within their existing resources. The planning stage began in September 2004 with an audit of existing activity.

The access to training element has been targeted at school staff and volunteers, including school governors. It was planned for up to 250 staff (senior manager and support staff) to receive quality and curriculum training. Specific training has been provided on particular study support activities and training that is generally available through ELS. Governor training was provided around helping schools understand their role as part of a local strategy.

The development of an infrastructure to support schools around the commissioning of services is not funded by NR and could be considered beyond the scope of this evaluation. However as the focus of the project is in developing schools ability to meet the needs of their local community, it may at times be appropriate during the course of the evaluation to touch on interactions that schools have had with other public agencies and how this has worked.

In addition from January 2006 ELS began work around Extended Schools Remodelling which takes a more strategic focus. This is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

Purpose of the evaluation

The project is being evaluated with the purpose of learning what has worked about the process, in particular to understand whether it has helped schools understand their roles and how to plan for their communities. This is to allow this learning to be used by ELS and NR to support the development of Extended Schools across Kirklees. The learning will inform the support given by ELS to planning extended schools in the future.

Scope of the evaluation

This evaluation is not about measuring the outcomes of the extended school activity, as it is far too early to do this and it is possible that systems may well not be in place. Rather it is about applying the lessons learned in the evaluation of the national pilot to see if the systems put in place locally address the issues that the national pilot evaluation highlighted. In particular the effectiveness of the planning process that ties schools into their local community and enables them to address needs affecting those communities which may impact on children's progress. As mentioned above it may at times be necessary to discuss how schools have interacted with other agencies to extend their activities, as school's roles in multi agency delivery is an integral part of the vision of extended schools.

The scope of the evaluation is limited to the extended schools activity and not the children's centre element of the project, unless that is coincidental with what a school is doing as part of its activities. The Children's Centre element of this project is focussed on two NR areas in particular and is quite separate. The focus of the evaluation is on how effective the planning process has been and the support given for planning and implementation. In this respect we are interested in the perspective of key staff in schools and staff within ELS. It may also be useful to consider the views of partner agencies who schools may need to engage with as part of the planning and implementation stage. This will help inform the Extended Schools Remodelling

Project Objectives

- To improve the co-ordination and responsiveness of services to support families with children living in the targeted areas
- To support preventative work with children, young people, and their families
- To encourage community access to schools and nurseries
- To enable schools to develop their capacity, to embed new opportunities and practices to change the scope of their work beyond the statutory education agenda
- To deliver a training and development programme with staff and volunteers in schools, nurseries and communities
- To increase access to services in areas where these are lacking
- To support improved educational attainment in areas where this falls below the Kirklees averages
- To promote active playgrounds and peer massage programmes (subjects of earlier NR proposals)

The above objectives relate also to the development of children's centre approaches within some of the NR schools. That is to say a small number of schools are extending through Children's Centre activity, which is not within the scope of this evaluation.

Evaluation Questions

In order to remain within the scope set out for the evaluation we have focussed on one project objective in particular.

To enable schools to develop their capacity, to embed new opportunities and practices and to change the scope of their work beyond the statutory education agenda

From this we have developed a set of questions that the evaluation seeks to address to see if this objective is being met.

To what extent have schools felt able to understand and engage with the extended schools agenda in a meaningful way that addresses the needs of their local community and allows them to deliver services beyond education?

How have they been supported in doing this and what value has this support been?

In order to address these questions, we needed to develop a set of evaluation objectives or a set of information we need gather to answer these questions. We also needed to identify who we needed to obtain this information from. This is set out in the evaluation objectives in the methodology section.

Methodology

Evaluation Questions

To what extent have schools felt able to understand and engage with the extended schools agenda in a meaningful way that addresses the needs of their local community and allows them to deliver services beyond education?

How have they been supported in doing this and what value has this support been?

In order to answer the overall evaluation questions, there is a need to identify the information required to answer them and who this may be obtained from.

This is set out in the evaluation objectives below which detail what we need to find out from each group of people.

Evaluation objectives

Target group 1 – designated teachers with responsibility for extended schools

To explore understanding of local area needs and what this is based on
To explore the understanding of what extended schools means to them within the context of their local area?
To explore the process by which they planned their extended school activity
To understand the sources of support, advice and information they used to help them with this planning
To explore perceptions of the value of this support
To explore what they are doing as an extended school and the rationale for this
To explore understanding of the link between rationale, activity, expected outcomes and plans to evaluate this. (theory of change and evidence base)

Target group 2 – staff within ELS who have supported schools

To explore what their understanding of extended schools is within Kirklees
To understand what the process has been to develop extended schools and how this has been implemented.
To explore how this process has worked practically including what has worked well and any difficulties encountered.
To explore systems in place to monitor activity and support schools in evaluating their outcomes.

Target Group 3 – school governors

To explore what their understanding of extended schools is within Kirklees
To understand what the process has been to develop extended schools and how this has been implemented and their involvement.
To understand to what extent they see their role as part of a broader area strategy
To what extent they feel supported in this strategic role and how this could be improved.

Methodology

The following sets out how the information was gathered to address each of the evaluation objectives for each of the target groups.

Documentary analysis

An analysis of all extended schools plans was undertaken to pull out common themes around rationales for activities and whether there is a link between rationale, activities and expected outcomes. Analysis of monitoring data provided by the ELS as to how these plans are progressing and the support provided the ELS was also completed.

In depth interviews with Target group 1 - designated staff with responsibility for extended schools (up to 6 staff)

A cross section of 5 schools were selected to cover a range of NR areas and children's age ranges. Head teachers were contacted by letter to arrange an appropriate interview date. Interviews were conducted by SER staff between 23rd March and 24th April. They were recorded and transcribed for analysis with the exception of one interview which was conducted by telephone.

In depth interviews with Target group 2 – Staff ELS who have supported schools (up to 2 staff)

One group discussion was undertaken with two support staff within ELS on May 8th.

In depth interviews with Target Group 3 – Governors

It was not possible to undertake interviews with governors within the available time. We also understand that although training was offered to governors there was a limited take up of governor training around extended schools.

Review of the Evidence Base

The three sets of activities set out in the background and rationale section above, around planning, training and infrastructure have been adopted on the basis of evidence from the evaluation of the Extended Schools Pilots.⁴ This evaluation does not provide robust evidence of the effectiveness of Extended Schools in breaking established cycles of disadvantage. However it provides important evidence around the difficulty of embedding the extended schools principle of meeting the needs of the school's local community. The evaluation suggests that the 'underlying rationales for school's approaches often focus on their own concerns and imperatives which may or may not be identical to those of local communities'.⁵ The evaluation found that schools were involved in a range of initiatives, sometimes seen as conflicting and a common response was the need for a wider strategic approach. There were mixed experiences of multi agency working, but the findings suggested that considerable time and investment was needed by both partner agencies and schools to ensure this happened.

It is with the need in mind to ensure that schools address their local community's needs and that more effective multi agency work is made possible that the approach outlined above have been developed.

The Extended Schools Pilot evaluation used a multi method approach of mapping, case studies, telephone surveys and a scoping study to explore the feasibility of a cost benefit analysis. As yet there has been no robust evaluation of the costs and benefits of extended schools activity upon which to make decisions as to what the economic value of the programme is.

The evaluation also aimed to apply a Theory of Change approach to help schools articulate how they saw the relationship between their particular problems, the outcome that they would like to achieve and the activities that they would use. This aims to identify short term measures to see if the change is on the 'right track' to meet the longer term outcomes. The model was applied to the case study schools for empirical testing and the authors suggest that this model may be generally applicable on the basis of this. The case studies were developed from a sample of 12 schools, a purposive rather than a representative sample was taken. The sample schools were all characterised by the following:

- There was confirmatory prima facie evidence that the initiative was well conceptualised and managed, that the school as a whole was well managed

⁴ Cummings, C. Dyson, A. Papps, I. , Pearson, D, Raffo, C. Todd, L, 2005, Evaluation of the Full Service, Extended Schools Project: End of First Year Report, DFES 2005

⁵ Cummings, C. Dyson, A. Papps, I. , Pearson, D, Raffo, C. Todd, L, 2005, Evaluation of the Full Service, Extended Schools Project: End of First Year Report, DFES 2005

and that there was likely to be a high level of delivery of activities and partnerships.

- They had good data collection procedures in place.
- They were keen to take part in the evaluation and saw it as a developmental opportunity.

We do not know whether these characteristics hold for all of the Kirklees NR schools and therefore the applicability of the Theory of Change approach to evaluation may be more challenging with schools that do not have these characteristics. This is something to explore within our local evaluation.

A further limitation of the Extended Schools pilot is the lack of reference made to the evidence base upon which schools were basing their theories. The Theory of Change approach to evaluation would be strengthened if it incorporated asking schools what strength of evidence they had for thinking that a particular activity would lead to a particular outcome.

The evaluation was undertaken among full service schools in Behaviour Improvement / Excellence in Cities areas, which tend to be areas of high levels of disadvantage with associated high levels of poverty, unemployment, poor health and social dysfunction. In this respect the findings are applicable to the schools in Kirklees NR areas. The evidence from this evaluation presents what the issues and difficulties of developing extended schools have been. This does present valuable learning and the findings seem to resonate with local experience in relation to addressing need and partnership working. On the basis of this it would seem that there is an evidence base to the ELS approach outlined above. Although there are some weaknesses in applying the Theory of Change where there is no evidence base to support why a particular approach might lead to a desired outcome.

Documentary Analysis

Ten school plans were considered as part of the documentary analysis. Two were high schools, one a middle school and seven were primary schools. Most of the plans identified broad issues within the local area, although many of these were concerned with child / parent specific rather than community based issues. There was acknowledgement by some schools of issues such as community cohesion, the needs of older people, the amount of long term illness in the area and the need for greater partnership working.

The perspective of the Extended Learning Service is that the 'school plans show a great deal of variety, but are somewhat limited in being written in isolation from the rest of their pyramid or cluster of schools. It is expected that this will be overcome through the Extended Schools Remodeling programme which brings pyramids of schools together to devise a community extended services plan'.⁶

Schools were able to list a range of activities they were undertaking as part of their extended schools activity. The link between each particular issue to be addressed and the activities selected was not always clear, and that issues to be addressed were not always clearly defined and explained. It was unclear how the plans connected to the School's Development Plans from documentary analysis alone. It was expected that this would be unpicked through interviews with a sample of head teachers as well as documentary analysis of the school's progress reports to the ELS.

Schools were asked to indicate in their plans what the outcomes might be of their activities. These were to be measured largely through numbers attending various activities and feedback from participants. There was no articulation of how intermediate outcomes (en route to final outcomes) may be achieved using the Theory of Change model purported by Dyson.

Given the issues that schools are trying to address are not always clearly defined and the rationale for why particular activities being selected is not always articulated in the plans, it would be difficult for schools to do much more than measure participation and satisfaction. The reason why issues are not clearly defined may be due to a number of factors, such as time constraints on planning, but also understanding what factors are really contributing to the issues within the local community. Again this is something to be considered in the interview analysis.

⁶ Neighbourhood Renewal Quarterly Progress SheetvQ3 October 1st 2005 – 31st December 2005

Support Provided by ELS

Support has been provided to schools in developing their extended schools plans in relation to their School Development Plans. This support has included the following:

At the strategic level

- Extended Schools Conference to support planning and engagement with data about the areas schools serve.
- An extended school toolkit
- Assistance with planning
- Training sessions for staff within each school
- Information for governors including the offer of training
- Sessions with senior managers

At the operational level

- Free training in a range of activities including FAST LANE, study support, Playing for Success, Share (Parenting programme), Peer Massage.
- Facilitation of meetings with other NR schools involved in the initiative.

The Strategic level work has been the responsibility of two senior managers in ELS including the Head of ELS. The operational level work has been supported by two staff in ELS who offer practical support to schools on how to implement activities on a day to day basis. During the course of the evaluation Extended Schools Co-ordinators have been appointed with a role to facilitate planning by pyramids of schools. These roles have not been explored within the evaluation.

Progress against Extended School Plans

ELS have monitored school against their plans under the following criteria based broadly on the Core Offer given in the Extended School Prospectus:

Wrap around care
Out of school provision
Support for parents
Speedier access to services

Extent of achievement

As of January 2006, 6 of the 15 schools being funded by NRF had completed plans from which this analysis could be undertaken. A summary of this is provided below:

Wrap Around Care

This applies to primary schools. This is being addressed though a mix of on site provision and signposting. Schools with significant Muslim populations have expressed the need to take account of their children attending Maddressah's from 4.30 to 5 every evening. ELS has had a role to place in supporting the provision of childcare in hanging Heaton through consultation with the local community and brokering support from school's asset management.

Out of school hours provision

Most schools offered a range of activities sometimes provided through other parties. Some schools were able to make the link with how out of hours activities would address specific issues their children faced, for example the use of play workers at lunch time to address social and communication issues.

Support for parents

There was a focus here around family learning type activities including Reading Friends and the use of Literacy and Play Workers to engage with parents. Schools also talked of running Share Plus parenting courses. Secondary schools planned on opening up their IT facilities and also talked about much broader support for parents including drop in facilities for health and careers information and exercise classes.

Swift access to services

Some schools mentioned the wish to be involved in a more strategic approach to developing this. Some managed to offer swifter access to services through the work undertaken by specific staff such as a SENCO⁷, while others appeared to rely on the presence of a Children's Centre nearby were they would refer parents. In the future this will form part of the work of Children's Trusts as schools and other agencies are encouraged to be proactive in making the connections between each other.

⁷ SENCO – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

Interview Analysis

In total five schools were interviewed as part of the evaluation, one high school and four primary schools. They covered a range of NR areas in both North and South Kirklees. Interviews were with headteachers or in the case of the secondary school a senior teacher with delegated responsibility. At some interviews another key member of staff who may be responsible for operational aspects participated if appropriate.

The analysis of the interviews is set out as follows:

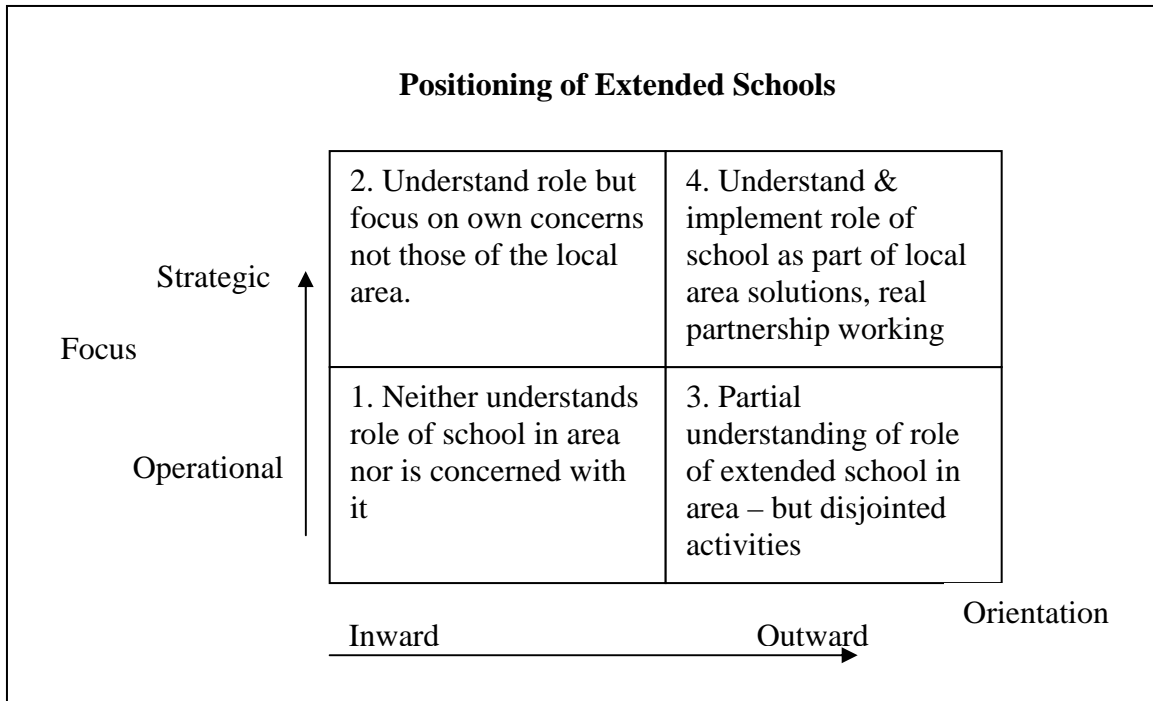
Level of engagement that schools have with the extended schools concept including

- the planning process that schools have gone through and how this fits with area planning
- Extent to which schools are engaging with external agencies to provide joint solutions to common problems.
- Resources and support schools have available
- Use of evidence and evaluation capacity

Level of engagement with the Extended School's concept

From the interviews with the schools and also from consideration of the plans they have put together and progress reports, it is evident that there is an understanding that extended schools is more than just putting on more activities. Schools are connecting extended schools to the delivery of the Every Child Matters agenda and initiatives that are supporting this such as workforce remodeling. There is concern however that this understanding is not always born out in the extended schools planning or in the approaches that might be taken in addressing particular needs in an area. This may not always be entirely down to the school, other agencies seeking to deliver services locally also have a part to play in engaging meaningfully with schools.

During the course of the analysis of the interviews and school plans, it became apparent that the way in which schools are applying the Extended Schools concept has some degree of variation. This can be expressed as a set of types which are shown in the matrix below. The matrix describes schools on the basis to which they have demonstrated an understanding of their school's role in delivering service improvement within their local area and that their role extends beyond children, families and education. It embraces deeper levels of partnership working with a range of agencies.



The matrix above is made up of four quadrants that provide a conceptual framework for analyzing and interpreting qualitative findings. It must be acknowledged that this analysis is based on qualitative research with schools and not on any kind of quantitative analysis. The framework is a means of categorizing the characteristics of the schools. An explanation of each quadrant is given below.

Quadrant 1 schools – have limited extra curricula activities for existing pupils and have no concern with the local area. No schools appeared to fall into this category.

Quadrant 2 schools - these schools are concerned with their own priorities. They acknowledge they are part of a local area and deal with issues that have a direct effect on their pupils.

Quadrant 3 schools – are concerned with the local area where they draw their pupils from and in having a more holistic approach to children’s lives. This is done through offering many and varied activities, however they are not a key part of local area planning and have yet to make deeper connections with mainstream agencies outside the educational sphere. Working practices in both the school, and partner agencies have not yet changed. (See later case study for example.)

Quadrant 4 schools– are connected into local planning and are influencing it. They see change within the local area as a whole (not families with children) as fundamental to their own success. The school is seen as part of the delivery

mechanism for regenerating the area, it seeks to deliver activities outside of its premises and engage all sections of the community to come into the school to access services.

During the course of the analysis of the five schools who were interviewed, schools were found to be either in quadrant 2 or 3 with some showing examples of quadrant 4 type activity. In the longer run, we might expect more schools to move towards quadrant 4. However consideration needs to be given to the push and pull factors that affect this.

Descriptions of schools in each quadrant

Quadrant 2

Schools which displayed this characteristic described extended schools as 'linked to the Every Child Matters Agenda', 'wrap around care', 'signposting', 'embracing different agencies' and 'providing things more locally', so for example, children didn't miss speech and language therapy appointments.

These schools were able to outline additional activities that they were undertaking to address immediate needs they believed their schools had, rather than linking to strategic area based work.

'We really prioritized... there were several children coming in who were hungry, stomach cramps in the morning and we knew really that we needed to sort out some sort of breakfast club'.

This is not to say that this type of activity is not valuable however in the future such a breakfast club may be part of a broader strategy that could be led by health agencies to improve nutrition / diet related ill health in local areas. However at the current time, this is a free standing activity.

Quadrant 3

These schools undertook a vast array of activities and put resources into engaging all elements of the local community with the school. The school was seen as a community resource and some staff were employed specifically with a community engagement role. There was understanding of variation in need across the community

'Some parents need help with parenting skills, whilst working parents need help with childcare'.

Although these schools have connections with other agencies, particularly KMC education, there was a sense that these schools were missing out on work at a more strategic level.

'We're finding it very difficult to engage with Health with what we're doing in school at all... We've had a gap in provision altogether (school nursing) and we've had a similar experience with speech therapy.'

There was a perception that new Children's Centres would overcome this by placing health staff on site rather than there being a shared approach to working through common problems together that might address a local area priority. This is reflected in the progress reports provided by ELS. These indicated that for some schools they saw their responsibility to provide 'swift access to services; as being met through signposting to the local children's centre. Others suggested they wished to build on a more strategic approach to service development, suggesting they were moving into quadrant 4.⁸

Quadrant 4

There were a number of schools that approached quadrant 4. These schools understood the issues within the local area including variation in need across the community and what was contributing to this need. They understood and accepted that the school had a role to play in addressing this need and involved other agencies to help them to do this. They accepted that the school needed to engage in the community by offering services in community venues and were clear about the need for the school to address all of the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes and not just focus on the enjoy and achieve one.

'Broadening responsibility from the academic qualifications to looking at the whole needs of the family and community'

A school that drew from fragmented areas expressed this broader view as the school having an opportunity to create a centre for a community without one.

'A new school could go a long way to provide health services ... signposted areas for domestic violence and all sorts of crime that effect people ... start to develop an element of community'

One of these schools expressed that there was a need to look at whether what the school did currently was 'fit for purpose' and what other organizations they could link to. This same school talked of working in partnership with another school, but not to just put on more activities, but to see how they could generate income through opening school buildings, through providing opportunities for the local college to use facilities and family involvement. They considered new ways of working including staff being able to work compressed hours and four day weeks to cover the new offer.

⁸ Summary of Extended School Plans submitted with Quarterly Progress Sheet By ELS, October 2005 – December 2005.

In terms of multi agency working there was a *'need (for) investment in time in valuing and negotiating putting time into team building'*

'We don't have a mental health worker or Social Worker on site but when we do we don't have a clear picture of professional working protocols needed. People need to understand what they are trying to achieve'... Can't be done by just putting people together, need a visioning exercise'

The point here is that putting professionals in the same building alone is not enough, they need to have a shared view of what they are aiming for and how they will achieve this. This is particularly important for professionals such as teachers who are used to just 'doing' things. This shared vision translated into practical work is perhaps what the essence of multi agency work is about. The example case study below may illustrate this.

Case study - Comparison of Quadrant 3 and 4 approaches to the same problem – with differing outcomes.

Two of the schools interviewed both expressed concerns about the low language abilities of children who entered their school. Both had concerns that children did not attend speech and language appointments that were held at clinics at some distance from the children's homes. They had two very different approaches to the problem.

School 1

One school was able to engage with North Kirklees PCT that provides speech and language therapy services. The school had large proportions (approx 50%) of children with speech and language problems. Many did not attend appointments at clinics. This resulted in therapist's time being wasted and the children's problems not being resolved. To address this, the PCT sent a therapist into the school to advise on appropriate programmes that would help the children. Money was also provided through health to then employ staff to deliver the programmes. Support was provided from therapists to check programmes were being delivered correctly and assess children's progress. In addition the school also delivers a 'social use of language' programme to all children to improve socialization skills. The school believes this approach has led to improvements in reading and spelling scores and also behaviour.

The approach the school took is in line with recommendations by the Health Development Agency about how speech and language therapists can best be used to support staff who have regular contact with children, and hence is an example of evidence based practice. ⁹

⁹ Law, J., Boyle, J., Harris, E., Nye, C., (1998) Screening for Speech and Language Delay: A systematic Review of the Literature, Health Technology Assessment Vol. 2 No.9

School 2

The second school albeit with a less extensive speech and language problem amongst its pupils, had not been able to engage the speech and language therapy service based at Calderdale and Huddersfield Acute Trust. It was hoping that location of a Children's Centre on the site would allow children to access their appointments. In this respect recommendations around how speech and language therapists can best be used to support children with delayed development are not necessarily being implemented, whilst children continue to miss appointments.

Learning Points

These two cases are illustrative of a number of factors that underpin the Extended Schools concept. Firstly the acceptance by two separate agencies of a common problem, that staff resources (speech and language therapist time) was not being used to best effect, children's development was being delayed unacceptably and it was possible for the two agencies to find a common solution that met both their needs. Rather than staff waiting for clients in clinics who never came, the time was used to cascade skills to assist those children whose development was being delayed largely by environmental factors.

A number of factors contributed to school 1's success these included:

1. The awareness of the headteacher in new approaches to developing children's language
2. The determination of the headteacher to engage with a partner agency and commit time to doing this.
3. The willingness and commitment of the partner agency to reshape their service including their staff's day job in response to need.

Learning Point

This is an example of where a school has been able to engage in multi agency working to achieve an ECM outcome and embraces the principles of extended schools. We need to bear in mind that each of these schools differed in the extent of its problem and also that as the schools fell into two different PCT areas at the time, speech and language services were provided by separate agencies. The differing outcomes achieved by each school, also reflects the need for more collective planning between schools to meet needs. Mechanisms for achieving this will be discussed in the future developments section of the report.

The Planning Process in Schools

The planning process for Extended schools varied, but most schools seemed to see that this needs to fit with their school development plan. Although few schools went as far as to say they needed to review ‘fitness for purpose’ of all they did in relation to the ECM outcomes. Some schools built planning into existing activities such as annual planning events that involved the whole community.

‘We have lots of ideas ... but in terms of knowing how to implement things’.

To some extent this sums up the need that some schools have for a strategic direction within their area and to be involved in influencing this direction. This would help prioritise these ideas and also allow other agencies to bring expertise on how to implement them. This will be discussed further in the future developments section of the report.

Extent to which schools are engaging with external agencies to provide joint solutions to common problems.

Some schools thought that as part of the planning process it was important for them to be involved with local groups.

‘ We have an annual event, and we involve all the children, all the staff in the school and invite anybody else who has anything at all to do with the school people who have helped with the various clubs or organizations that have been involved local councilors, police...’

This suggests that schools may include a range of people in the planning process in order to get broad perspective of need. There may need to bring a balance to this in using objective evidence to decide priorities and see how the school plays a role operationally in delivering on strategic area objectives as well a drawing on a range of opinions. This may mean having smaller more focused planning involvement of key agencies.

From the earlier discussion around the quadrants that schools fall into in developing their extended offer, there is a sense that not all schools are engaged with agencies at an operational level, nor have the ability to influence connections that may be being made at a more strategic level. This may be something that needs to be considered within the Extended Schools Remodeling to allow for improved communication between the operational and strategic within a local area and within the local agencies. This may include representation of agencies within the schools strategic planning days where priorities are objectively assessed and resources allocated. Again this will be discussed in the future developments section.

Headteachers are key contributory factors to the development of extended schools, not only from the leadership they provide, but also through the networks and access to knowledge they gain.

'I'm part of the local police network ... a lot of various people councilors, headteachers, loads of various associations actually attending these meetings to discuss crime levels in X area'

They do however face barriers to developing stronger levels of multi agency working.

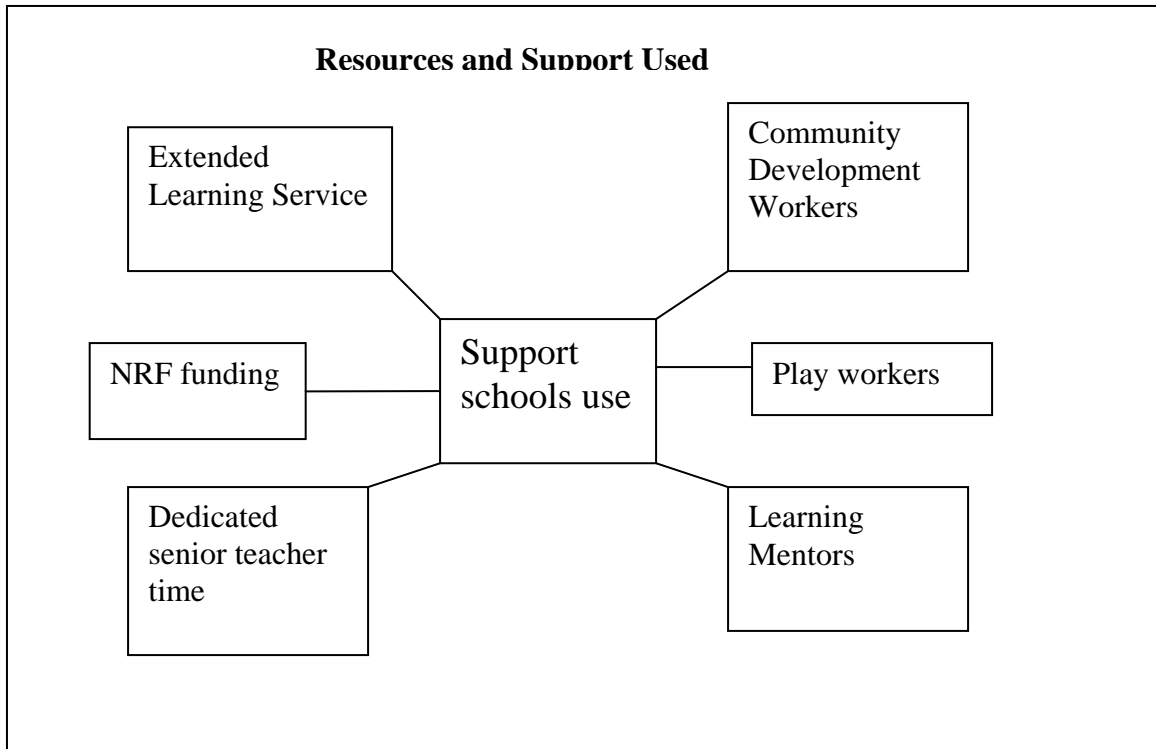
'Would like to have more impact in area committees but were not invited'

Support is needed by individual heads who are not always able to tackle issues on their own.

'We're finding it very difficult to engage with heath...' Whether pressure brought to bear from somewhere like the Extended Learning Service would help bring these changes about, because obviously with just me making noises an individual head teacher, I'm easy to ignore, so maybe they might be able to help.'

Resources and support

Following on from the barriers schools have identified in developing an extended school that allows them to play a part in addressing problems in their local area, schools talked about the resources they had used to help them as well as further support they feel they need. The diagram overleaf illustrates the sources of support schools were tending to use.



Internal resources and sources of support

For primary schools there was a reliance on a member of staff who was not a dedicated teacher, but who had sufficient status in the school to be able to engage both with children, parents and outside agencies to enable activities to happen. These staff generally included those in roles such as learning mentors or community development roles. These staff tended to be on short term contracts due to funding coming from a range of streams. They were seen as imperative by head teachers in doing many of the operational type activities associated with developing the school's offer. Although they did not tend to have strategic role this was the domain of the headteacher the roles tended to be fairly broad.

One such staff member stated their role was *'Anything to do with liaising with the community... I come in every day not knowing - well having a vague idea of what I've got to do but not knowing exactly what to expect when I walk through the door, so its really interesting.'*

'Through the learning mentor, more and varied people active and interested in the school'

Some schools employed staff who had a more focused role, who concentrated on a small number of very specific issues that required particular types of skills.

Play workers fall into this category where their role is principally around working with children and parents to develop language and social skills.

Secondary schools had sufficient resources to either employ a dedicated extended schools co-ordinator or make this part of a senior teacher's role. From the schools interviewed and plans reviewed this appears to allow more scope for developing the extended school more strategically, in that senior teachers and co-ordinators can be linked into and can influence area level work and engage in partnership working with other schools in the area. An example of this is two single sex schools who each take children from the same families, and so need to work collectively at the family rather than the individual level.

'We have identified difficult families at risk of exclusion and had multi agency meetings with Batley Enterprise College, Education Social Workers and Neighbourhood Enrichment and their shared police officer to develop a community based response to social exclusion.'

Governors

Schools made little reference to governors in developing the extended school, unless they had a governor who was particularly interested and had time to become involved or a particular skill they would like to contribute. This seems to fit with the low response that was received to offers by ELS to run training for governors.

External resources and sources of support

Schools talked of limited support they had received from outside. Principally this was the support received from the ELS as well as the small amounts of money received from NRF. For most schools the NR funding alone was not a sufficient reason for taking part, but for some schools it was necessary to get them started and give them some breathing space so they test things out and see if they would be worth funding longer term.

'I think our planning will be much more focused ... now we know where we are going'

'We've had an Extended school in this area, but we've had breakfast clubs, after school clubs, so we've had provision but it hasn't been a clear provision ... I think what this has done is actually started the process.. but we've got a long way to go.'

Schools talked about NRF being one of a number of funding streams that allowed extended school activity to happen.

'We've actually used the money to pay somebody to come and provide short cover ...but that would again cost much more money than we got from Extended Schools, so I would rather , it's the Extended School plan which has made us think about how we are going to impact...'

Support provided by ELS was appreciated. The support provided by the Extended Schools Manager around planning and prioritizing. Having the opportunity to discuss with other schools was also welcomed through the conferences that had been provided, although not all schools had attended these and felt that not enough support had been provided generally.

Support at the operational level was valued for example ELS co-ordinating and providing advice around Peer Massage and the Reading Friends initiative and advice around child minding.

The value of the NR support though has been around practical things, *'NR has bought some planning time, but is not enough to help with the reshaping.'*

The extended learning service has been supportive of schools in developing their own 'brand of extended school', some schools have welcomed this, whereas others thought it could have been bolder about what it wanted to achieve.

'It's all very well to develop own response to extended schools but it could be zero response (as could say are an extended school already, as do more than the curriculum), if don't say to schools they must to do this. This can only sensibly be made if it is part of a wider strategy – what bits can the school provide- what are the different things that really need addressing e.g. is it acceptable for children to go through ... all white schooling.'

This latter point suggests the need for strong leadership at a local level.

The ELS support staff

Interviews were held with two staff in the Extended Learning Service who provide operational support to schools. These staff offer a menu of activities to schools which they can choose to run in their school. It appears that this is a response led service that provides training and practical advice to schools on a range of activities such as Share Plus (parenting) Peer Massage and Reading Friends. The role of this team appears to be to identify possible activities which can be promoted to schools and support their delivery.

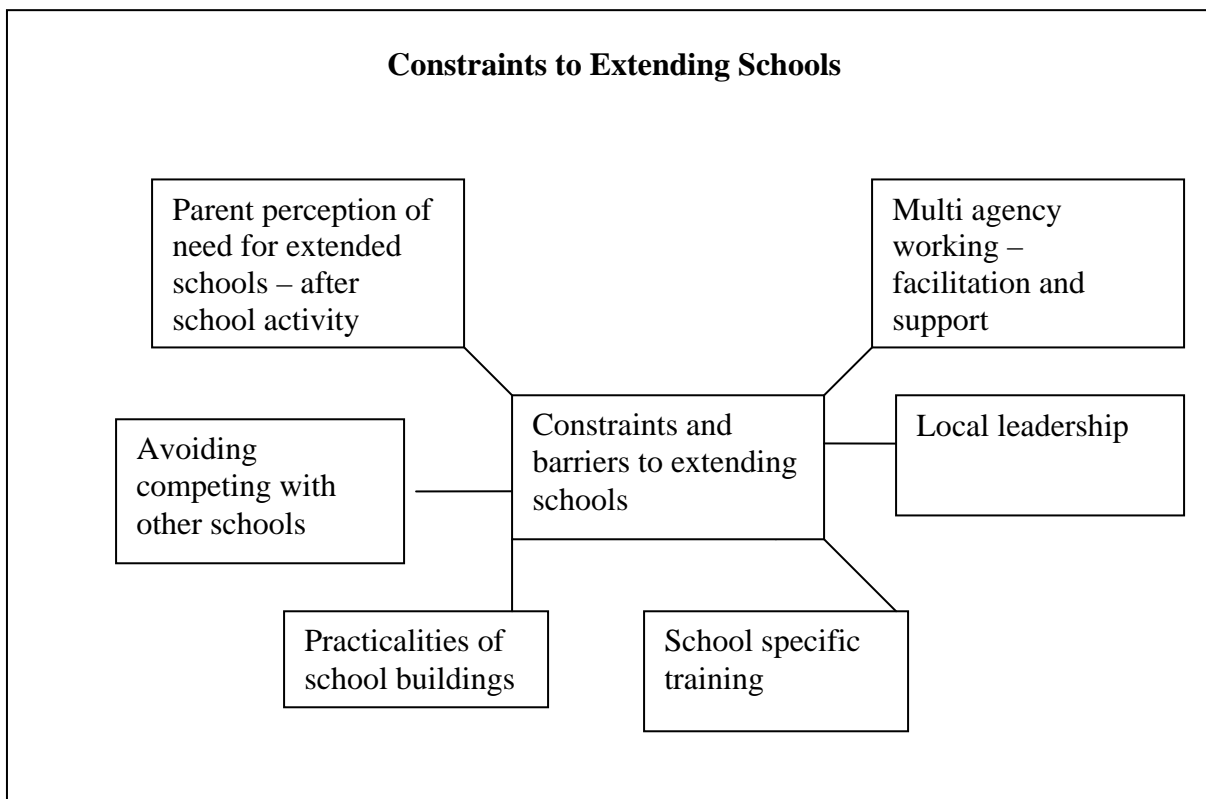
This team did not appear to be involved in supporting schools at the strategic level, in seeing how these activities connected to the broader area strategy and addressed need. The team did not appear to have any resources to assess the

value of the activities that were offered in terms of their effectiveness in achieving desired goals, for example the appraisal of research studies around the activities offered, that could be used to support planning and evaluation.

The evaluation did not include any interviews with the Extended Learning Service Co-ordinators who may have been able to give a perspective on the planning aspect of extended schools.

Constraints and barriers

The diagram below summarises what schools believed to be the constraints they faced in developing their extended activities.



Schools expressed the difficulty they face in multi agency working and that they could not do all of this work in isolation. This has been discussed above. This includes assistance at all stages from initial engagement and brokering involvement with other agencies to developing protocols for working together, to investment in team building and visioning around common objectives. This is discussed further in future developments. Those schools that were approaching quadrant 4, in their understanding and operationalising their role, expressed the importance of schools being part of a wider strategy. They talked of contributing to the things that need addressing against the ECM outcomes in order to develop the community and local area.

This is tied very much into local leadership to create the vision, the direction of travel and enable all agencies to see what their role is. Not all schools appeared to have this level of understanding, particularly those who were focusing their energies on immediate problems. This suggests that local leadership has a role to play in developing understanding amongst schools what their contribution is to the local area.

This may tie into the comments made around school specific training. Although generally it was felt that the training provided by Professor Dyson was very good, it has been too general and schools may need support in applying this to their school. They need to know what this means for them.

On a practical level, some schools felt that their buildings were inadequate to deliver services to the community. For example where the school was very open plan it would not be practical to allow the public to enter the school while the children were having lessons as this would disturb learning.

Some schools talked of being careful about what activities they put on, because of the effect it may have on neighbouring schools. For example a junior school putting on breakfast clubs may affect take up of the breakfast club ran by the feeder infant and nursery school. This stands in contrast to policies which have encouraged competition between schools and suggests a spirit of collaboration between some schools that are not in direct competition is being developed.

'Altruistic involvement in the community clashes with competition and free choice.'

Parent Perception

There is a concern amongst schools that there may not be a demand for services provided by extended schools because of the perception of parents.

Parents' may not always perceive the need for extended schools, this applies for example to after school activities. 'Parents don't see a problem giving children of our children's age (7-11) a key to let themselves in for a couple of hours at the end of the day ... so there isn't a huge take up.'

However it needs to be acknowledged that schools may not always have the capacity to objectively research perceptions and needs within their local area. This links with the next section on the use of evidence.

Use of evidence and evaluation

There is some evidence from schools attending the Extended Schools conference that they are beginning to engage with objective evidence

identifying needs in their local area. As agencies begin to work together it will become increasingly important to have access to objective sources as well as personal experiences of individual professionals.

However we found the use of evidence based practice to address (rather than identify) needs relatively limited and that there is little support available to assist schools. By evidence based practice we mean the use of research studies that would suggest that a particular activity leads to a particular outcome. The closest we came to this was the use of pupil data on attainment, achievement and attitude surveys that allow individuals and groups of children to be monitored and under performance picked up.

However in selecting which activities to use, no reference was made to the use of research studies which may collect similar outcome data but also control confounding factors and have statistically valid comparator groups, for example for Peer Massage and Share parenting courses. The closest we came to this was reference to the Times Educational Supplement and the Internet. There are no Kirklees wide circulations of appraised evidence. This is somewhat concerning given the need to focus resources on evidence based practice so that decisions around the cost effectiveness of alternative means of achieving an outcome can be made.

Future Developments

Learning from the NRF experience and developing a strategic approach

Initial evaluation work, that considered school plans and interviewed schools took place in April and May 2006. Since then a number of developments have taken place in the approach that the Extended Learning Service has adopted based on their experience with the 11 NR schools in this project and a Strategy for Extended Schools has been developed. This strategy emphasizes the importance of the Children and Young People's Plan as its key reference is setting the direction. Schools also have increased flexibility in how they use their budgets and can use it to fund the extended offer.

This strategy acknowledges some of the issues raised in the initial evaluation work discussed above, around partnership working, ongoing consultation and integrated planning at a locality level to deliver the core offer of:

- high quality childcare available 8am-6pm all year round
- a varied menu of activities such as homework clubs, sports, music tuition
- parenting support including family learning sessions
- swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services
- wider community use and access to ICT, sports, arts and including the provision of adult learning

With regards to planning, this is done in school pyramids rather than each school doing this in isolation. 'It became obvious, quite quickly, that schools wishing to provide extended services would need to do so in partnership with their neighbouring schools and with local partners, agencies and providers. Schools can not do this by themselves'.¹⁰

A three stage training model has been rolled out across Kirklees. The first stage considers the context of extended schools, the requirements of the core offer and helps schools understand the needs of the local area from standard census and administrative data that is provided to schools. Support is provided on how schools may consult with local parents particularly in relation to the suitability and availability of childcare. We are unclear at this stage whether this support draws on the expertise of the KMC research team to ensure schools are collecting valid data on the demand for this.

The second stage to the planning model uses a market based approach bringing schools and potential providers who can offer services to support extended schools together to discuss requirements of either side.

¹⁰ Extended Learning Service, Tranche Training document October 2006

The third stage synthesises the first two stages into a plan which sets out, objectives, tasks/actions required, timescales, responsibility by the partners involved, resources needed, monitoring indicators and success criteria. Objectives are set in relation to the 4 areas of the core offer.

Implementation of the plans are then supported by ELS through the work of Extended Learning Service Co-ordinators.

Supporting and sustaining this planning process

It is anticipated that by 2010 this approach to planning will mean that schools are part of a community plan that is a collaboration of schools and other agencies. This will be achieved through the planning process above which will be supported by all schools having access to an Extended Learning Co-ordinator assigned to their locality. They will have a key role in facilitating local networks and offering practical, developmental and policy support to extended schools. The community service planning process that should be in place by 2010 will be supported by DFES funding streams which the local authority will give guidance on. This will ensure their sustainability. Schools will play a vital role in supporting and developing relevant networks including the Neighbourhood learning Network, to maximise the opportunities for parents and carers to access family and adult learning opportunities.

It is expected that these community plans will be reflected in School's Improvement Plans. The Single Conversation between schools and the ELS will evaluate any changes brought about as result of extended services and the School Evaluation form central to the Ofsted inspection will also evidence the extent to which schools have embraced the agenda.

It is expected that this approach may go some way to addressing the concerns that schools had around having to broker access to services on their own and also the limited resources and expertise they have available to assess needs within their local area.

Remodeling the workforce

The Extended Schools strategy forms part of the broader national remodeling of the children's workforce which is being led by the Training Development Agency. This has a strong focus on the status and skills of support staff in schools, which as we have seen in the small number of schools who have taken part in this project have been very important in helping schools extend their activity so far.

Moving to locality based working

Within Kirkless three pilots are being undertaken of developing integrated locality based working through the Local Project Implementation groups (LPIGS), covering Huddersfield South, Dewsbury and Batley. These bring together all children's service partners working in a locality and thus include both Extended Learning Service Co-ordinators and schools. Future evaluation of the extent to which these groups are bringing about shared working and the underpinning culture change needed will help us understand the extent to which this is working on the ground.

Evaluation of pyramid plans that are work in progress.

A number of pyramids are currently in the process of being developed and it is opportune at this point to provide some commentary on their content. We have considered those set out by the Moorend, Earlsheaton and Holmfirth pyramids that have been developed along the lines set out above.

A number of these plans make reference to the need to conduct audits of services, for example study support in Earlsheaton and all make reference to the need to assess the demand for childcare. We would urge that any assessment of childcare is not done in isolation by schools or pyramids of schools but is done as part of the work that is underway on the ChildCare Assessment that the local authority is required to undertake. This will avoid duplication of questioning of residents and also ensure standardized and representative data is collected to allow comparability across Kirklees and give confidence in using the data collected.

Some of the activities that have been presented in these plans such as Playing For Success have a sound evidence base. For example we are aware this project has been subjected to DFES control group evaluation, demonstrating that longer term it has small positive effects on attainment with underachieving groups at Key stage 2 and 3.¹¹ However the rationale, evidence base and target groups for this and each of the other activities in the plans is not explained and we would suggest that inclusion of this as a standard item in the planning proformas would provide a helpful focus. This would be particularly useful in helping explain why there are marked differences in the methods used between pyramids. For example the Moorend pyramid is looking to have shared access to a speech and language therapist for improving swift referral. However we are unclear as to how this therapist will be used and whether reference has been made to the recommendations made by the Health Technology Assessment systematic review on speech and language. In deciding this¹² The Earlsheaton pyramid on the other hand is addressing the

¹¹ Sharp, C, Schagen, I., Scott, E., Playing for success the longer term impact: A multi level Analysis. November 2004, DFES, RB593

¹² ¹² Law, J., Boyle, J., Harris, E., Nye, C., (1998) Screening for Speech and Language Delay: A systematic Review of the Literature, Health Technology Assessment Vol. 2 No.9

swift referral objective through the use of a DVD provided to parents. We are unsure as how effective providing DVD's is compared to having advice from staff who have received training from speech and language therapists as recommended in the above referenced review. We are also unclear as to why such different approaches are needed between the different pyramids. For this reason we need to understand the rationale, so we can be clear as to what the different needs of the population in each area are and therefore why a different method is being used. If this is for resource reasons, then it may be a strategic view is needed as to which pyramids have the greatest need of speech and language expertise.

Understanding the rationale and evidence base for approaches is also crucial in order to set meaningful success criteria. We are concerned that the criteria in the plans at this stage focus on outputs rather than outcomes for example we would expect to see success criteria for playing for success that show improvement in children's attainment as well as numbers attending courses. We might expect to see changes in patterns of referral to speech and language therapy as children at risk of delayed development are picked up sooner, and receive input from trained staff who can advise parents on how they may support their children.

Developing swift and easy referral processes

Development of these services is not something that schools can address on their own. It requires partnership working with the key services that children are referred to. It is anticipated that these mechanisms will become easier to make when there is greater clarity around Children's Trust arrangements.

Conclusions

Evaluation Question

To what extent have schools felt able to understand and engage with the extended schools agenda in a meaningful way that addresses the needs of their local community and allows them to deliver services beyond education?

How have they been supported in doing this and what value has this support been?

The evaluation set out to find out about how a group of schools in NRF areas had been supported to engage with the extended schools agenda with the aim of moving these schools in the direction of the following key project objective:

To enable schools to develop their capacity, to embed new opportunities and practices to change the scope of their work beyond the statutory education agenda

It is far too early to measure the outcomes of this support, but we need to be certain that schools are being given appropriate support and are developing in a way that will enable improved outcomes for children to be achieved.

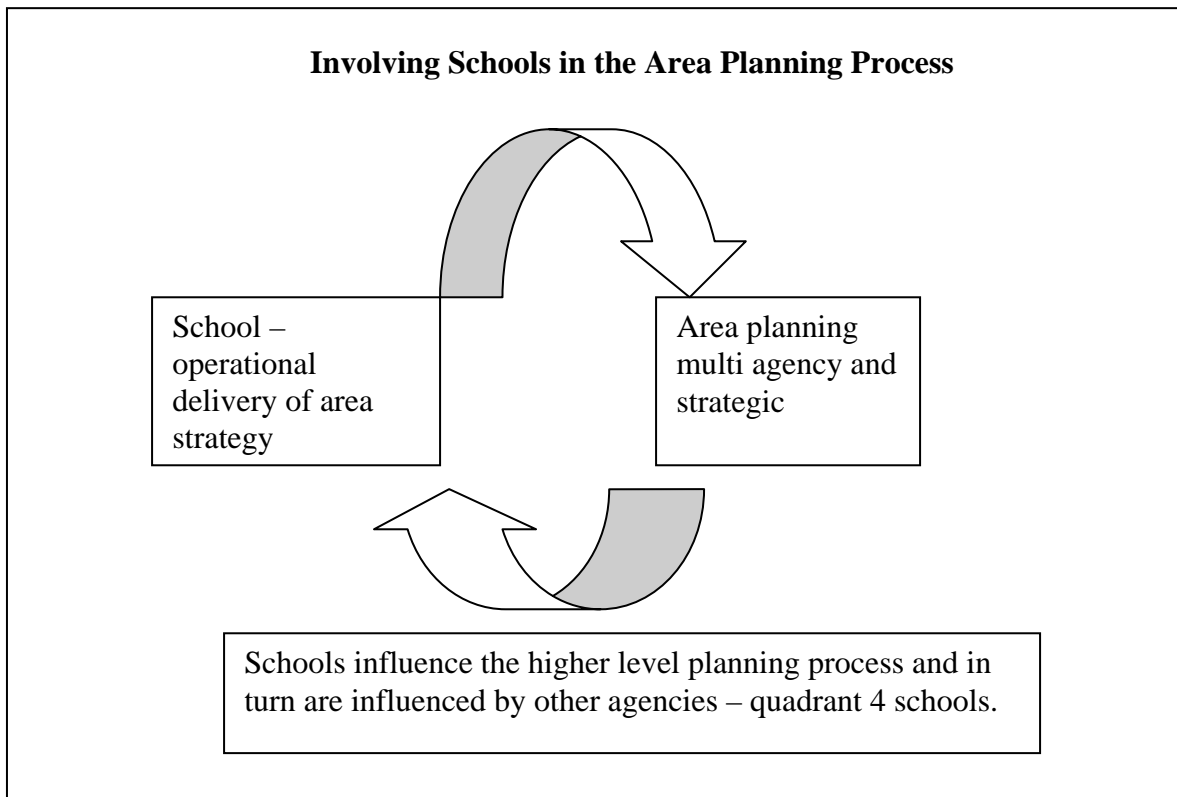
The evaluation has been limited in its focus and used documentary analysis of plans and monitoring data along with interviews with senior or head teachers and ELS support staff to draw out the following conclusions in relation to the above questions. We have also drawn on the evidence provided as part of the national evaluation of the Extended Schools Pilot to identify potential difficulties schools may encounter. We have reviewed this evidence and identified concerns with the Theory of Change model that it purports as a means of measuring change, principally around the evidence base to support the link between activity and outcome.

Understanding of the extended schools concept

We have presented a matrix model that indicates the extent to which it is believed that schools are engaging with the principal of Extended Schools. The model does not provide a quantitative analysis of where the schools are, rather a representation of where they may be and where we would aim to move them to. We have found schools to be in all quadrants, except quadrant 1. This suggests that there is a good understanding by schools of their role, and that schools are moving away from engaging in disjointed activities that do not necessarily tie into local area needs towards recognising the need to become

more integrated with other agencies. This is supported by the findings of the Dyson evaluation, that it does take time for schools to become aware of their role in contributing to the delivery of regeneration within their area and to build relationships with partners.

We have found that schools are aware of the needs within their local area, but need to be firmly connected into local area planning and the use of objective data. We have found that not all schools are engaged with local area planning and that although schools may invite stakeholders to 'their' planning days, they need to be part of the planning process for the local area and take this higher level perspective into their organizations. The Extended Learning Service is making progress with this through its new 3 stage planning model. Through the pyramid approach and the role of the Extended Learning Service Co-ordinators it is facilitating work between schools and other agencies which may lead to planning process as depicted in the diagram below. This process will help schools become involved in debating and clarifying needs and enable them to see a range of perspectives of need rather than just their own.



From our discussions with schools there appeared to be a number of push and pull factors that effect where schools were in the matrix and their ability to move closer to quadrant 4. These appeared to be:

Push factors (internal factors)

Understanding of the local planning process and the role of the school in the local area.

Connections into local planning

Resources at a high enough level devoted to planning at the area and school level

Pull Factors (external motivation)

Relationships with a range of external agencies including understanding and commitment to shared priorities

Brokering and facilitation by third party to bring schools and other agencies together

Leadership at the area level – communicating the vision and school's role in it

The ELS has a role to play in both encouraging schools to understand their role and in facilitating links with the other agencies. An example of this is the access to asset management to support the development of childcare within the Hanging Heaton area.

Support received by schools

It appears that at the time of the school interviews and from the documentary analysis of the extended school plans that this type of planning cycle was not yet in place for all schools. As a result of the learning from this NR project The ELS has made changes to the planning process in order to enable schools to plan in pyramids and have access to information about their local area and the providers who can help them. Support is also being provided in incorporating this into plans and in implementing them through the work of the Extended Learning Service Co-ordinators.

Schools have expressed the need for support in engaging with other agencies that may be able to help them deliver on their own priorities. We have found one example of where a school and a health agency have been able to identify shared objectives and develop a way of working collaboratively to their mutual benefit. It is expected that as part of the pyramid approach schools will be able to work collaboratively to approach agencies together facilitated by ELS staff.

Linking activities to outcomes

Schools are engaged in a range of activities, some of which receive support at an operational level. To some extent these can seem divorced from area planning. We have not been clear that schools are familiar with the underpinning evidence that would suggest particular activities lead to specific outcomes. This is a weakness in the Theory of Change model of evaluating the effect of extended school activity. Although schools benefit from operational

support in delivering these activities they would benefit from advice around the likely value of the activities in generating given outcomes, for example we are unclear as to evidence base for Peer Massage and Share Parenting Support.

The link between activities and outcomes continues to be a concern in the pyramid plans that are currently under development and it may be that those involved in the planning need opportunity within the proformas to explain their rationales. If these plans could also be considered at a strategic level by partners who may be expected to contribute resources this may help make more informed resource allocation decisions.

Schools tend to evaluate the effectiveness of activities through numbers participating in and satisfaction with programmes and this continues with the new plans. As evaluation tools these are appropriate in answering questions around reach and any operational concerns that may need to be addressed. However they are often not appropriate in establishing links between activities and outcomes and for this reason there is a need for schools to have access to evidence of effectiveness studies in order for them to be confident that they will have the desired outcomes. This is where they may be value in working with partner agencies who may be more familiar with the evidence base.

The funding for this NRF project has been used to effect in helping pilot a number of schools with their planning. The project has presented a learning opportunity which the ELS has used to develop and refine its planning process and inform the development of a strategy for rolling out extended schools across Kirklees in conjunction with and complementary to the children centre agenda. Continued development of the approach will be needed to anticipate and respond to the challenges and changes in Children's Services. It is hoped that the recommendations suggested next will go some way to supporting this.

Recommendations

Following on from the analysis and the conclusions a number of suggested recommendations are put forward as to how schools may be better supported in extending their school.

1. Planning

Schools are likely to need time to adjust to the pyramid planning approach and continued support from the Extended Learning Service Co-ordinators will be important. This may also require commitment of resources from schools. Continued training in planning will be needed by school representatives to understand their role and the role of other agencies. As part of developing the planning expertise of schools it is recommended that schools are encouraged to articulate the rationale behind the activities in their plans and how they address the needs of target populations. They are likely to require support in accessing the evidence base to support their rationales.

It may be that corporate expertise in KMC and its partners can be drawn on to support access to this. It is also recommended to draw on corporate expertise in undertaking consultation activity with communities, particularly given the developments in Research Governance across Children's Services and the need to prevent consultation fatigue amongst the population. Linking into the work on assessing the childcare market that is already underway would be advisable for this latter reason.

2. Support for understanding and applying the evidence base

In order to support effective planning, schools need be confident that the activities they engage in will have a desired effect against which they or partners can off set costs. Providing access to expertise that can identify, review and appraise evidence would be a valuable resource not just to schools but also to children's services more broadly. Such resources are already available (albeit limited) within the health sector to support practitioners, but not within the education aspect of children's services. Such a resource would help schools be more confident in knowing that the activities they put forward in their plans can potentially lead to the outcomes specified. Such a resource should be considered essential in appraising evidence to support expenditure decisions around commissioning budgets. This is a recommendation that needs to be considered not just by the ELS, but more broadly by Children's Services.

3. Support for multi agency working

Schools have expressed a view that they cannot influence agencies by operating individually. The pyramid planning process and extended learning

co-ordinators may help overcome this and facilitate access to agencies by a third party. The inclusion of schools in the LPIG's and sub ECM groups would be advisable for schools operating in the three areas where these pilots are underway. This will allow their views to be heard, and also for them to be aware of the roles of other agencies.

4. Local area leadership

A leadership vacuum has existed around locality planning and this may have impeded schools progress in becoming familiar with what the bigger picture is within their local area and also understanding what their role is. The development of the LPIG's to facilitate leadership will go some way to address this. The leadership provided through the LPIGS needs to permeate through schools so that staff are aware of what they are working towards, the ELS has a role in supporting this.

5. The role of ELS

ELS has taken the lead through the NRF bid in developing extended schools and has an influential role in their planning. The learning gained from this project has enabled the planning process to move on. It has a role to play in supporting the further development and implementation of these plans. The ELS has a strong role to play in bringing agencies together and brokering services working in conjunction with other projects that are also facilitating multi agency working such as LPIGS.

ELS also have a role to play in contributing and influencing the development of the Children's Services infrastructure. Examples of this will include, supporting schools in accessing and using evidence with regard to their planning, and in corporate exercises such as the assessment of the childcare market, as well as consulting local communities on their needs.

On an operational level ELS have a role to play in supporting schools to deliver a range of evidence based extended learning activity where this meets the needs of target populations.

ELS could be supported in its role around facilitating schools to make swift and easy access to services once there is greater clarity around Children's Trust arrangements.

6. The role of governors

We have been unable during the course of this evaluation to gain any insight into governor's understanding of extended schools. They appear from the training take up to have perhaps a limited awareness and interest. This may be something that needs to be addressed though raising awareness and also discussing opportunities at governor meetings. It is noted that as part of the Extended Schools Strategy additional information has been provided including how Ofsted will consider extended schools activity within school's self assessment forms.

Appendix – Discussion Guides

Discussion Guide – Extended Schools Evaluation

Headteachers / Extended Schools Representatives

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the evaluation of the extended schools project.

Introduce self – independent researcher, separate from ELS.

Check is ok to record and assure of anonymity of information provided and is within MRS code of conduct.

Interview will take up to 1 ¼ hours.

I am going to begin by asking you some background questions about the school and your role within it and then more specifically about the extended school project.

Individual background questions

Name

Job title

Can you briefly describe what your role is within the school?

Understanding of local community's needs and how this affects the school

Can you tell me about the area your school is located in?

Probe – levels of deprivation
Issues or concerns within the local area

Where do the children attending the school come from?

Probe – local area to further afield
If further afield what areas do they come from?

How does the local area effect the school?

How do you think the school effects the local area?

Understanding of the school's and local area's needs

I am now going to ask you about your school

Just thinking about this school and the area it is in, what would you say the key needs are for it over the next 1-2 years?

Probe - school based needs

- Area based needs

Understanding of extended schools in this context and motivation to take part

I am now going to ask you some questions about extended schools

When you decided to take part in the extended schools project, what did you understand the concept of extended schools to be?

What motivated you to take part in the project?

Has your school taken part in extended school type activity before?

Planning process

I am now going to ask you some questions about your involvement with the extended schools project, starting with the planning process

How did you go about setting up as an extended school?

Where are you up to in terms of planning?

Probe – governance and management structures that are in place?

Probe -what is the timescale for future developments?

What sources of support, advice and information did you use to help you?

Probe – Can you tell me about the input you have received from ELS around planning?

Probe if don't say spontaneously -can you recall taking part in / receiving the following

Audit

Toolkit,

Conference,
Planning days with other schools
Planning support from ELS staff
Training for senior staff
Training for school governors.

What value would you say this support was to you in planning your extended schools?

Resources

I am now going to ask you some questions about the resources you have had available for planning your extended school.

What resources have you had available to you to help with your planning?

Probe are these additional to existing resources?

Probe – are they from inside the school – staff time, type of staff
Outside the school - other agencies, parents
Probe how these links were made?

Would it have been possible to develop your extended schools without these resources?

Running extended school activity

I am now going to ask you some questions about actually running the extended school activities.

Can you tell me about the activities that you have been running as part of being an extended school?

Probe – what else is planned?

What resources have you drawn on to run these activities
Probe – internal to the school
Probe – external to the school, other agencies, parents, partners

How did you come to choose these activities?

Evaluation and Monitoring

No intro here

What do you aim to achieve in running these activities?

Probe – what impacts do you expect them to have on the school? (pupils, parents)

what impacts do you expect them to have on the local area / community?

What leads you to believe that you will achieve these impacts?

Probe around evidence sources.

Probe for whether are applying theory of change

Probe – How will you know if you have achieved them?

What systems do have for monitoring whether things are changing?

How will you know why things are changing and if it is connected to the extended school activity?

Mainstreaming

What plans do you have

Discussion Guide – Extended Schools Evaluation

Support Staff ELS

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the evaluation of the extended schools project.

Introduce self – independent researcher, separate from ELS.

Check is ok to record and assure of anonymity of information provided and is within MRS code of conduct.

Interview will take up to 1 hour

I am going to begin by asking you some background questions about your role in the extended learning service and then more specifically about the extended school project.

Individual background questions

Name

Job title

Your role in the project

Can you briefly describe what your role is within the extended learning service?
Probe – decision making levels.

Can you tell me a little about how your background relates to this roll?

Can you explain what you role has been in the NRF extended schools project?

What did you understand the purpose of extended schools to be?

I am now going to ask you some questions about your involvement in the planning of extended schools

Understanding of the school's and local areas needs and the planning process

To what extent has your role involved helping schools better understand:

a. The needs of the local area

b. How the school may contribute to addressing these needs?

Probe – Support for planning activities
evidence based practice

To what extent does your role contribute to multiagency working between the school and the range of public agencies in the area?

Probe – form this has taken
Engaging other agencies in schools

What has helped or hindered you in doing this?

What form has this facilitation taken?

Probe - have any processes been set up?
Do any processes need to be set up?

I am now going to move on to ask you some questions about the outcomes of extended schools

Outcomes

What outcomes are the schools you are working with expecting?

To what extent do you think schools have moved beyond their traditional agenda?

To what extent have they developed their capacity to engage with addressing the issues within their local community?

Probe – why, helping and hindering factors.
What more could be done?

Have any systems been put in place to help schools monitor and evaluate the impact they are having on the local area?

I am now going to ask you about the future of extended schools in Kirklees

Future

How would you expect extended schools to develop in the future?

What support do you think they would need to do this?

That's all the questions I have to ask. Do have anything you would like to add about extended schools?

