

Extended Services in and around schools

A Strategy for Worcestershire

2008 - 2011

Background

Extended services are a vehicle for meeting the Every Child Matters agenda and improving aspirations, outcomes and standards of achievement for all children, young people and their families. Research has demonstrated that offering access to extended services -- providing more opportunities for personalised learning, increasing parental involvement and support for their children's learning – is one of the most effective ways of driving up standards.

There is now clear evidence that children's experiences greatly influence their outcomes and life chances in later life. In particular, educational attainment is a powerful route out of poverty and disadvantage. Children who do not achieve well at school are most at risk of being involved in and becoming the victims of crime, unemployment, living an unhealthy lifestyle, and continuing on this cycle of disadvantage with their own children. Within Worcestershire we are committed to narrowing the gap between the children and young people who achieve their full potential and those who don't. **We believe that every child, young person and parent should have access to the services they need to ensure they can reach their full potential.**

Whilst the evidence suggests extended services are already having a positive impact on children and young people, the main outcomes we are seeking will require patience. The development of extended services and the wider Every Child Matters agenda is seeking to transform the way schools operate, making them more inclusive and community focused. The agenda also places great emphasis on both early identification and intervention to prevent the escalation of the problems faced by children, young people and their families. Measuring the step change in communities' attitudes towards learning and the impact of preventative services relies on a culture shift and will take time.

This strategy contributes to the Children and Young People's Plan and outlines in more detail how Worcestershire County Council will support schools to plan, develop, manage and maintain extended services through developing partnerships with key agencies. This strategy will be submitted to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) for formal approval.

While this strategy focuses on the development of extended services in and around schools, it is important to note that these services cannot be considered in isolation from other emerging strategies, in particular the new duty on schools to promote Community Cohesion, the Youth Strategy and the roll out of Children's Centres. A key principle underlying all the work in this area is, therefore, to seek to join up with these and other developments wherever possible to avoid duplication and maximise the impact of services for children, young people, and their families. The implementation of this strategy will also support the move towards the local commissioning of services to support children and young people by devolving resources to a local level for both decision-making and delivery.

Extended Schools 'Core Offer'

Schools lie at the heart of communities and are ideally placed to be at the centre of the delivery of the Every Child Matters agenda. By 2010 central government have stated that they expect every school to be providing access to a 'core offer' of services to meet local need:

- **A Varied Menu of Activities (including study support and play) and childcare**
- **Early Intervention and Support**
- **Parent Support**
- **Community Access**

Partnership working will be key to delivering this 'core offer' in communities. Schools should offer access to the core offer meaning that services do not need to be on-site or directly delivered by the school: services may be provided through an existing provider in the local community or by collaboration between schools. Similarly how the core offer is delivered locally will depend on need: services should be responsive to the communities they serve and should not be set up where there is no current need/demand or where these are met from current good quality provision elsewhere.

Extended Services Pilots

Worcestershire County Council has been supporting the development of extended services in and around schools since 2005. Between 2005 and 2007 the programme was piloted in four areas. All schools across the four areas successfully developed all aspects of the core offer in line with local need and have subsequently recorded improvements in standards. Other achievements noted included improved self-esteem and confidence in pupils as well as improved attendance and relationships with parents.

Those pilot schools that have been OfSTED inspected since 2005 have had their extended services commended by inspectors within the final report. One school was chosen to be part of the OfSTED Extended School Inspection Survey, which resulted in the school being judged as outstanding. Improved links with the community, pastoral care and more explicitly the inclusion of extended services within the schools SEF were specifically highlighted as good practice.

The lessons learnt from the pilot have reinforced the importance of partnership working, consistent co-ordination of services, and a clear planning process when developing and delivering extended services. The pilot programme was externally evaluated in July 2006 and the recommendations have been used to inform the content within this strategy.

Extended Services Planning Process

In early 2007 work began on developing a network of Community and School Clusters. A total of 12 local Clusters have been formed: this number currently provides the 'best fit' between the different arrangements of key stakeholders including schools and their pyramids, the three integrated area teams for Children's Services, local community initiatives, District Councils and Local Strategic Partnerships. The number of Clusters will continue to be reviewed as extended service developments become more established and if Clusters are used as delivery platforms for other agendas: over the life of this strategy it is likely that Clusters will establish formal governance structures and may evolve into local commissioning bodies modelled on the Joint Commissioning Board arrangements for the CYPSP.

All 250 schools and the full range of local partners have now engaged in a structured extended services planning process, delivered through these Community and School Clusters. The planning process involves a number of partnership planning workshops where schools and partners work together to assess what the needs of children and young people are, identify what resources are available and to plan together to meet those needs, setting priorities that will decide how to deploy resources to meet those needs. As Cluster arrangements develop and formalise it is anticipated that they will assume responsibility for procuring services to meet the needs and priorities identified in this process and to performance manage and review those services against the agreed priorities and outcomes. In the interim period as these arrangements develop; the work of the Clusters will be guided by this strategy and the contents of the 12 Cluster Action Plans.

The outcomes of the Community and School Cluster planning process have been used to inform this strategy. Our review of the emerging priorities of each Cluster has revealed that, while the Clusters structures are still evolving, a number of services would be best developed across the county to ensure consistency and best value and in order to meet the central government target that all schools provide access to the extended schools 'core offer' by 2010. For example the enhancement of Early Intervention Family Support and the further development of information services for parents. A three-year approach has been taken for all of these projects with a clear sustainability strategy built in: it is anticipated that after this time a county-wide approach may not be necessary. All initiatives will be reviewed and monitored on a six-monthly basis.

While this will address the shared priorities of the Community and School Clusters the divergent nature of Worcestershire requires more local focus: the 12 Cluster Action Plans will also contain more local and targeted actions which embrace both cluster wide and school pyramid level actions along with actions for 'families' of schools, individual schools and neighbourhood level initiatives.

The first round of the planning process for all the Community and School Clusters will be complete by April 2008 leading to local actions plans being developed for the 2008-09 period. Throughout this period each Cluster will be expected to review and re-adjust their plans to ensure they continue to meet local need.

Support and Co-ordination

Worcestershire County Council Extended Schools Team is facilitating the planning and development of extended services in and around schools. A total of 11 full time equivalent Extended Services Coordinators (ESCo) have now been appointed providing sufficient capacity to support all schools in Worcestershire. Each ESCo supports a set pyramid / family of schools to provide access to the core offer. Their work includes:

1. Working with schools, Education Improvement Advisers and other key partners to set local priorities for how extended services can help raise achievement levels;
2. Brokering and facilitating relationships between schools and partner agencies to help meet priorities;
3. Supporting the consultation / needs analysis process to ascertain local need;
4. Identifying external resource opportunities.

These ESCOs are split into three teams in line with the integrated area teams and are line-managed by a Cluster Manager who is responsible for the extended services planning process across a defined area of the county and for overseeing the development and implementation of Cluster action plans. The Cluster Managers also provide direct support to the PRUs and Special Schools within their area.

Wherever possible this Extended Schools Team seek to utilise the expertise and infrastructure of existing partnership arrangements to develop and deliver extended services. Further explanation of the links to existing partnership arrangements are included within central and local action plans.

For more information or to contact your local Extended Services Co-ordinator please go to www.worcestershire.gov.uk/extendedschools or www.edulink.networcs.net

Funding Extended Services in and around schools

When considering resourcing this strategy and associated action plans it is essential to recognise that the focus of the extended schools 'core offer' is on reshaping services – on developing new ways of working and different ways of doing things -- and, as such, cannot nor should not rely on a single pot of money. Instead, the extended services action plans will draw on a range of resources including existing human resources, the re-prioritisation of existing activities or funding, and where possible the pooling of budgets between partner organisations and future joint commissioning. The partnership nature of this approach, which includes a wide range of organisations from the voluntary sector, may also provide opportunities to access external grants and funding streams.

This being said, the grant funding that has been made available from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to support this initiative between 2008 and 2011 will have a critical role to play in supporting this strategy.

The indicative funding amounts allocated to Worcestershire for the three-year period from April 2008 to March 2011 are outlined in the tables below:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
General Sure Start Grant	£524,588	N/A	N/A
Standards Fund: Area Based Grant	£1,087,435	£1,640,490	£677,107
Standards Fund: Sustainability	£751,961	£1,376,038	£1,938,730
Total Revenue	£2,363,984	£3,016,528	£2,615,837
Total Capital	£760,301	£805,557	£416,335

The increased amounts reflect the current stage of extended schools developments, in particular the need to continue to drive towards *every school providing access* to the extended schools 'core offer' by 2010. Central government have, however, made it clear that this funding will be short-term and both new and existing services will need to be supported to become sustainable.

The extended schools funding will act as an important catalyst to support this change process that lies at the heart of this programme but the short-term nature of this funding must be recognised in all uses of this funding. Within Worcestershire any services developed using this funding will be required to have a clear exit strategy from the outset.

Extended Schools funding will be used to pump-prime initiatives where a clear need has been identified through data analysis and consultation and has then been prioritised by the cluster planning process. This pump-priming funding will allow schools and partners with the support

of the Extended Schools Team to experiment and evaluate new ways of working and will give them time to either re-prioritise existing funding to support these initiatives to make them sustainable in the long term or to develop sustainable charging policies where this would be appropriate. These initiatives are likely to take a number of forms including targeted community projects, new posts such as Early Intervention Family Support Workers or they may take the form of small one-off initiatives with identified groups of children and young people in order to develop a pool of Worcestershire best practice that can demonstrate the impact of a specific approach.

The start-up and sustainability funding made available to from the DCSF will be considered together and will be allocated in accordance with this strategy, the national guidance, and the local priorities determined locally by community and school clusters. The national guidance on the use of extended schools funding clearly outlines two priorities which central government expect to be supported from this extended schools funding.

1. The appointment of Extended Services Co-ordinators in clusters of schools to help schools create and embed the infrastructure necessary to deliver the extended schools offer in a sustainable way and to support the co-ordination of services by building links to local agencies, businesses and other educational institutions. The learning from the four full-service extended schools pilots in Worcestershire was that these posts are most effective when they are managed and supported centrally but have a clear identified cluster of schools to work with.
2. Parent Support Advisers whose role is to work with families to improve behaviour and attendance, overcome barriers to learning; improve parent's engagement with their child's learning and to signpost to relevant specialist services including parenting programmes. A number of models for these posts are available and, within Worcestershire, the consultation with schools and partners through the extended services planning process has demonstrated that this role is best met by further development of the Early Intervention Family Support Worker posts that have been prioritised by all Community and School Clusters.

In line with this strategy and to ensure both consistency and best value, a proportion of the funding available from the DCSF will be used to centrally fund the two national priorities listed above alongside any specific projects and posts that have been prioritised by all, or most, Clusters. £130,000 will be retained centrally to cover the costs of the central management, administrative support and monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The remaining funding will be devolved to Community and Schools Clusters to allow them to respond to locally identified need as defined within Cluster Action Plans. In the event that there should be any funding remaining consideration will be given to emerging needs or devolving funding directly to individual schools.

Capital Funding

A small amount of capital funding has been allocated to each authority to overcome the challenges schools may face in providing access to the 'core offer'. National guidance for this funding clearly states that for maximum impact the funding should be joined up with other devolved local authority level funding and should be used to support primary schools (including Voluntary Aided) to provide access to the core offer.

In line with the revenue funding, capital allocations will be made in accordance with this strategy, the national guidance, and the local priorities determined locally by Community and School Clusters. In Worcestershire this means that First, Primary and Middle (deemed Primary) schools will be able to access small amounts of capital funding to provide access to the core offer with special emphasis being placed on ensuring the community use of school

buildings. Larger capital programmes will be considered under exceptional circumstances if there is a clear business case that the proposed project directly supports the extended schools core offer and schools are able to provide match funding.

Action Plans and Future Communication

12 Community and School Cluster action plans have been developed to support the implementation of this strategy. Schools and partners will receive the appropriate Community and School Cluster bi-monthly progress reports along with other relevant information when appropriate. Copies of the action plans and progress reports can also be found on www.worcestershire.gov.uk/extendedschools or www.edulink.networcs.net

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