

# ***Extended Schools***

## **Introduction**

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The Government's extended schools initiative has clear benefits to schools, local authorities (LAs), children, families and local communities. However, its implementation has been a cause for concern for headteachers, teachers, teaching assistants and lecturers. For this reason, ATL's Policy Council set up a specialist task group (STG) to review the implementation of the initiative.

ATL used a variety of research methods to collect the data that formed the basis for this policy position including:

- a review of research literature on extended schools;
- an examination of extended school strategies and other documents related to a sample of over 30 LAs;
- meetings of the extended schools STG held to discuss findings and to provide data;
- a workshop involving a focus group of ATL branch secretaries at a conference in January 2006;
- information from a number of experts who are currently involved in the extended schools agenda;
- direct contact with a large number of ATL members working in extended schools pilot areas.

## **National policy context**

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The extended schools initiative is an important piece of a complex policy jigsaw. According to the DfES prospectus *Extended Schools: Access to opportunities and services for all* (DfES, 2005), mainstream and special schools are expected to make a core offer of extended services to meet the

needs of children and young people, their families and the local community. This core offer must include five key outcomes:

- 'wraparound' childcare;
- a varied menu of activities;
- parenting support;
- swift referral to a range of specialist support services;
- community-wide access.

Primary schools are expected to work with a range of local agencies to help children and families access extended services, not necessarily on their own sites. Secondary schools, however, are expected to 'open from 8am–6pm all year around, offering a range of activities for young people'. The extended schools initiative also forms an essential part of the *Every Child Matters: Change for children* (DfES, 2004) agenda and also contributes to the DfES' *Five-Year Strategy for Children and Young Learners* (DfES, 2004) and HM Treasury's *Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children: A ten year strategy for childcare* (HM Treasury, 2005). In addition, the initiative forms an important part of the Government's Education White Paper *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All: More choice for parents and pupils* (DfES, 2005). Extended services also fits with the provisions of *The Children Act 2004* (OPSI, 2004), which makes a number of specific provisions related to children's services in England.

### **The impact of extended services on schools**

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Very few schools are currently involved in the extended schools initiative. However, many schools have been running services and activities which fall within the general category of 'core' extended services. LAs have started appointing lead officers; developing area-wide strategies and consulting local stakeholders on their extended services. However, there are thorny problems facing LAs as they start to roll-out the extended schools initiative. These include:

- the impact it has on teachers, headteachers and school governors;
- leading consultations and auditing local services and needs;
- establishing, developing and sustaining partnerships between schools and other local providers;
- funding for extended services;
- sustainability of extended services;
- inspection of extended services and its implications for schools; and
- the role of the LAs in the extended schools agenda.

The extended schools initiative results from the Government's concern for social justice and its strong desire to tackle disadvantage and to address inequality in British society. ATL supports this action to reduce inequality and disadvantage in principle and believes this initiative is critical in removing barriers to learning. However, ATL has major concerns about

its roll-out which need to be addressed to ensure its successful implementation in all LAs in the country.

### **The benefits of the extended services to schools**

The extended schools initiative has benefits for schools. Evidence from recent research reports (Cummings *et al*, 2005:p27) suggest that it enabled schools to:

- improve parenting classes;
- conduct market research;
- engage external consultants;
- purchase a minibus/lorry;
- provide childcare places;
- support planning activities;
- establish infrastructure (such as building adaptations);
- employ co-ordinators to stimulate and manage activities in future (Cummings and Todd, 2003:p1);
- achieve huge improvements in communication between them and the agencies involved;
- foster better relationships between these agencies and schools (Cummings *et al*, 2003:p3);
- consider how effective they actually are as community schools (*ibid.*); impact on and raise standards (*ibid.*).

### **The impact of the extended services on school workforce**

The extended schools initiative could have a negative impact on school leadership teams. Recent research reports (Cummings *et al*, 2005; Wilkin *et al*, 2003) suggest it could:

- impose strain on members of school leadership teams;
- impact on the roles of other school staff;
- distract headteachers and teachers from their 'core business' of promoting achievement;
- bring additional stress to schools;
- put pressure on headteachers and governors;
- involve the headteacher and often other members of the school's senior management team;
- lead to headteachers taking on a more managerial role, coordinating and overseeing the delivery of all the services and provisions on offer (Wilkin *et al*, 2003:p39);
- place 'heavy demands and extra responsibilities' on school governors (Wilkin *et al*, 2003:p34);
- affect teachers and teaching assistants (Cummings *et al*, 2005:p63);

- increase teachers' workload;
- increase teachers' need for professional development and training;
- affect teachers' working conditions and environments;
- impact on their personal space and territory; and
- heighten concerns about the identity and function of the school (Wilkin *et al*, 2003:p60–79).

### **Consultation on extended services**

ATL supports the principle of consultation and the concept of extended services responding to and meeting the needs of local stakeholders. However, ATL is conscious of the fact that genuine consultation requires proper planning, effective management and sufficient resourcing. ATL is concerned by the burden that this would place on schools and strongly recommends that LAs take responsibility for planning, managing and resourcing consultations on extended services in their areas. ATL believes LAs should take the lead in conducting audits of local needs and services; evidence suggests that audits of services are more effective when they are performed by LAs. In addition, ATL is of the view that such consultations and audits of local services and needs should involve representatives from education unions.

### **Partnership working**

ATL upholds the value of partnerships between schools, LAs and other local agencies. However, ATL is concerned that it would place unreasonable demands on headteachers and other members of school leadership teams and affect their workload. ATL recommends that LAs take full responsibility for leading, building, developing, resourcing and sustaining partnerships to deliver extended services in their areas.

### **Funding**

The DfES has allocated start-up funding to LAs for the development of extended services in their areas. However, ATL has serious concerns about the fragmented nature of the funding, its insufficiency and its short-term nature. ATL recommends that the DfES commissions an independent review of this funding regime with the view to ensure its weaknesses are effectively rectified. It is imperative to find a viable funding regime to replace the current system if the vision of extended services is to be translated into a palpable reality on the ground. ATL believes that investment in extended services will pay dividends in the long-term.

### **Sustainability**

ATL has grave concerns about the lack of sufficient resources to ensure sustainability of extended services. Raising funds from diverse sources is a huge challenge and charging presents a moral dilemma to some schools. There is clear evidence that some schools are

charging children for their extended services whilst others are not. It is difficult for schools involved in extended services to come up with charging policies which are in harmony with each other. ATL believes that schools should not be required to produce charging policies as this could result in a competitive market in childcare which would drive down quality. ATL believes that LAs, in consultation with schools and other local service providers, should develop charging policies to ensure standardisation. Moreover, ATL believes that it is vital for LAs to take full responsibility for sustainability of extended services. As an interim measure, LAs should co-ordinate funding streams to support their long-term strategies for extended services in their areas, pending development of a more viable funding methodology.

### **Inspection**

OfSTED inspectors will look for evidence to assess the impact of the core extended services on the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters*, which are:

- to be healthy;
- to stay safe;
- to enjoy and achieve;
- to make a positive contribution; and
- to achieve economic wellbeing.

ATL believes that if extended services offered by schools are configured as essentially LA services, offered in partnership with schools, this could avoid additional administrative and management responsibilities which would otherwise be an additional burden for headteachers, governors, teachers and teaching assistants. ATL concludes that all extended services should be inspected as part of the LAs' area-wide inspections, rather than as part of school inspections.

### **Impact on children**


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Evidence from the pilot and pathfinder projects suggests that extended schools have significant benefits to children. They impact positively on pupil attainment, motivation, attendance, punctuality and behaviour. They also boost education and learning, increase engagement and motivation and remove barriers to attendance and achievement. Full-service extended schools may contribute to high levels of multi-agency working which in turn result in benefits to vulnerable children and their families.

### **Impact on families**

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Full-service extended schools provision may have significant potential benefits for children, schools and parents. These include an impact on children's learning, new opportunities for positive relationships between schools and families, and support for parents in accessing



services and in gaining and maintaining employment. Full-service extended schools also have positive outcomes including raised attainment, increased pupil engagement with learning, engendering trust and support between families and schools and the potential to tackle disadvantage. However, evidence suggests that lack of transport and childcare facilities in the school catchment areas have created barriers to increased parental involvement.

### **Impact on local communities**

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Extended schools can also impact positively on the local community. They can provide a dynamic base to which other organisations can become affiliated, and they can lead to more efficient service delivery. Extended schools can also impact on community pride and involvement by fostering a growing sense of self-esteem in community members and of control over decisions which affect their lives. The body of evidence examined by ATL suggests that extended services offer good opportunities which have the potential to change the lives of children and young people, parents, families and local communities. ATL therefore urges the DfES and LAs to ensure that such opportunities are extended to all children.

### **Local authority responsibility**

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ATL considers that the LA is better placed to be ultimately responsible for the planning and provision of extended services. LAs should assess and prioritise local needs and decide, in consultation with schools, the optimum provision of services. LAs should also be responsible for devising an appropriate charging policy to ensure sustainability.

### **ATL's recommendations**

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- The extended schools initiative is critical in removing barriers to learning, and ATL will continue to support government action to reduce inequality and disadvantage. However, ATL has major concerns regarding the roll-out of the initiative, which need to be addressed to ensure its successful implementation in all LAs in the country.
- ATL supports the extended schools policy and urges the DfES and LAs to ensure that the opportunities and benefits of the initiative are extended to all children, young people and families and parents, communities and schools in deprived areas.
- ATL recommends that the DfES and LAs should ensure that all teachers, teaching assistants, headteachers and other members of school leadership teams and school governors are not over-burdened by the extended schools initiative.
- ATL recommends that LAs should take full responsibility for planning, coordinating, reviewing, funding and staffing extended services in their area.

- ATL recommends that OfSTED should inspect LAs rather than schools involved in running extended services.
- ATL supports the principle of consulting with local stakeholders in order that extended services respond to and meet their needs. ATL strongly recommends that LAs take responsibility for consulting on extended services, auditing local services and identifying local needs.
- ATL believes in the value of partnerships between schools, other local service providers and LAs and recommends that LAs take full responsibility for leading, building, developing, resourcing and sustaining partnerships to deliver extended services in their areas. This will be essential in ensuring that school governors and school leadership teams are not over-burdened by undertaking these tasks.
- ATL regrets the fragmented nature of the current funding methodology with some money going directly to schools and some to LAs. ATL urges the DfES and LAs to ensure that extended services are sufficiently funded. ATL strongly recommends that the DfES commissions an independent review of this funding regime with the view to ensuring that weaknesses are rectified effectively. In the interim LAs should coordinate funding streams to support their long-term strategies for extended services in their areas.
- Given the difficulty that schools involved in extended services will have in developing charging policies that are in harmony with each other, ATL strongly recommends that LAs should develop charging policies in consultation with schools and other local service providers to ensure fairness and standardisation.
- ATL urges the DfES to ensure that all LAs are supported in their endeavours to develop and implement long-term strategies to translate the vision of extended schools into a palpable reality on the ground.

A full report of the findings from ATL's extended schools STG is available for download from ATL's website.

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