

In this issue of Enquire within, we look at the development of the integrated community schools initiative. As well as focusing on the aims of the programme (*cover story*), and how it is being rolled out across Scotland, we hear from the leader of a learning community in Glasgow (*pages 2 and 3*), and a group of family work co-ordinators in Fife (*page 4*).



*Raising parental participation:
an aim for integrated community schools*

Developing integrated community schools

The integrated community schools approach – or the new community schools approach, as it was originally known – was launched in 1998. At that time, the Scottish Office set out its five key goals:

- modernisation of schools and the promotion of social inclusion;
- increasing the attainment of young people facing 'the destructive cycle of underachievement';
- early intervention to address barriers to learning and maximise potential;
- meeting the needs of every child, ensuring that services are focused through new community schools;
- raising parental and family expectations and participation in their children's education.

While some single schools became new community schools, most of the projects comprised clusters of locally associated schools, and all brought together teachers, social workers, family workers and health professionals to develop child and family centred services.

The integrated schools approach aims to help each individual child to overcome the particular barriers to learning and positive development which he or she faces. The approach makes no distinction between different groups or categories of children, and no specific provision is

made for children with additional support or special educational needs. The help for each individual child is delivered through the provision of integrated services – principally education, social work, family support and health improvement. All pupils may therefore expect to benefit from early identification of problems and the provision of support of the type, and at the level, appropriate to their individual needs.

The evaluation of the pilot project found that the common factors which contributed to success of new community schools included: a commitment to the new community schools concept; support from education authorities and partner agencies; team working, team co-location, a shared vision and strong leadership; and adequate resourcing to develop local solutions to local contexts. The new Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Bill, currently going through the Parliamentary process, is also concerned with co-ordination of services particularly for those students with the most complex needs.

The report also found that the factors which hindered projects were: a lack of clarity and commitment between partners; competing priorities and shortages of staff; overly complex management arrangements; short time scales and a lack of clear planning beyond the pilot; and professional barriers to bringing staff from different agencies together. Families and the wider community were less involved than had been envisaged. This was attributed in many cases to the short term funding for the pilot.

Key findings from the national evaluation of the new community schools pilot programme in Scotland were published as Insight 7 in August 2003. It is available to download at www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/ins7-00.asp.

Background to integrated community schools

- Pilot programme launched by the Scottish Office in 1998.
- Phase one of pilot programme started in April 1999 and involved 37 projects (170 schools/institutions in 30 local authorities).
- Phase two added a further 10 projects.
- Phase three added a further 15 projects.
- National evaluation commissioned in 2000.
- Integrated community schools approach began to be rolled out to all schools in 2002.
- National evaluation report published in 2003.
- Scottish Executive committed to completing roll out by 2007.

Focus on...

Eastbank Learning Community in Glasgow

Jim Dalziel, Head Teacher of Eastbank Academy and Principal of the Eastbank New Learning Community, knows more than most about the managing an integrated community school. Here, he outlines the background to the Eastbank Learning Community and shares his thoughts on Glasgow's first ever community conference which took place in January 2004.

In 1999 as a pilot, Glasgow established two 'learning communities', which consisted of two secondary schools, Eastbank Academy and St Mungo's Academy, and their clusters of associated primary schools plus some designated pre-five establishments. Initially the challenge for each of these learning communities was to improve the quality of the educational experience for all pupils, raise levels of attainment, provide for better transition at key stages and create a locally responsive more integrated service provision for children and their families.

In 2000 the city expanded the pilot to six learning communities, all in the east end of the city, each with its own Principal selected from among its establishment heads who had the role of leading and co-ordinating the community plans supported by School Business Managers.



In developing our local plans we had to clarify our priorities to ensure we put teaching and learning first as improving outcomes for pupils was to be our highest priority. Our local priorities however also had to reflect and respond to the targets set by Glasgow City Council in their children's services plan and the national priorities established for education by the Scottish Executive. The highest priority was given to the establishment of more effective integrated children's services.

In reality, during the first three years, some excellent work was done but the agenda became very much focussed on all things educational, and an interim evaluation by the University of Glasgow reported a lack of involvement in the development process from parents and significantly from children and young people. The professionals were setting the agenda. Partnership with parents/ carers, links with the wider community and other agencies and the views of children and young people were not at the fore and this was a challenge we had to address.

In 2003, the new Director of Education in Glasgow, Ronnie O'Connor, who had spent three years as Director of Social Service re-titled the communities as new learning communities and they were adopted as the model for the roll out of the Scottish Executive integrated community schools project. Along with this change of title there was funding from the Executive but more significantly there was to be renewed emphasis on the delivery of an integrated service approach and partnership to lead to a better deal for children and young people.

At a city level this has resulted in the establishment of interagency/departmental planning groups involving officers at the highest level with local groups of senior managers working together to create planning forms that will ultimately enable each community to create and deliver locally based integrated service plans. This year all school clusters will become new learning communities.



As a first step to recognise and to be seen to embrace this new emphasis on partnership, Eastbank New Learning Community – which now includes two secondary schools, one for pupils with complex learning needs, six primaries and six pre-five establishments – held its first ever ‘community conference’ in January.

The aim of our conference was to involve as many of the stakeholders from our community as was reasonable. In the end we had over 200 delegates. Pupils made up some 60% of the delegates with representatives from P6, P7, S1, S2 and a number of seniors. Other delegates were parents, teachers, development officers, colleagues from other agencies and some local residents.

The conference was an excellent stage for our newly appointed development officers to outline their initial plans and ideas and to gauge the views of the young people, parents and fellow professionals. All of the development officers have been appointed on a partnership basis to create an integration team. Partners in these appointments include NHS Glasgow; Cultural and Leisure Services, Glasgow (both Sports Development and Youth Services); Save the Children; Careers Scotland; and Strathclyde Police. Funding is either shared between the new learning community and the partner or funded from other external sources.

The day consisted of a series of very brief presentations from developments staff with time for the young people to consider issues such as our community, health/fitness, values and citizenship, and inclusion.

Comments from Glasgow’s first ever community conference

from young people...

- A great day. What a lot of hard work. Thank you. It was very good for all the children from different schools including SEN to meet with each other.
- Should have been more games and less talking – and better food.
- This is what a community should be like.
- I like when they were listening to me.
- Can I come back next year!

...and from adults

- Today was very enjoyable, informative and made me more aware of the support and involvement within the Learning Community.
- I found today very interesting as working in a nursery we are unsure what is going on in the schools and community around us.
- Enjoyed working with and sharing information and problems with other staff. We don’t ever get time to exchange our perspectives.
- Very enjoyable event, which demonstrated all the positives about Learning Communities. How they can improve the lives of the children involved when we are all working together.

Through a range of activities the young people were able to express their ideas about their communities and their priorities, which we have promised to feed into the development planning cycle for the Eastbank New Learning Community.

Obviously it is early days and it will take time to judge how the conference and the views expressed will impact upon our new learning community and how we deliver children and family services but initial feedback on the day was very positive.

As a head teacher of nearly 20 years standing, I think I found the day just as rewarding as the young people, possibly more so. Many of us who are professionals in the field of education and childcare think we know what is best for our ‘charges’. But through a simple event such as our community conference, young people can astound you by their maturity and their insight. I thought I had been listening all these years but clearly I have not been listening hard enough!

Family work co-ordinators: new roles for a new initiative

One of the new roles which has been created in Fife for integrated community schools is that of family work co-ordinators. We asked the team to tell us a bit about the new role and what it involves.

The role of family work co-ordinator is a new one. What is the primary aim of the role?

The primary aim of the role is to liaise with schools and other agencies to offer support to children and young people and work with parents to help them support their child's/children's education.

What does the job entail on a day-to-day basis?

It's difficult to say at the moment as it's such a new post and much of it currently involves setting up the office base and making contacts with schools and other agencies. Once the groundwork has been done the job will involve liaising with schools and other agencies involved in supporting young people and taking referrals to distribute among the team of family workers. At that stage the job will become about putting together appropriate packages of support for individuals and families.

What advantages do you think it will bring to the school?

Teachers often spend time dealing with young people who are reacting in school to problems that are going on at home. I believe that close liaison between schools and family support workers can help alleviate some of these problems and also help break down some of the barriers to learning that many young people face.

Are there any particular provisions made for children with additional support needs?

Fife Council has established six integrated community school projects throughout the Kingdom and parents of children with additional support needs can access the service just as parents of those without additional

support needs. The integration manager and family work team in each of the six areas will also be involved in the development of pre-school community teams.

Have there been any areas that have caused you particular difficulties or obstacles you have had to overcome in the job?

As the role of family work co-ordinator is a new one, it is too early to identify any areas of particular difficulty.

How do you see the role developing in the future?

The integrated community schools initiative in Fife is part of the overall children and young people strategy which aims to provide co-ordinated responsive services to all Fife's children.

We would like to see family support workers employed to work with schools and parents from the very start of a child's formal education. Close working relationships between professionals together with developing good working relationships with children, young people and families would benefit everyone.

For more details on the role of family support worker, contact any one of the integrated community school projects in Fife. They are based in:

Dunfermline - 01383 312911

West Fife - 01592 783641

Kirkcaldy - 01542 412349

Glenrothes - 01592 754469

East Fife - 01334 655467

Levenmouth - 01592 414475

NOTICEBOARD

Insight 7: key findings from the national evaluation of the new community schools pilot programme in Scotland.

Available to download from www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/ins7-00.asp

See also: www.scotland.gov.uk/education/newcommunityschools/default.htm for more information on the integrated community schools programme, including publications and contacts.

Enquire training event - free places for parents

Developing parent-professional partnerships in additional support needs provision

One-day workshop: Inverness, 24 March 2004

For more details, contact Harriet Grant at Enquire on 0131 222 2422. or email hgrant@childreninscotland.org.uk.



Designing schools for the future: a practical guide

This report examines issues for good school design and includes a set of design criteria for building for the future.

Available, priced £15, from Children in Scotland.

Contact Moira Cameron on 0131 222 2410 or email

mcameron@childreninscotland.org.uk.