

The Background

In 2003, the government published the Every Child Matters green paper, calling for all organisations involved in providing services to children and young people to work together towards five key outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda (ECM).

These five outcomes are:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

Extended schools have a key role to play in achieving the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes and the goals set out in the Children's Plan.

This is backed up by a recent Ofsted survey which found: "The majority of the schools visited had compelling case study evidence that extended services had made life-changing differences to pupils that had led to better attendance and attitudes."

The Core Offer

The core offer of extended services, which all schools are expected to provide by 2010, is made up of five elements:

- § childcare (in primary and special schools)
- § a varied menu of activities including study support, sport and music clubs
- § parenting support including family learning
- § swift and easy access to targeted and specialist services, and
- § community access to facilities including adult and family learning, ICT and sports facilities.

Schools are not expected to provide these services alone, or necessarily to deliver them on site. Instead, they should work in partnership with other schools and agencies, including voluntary and community organisations, signposting existing services where appropriate. Schools are expected to consult widely with pupils, families, their own staff and the wider community to identify priorities and needs.

By providing extended services, schools will be supporting and reinforcing initiatives such as the Healthy Schools programme and fulfilling their statutory duties to promote pupil wellbeing and community cohesion, and to serve the wider community.

Research carried out by different organisations, including Ofsted, over the last four years suggests that those schools which are already offering extended services are experiencing a range of benefits, including:

- § more motivated pupils
- § better attendance and behaviour
- § more engaged and better equipped parents
- § greater willingness to adopt healthier lifestyles, and
- § better community access to local services.