



# **Values and Vision: Working Together in Integrated Community Schools?**

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**VALUES AND VISION: WORKING TOGETHER  
IN INTEGRATED COMMUNITY SCHOOLS?**

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**Introduction**

*Values and vision: working together in integrated community schools?* That was the challenging title of a one-day conference held at the University of Aberdeen's King's College Conference Centre in June. It attracted a large number of education, health and social care practitioners, drawn from a wide number of agencies and from most local authorities across Scotland.

The event was planned and organised by the School of Education's NEXUS research group, which focuses on research in the substantive area of inter-professional and interagency collaborative working. *Values and vision 2004* was aimed at all practitioners working for education, health and social care agencies, including professionals working in integrated community school (ICS) settings and others with a professional interest in developing new ways of working together in ICS.

The aim underlying the introduction of ICS is to move towards, or 'roll out', single school site delivery of health, education and social care services for children and young people and that every school in Scotland will function as an integrated community school. The document *New Community Schools: The Prospectus* (1998) argues that 'the climate is right for the development of this new integrated and inclusive approach' (p.2).

*Values and vision 2004* set out to examine whether the time is right for ICS, explore the lessons learned to date about joining up working in schools and debate future priorities.

Integrated services – what do they mean for children and their parents?

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Integrating social justice and schooling.

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Where do we go from here? Copyright 2004 Walter Humes

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## The conference programme

The day opened with warm words of welcome from the Principal of the University of Aberdeen, Professor Duncan Rice. Professor Kathleen Marshall, the newly appointed Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland, officially opened the conference with a clear and helpful overview of the Commissioner's role, powers, and priorities. She identified the current priorities for the post and, in presenting her five-year plan, shared her thinking about the important tasks that lay ahead in establishing and embedding the post of Commissioner. A central theme on her work will be to monitor how 'service providers' take good account of the rights, interests and views of Scotland's children and young people. Later in the day, the question of how inter-professional teams might address this indicator of good practice was taken up in the workshop discussions as delegates shared how they currently make children and parents' needs and aspirations central in all their planning and practice decisions.

Professor Geoff Whitty and Dr Carol Campbell of the University of London Institute of Education gave the first Keynote Address. Their presentation, *Integrating social justice and schooling: the research evidence and policy concerns*, explored the evidence base for practice in the area of integrated community schools and joint working practices in those sites in Scotland. Professor Whitty, Director of the Institute of Education, provided an overview of the literature and research evidence and Dr Campbell gave a detailed account of the evidence that has emerged from the Scottish New Community Schools evaluation project. She introduced the findings of the national evaluation of the new community schools' pilot phase research which was commissioned by the Scottish Executive, carried out by researchers at the London Institute and reported in the publication, *New Community Schools in Scotland: Final Report National Evaluation of the Pilot Phase* (2003). Dr Campbell drew attention to a wide range of possible implications for future collaborative practice in ICS. Professor Whitty and Dr Campbell emphasised that one broad message from the review is that until now ICS have achieved 'enhancement rather than transformation'. In follow-up workshop sessions delegates pursued this theme in

addressing whether and to what extent enhancement is enough and the extent to which transformation is desirable or achievable.

The second Keynote Speaker in the morning session was Dr Bill Maxwell, HMIE, who presented a comprehensive and informative account on the subject of *Evaluating the Impact of Integrated Community Schools*. Within his overall theme of evaluating and measuring effectiveness of ICS, Dr Maxwell raised issues of wider community engagement in schools – clearly a challenge for ICS – and how the qualities of 'good leadership' might be described and specified in these new contexts. In the light of the imminent publication by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) of the new quality indicators relating to Integrated Community Schools, Dr Maxwell's contribution was valued as pertinent and timely with its content provoking much interest and debate over lunch and in the afternoon workshop discussion groups.

Dr Kay Tisdall, University of Edinburgh, gave the third Keynote Address of the day. Dr Tisdall, like Professor Marshall in her opening remarks, touched on the needs, views and aspirations of children and young people in her presentation on *Interprofessional Policy and Practice*. Formerly Director of Policy and Research, Children in Scotland, Dr Tisdall spoke knowledgeably to delegates about the kinds of new and changed values and vision which must underpin and permeate policy and practice in inter-professional, inter-agency working for children and young people and their families.

Professor Walter Humes, University of Strathclyde (since August 2004, Professor of Education at the University of Aberdeen) led the Plenary Session which drew the day's proceedings to a close. His address drew together and reflected on the particular themes which delegates had picked up in the workshop discussions and the kinds of values and action which conference participants viewed as important future ICS priorities. Professor Humes noted some of the lessons which keynote speakers and delegates thought had been learned so far and drew attention to the need to think clearly about the nature and purpose of Scotland's schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

In this Research Paper, we are able to present the background paper examining the evidence base for ICS practice by Geoff Whitty and Carol Campbell, the views of

Kay Tisdall and Jennifer Wallace in their paper on the topic of what integrated services mean for children and their parents, together with a reflection on these and other Conference themes and implications for future practice and for schools as institutions in the paper by Walter Humes.

#### End notes

The *Values and vision* conference built on the success of the *Joining-up Professional Development* conference which had been held at King's in 2003 and attracted similarly large numbers but on that occasion mainly drawn from teachers and speech and language therapists and education and health managers and leaders. The 2004 conference built on the 'joining up working and training' themes which had been explored in 2003 and provided a fruitful forum for learning and debate for the widening range of professionals and professional groups who collaborate daily in Scotland's schools.

Delegates' evaluations suggest that the conference more than fulfilled its aims and provided a productive arena for delegates to learn more about the ICS integrated and inclusive approach and to evaluate its potential contribution to the support and development of children and young people. Participants observed that the day was a great opportunity to engage with colleagues from different professions and learn how joined-up working is working out in practice across Scotland in many and varied contexts, and to voice their views on what needs to happen next.

The event also provided a timely opportunity for the multiplicity of professional groups now engaged in working in and contributing to the development of Scotland's children and young people to examine and discuss their own professional values and the values of social justice, social inclusion and social capital building which frame ICS policy and practice. Indeed it may be claimed that the conference itself provided a space for networking and social capital building in the sense used by Kilpatrick, Field and Falk (2003):

The concept of social capital points to the ways in which social relationships serve as a resource, allowing individuals and groups to cooperate in order to

achieve goals that otherwise might have been attained only with difficulty (p.417).

Or 'as the cliché has it, it isn't what you know, but who you know, that counts' (p.418). From evaluation comments, *Values and vision 2004* successfully provided participants with new information about policy and practice in ICS and opportunities to share and discuss wide-ranging professional issues, concerns and priorities. It also had the practical consequences of enabling individuals working in ICS across Scotland to meet and learn more from and about each other.

NEXUS research group members work across a number of courses, projects and centres within the School of Education and the School of Social Science's Rowan Centre. NEXUS plans to organise a third Values and vision conference in 2005 so please 'watch this space' – and check out the NEXUS pages on the University of Aberdeen, School of Education website for up-to-date delegates' information.

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## INTEGRATING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SCHOOLING: RESEARCH EVIDENCE AND POLICY CONCERNS

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When Donald Dewar announced the policy of (then) New Community Schools in 1998, he proposed that these would be 'at the leading edge' of the Scottish Government's 'radical strategy to promote social inclusion and to raise educational standards' by bringing about a 'step change' in policy and practice (Scottish Office, 1998). New Community Schools, and now Integrated Community Schools, are thus a central component of the Scottish Executive's wider Social Inclusion strategy and commitment to *Social Justice: a Scotland where everyone matters* (Scottish Executive, 1999a). In this paper we examine how far and in what ways Integrated Community Schools might contribute to the realisation of this vision of social justice.

### Social justice and schooling

Although we now talk widely about the importance of social justice, it remains an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie, 1956) imbued with a range of diverse meanings and associated values (Troyna and Vincent, 1995). Furthermore, in connection to education policy developments and evaluations in England, Gewirtz rightly argued in 1998 that there had been 'very little explicit discussion of what social justice means or ought to mean' (p.469). Indeed, in England, the term has been much less used by New Labour in government than in opposition. So it is good to see the greater prominence the concept has been given in Scotland in the context of the Social Inclusion Strategy (Scottish Executive, 1999b) as well as in the introduction of New Community Schools. More recently, the Partnership Agreement between the Scottish Labour Party and Scottish Liberal Democrats, *A Partnership for a Better Scotland* (2003a), contained a commitment to social justice including the pledges that:

We want a Scotland where everyone can enjoy a decent quality of life... We will tackle the social, educational and economic barriers that create inequality and work to end child poverty by tackling deprivation and social need. (p.37)

Such an approach is helpful in recognising that any attempt to improve the life chances of young people must take seriously the need to address the multiple and inter-connected forms of economic, social and educational disadvantage and involve reform across public services, social and economic policy. This is encouraging compared with England where David Blunkett once dismissed as 'claptrap' Peter Robinson's claim that 'a serious programme to alleviate child poverty might do far more for boosting attainment and literacy than any modest intervention in schooling' (Robinson, 1997, p.17). This is not to say that education does not have a role, but to recognise that it needs to be part of a wider strategy. There can only be limited prospects for pursuing social justice through schooling alone, particularly when schools and other educational institutions themselves too often embody practices that re-enforce inequalities.

The need to address child poverty is, of course, a serious and pressing one in Scotland, where according to *For Scotland's Children: Better integrated children's services*:

Scotland has some of the highest rates of relative child poverty in the developed world. One third of Scotland's households are in or on the margins of poverty. (Scottish Executive, 2001, p.8)

Throughout the UK, there is longstanding and continuing evidence that there is a strong negative correlation between most measures of social disadvantage and school achievement. There is also considerable evidence that there are multiple forms of disadvantage which interconnect and interact with educational disadvantages.

While, for a time, proponents of comprehensive education often pointed to Scotland as evidence that education could compensate for society (Gray *et al*, 1983), the overall picture is at best inconclusive. The same is true of current evidence, where official figures suggest that in recent years the attainment gap between the most and

the least deprived wards has been somewhat reduced at primary school level in Scotland, while at secondary level the improvements of the lowest attaining students have been outstripped by the increase in performance of the highest attaining students (Scottish Executive, 2003b). Even where the gap has been marginally reduced, the relative differences between attainment levels in schools in affluent areas and those in deprived areas remain huge.

None of this is news, nor is it surprising, but the notion that educational interventions alone will transform the life chances of large numbers of disadvantaged children is hardly tenable, even though we can point to individual cases of bucking the trend.

Peter Townsend, one of the leading experts on poverty, points out that:

Deprivation takes many different forms in every known society. People can be said to be deprived if they lack the types of diet, clothing, housing, household facilities and fuel and environmental, educational, working and social conditions, activities and facilities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which they belong (1987, p.126).

In *Measuring Deprivation in Scotland*, researchers at the Universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh (Bailey *et al*, 2003) argue that this definition includes four key elements:

- First, deprivation is multi-dimensional – people can be deprived in different ways, at different levels and for differing combinations of factors.
- Second, deprivation concerns both material and social or relational dimensions – the former is associated with poverty measures and the latter concerns the relationships and networks between individuals, groups and society (which it is fashionable to term ‘social capital’).
- Third, deprivation is relative, particularly to social norms and expected standards of living, for example the 1999 *Poverty and Exclusion Survey* suggested that Scots have a slightly less generous definition of “necessities of life” than the English, but that they appear more concerned about the problems which arise from deprivation, and keener that action is taken to tackle these.

- Finally, Townsend’s definition of deprivation focuses on individuals rather than areas – ‘Individuals do not become multiply deprived simply by moving into an area with a high concentration of deprivation’ (Bailey *et al*, 2003).

Nevertheless, it is evident that the concentration of individuals with high levels of multiple deprivation in specific geographical areas is significant. For example the *Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation*’s list of the 100 most deprived wards in Scotland in 2003 revealed that a total of 41 were located within the boundary of City of Glasgow, compared to only one in City of Aberdeen and none in local authorities such as Argyll and Bute, East Renfrewshire and Borders. Such concentrations have important implications for educational quality (Lupton, 2004). At the same time, though, we have to remember there are even more disadvantaged individuals outside the areas of concentrated multiple deprivation and this poses a major challenge for policy intervention, not least with regard to the issue of targeting versus universalism.

We know that the various factors identified by Townsend can contribute in cumulative and multiplicative ways – directly or indirectly – to students’ experiences and achievements within education. Young people who leave school with no or few educational qualifications are more likely to experience further social and economic disadvantage in later life. There is strong evidence of the linkages between social disadvantage, ill health and educational under-achievement throughout an individual’s life. For example, data from the 1970 birth cohort study show that those without educational qualifications are, at age 26, four times more likely to report poor general health (23%) than those with highest educational qualifications (6%). There is also an inverse relationship between educational qualifications and depression, with very high levels of depression evident, particularly among women without educational qualifications (Montgomery and Schoon, 1997). Another conclusion to be drawn from cohort studies is that ‘children who do well in education tend strongly to make healthier choices in adult life in health related habits of diet, alcohol consumption, smoking and exercise’ (Wadsworth, 1997, p.200).

Hence there are both vicious and virtuous circles at work here, but the actions of professionals can themselves influence the extent to which the circle becomes vicious or virtuous. Another factor we have researched is homelessness, a factor particularly

relevant to Scotland where, according to *For Scotland's Children: Better integrated children's services*:

80 children under the age of 16 become homeless every day. In any one year approximately 11,500 young people aged 16 to 24 years old apply to their local authority for housing support as homeless – 1 in 4 of all homeless applications. (Scottish Executive, 2001, p.8).

Research in the UK and the USA has pointed strongly to the connections between inadequate or insecure housing, poor health, low educational achievement and other aspects of a young person's well being. Our research in England, funded by *Shelter* (Power et al, 1995), tried to explore some of the processes that lie behind such patterns of disadvantage. Sadly, it showed that the nature and organisation of services, and professional responses to disadvantaged groups, was often as much part of the problem as part of the solution. In one case, two different people in the same local authority gave us diametrically opposed accounts of the arrangements for organising school placements for children from homeless families. Presumably the homeless families themselves would have encountered similar confusion.

Small wonder that, 30 years ago, Chelly Halsey pointed out, on the basis of his studies of Education Priority Areas, that:

...the teacher cannot reconstruct the community unaided...the needs of the neighbourhood for health, housing, employment and other services will be found to impinge directly on...teaching tasks. The implication is clear: educational priorities must be integrated into community development. (1977, p.241)

Only when the issues are seen as inter-related and coordinated strategies developed is there any real likelihood of overcoming disadvantage. Unfortunately, this has not always been reflected in subsequent education policies and priorities.

### **Breaking the cycle**

Over the years, governments both north and south of the border have sought to break the cycle through a variety of different approaches. Yet, generally, the reforms have been based on the premise that education is the answer - that, one way or another, schools can make a difference.

One approach rests on the concept of meritocracy, which was the basis of the scholarship ladder and subsequent 11-plus selection procedures and has also informed the thinking behind public examinations generally. In Scotland, the traditional notion of the 'lad o'pairts' (McPherson and Raab, 1988) -- an individual to whom the Scottish system offered the opportunity for education and advancement, ideally to university and on to a professional career -- was based on notions of meritocracy and conceptions of ability and aptitude. The evidence from studies of social mobility shows that a meritocratic approach does help overcome the effects of disadvantage by promoting some individuals with outstanding talents. What such studies also show, however, is that, although this works for some, it fails to do so for many more (Brown *et al*, 1997) and does nothing to improve the standard of education for those left behind or to address deeper cultural, economic and social barriers.

A second approach has involved the use of compensatory mechanisms and positive discrimination in terms of funding. Compensatory mechanisms have included the allocation of additional resources to schools, such as in the Educational Priority Area programmes of the 1960s and 1970s, when extra payments were made to schools with high proportions of disadvantaged students (Halsey, 1972; Smith, 1987). One drawback of such schemes is that some advantaged students gain access to extra resources within the chosen schools, whilst many disadvantaged students in other schools do not (Plewis, 1997). Such approaches therefore have difficulty in creating a widespread impact. Wider benefits for disadvantaged individuals have included free school meals, uniform grants and other special measures for low income families.

A third approach has been to focus on whole school reform. As mentioned earlier, Scotland has sometimes been seen as demonstrating the potential of comprehensive schools, but whatever the overall effects of comprehensivisation, the variation

between schools has been considerable and attendance at some city comprehensive schools has been unthinkable for many middle-class parents even in Scotland. More recently the focus has shifted from systemic reform to individual school improvement. In some cases, this has been linked to marketisation of the system, in which institutional diversity and parental choice encourage competition between schools on the assumption that this will lead them to improve or go to the wall (Whitty *et al*, 1998).

The central tenet of school improvement, whether or not linked to marketisation, is that the responsibility for change must lie in the hands of the school itself (Stoll and Fink, 1996). Yet it is easier for some schools to improve than others. Despite some outstanding exceptions, it remains the case that schools located in contexts of multiple disadvantage have overall levels of performance well below the national average (Gray, 1998; Gibson and Asthana, 1998; Lupton, 2004). The National Commission on Education (NCE, 1996) undertook a project designed to uncover how some schools with disadvantaged students had improved and succeeded against the odds. Five years later, when some of those schools had failed to maintain their improvement, John Gray reflected that

we don't really know *how much* more difficult it is for schools serving disadvantaged communities to improve....That it *is* more difficult, however, seems unquestionable. (2001, p.33)

Members of staff have to be more committed and work harder than their peers elsewhere. What is more, they have to maintain the effort so as to sustain the improvement. We must therefore be aware of the dangers of basing a national strategy for change on the efforts of outstanding individuals working in exceptional circumstances. Whilst it might be possible, for example, for the ethos of a particular school to help transform the aspirations of a particular group of students within it, it seems highly unlikely that all schools could do this in the absence of more substantial social changes. An excellent book on the subject from New Zealand makes the point very effectively through its title – *Schools making a difference: let's be realistic!* (Thrupp, 1999).

It seems then that, if social justice is to be the policy aim, then alongside a commitment to raise standards for all, there need to be very strong measures to ensure that the rate of improvement at the bottom is greater than that at the top. If we seek to reduce inequalities, rather than merely raise standards overall, policies will need to be more effectively targeted towards disadvantaged groups than has previously been the case, both in relation to those in schools in multiply disadvantaged areas and, in different ways, to disadvantaged individuals in schools outside these areas. Given the combined effects of multiple disadvantage on both these groups, this cannot really be done by educational interventions alone.

#### **Integrating reforms: inter-agency working**

It seems therefore that inter-agency working may provide the answer. This was certainly the implication of the rhetoric of New Labour, though rather less so an aspect of the reality of education policy in England. Following the 1997 election, Tony Blair was swift to propose that 'joined up problems demand joined up solutions' (Blair, 1997) and that such a necessity would be central to the government's proposed 'third way' involving partners to deliver 'what works'.

One of New Labour's first 'flagship' education policies in England, Education Action Zones, reflected this approach. Like Integrated Community Schools, EAZs were a policy response to the need to tackle social and educational disadvantage and to raise educational standards through partnership working. However, unlike Integrated Community Schools, this partnership working did not always extend to health and social services, but rather relied largely on innovation within and between schools and working with the business community. Despite the high aspirations, and some evidence of local successes, the EAZ policy has now ended and become subsumed as mini-EAZs within the Excellence in Cities initiative – which again emphasises partnership working and collaboration across schools within a local area rather than integration with health and social services. Indeed, sometimes there have been EAZs, Health Action Zones and Employment Zones operating in the same areas with very little cross fertilisation (Power *et al*, 2003).

Yet if, as we discussed earlier, disadvantage has multiple causes, tackling it requires strategies that bring together multiple agencies rather than expecting schools alone or even in collaboration to bring about the level of reform required. Therefore it is important that schools not only are considered within community development and area initiatives but also develop integrated services and partnership working with a range of key agencies, as is fundamental to the concept and practice of Integrated Community Schools. As Donald Dewar commented, such schools

will embody the fundamental principle that the potential of all children can be realised only by addressing their needs in the round – and that this requires an integrated approach by all those involved. (Scottish Office, 1998, p.2)

To achieve this, ‘integration of services is essential’ (p.4) and hence the move to integrated children’s services and Integrated Community Schools as offering potential for improvement in children’s lives and in their educational experience and achievement.

The eight essential criteria originally specified in *New Community Schools: The Prospectus* (Scottish Office, 1998) emphasise the fundamental importance of integration at different levels – pupil, family, community, professional and agencies – to achieve:

- A focus on all the needs of all pupils at the school
- Engagement with families
- Engagement with the wider community
- Integrated provision of school education, informal as well as formal education, social work and health education and promotion services
- Integrated management
- Arrangements for the delivery of these services according to a set of integrated objectives and measurable outcomes
- Commitment and leadership
- Multi-disciplinary training and staff development.

The widespread implementation among schools in Scotland of integrated services, involving at least education, health and social services, has led the way in such

developments within the UK. Although Surestart had introduced the development of inter-agency working for children during their very early years and the healthy schools strategy in England has emphasised health and education joint working in schools, New Community Schools moved the agenda further by applying new strategies for integrated working across primary and secondary schooling. This initiative informed the later development of Extended Schools in England. The wider Children’s Services agenda in Scotland, based on *For Scotland’s Children* (Scottish Executive, 2001) and the Commissioner for Children and Young People’s Act 2003, have also been influential in the development of the current Children Bill for England.

Nevertheless, if we look internationally as well as nationally, the principle and practice of inter-agency working in and around schools is becoming well-established, particularly in North America and parts of Europe. A study by colleagues at the Institute of Education of different countries’ approaches to children’s services and integrated working, entitled *Rethinking Schools* (Moss *et al*, 1999), illustrated the need to carefully think through the purposes of collaboration and the nature of services to be provided. Melaville and Blank’s (1999) research into 20 of the most widely developed models in practice in the US identified that the dominant foci were ‘services reform’ involving joint working between education, health and social services for schools and communities, and an emphasis on ‘youth development’ initiatives to support young people’s learning, well-being and personal development. Driscoll *et al*’s (1998) national survey of such collaborative approaches in the US indicated that the number of such services being provided in individual schools ranged from 2 to 35, with the average being around 14. The most common services provided related to ‘parenting education’ (over 81% of programmes), ‘family support and advocacy’ (68.6%) and ‘other health education’ (67.2%).

Integrated Community Schools have an important, but ambitious, agenda to meet the eight essential criteria listed above. In particular, meeting ‘all the needs of all pupils at the school’ requires strategies not only to remove barriers to learning but also to provide support for learning. This involves a focus not only on health and social service provision but also educational reform within and beyond the classroom. Furthermore, as all schools in Scotland become Integrated Community Schools by 2007, there is a need to retain the focus in the pilot phase on the most challenging

needs of individuals suffering from multiple disadvantage, while also delivering strategies and initiatives to support all the needs of all students across the range of social, economic and educational experiences.

In view of the current emphasis on comparing standards of achievement in a global context, there may be concerns that moves to integrate schools with other agencies and their communities represent 'mission drift' by taking schools away from a central focus on teaching and learning. Some researchers have suggested that a policy emphasis on both raising academic attainment and promoting social inclusion (and reducing school exclusion) may produce tensions in practice (Parsons, 1999) and may even create contradictory pressures (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). However, in our own *Review of Developments in Inclusive Schooling* (Campbell *et al*, 2001) for the Scottish Executive, we reviewed international evidence which suggested that not only was the development of 'inclusive effective schools' (see Sebba and Ainscow, 1996; Rouse and Florian, 1996) important in principle, such practices were also beneficial for students. Our review argued for the importance of a focus on the individual needs of students, combined with a commitment to social inclusion and social justice, and practices which supported school effectiveness and improvement.

Evidence across schools working as part of a multi-agency approach has pointed to a range of positive outcomes. For example, a review of evaluation evidence across inter-agency working in US schools conducted by Wang *et al* (1998) identified a total of 176 outcome measures, of which the vast majority reported positive results (80%) and only 5% reporting negative results. They concluded in their overall evaluation that school-linked inter-agency working had 'positive effects on students' achievement tests, grades, dropout rates, and attendance'. Integrated services in the USA have also demonstrated considerable impact when targeted on specific areas, for example parent education, health behaviour and teen pregnancy programmes (Wang *et al*, 1998).

In our own evaluation of the Phase 1 New Community Schools (Elliot *et al*, 2002; Sammons *et al*, 2002, 2003a, 2003b) – including 37 NCS projects, involving around 170 schools and other institutions across 30 education authorities – the findings were positive in identifying considerable progress in the development and impact of NCS

between 2000 to 2003. The evaluation surveys of all 37 NCS projects in Phase 1 indicated an increasing range of initiatives being provided to support the education, health and social welfare of students during the three years of the pilot.

Developments to provide services and supports for families and communities were also identified. Case study evidence suggested that individuals who had participated in NCS activities or received support from NCS staff were positive overall about the benefits of the NCS project.

In particular, NCS projects were improving their capacity to identify vulnerable students more swiftly and had enhanced capability to draw together agencies to provide appropriate and accessible support for students and families. Evidence from the case studies suggests that, where extra support was provided for vulnerable children and young people, it helped to keep them in mainstream schooling. The case study evidence indicates that improved student behaviour, attendance, attitudes to school and self-esteem were evident for vulnerable students interviewed. From our survey evidence concerning vulnerable students, the NCS impact was seen to be greater for children at risk of exclusion, with nearly half of both primary and secondary respondents reporting the NCS had a 'moderate' impact on raising the attainment of this group. Furthermore, one tenth of primary and one fifth of secondary respondents thought their NCS had exerted a 'considerable' impact in raising attainment of this group. This improved capacity to identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable students and their families is consistent with evaluation evidence of similar strategies in the USA (Wang *et al*, 1998).

In our NCS evaluation, case study and survey evidence indicated that for students involved in NCS activities this could be successful in talking disaffection and improving engagement with their education. The Year 3 surveys reported that NCS activity had improved students' attitudes to school. Just under half of primary and nearly two thirds of secondary respondents rated the impact of the initiative on students' attitudes to school as 'considerable'. Such improvements can contribute directly and indirectly to improved educational outcomes and achievements.

However, while there were clearly benefits for individuals involved with NCS initiatives and supports, the overall effect across all students and schools was more

difficult to establish within our evaluation. Evidence from the USA, where such approaches have been longer established, indicates that it may take at least four years before it is realistic to expect to be able to measure related outcomes (Lane, 1998; Zetlin, 1998) and that, even then, establishing a direct link between student achievement and attainment and integrated school approaches is problematic. For our evaluation, we were able only to analyse national data to 2000/01, only one year after the initial start up of the majority of pilot NCS. Nevertheless, that data did not indicate any detrimental impact on attainment of NCS, rather the available national data relating to attainment for Phase 1 NCS projects during 1998/99 to 2000/01 indicated that overall these schools showed fairly steady improvement during this period. This improvement was consistent with the national trend in improving attainment, therefore the overall attainment gap did not close. However, given that Phase 1 NCS projects generally contained the lowest attaining schools and those with high levels of social disadvantage, it is difficult to establish whether without the NCS project they would have managed to improve at the same rate or what the longer-term trend will be as the integrated approach becomes further embedded.

Alongside educational indicators, inter-agency working can benefit health and social outcomes. In our NCS evaluation, breakfast clubs were perceived as a particular success in terms of increasing engagement and promoting health at the primary level. The Year 3 survey showed that half of all Phase 1 primary schools and over a third of secondary schools responding had introduced a breakfast club and, of these, almost all reported that NCS involvement had led to their development. Survey evidence indicates a striking increase in involvement in health initiatives in most pilot NCSs. Respondents perceived considerable progress in the extent to which they could describe their school as 'Health Promoting' with many specific new activities and initiatives. These benefits in turn could also improve social outcomes, such as addressing issues of bullying.

This combination of education, health and social welfare outcomes has been evident too in the National Healthy School Standard in England, which also involves a partnership, at national, local and institutional levels, between education, health and other partners. Interestingly, an evaluation of this initiative by a team from the Institute of Education and the National Foundation of Educational Research (Warwick

*et al*, 2004) has identified a range of 'social inclusion' improvements associated with this scheme which mirror some of our findings concerning NCS. The development of 'social inclusion' indicators is helpful in seeking to monitor and evaluate the overall impact of integrated working. In the National Healthy School Standards, the social inclusion indicators and outcomes include:

Primary pupils:

- Less likely to be afraid of bullying

Secondary students:

- Higher self-esteem
- Year 9 students less likely to truant
- Year 8 students more likely to participate
- Year 7 students more likely to have positive attitudes to teachers

This research suggests also that the National Healthy Schools Standard is having a greater impact on schools serving areas of socio-economic disadvantage, while also being associated with schools that were generally considered to be effective by OFSTED. In particular, primary and secondary schools involved in the National Healthy School Standard are making improvements at a rate faster than schools nationally in a number of key areas, including, behaviour, standards of work, quality of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme and management and support of students. Although a causal link between these cannot be established, this does much to dismiss claims that inter-agency working is a distraction from the 'real business' of raising attainment.

Nevertheless, there remains scope, and considerable challenges, for further development, which will be of particular relevance as all schools move towards becoming Integrated Community Schools by 2007 in Scotland. Research evidence to date identifies the benefits of adopting a whole school approach to inter-agency working (Warwick *et al*, 2004), but so far the impact within classrooms and for teachers remains under-developed. Similarly, evidence from both our evaluations of NCS and EAZs indicates that while 'social capital' and community partnership

proposals are important, they have been difficult to establish and develop. We further elaborate on some of these challenges below.

### **Key challenges for integrated community schools**

Although our evaluation of the Phase 1 Pilot NCS identified a number of beneficial impacts and outcomes for individuals, as discussed above, there are also a number of challenges to be addressed in implementing and sustaining integrated working. These challenges will require careful attention in the roll-out of Integrated Community Schools.

- ***Professional integration***

The evaluation of Phase 1 NCS projects identified positive impacts in terms of the development of inter-professional understanding and joint working with benefits also for the range of integrated services and initiatives provided for children, families and communities. Nevertheless, the move toward integrated professional working and services was not easy and continued to encounter a number of problems. In our evaluation of the NCS pilots, some of the professional barriers were practical (e.g. different working hours and holiday arrangements), but there were also cultural barriers reflecting different professional experiences and expectations, for example in the definition of 'vulnerable' children.

The identification of an individual with dedicated day-to-day management responsibilities for the NCS project, generally an 'integration manager', was a key factor in ensuring the NCS progressed. Support from senior managers, including provision of funding and resources, and clarity of management and governance arrangements were also important to ensuring the development of the NCS. Staff committed to the inter-agency approach of NCS, and appointed on a longer-term basis, provided considerable expertise and capacity to support integration and delivery of services. The co-location of staff working for the NCS on one site (generally in a school or area office) also benefited the NCS projects' work. When working with vulnerable students and families, consistency of staffing is important also for establishing trust. However, NCS suffered from recruitment and retention problems, particularly linked to short-term pilot funding and staffing shortages.

Therefore, as ICS develop across whole local authority areas and nationally, it will be important to continue to resource and apply structures which bring together partners effectively and to consider the allocation and location of dedicated management and staffing for NCS projects. The availability of appropriate professional development – both in initial training and continuing development – is vital. On a day-to-day basis, ICS teams need to develop communication and commitment around a shared vision linked to the concept of integrated provision to meet individual needs. In the longer term, some writers have suggested that integrated services will involve the rise of a new professionalism emphasising capacity to fuse 'knowledge and practice' (Allen, 2003, p.299) across individuals and 'boundary spanning' (Newman, 2001, p.166) across organisations.

- ***Service integration for integrated needs***

Our survey evidence indicates that the pilot NCS reported that they became involved in implementing and delivering an increasing range of education, health and social policy initiatives during the three years of the pilot. In many cases, however, rather than the NCS bringing about new services, the NCS provided additionality by enhancing or extending services and ensuring that they reached those most in need. The NCS initiative appeared to act as an important catalyst to promote change and supported the combination and integration of different initiatives. While this is encouraging, it is important that the fundamental focus remains on meeting the needs of students and other recipients of services. When implementing integrated services, there can be a tendency to focus initially on the implications for professionals and agencies, which while important must not come to detract from ensuring that service integration brings about appropriate provision and outcomes to meet individuals' needs (see Honig and Jehl, 1999).

- ***Integration within schools***

As Gardner (1993) has argued, integration should involve working throughout the school, including classrooms, rather than simply being 'add ons' to conventional school practices. In our NCS evaluation, we found that in general teachers were not yet substantially involved directly in NCS activities. Rather, NCS activities tended to

focus on provision outside of the classroom, or for individuals with specific needs as an alternative to attending classes. The impact of integrated services on the curriculum was mainly in the area of health education and the introduction of alternative vocational curricular. While important, the overall effect for curricular reform was minimal. Of particular concern is the evidence that integrated services will not achieve as significant impact if they do not also involve an educational component, ideally linked to curriculum and classroom practices. Although Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) are intended to contribute to such an impact, their development was slow overall during the Phase 1 pilot NCS. By the third year of our evaluation, there was a reported increase in the number of schools implementing Personal Learning Plans – with around one third of primary schools and half of secondary schools reporting ‘considerable’ implementation of PLPs – but difficulties in developing and progressing PLPs remained and teachers overall appeared to be unconvinced of their beneficial impact. Therefore, as Integrated Community Schools are further extended, it will be important to clarify the involvement of teachers directly and for teaching and learning within classroom practices – this is vital to the longer-term success of integrated approaches to meet all the needs of students. Our evidence from the pilot NCS suggests that head teachers play a vital role in supporting such processes.

- ***Integration with communities***

In the Phase 1 NCS projects, the provision of dedicated staffing (e.g. home-school liaison officers, social workers and youth workers) and strategies could provide beneficial support for families. Services targeted to support parents in need were also developing, e.g. family liaison, holiday clubs, although the number of individuals involved was small. Initiatives involving parents in their child’s learning and their own learning are to be further encouraged. For communities more generally, NCS projects reported a growing range of activities over the three-year pilot, for example linking to community education or using the school as a community resource. Nevertheless, such strategies remained small-scale and patchy across NCS overall. In Phase 1, community engagement was generally the least developed aspect of NCS practice, with a tendency to focus on student needs primarily and then families. Therefore, as Integrated Community Schools develop there is a need to consider carefully appropriate strategies for engaging with communities, while ensuring also a

continued focus on meeting the specific needs of children individually and collectively. As with EAZs in England (Power *et al*, 2003), the wider aspirations of NCS as generating ‘social capital’ and local democratic renewal (Nixon *et al*, 2002) have been difficult to achieve in practice.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that Integrated Community Schools are a significant development with considerable prospects for bringing about educational improvements for disadvantaged groups and individuals. In particular, Integrated Community Schools take seriously the reality that young people can experience multiple forms of disadvantage which interconnect and interact with their experiences in school and their achievements in and from education. This is a step forward from education policies which have proposed that meritocratic sponsorship of a few individuals or within-school reform alone could bring about social change. Although there are critics who suggest that moves to integrating services around schools and also reaching out to communities and families may undermine the ‘core purpose’ of education -- which they view as raising attainment -- the evidence to date about the impact and outcomes from Integrated Community Schools in Scotland and similar reforms internationally suggests that the early indications are promising about the benefits, particularly for those identified as being vulnerable as a result of multiple deprivation and disadvantage. Integrated services appear to offer scope to contribute to the achievements of individuals and to take seriously wider concerns about social justice in Scotland.

‘Education equity’ cannot be considered simply in terms of schooling but rather requires development within ‘a broader conception of children’s services’ (Kirst, 1994, p.583). Scotland is leading practice in developing such approaches at national and local levels involving policy makers and professionals. The challenge of integration involves all of us – within schools, local authorities, health, social services, higher education and at a national policy level. The appointment of the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland is a welcome move to signal this high level importance and commitment, and is now being followed by the appointment of the Children’s Commissioner in England.

Nevertheless, there remain considerable challenges in rolling out Integrated Community Schools for all schools and all students, not least because there is some evidence that universalistic as opposed to targeted initiatives often end up by further advantaging the advantaged. The combination of targeting disadvantaged groups while bringing about overall improvements will be the major challenge for the roll out of Integrated Community Schools to meet 'all the needs of all pupils at the school' (Scottish Office, 1998, p.8), along with the more specific challenges we have identified with regard to inter-professional working, classroom practice and community development.

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## INTEGRATED SERVICES – WHAT DO THEY MEAN FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS?

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### Introduction

Integrating services is a cornerstone of current policy on children's services and social exclusion. This research reported here aimed to explore, in-depth, integrated children's services, focusing on the impacts on children and families using four services across Scotland: two family centres and two New Community Schools (NCS)<sup>2</sup>.

Both NCS and family centres fit neatly into the government's policy agenda for children. Since the election of the New Labour Government in 1997 and the establishment of the Scottish Executive in 1999<sup>3</sup>, there has been an increased emphasis on prevention and early intervention, an argument for child-centred and thus 'joined up' services, and an over-arching policy agenda for social inclusion. These ideas were given further impetus by the critique of existing services in *For Scotland's Children* (Scottish Executive 2001: 71):

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<sup>1</sup> This research was undertaken by Children in Scotland, the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with children and their families in Scotland ([www.childreninScotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk)), with the contribution of the Jim McCormick of the Scottish Council Foundation. The research team involved several researchers: Andrew Bell; Evelyn McGregor; Dianne Millen; and Jennifer Wallace. The research was greatly assisted by an Advisory Group. It could not have been undertaken without the support and assistance provided by the case study sites and the research participants. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation supported this project, but the material presented here represents the findings of the authors, not necessarily those of the Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> 'New Community Schools' was the terminology for these sites, at the time of the research. This terminology is no longer current – all schools are to become integrated community schools by 2007.

- Some children are 'born to fail'
- There are children who are invisible to services
- Co-ordination of services is not widespread
- The most vulnerable children can be excluded by services
- No consistent help is available for each child requiring special assistance
- There are difficulties in sharing information between agencies
- There is a shortage of skills in working with families

This critique was accepted by the Executive and formed the basis of a Cabinet sub-committee on children's services.

*For Scotland's Children* finds that, despite research and policy attention, the cycle of poverty and disadvantage has not been broken for many families: 'It could be argued that even after a thirty-year period in which we have understood the impact of poverty on families, many of our children are still born to fail' (p.41). The research is set within the context of Scotland's socio-economic situation where:

- 30% of children in Scotland were living in poverty<sup>4</sup>, in 2000/01. Rather than decreasing, this proportion has risen slightly from 1994/95.
- Exam results have improved for both the lowest fifth of pupils and for pupils on average (1995-2002). However, the gap between these two groups has slightly widened. Those pupils from manual backgrounds are four times more likely to obtain low or no qualifications than those from non-manual backgrounds.
- Parents living in areas of above-average deprivation are more likely to have babies with low birthweights (9%) than babies born to parents living in areas of below-average deprivation (6%), in 2002 (figures from NPI 2004).

New Community Schools were launched in 1998 and became a flagship policy:

<sup>3</sup> With a coalition government of New Labour and the Liberal-Democrats.

<sup>4</sup> Defined as living in households whose income is below 60% of the median British household income.

New Community Schools are central to the Government's radical plan for modernising Scottish schools and to its strategy to promote social inclusion. (Scottish Office 1998: introduction)

Local authorities, in partnership with health and other agencies, bid to be part of the pilot phase. The NCS prospectus set out eight essential characteristics for the pilot programme:

1. A focus on all the needs of all pupils at the school
2. Engagement with families
3. Engagement with the wider community
4. Integrated provision of school education, informal as well as formal education, social work and health education and promotion services
5. Integrated management
6. Arrangements for the delivery of these services according to a set of integrated objectives and measurable outcomes
7. Commitment and leadership
8. Multi-disciplinary training and staff development (Scottish Office 1998)

Thirty-seven bids were successful, across 30 out of the 32 Scottish local authorities. Phase 2 was announced in May 2000, resulting in a further 23 projects being funded. This ensured at least one NCS project in each local authority area. Most were located in areas with high levels of social disadvantage and relatively low educational attainment (Sammons *et al*, 2003). Projects varied considerably. Some were single primary or secondary schools while others were 'clusters' (e.g. groups of feeder nursery and primary schools or family centres and the local secondary school(s)). In November 2001, the Executive announced that all local authorities would be expected to 'roll-out' the NCS approach across all their schools – so that all schools are to become integrated community schools by 2007.

Like the original NCS, family centres have frequently sought to meet the needs of families in more deprived areas. Unlike NCS, family centres have not had targeted policy nor funding initiatives to promote them. However, commentators (Pinkerton *et al*, 2000; Pithouse *et al*, 1998) note the growth of interest in family centres over the

past two decades. In responding to the Scottish Executive census on pre-school and day care services (Scottish Executive 2003), 285 of 4277 centres (6.6%) described themselves as 'family centres'. From 2002 to 2003 there was a growth of 63% in family centres, the highest growth rate of any service provision for pre-school or day care. The family centres offered the most diverse range of services (average of 9) of all pre-school and day care provision.

Respondents to the Scottish Executive categorised their centres themselves, as there is no legislative definition of a family centre. Pithouse and colleagues suggest the following definition:

... a physical setting where parents and children attend to take part in activities which seek to enhance child, family and community life ... Such activities, typically organised or promoted in some way by paid staff, also take place in other parts of a local community and in the homes of local people as well.  
(1998: p.1)

While they may not have a dedicated policy initiative, family centres have been boosted by recent Scottish Executive initiatives. The Sure Start Scotland initiative launched in 1999 aimed to address the specific needs of families with children aged zero to three years, targeting communities in more deprived areas. The initiative emphasised joint working between education, social work and health departments. Voluntary agencies were recognised as potentially making an important contribution. Family centres were a common development under this initiative. In health, the Starting Well demonstration project, established in 2000 in Glasgow, aimed to improve child health by family support and local community development. A team from the Scottish Executive, inspecting services for vulnerable families with children under the age of three, declared that:

... family centres were valued and appreciated across the board. They were seen as an important resource, without stigma, and seemed to us an ideal place to offer multi-agency support. (Scottish Executive 2002: p.54)

### The terminological quagmire

While there is little dispute about the need for better integrated services, there is a proliferation of terminology. Indeed, Lloyd and colleagues describe a "terminological quagmire" (2001: p.3). Their work distinguishes between **inter-agency working** – when two or more agencies work together in a planned and formal way – and **multi-agency working** – when more than one agency works with a young person, family or a project. The latter may or may not be formal and activities may be sequential rather than organised at the same time. A further distinction is made with **multi-professional working**, where staff who have different professional backgrounds and training work together.

Concentrating on the professionals, Pirie and colleagues develop the notion of multi-professional or multi-disciplinary working in contrast to inter-professional or inter-disciplinary working:

Multi-disciplinary/ professional working - Activities which:

- Bring more than two groups together
- Focus on complementary procedures and perspectives
- Provide opportunities to learn from each other
- Are motivated by a desire to focus on clients' needs
- Develop participants' understanding of their separate but inter-related roles as members of a team

Inter-disciplinary/ professional working – Activities which enable team members to:

- Develop a new interprofessional perspective which is more than the sum of the individual parts
- Integrated procedures and perspectives on behalf of clients
- Learn from and about each other
- Reflect critically on their own knowledge base

- Engage in shared reflection on their joint practice
- Surrender some aspects of their own professional role
- Share knowledge
- Develop a common understanding (reported in Wilson and Pirie, 2000: p.7)

Already, these two different typologies suggest variations of integrated services. Integration can be at one or more levels: strategic, organisational and staff. The preface of 'inter' suggests a closer relationship than 'multi'. In other words, multi-agency or multi-professional working involves agencies and professionals working *alongside* each other, with common goals. Inter-agency or inter-professional working involves developing a common agenda and/or understanding, as well as common goals. As Pirie and colleagues write, it 'is more than the sum of the individual parts'.

The literature more generally has developed a fulsome list of barriers to, and supports for, inter-agency working. Wilson and Pirie (2000) report on several factors: lack of appropriate accommodation and resources; the role of professional bodies and profession-specific training; attitudes of team members, especially ones that reinforce traditional professional hierarchies and stereotypes. Stobbs (1999) lists factors that support the development and sustaining of joint initiatives, at a more strategic level:

- Political support
- Determination to overcome traditional obstacles
- Special funding mechanisms
- Communication
- Structures and mechanisms
- Research, consultancy and the involvement of national bodies
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Training and experience
- Joint physical location of services and a shared geographical area of responsibility
- Integration of services on a small scale
- Recognition of the time needed for the development of joint work

## Policy drives in children's services

### *Integrated services*

A key connection between inter-professional practice and policy is the drive for integrated services in Scotland. This is not a new policy idea: the call for better co-ordinated services has permeated child care for decades, in areas such as child protection and services for disabled children. Statutory and voluntary organisations came together to lobby for this, as the Children (Scotland) Bill went through the Westminster Parliament in the 1990s (see Tisdall 1997).

As a result, the 'corporate' definition of local authority was publicly underlined by Ministers for the Children (Scotland) Act 1995: i.e. the duties on local authorities under the Act – for children in need, for children on supervision orders from children's hearings, for all children who are looked after – apply not only to social work but to all functions of local authorities from housing to education to leisure and recreation. Health services have a duty to co-operate with local authorities in providing such services. Children's services plans were introduced, to facilitate integrated planning. This was re-enforced recently, by the revised procedures for children's services plans (Scottish Executive, 2004a). The provision of integrated services is listed as a key principle in the accompanying guidance for the Act:

Any intervention by a public authority in the life of a child must be properly justified and should be supported by services from all relevant agencies working in collaboration. (Scottish Office 1997: vii, Volume 1)

The push for integrated services was taken further by the New Labour Government and subsequently by the Scottish Executive and Parliament. As stated above, the Action Team's report, *For Scotland's Children* (Scottish Executive 2001), was influential in this. The report recommends six action points:

1. Consider children's services as a single service system
2. Establish a joint children's services plan
3. Ensure inclusive access to universal services

4. Co-ordinate needs assessments
5. Co-ordinate intervention
6. Target services (p.73)

A wide range of initiatives and funding have sought to promote this agenda. New Community Schools were one of these. Sure Start Scotland focused on the youngest children and their families. The Changing Children's Services Fund specifically aimed to be a catalyst for inter-agency development. There were health promoting schools and the health improvement fund. Funding was given for community programmes, such as Social Inclusion Partnerships and Better Neighbourhoods Fund (now amalgamated into the Communities Regeneration Fund). Proposals to integrate assessments across universal and specialist services have been put forward (Scottish Executive 2004b), while there will be joint inspections for children's services.

The paragraphs above only begin to list recent and current initiatives and funding streams. Issues have arisen on the need to 'integrate the integrated services', to move away from short-term initiative funding and to rationalise the multiplication of planning duties (see Tisdall 2003 for critique). In the letter sent out about children's service plans, the Executive notes positive progress but also:

- Despite better strategic planning and cross-reference between planning processes, there is still some way to go to achieve a genuine 'single service' approach to planning and delivery;
- Current joint dialogue is often focused on specific funding streams and initiatives, with less evidence of this impacting across mainstream services;
- There is still a perception that different priorities and targets across agencies are discouraging integrated planning and delivery;
- There is continuing uncertainty and challenges in translating joint service planning into more effective integrated service delivery on the ground (para 2, Annex B).

### ***Social exclusion***

Social exclusion, and its 'flip side' social inclusion, have become the subject of much theoretical exploration since their adoption by New Labour. Government or political

documents, however, provide no definition. Instead, the Prime Minister's description of associated 'symptoms' is much quoted:

Social exclusion is a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown. (Social Exclusion Unit website)

Social exclusion can be seen as a dynamic rather than static concept, emphasising processes in society that disadvantage individuals, groups and communities over time. Social exclusion/ inclusion at least has the potential to emphasise society's barriers rather than individual failings and, argue Stevens and colleagues, social inclusion is fundamentally about participation: "Participation can be thought of as the opposite to the process of social exclusion" (1999: p.3).

As future adults, children and young people have been a prime focus of the social exclusion agenda, alongside other groups. The Scottish Executive's social inclusion agenda, set out in *Social Justice: A Scotland where everyone matters* (1999), is replete with targets for children and young people. Since 1997, the UK Government has attached the highest priority to reducing child poverty, with the Prime Minister pledging to eradicate it by 2020. Recent data suggest that the government is on track to reach its interim target over five years but an even greater push will be needed thereafter to move all children out of poverty.

### ***Early intervention and prevention***

A central method to achieve social inclusion has been this investment approach to children. New Labour was impressed by the ratio found in American research on the Perry Pre-School project: one dollar invested now resulted in a saving of seven dollars in terms of avoiding crime, promoting employment, etc., by the time the participants

were in their thirties (Schweinhart 1993). Early intervention and prevention became a noticeable policy element when New Labour came to power in 1997, often combined with integrated services. This was a key result of the Treasury Review on Services for Children under 8 (1998), which led to such initiatives as Sure Start.

Early intervention and prevention also have multiple meanings. Little's typology (1999: p.307) has the advantage of being more client-focused than service-led:

1. Prevention to intervene with an entire population to stop potential problems from emerging.
2. Early intervention with people who show the first indications of an identified problem and who are known to be at unusually high risk of succumbing to that problem.
3. Treatment or intervention to focus on the particular circumstances of individuals who have developed most of the symptoms of the identified problem.
4. Social prevention to minimise the damage that those who have developed an identified condition can do to others with whom they come in contact.

Indeed, Little states firmly that it is 'counterproductive to think in terms of preventing a service' and that the focus should be on preventing problems developing (1999: p.310).

The programmes and policies that are termed early intervention or prevention, in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK, are not necessarily all at level 1 but range from levels 1 to 3. This demonstrates an on-going tension between targeted and universal services. On one hand, *For Scotland's Children* argues for targeted services, while ensuring access to universal services. On the other hand, the Scottish Executive three years later comments that the push for integrated services has been too targeted and has not yet impacted on mainstream services to the extent desired.

### **Research study**

As stated above, Children in Scotland undertook research to explore in-depth, integrated children's services, focusing on the impacts on children and families using

four services across Scotland: two family centres and two NCS. The research questions were:

1. How do the experiences of children and families using these services match up to the intended 'impacts' as defined by national and local policies, service providers and users themselves?
2. To what extent, and in what ways, are children and their families involved in the management, development and delivery of services, and with what result?
3. To what extent, and in what ways, do policy, management and structure of services and, in particular, issues relating to inter-agency working affect the impacts on children and their families?

Four sites were recruited in order to compare models of inter-agency service provision. These were selected on the basis of findings from a preceding mapping study (Millen and Tisdall, 2000), on the following criteria:

1. Rural and urban: one each for NCS and family centres. Rural respondents in the mapping study were concerned that national evaluation indicators would be more suited to urban initiatives than the smaller populations of rural schools.
2. Established services: sites that had been providing integrated services for at least 6 months. This criterion aimed to avoid 'start-up' issues.
3. Contrast between management context. All NCS were, by the nature of the initiative, managed through local authorities. Family centres under voluntary organisation management were identified as a potential contrast.
4. Focus on younger children: because family centres primarily work with younger children, NCS working in primary schools were selected.

Further, 'neighbourhood' family centres were chosen (i.e. ones that are located in disadvantaged areas and that encourage parental participation), in contrast to client-oriented centres working with referred clients often due to concerns about child protection and about community development centres that foster collective action (Holman, 1988). The research acknowledges that there are differences between family

centres and NCS, such as a younger population and a smaller population target in family centres than NCS. However, it also finds that there are informative differences between how family centres and NCS are conceived, managed and delivered.

An embedded case study approach was undertaken, involving site visits, interviews with staff and service users (children, parents or carers, and other family members) and discussion sessions. This took place over a three-year period, with three phases, in order to incorporate a longitudinal aspect into the research. Phases one and two of the research involved site visits and interviews. Semi-structured interviews were held with 39 staff and 26 families (19 children; 36 parents and other adult family members). Phase three involved open discussion sessions for families and staff at each site, convened by the researchers, in order to give all interested participants an opportunity to comment on the analysis and to update site information. Further information about the methodology and ethical considerations can be found in the full report to the study, which should be available shortly<sup>5</sup>.

This article presents a particular slice of the research. It focuses on NCS and asks how sites 'do' inter-agency working and parents' and children's experiences of this. Below, a case study is considered from a family involved with a NCS team. Its discussion is a form of 'question and answer' and is thus presented and discussed in boxes. Here, aliases have been used, and a few details changed, to protect anonymity.

<sup>5</sup> Contact Children in Scotland (jturpie@childreninscotland.org.uk)

### Reflecting on the Cairns' views and experiences

Ms Cairns lives with her youngest son, Peter (10). Ms Cairns is disabled and relies on Peter as her primary carer. The family has been under considerable pressure recently as they are temporarily homeless when the local authority is trying to re-house them. Ms Cairns is also dealing with negative feelings about past experiences of abuse. Peter goes to his local Primary School.

- What might Ms Cairns want for herself and Peter?
- What might Peter want for himself and his mother?

Ms Cairns says she would like to settle down for good without the anxiety of moving elsewhere. She would like the housing problem resolved. She is very worried about the help that Peter gives her, feeling at times it is not appropriate:

Peter looks after the cat, always looks after the cat. Peter does a lot of shopping for me, Peter goes to the library for me, picks up prescriptions, cashes money for me, pays bills, helps out in the house. A lot of things that Peter shouldn't be having to do ... because I couldnae manage it on the bath chair that I've got. I get more embarrassed than Peter does about it but it's things that Peter just shouldnae have to be doing ... what Peter has to put up with and that is far more than what somebody else would be putting up with at that age.

Ms Cairns tells the researcher that Peter was very depressed last year. Peter only tells the researcher that he can feel quite busy. He would like to take up snooker, though, if he could find the time and travel to it.

Peter is referred by social work to the NCS team. A family conference is held in the primary school, that includes both Ms Cairns and Peter.

- What kind of things could the NCS team do, that would make a difference for Ms Cairns and Peter?

A package of support is offered. This includes respite services, home help, help with Ms Cairns' mobility so that she can go to the shops herself, and a key worker for Peter. The key worker takes Peter to play snooker and makes home visits, to provide the family informally with information and support.

Peter tells the researcher he is really enjoying the outings to play snooker.

Throughout her first interview, Ms Cairns seems very appreciative of three elements. This first quotation identifies two elements – the home visits and the relationships with NCS team staff:

It's more a friend that's popping in and helping you if you need it. It's the same as picking up the 'phone and I think that this is what they're trying to provide rather than this "We're the professionals and you're the client." It's like "We want to be your friend and we're here if you need somebody." And I think that's what they're trying to break down - this barrier.

A description of the professional being like a 'friend' was frequently made across sites and case studies. Further, the description tends to be presented as what makes the family centres or the NCS different, and an improvement, from other services. The description poses questions of how parents and children perceive professional boundaries and roles, questions of what they want and need from services, and indeed what meanings underlie their use of the word 'friend'.

The second quotation demonstrates the third element. Ms Cairns appreciates that her requests will not 'fall through the cracks' of professional boundaries:

I know whether regardless of whether my back's up against the wall or not all I need to do is pick up the telephone and there'll be somebody there. It doesn't matter what department they're from -- there's always somebody there.

By the time the researcher interviews Ms Cairns and briefly talks to Peter ten months later, they have been re-housed by the local authority. They are still within the NCS catchment area.

Peter says that he is no longer playing snooker. They have not been to a family conference for some time and the services have dropped away. Ms Cairns' comments are quite angry:

As I said, they're busy people. I understand all that, but it wouldnae take them two minutes to pick up the phone, even once in every three weeks and say "Are you ok? Is there anything you are needing? How's Peter?"

Ms Cairns reflects:

If I knew that this was gonna happen I would just have said no ... I don't need it. I really dinnae.

- Why might services have dropped away for Ms Cairns and Peter?

Staff members at the NCS said they had had problems with staffing. They had staff shortages, including a five-month vacancy in a key post. Some staff (although not all) thought that few applicants had been suitable to work in an integrated services environment. The NCS team also had difficulties in gaining sufficient social work and educational psychologist input. The staff felt very sharply that short-term funding had led to considerable staff turn over. The good news, by the end of the research, was that the key post had been filled and the funding had been continued.

The Cairns case study above is illuminative but not representative of other family case studies in the study. It is illuminative because of the juxtaposition between the first interviews between the family and researcher and the later interviews and it combines several elements – multiple needs involving both parents and children, views about what has and has not assisted them – that can be found in other case studies. Issues of staff turn-over and short-term funding were common across the NCS sites, and have been raised more generally over initiative funding (see Tisdall 2003).

### Translating inter-agency working into practice

Across the case studies, the two NCS translated the policy of inter-agency working into practice, in particular ways:

- Both sought to combine targeted services with early intervention or prevention, to improve educational outcomes and to provide a 'one-stop shop' service.
- They both offered general services such as breakfast clubs. The NCS team focused on more targeted groups.
- Access to the NCS team was through a referral of the child. Typically a crisis triggered a referral.
- The next step was a multi-agency decision-making meeting, which involved the NCS team and others.
- Packages of support might then be offered to children and their parents.

There were similarities but key differences with the two family centres:

- Centres had very similar aims to NCS, except one family centre also sought to maximise families' income.
- Parents or children were informally referred to the Centres.
- Centres had eligibility criteria, outlined in their funding, but all families wishing to use the Centre were seen as meeting these criteria.
- Informal reviews – annual reviews were held and recorded. Parents reported on-going involvement.
- Packages of support were provided for children and their parents.

The NCS described in the Cairns case study shows inter-professional practice. The other NCS site might be better described as multi-disciplinary. Strategically, both were inter-agency. Management was more complicated, with some staff members managed by the team leader while others were not. Both family centres were inter-professional. Management was predominantly in-house, while interaction with services outwith the family centres could be described as predominantly multi-agency.

These different ways of 'doing' inter-agency working had certain effects. For example, all sites struggled with community awareness of their services. The two NCS were worried about marketing for two reasons. They feared they would be overwhelmed with requests. Further, they would risk breaking confidentiality with the families they were presently working with, which could result in these families being stigmatised. Family centres were more active in marketing and were not concerned about this stigma.

Another difference lay in the involvement of children and parents. The more formal referral and decision-making processes reported in the NCS made the involvement of children and parents a key question for the decision-making meetings. All parents wanted to attend such meetings. One NCS invited parents routinely while the other moved away from parental attendance after the first year. Ms Cairns did not know about this change and in Phase 2 thought she should be involved:

If I thought for one minute, that there was meetings going on behind my back and things were getting discussed and getting decided and that then to be quite honest, I'd draw a line, because I don't need that with all this going on.

Neither NCS routinely asked children to meetings (although they did so in the secondary schools). Both children and parents reported not finding it easy to feel involved in the decision-making at meetings, although most felt that they were asked their views. By contrast, involvement was not a contentious topic for family centre research participants. There was no critical boundary in the family centres between families being in or out of key decision-making meetings, as there was in NCS. Parents all reported feeling very informed in decision-making, whether about their individual child or about the family centre more generally. But without the boundary, the involvement of children was not discussed, either positively or negatively, in the family centre research by participants.

The research sought to identify what particular aspects of integrated services seemed to make a difference for families, from their perspectives. For the children, issues related to integrated services were not to the fore of their discussions with the research

team. This differs from other research where, for example, older disabled children report being tired of changing staff members and being repetitively assessed by different professionals (e.g. Tisdall and Davis 2004). One or two children who had attended a NCS meeting did comment that they were confused about which professional was which at the meeting. But overall the children were outcome focused. For example, one boy was asked what difference the services had made and he proudly spoke of how he had won a good behaviour award at school.

By contrast, parents identified several elements that had made a difference. Virtually all families – even with young children – were able to contrast their experience of these services with previous service experiences. First, as with Ms Cairns, parents spoke of ‘not falling through the cracks’ of professional boundaries. Parents appreciated greatly when one of the NCS or family centre team would ensure a problem was addressed, without being passed on from person to person and without undue delay. Second, parents noted the importance of having their concerns recognised, particularly if these concerns had not been acknowledged previously by services. For some parents, this recognition was valued even if no productive outcome was achieved for the parent or child. This complements results from Lloyd and colleagues (2001) that sometimes attending meetings or other kinds of interaction, in themselves, can be supportive for some parents. Third, parents, like Ms Cairns above, praised relationships with staff that were not as hierarchical as they had experienced previously. As a result, some parents felt able to talk about concerns with staff before the concerns became acute problems. Fourth, several parents spoke about the value of staff acting as mediators, advocates or negotiators with other services. The research team explored if parents or children expressed different satisfaction, depending on the roles taken. It appeared that, in fact, they were all equally satisfied with whichever of these three roles the staff member took.

Some families did experience a fault line for ‘seamless services’, when their service needs went outwith the particular integrated service team. This tended to occur when families had multiple difficulties (and in particular housing – e.g. it took a long time to solve the Cairns’ housing problem and a housing staff was not part of the NCS team) and/or when adults had their own difficulties (e.g. a parent who had mental

health problems and his or her own social worker). Services for these families could be overlapping, fragmented or absent, with significant difficulties unresolved.

### Conclusion

Integrated services, with the accompanying concepts of inter-professional and inter-agency services, have been a key policy drive in Scotland. Integrated services have been seen as a means to address social exclusion and to promote social inclusion. As the rhetoric is being translated into policy and then practice, questions inevitably begin to be asked.

The research reported here raises several such questions. One, what is the best balance of targeted and universal services? Is it best to target within a universal service (as the NCS teams did within the primary schools) or better to target a smaller population but provide an open service to all within that population (as the family centres did)? The current positioning of some integrated services may not be at the best place within this balance. Second, how involved are children and their parents in integrated services and what are the best ways to involve them? Third, there are different ways of ‘doing’ inter-agency working. A common method in NCS is multi-disciplinary, multi-agency meetings (these are also common for children with disabilities or additional support needs, children in care and in child protection). Meetings have both advantages and drawbacks. For example, they do bring a range of expertise together but they are thus costly in terms of time and effort. Not all organisations can be involved in the closeness of integrated working because the group – and particularly a meeting – becomes too big to be functional. How can the boundary issues of integrated services be dealt with productively – where perhaps multi-agency working *is* the objective?

Children and young people have recently been consulted, for the Children’s Charter, on what they would like from services (Scottish Executive 2004c). The Charter is intended to inform the framework for standards for child protection, although it speaks to all services for children. Children’s headline messages are:

- Get to know us
- Listen to us
- Involve us
- Be responsible to us
- Think carefully about how you use information about us
- Use your power to help
- Help us be safe
- Speak with us
- Take us seriously
- Respect our privacy
- Think about our lives as a whole
- Put us in touch with the right people
- Make things happen when they should

Ultimately, the most important question is *not* what would make better integrated services or how to improve inter-professional practice. The most important question is what ways of working, what ways of supporting families, actually make a difference in the lives of children and their families. Are integrated services meeting the messages of the Children's Charter?

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## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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The papers presented at the conference offer a number of important perspectives on the theory and practice of integrated community schools. Taken together, they highlight the need to be aware of the many dimensions of this significant policy initiative – legal, ethical, contractual, professional, and operational. In general, they are positive about what is happening but they also raise challenging issues for future policy. This is hardly surprising. It is in the nature of innovation that it encourages reflection and directs attention both to achievements and limitations. In offering my own thoughts on what has been said (in the workshops as well as the formal sessions), I shall focus on research questions that seem to me to invite further interrogation and sketch a future agenda for policy makers and practitioners.

My starting point is a belief that no single initiative, however well-intentioned and well-resourced, can solve all our educational and social problems. There is, therefore, a danger of setting expectations too high and presenting integrated community schools as some kind of panacea. It is entirely understandable that those who have devoted considerable time and effort to their introduction should want them to succeed and to make a real difference to the lives of children, particularly in disadvantaged communities. At the same time, it is necessary to be quite hard-headed about the conceptual underpinning of the programme. In the phrase 'integrated community schools' all three terms are potentially problematic. What is it that is being integrated – systems and structures, values, information, training, codes of practice, or some combination of these? What exactly is meant by community? Is it principally spatial in character or does it include what sociologists refer to as 'communities of meaning' which enable people to define their identity? And what about the developmental aspects of community, involving the raising of political consciousness and the promotion of civic activism? As for schools, the key question is how far will they differ from traditional models. Will the reforms radically transform their mode of operation, or will they amount simply to minor adjustments at the margins? If the latter, what are the chances of meeting the challenge represented by those pupils who are sometimes referred to as the disappointed, the disaffected and

the disappeared? I shall return later to the issue of how schools need to change if they are to respond adequately to wider pressures in society.

These questions invite us to consider the nature of the policy discourse that shapes professional thinking, its origins and purposes. Professionals across a range of fields regularly invoke concepts such as community, social inclusion, citizenship, and social justice in ways that encourage agreement. It is important to dig beneath the surface of this rhetoric and ask what is really involved. In doing so, the contested nature of policy is often revealed. For example, I detected a tension between Kathleen Marshall's account of her role as Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland, which in many ways calls for a reconceptualisation of our understanding of childhood, and Bill Maxwell's emphasis on traditional forms of evaluation and inspection, allied to a focus on measurable educational outputs. It will be interesting to observe what happens when the 'pester power' of the Children's Commissioner encounters resistance from the political and bureaucratic machinery of government.

From the perspective of headteachers, there are several managerial challenges associated with integrated community schools. How far do they feel their role is one of driving the programme and how far merely being responsive to the policy imperatives of the Scottish Executive? Again, it will be important to monitor and evaluate the roll-out process from pilot to mainstream provision. Some delegates sensed a degree of conflict between the programme being presented as a focused initiative on the one hand and as a general educational principle on the other. This is related to the question of sustainability. How can the initial commitment and enthusiasm be carried forward, particularly in ways that will really help to close the attainment gap between social classes? It is easy to talk about building social capital: actually making it happen is much harder. Perhaps the most problematic finding in the research evidence presented by Geoff Whitty and Carol Campbell was the limited extent of community engagement in the first stage of the programme. If the community dimension is to develop, the underlying reasons for this must be addressed.

Part of the answer may well lie in the initial training of all the professionals involved and in the opportunities they have for continuing professional development. The case

for moving towards some elements of inter-professional training for teachers, community educators, health service staff and social workers is strong. There will be legitimate debate about when this should take place, how much time it should occupy and the content of courses, but the basic principle needs to be asserted and taken forward. Professionals have much to learn from each other, not least in exploring their differing understandings of what is involved in professionalism and in the ethical values that inform the range of service provision at present. The fascinating research reported by Kay Tisdall gave a real insight into the problems encountered by some clients when faced with a multitude of agencies and personnel, as well as the scale of the challenge to professionals when faced with demanding and dependent clients. However, the resistance to inter-professional training is likely to be strong. Engagement with traditional attitudes within teachers' organizations, the General Teaching Council and the Scottish Executive Education Department may have to be robust to advance this agenda. If the talk of a 'new professionalism' is to mean anything, there has to be preparedness on all sides to develop new forms of understanding, and openness to cultural change.

In terms of research studies, there will be a need for ongoing evaluation at school, local authority and national levels. The independence of these evaluations is vital. They must not be compromised by the very considerable political investment in ensuring the success of integrated community schools. There are difficult methodological issues in separating those outcomes which might be attributable to the initiative from those which might have taken place anyway. The interpretation of some of the evidence will be tricky and may involve a degree of complexity that resists the headline stories so eagerly sought by the media and politicians. Researchers will need to be tough-minded in defending their intellectual autonomy.

Finally, let me return to the point about the implications for the future of schools as institutions. Are integrated community schools essentially a way of enhancing and perhaps extending the role of existing forms of provision, or are they intended to be a stimulus for a more radical systemic shift in the educational landscape? If the latter, it will be desirable to engage in the bigger debates about future schools evident in some of the publications of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD has produced a series of future scenarios of schooling taking

account of a wide range of external pressures – economic, demographic, technological, environmental, cultural. Within the educational policy community in Scotland, there has been remarkably little interest in this kind of thinking. My own view is that integrated community schools, if they are to make a real difference, must be part of a wider strategy which takes account of the continuing relevance to any serious social analysis of issues of class and poverty, as well as developing ideas about the rights of children and parents, and the role of professionals in advanced democracies.