

Building partnerships

Working to develop extended services and community focused schools in and around special schools

'When we say that every child matters, we mean every disabled child too. Delivering on our vision ... is a further sign of that commitment across government ... Disabled children have to be considered as a priority: a local priority for local agencies and services, and a national priority for central government.' (Ed Balls, 2007)



Contents

Who is this guide for?	2
Introduction	3
Issues to consider	4
Challenges and solutions	5
Key success factors	6
Recommendations and conclusions	7
Case studies	8

continyou

Newid bywydau drwy ddysgu
Changing lives through learning

Acknowledgements

This guide was written by Jerry Murland on behalf of ContinYou. It was edited by Louise Reilly and designed by Paul Mephram. It was translated by Eleri Jones, Penisa'r-waun.

ContinYou would like to dedicate this guide to Heather Bush, a valued colleague and friend to staff at ContinYou.

Thanks go to the following schools and individuals who took part in the consultation exercise and contributed to this publication: Alice Stevens School, Coventry; Baginton Fields School, Coventry; Blackfriars School, Newcastle under Lyme; Brynlywarch Hall School, Newtown; Forest Way School, Coalville; Holly House School, Chesterfield; Oak Wood School, Nuneaton; St Christopher's School, Wrexham; The Corley Centre, Coventry; Tiverton School, Coventry; Ysgol Cedewain, Newtown; Helen Bishton; Julia Bond; Peter Brant; Arnold Chave; Mick Chilvers; Lisa Fairbrother; Simon Grant; Ian McAllister; Steve Nelson; Lynn Slinger; Maxine Pittaway; RoseMarie Scott; Peter Tudor; Clive Williams; Tina Wukics; Jenny Clemo; Jenna Hall. ContinYou is grateful to Ian Fordham and Phil Dickenson for permission to use the material in *Every special school matters* – a report into the implications of delivering the extended services agenda in and around special schools in Hampshire. Photos courtesy of: Holly House School; Alice Stevens School; Tiverton School; Forest Way School; Oak Wood School; St Christopher's School.

Published by ContinYou Cymru
Copyright © ContinYou 2008

ContinYou Cymru, First Floor,
Anchor Court, Keen Road, Cardiff CF24 5JW
Tel: 029 2047 8929 Fax: 029 2047 8930
Email: info.cardiff@continyou.org.uk
Website: www.continyou.org.uk

Registered charity no: 1097596
Company limited by guarantee
Registered in England and Wales: 4652378

11/08

Who is this guide for?

This guide aims to disseminate good practice to mainstream and special schools, pupil referral units, and other professionals working in multi-agency teams. It recognises the challenges facing staff working to engage children in special schools with the range of activities and services that are offered to their mainstream peers.

Definitions

Extended schools

In England, an extended school works with the local authority, local providers and other schools to provide access to a core offer of integrated extended services. These will often be provided beyond the school day, but not necessarily by teachers or on the school site. In Wales, a community focused school provides a similar range of services and activities to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.

While there is a noticeable difference in approach and in the level of funding between the two countries, the overall aim of their governments is to see schools working closely with stakeholders to shape these activities around the needs of their communities, thereby raising standards of provision and achievement for all.

Study support/oshl

Study support, otherwise known as out-of-school-hours learning (oshl), is an activity that young people take part in voluntarily, outside normal school hours. Oshl activities may take place:

- before the start of the school day
- at lunchtimes
- after school
- at weekends
- during school holidays.

They may be provided through the school, or by a range of providers in a variety of settings. The prime purpose is to enable young people to follow a specific interest or to fulfil a particular need and to enjoy learning – but another important outcome is the improvement in their motivation and their ability to become more effective, lifelong learners.

For the purposes of this publication, the term 'extended services' will be used to describe the range of services and opportunities offered by schools and their partners in both countries.



Special schools

Special schools provide educational provision for some 90,000 children and young people in England, most of whom have a statement of special educational needs (SEN). They cater for a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities.

More than half have either a moderate learning difficulty or a severe learning difficulty. Nearly 14 per cent have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and 1 in 10 have an autistic spectrum disorder; 7 per cent have a profound and multiple learning difficulty; a further 6 per cent have a physical disability.

In Wales 489,000 pupils are in full-time education; of these, special schools provide places for over 3,500 children and young people.

Special schools can be age-phased primary and secondary schools, or all-age, catering for the needs of young people aged 3 to 19. Every special school is unique. With such a diversity of needs there cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach to the provision of extended services and oshl.

In England and Wales as a whole, some 1.2 per cent of all pupils of school age are in special schools, but the figures vary between 0.32 and 2.6 per cent between local authorities in different parts of the countries.

Introduction

Special schools have a key role in ensuring children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are able to access a wide range of informal learning activities. They already offer their pupils a personalised and enriched curriculum by responding to individual needs, developing life and social skills, building confidence and emotional well-being and providing residential and vocational opportunities to extend learning. In order to offer children and young people the best start in life and to support families and communities, the governments in both England and Wales now want all schools to offer extended services that provide additional learning opportunities, childcare and easy access to a range of services for all children and young people.

In England, the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda, launched in 2003, aims to provide a more 'joined-up' approach across a range of services, including education, social care and health, to make services and support more accessible and to target the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society. Every Child Matters makes it clear that every child, whatever their background or circumstances, should have the support they need to: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being.

For children and families of children with special educational needs (SEN) the reality of access to provision to extended services and oshl opportunities is sometimes very different to that envisaged by government. Disabled children are more likely to be brought up in

poorer socio-economic households, are less likely to achieve at school, and experience poorer rates of employment on reaching adulthood – even when the comparison is only with those disabled children with non-cognitive impairments. Furthermore, a recent Social Exclusion Task Force Report (*Families at risk review*, March 2007) identified that mothers of disabled children are less likely to be employed than their peers and that many parents experience high levels of stress, leading to a disproportionate level of relationship problems and marital breakdown.

The extended services agenda is one of the many highly visible mechanisms for delivering the five ECM outcomes, by encouraging schools to provide access to a range of services in and around the school. It is widely acknowledged, however, that delivering the extended services 'core offer' presents major challenges for special schools in providing accessible activities and services to parents and children who most need them, around the school and in their own areas.

It is also a challenge for special schools to balance the requirements of the ECM agenda with the seemingly conflicting messages about school improvement and raising standards. Recent independent research from the Universities of Manchester and Newcastle points towards the considerable benefits of extended services in raising standards in schools. For special schools, this draws attention to the conflict between the 'core business' of the school in meeting the often complex, individual needs of its pupils and their families and the demands of the target-driven standards agenda. Many special schools will argue that the outcomes of extended services for children in special schools are essentially different to that of mainstream schools. Disabled children aspire to the same sort of outcomes as non-disabled children; however, the way they are prioritised and the level of achievement expected often differ significantly from non-disabled children.



It is a similar picture in the 22 Welsh local authorities. In 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as the basis of all its work for children and young people in Wales. This has been translated into seven core aims, which are intended to ensure that all children and young people:

- 1 have a flying start in life
- 2 have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities
- 3 enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation
- 4 have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities
- 5 are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised
- 6 have a safe home and a community that support physical and emotional well-being
- 7 are not disadvantaged by poverty.

In the two years since the seven core aims were launched, it has become increasingly apparent to education managers in Wales that, from schools' perspectives, two of the most effective vehicles for delivering the seven core aims are the Welsh Assembly Government's Community Focused Schools (CFS) initiative and the national framework that currently supports oshl opportunities. However, as in England, the community focused services and opportunities that the Welsh Assembly Government envisages being delivered by schools through CFS funding present similar challenges to special schools.

Issues to consider

In England, the government agenda is fast moving towards 2010 when all schools, including special schools, will be expected to offer extended services as part of a 'core offer'. The DfES Prospectus (June 2005) made it clear that all children should have access to a variety of activities beyond the school day:

'Well-organised, safe and stimulating activities before and after school provide children and young people with a wider range of experiences and make a real difference to their chances at school. It gives them the opportunity to keep fit and healthy, to acquire new skills, to build on what they learn during the school day or simply to have fun and relax.'

Although there is no 'core offer' in Wales, there is a discernable move towards restructuring schools as a base for meeting the wider needs of children and families through community focused services, particularly in areas where there is a high level of social exclusion and deprivation.

'Children who have a long-term health problem or are disabled tell us that they want all the things that other children want. We intend that as many disabled children as possible have a full education and take part in activities with other children. Our Children First programme aims to make sure that children who are disabled or have a long-term health condition are able to live with their families and use local services where their needs can be met.'

(Children and young people: rights to action, Welsh Assembly Government, 2004)



In spite of the considerable challenges this poses for schools and service providers, there is less centralised direction into how individual authorities choose to allocate CFS funding. To an extent this is commendable, but it has led to an inconsistency of provision that was identified by Estyn (*Provision of community-focused services and facilities by schools*, 2008) in May 2008:

'It is clearly appropriate that CFS provision should be flexible enough to meet local needs. However, in practice this flexibility often leads to variable provision, in which only a few schemes realise the full potential of CFS to bring significant benefits to their local community. This means that learners in some communities will enjoy much greater access to out-of-hours learning and other services than elsewhere.'

Special schools nationwide have long acknowledged that delivering extended services and meaningful oshl activities to the parents and children of special school communities cannot be done exclusively from one special school, separate from its neighbourhood schools and the wider community. Headteachers will also be the first to point out that short-term funding and national initiatives can only go so far towards addressing the needs of their school communities. While start-up funding is vital in developing services, it is only through more secure long-term funding that services and opportunities offered by special schools to their communities can be maintained and developed.

Increasingly, it is parents and local communities that hold the key to future planning and the delivery of local services, services that must include a responsibility to meet the needs of all children. Proactive special schools have taken the initiative and developed co-operative cluster partnerships with mainstream primary and secondary schools but, while there are clear benefits arising from such collaborative working, evidence suggests this is often a very much one-sided development.

The focus on positive outcomes for disabled children and young people in England and Wales not only depends on access to all the opportunities afforded by a range of services, but also very much on a more active and practical partnership with mainstream schools. Much of the current cluster development taking place to deliver extended services and oshl does not automatically include children who attend special schools.

Phil Dickinson and Ian Fordham write in their report *Every special school matters* (2007) that a new wave of policy is required to effect a major change in the manner in which schools relate to their communities.

The challenge for the future is for schools to identify the barriers to learning and work collectively to overcome these by becoming hubs for the delivery of health, social care and respite services, as well as learning, for the whole community.

Challenges and solutions

The key challenges below have been identified as a result of field research. Use the case studies in the following pages to identify the most commonly effective solutions and keys to success. These have been highlighted on page 6; full case studies are included on pages 8 to 14 to further support, clarify and offer other practical ideas and solutions.

Challenges

A clear picture of the challenges that face special schools in delivering extended services and oshl to children and young people with SEN and disabilities is a useful starting point to identifying potential solutions. In ensuring that every child really does matter, and that there is equality of provision and opportunity for all children and young people, it must be recognised that this will only take place if there is a shared responsibility.

Some of the more significant challenges are the following:

- **A lack of information for parents and carers.** Many parents of disabled children do not know what services exist, what support there might be for their child, and what funding is available.
- **Attitudes of staff and managers in mainstream schools and other provision.** Not all settings provide a ready welcome for disabled children, particularly if they present challenging behaviours or have other complex needs.
- **Parents' concerns about safety and staff skills.** Having appropriate and effective support in place is essential for parents to have confidence about their child's safety in the provision.
- **A lack of appropriate staff training and development.** Parents often have concerns about staff in other settings not possessing the relevant skills and understanding of their child's needs. Many young people from special schools say that if staff in other settings had a better understanding of their needs they would be able to take part more.
- **Transport provision.** Inflexible transport provision before and after extended day activities is identified by parents, carers



'All children have the right to a good education and the opportunity to fulfil their potential. All teachers should expect to teach children with special educational needs (SEN) and all schools should play their part in educating children from their local community, whatever their background or ability.'
(Removing barriers to achievement, DfES, 2004)

and many staff as being a problem that frustrates access to extended day provision. It becomes more of an issue in rural and isolated areas.

- **Paying for provision.** Many parents and carers are not in paid employment and struggle to pay for oshl and extended services. 'More parents of disabled children are lone parents and more families with a disabled child are living at or in the margins of poverty.' (*Extending inclusion*, DCSF, 2008) Parents have pointed to provision they valued that ceased because of short-term funding, further reducing opportunities for both parent and child. Parents have also drawn attention to the fact that quality childcare for disabled children is very difficult to find.
- **Cost of providing activities.** There is a significant cost element to special schools in providing extended services and arranging oshl activities. The cost of transporting pupils to and from off-site activities are among those most frequently raised by special schools. Special school heads are adamant that any extended services must be integrated into the core business of the school and not perceived as an add-on that is time limited by budget restraints.

Solutions

There are numerous examples of special schools and partner organisations responding to the challenges and identifying ways to overcome the barriers. There are six main areas of work that describe the current direction schools are taking in developing extended services and opportunities for their pupils; many schools find their work in one area leads to development in another:

- 1 collaborative working between mainstream and special schools
- 2 outreach and professional development work that builds understanding, skills and capacity in the wider community
- 3 effective partnerships with parents/carers
- 4 the development of partnerships and working protocols with other agencies
- 5 acquiring specialist status (in England) and developing a community plan with other partners
- 6 developing new roles and responsibilities and restructuring/remodelling as extended services become more embedded in the core business of the school.

Find out how schools have begun to address these challenges and implemented these solutions by looking at the case studies on pages 8 to 14.

Special schools are central to the future success of inclusive extended provision across communities – their involvement will build skills and understanding not only among staff in mainstream schools, but also in the wider children's workforce.

Key success factors

A number of key success factors were consistent across the schools visited and consulted for this publication, which are central to the delivery of effective services for the children and their families:

- the commitment, drive and motivation of the headteacher and staff within each school to deliver a range of extended services and oshl opportunities tailored to meet the needs of the pupils and families
- partnerships with a range of other agencies, specifically health and social care professionals
- high levels of expertise and expertly trained staff meeting the individual needs of pupils
- recognition of the importance of multi-agency collaboration to achieve better outcomes for children and families
- creative and innovative ideas and determination to overcome barriers
- a holistic view of the pupils' and families' needs, and an understanding of the individual support needs of parents and carers
- communication with and support for parent partnerships
- putting the outcomes for pupils and families at the centre of developments.

Recommendations and conclusions

The provision of core services in special schools is heavily dependent on an inclusive working partnership with mainstream schools and a range of other specialist services and agencies, the private sector and voluntary organisations. It is also dependent on mainstream headteachers changing their thinking about their facilities on their site and proactively promoting the fundamental message inferred from the Every Child Matters and Seven Core Aims agendas.

Extended services in special schools must be developed in response to the needs of pupils, their families and the wider community, and identified through a process of consultation. Consultation should establish the range of unmet needs and how this may vary at different times, particularly looking at the requirement for extended services during school holidays, as well as during term time.

Building a genuine partnership with parents leads to a major rethink of the relationship between home and school. Parent partnerships that involve parents and carers in their design and implementation are more likely to succeed with those they are trying to help. Schools need to evaluate the extent to which parental engagement is embedded in their core business and what is being done to consult and involve parents/carers in the delivery of that service.

There are excellent special schools in Wales and England that provide good teaching, learning and support and are valued by parents and pupils. There will clearly be a continuing future role for specialist provision. However, special schools need to be confident, outward-looking centres of excellence, building on their strengths, and ensuring that they are an integral part of an inclusive education system for children in their areas and beyond.

Special schools will need, increasingly, to work flexibly, perhaps taking some pupils for relatively short periods, rather than for their whole-school careers. They will need to work actively with mainstream schools to plan support for children who could benefit from a mainstream setting. They will also need to act as a source of expertise, advice and professional development for mainstream colleagues. It is important for staff not to become detached from mainstream education. A greater interchange of teaching staff between mainstream and special schools is to be encouraged.

Local authorities should review their extended services strategy and related policies to ensure that the needs and aspirations of all children and young people with SEN and disabilities are addressed. Practical issues, such as home to school transport arrangements and the associated cost to parents/carers and schools, must facilitate rather than act as barriers to participation in extended services.

It is important to invest in the concept of special schools becoming centres of excellence in inclusive, multi-agency work that supports the delivery of local authority strategic priorities, and the development of a children's workforce equipped and committed to inclusive services and facilities.



Case studies

1 Collaboration between schools

Research undertaken in 2001 concluded that the more successful link schemes between mainstream and special schools reflected positive attitudes on the part of both sets of teachers, resulting in joint planning and clear thinking on the nature and aims of the links and whose needs were being served. However, it did highlight the fundamental issue at the heart of all collaborative initiatives between mainstream and special schools:

'So long as links are regarded as optional extras and are not embedded in the plans of every special school and every relevant mainstream school, there will continue to be a divide between the two forms of provision and dialogue will remain at the level of counting pupils on roll, rather than discussing effective case management.' (Fletcher-Campbell and Kington, 2001)

The learning and social health needs of children and young people cannot be delivered by schools working in isolation and the extended services agenda underlines the need to work in partnership.

Tiverton School

About the school

Partnership is a factor that Arnold Chave, headteacher of Tiverton School in Coventry, takes seriously when providing oshl activities for his pupils. The school provides for 37 pupils aged 3 to 11 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. In addition to a range of out-of-school activities, including a thriving gardening club, the school offers its pupils the opportunity to attend the after-school club at Radford Primary School.

'It's part of our core business and something both schools value in terms of providing out-of-school opportunities for all pupils in the community.'

Transport

Although transport arrangements were initially difficult to organise, pupils from Tiverton are now taken to the club by one of the school buses on the usual end of day home-school run and dropped off at Radford Primary. Discussions with transport providers enabled a more flexible arrangement to be made to allow pupils to use a different route and vehicle at the end of the day.

Parents of Tiverton pupils attending the club are included with play partners in the early stage planning and risk assessment arrangements. Pupils are met at Radford Primary by their play partners, who are provided and funded by the Children and Families Education Service. Parents pay 50 pence per session to cover refreshments and are responsible for collecting their children at the end of the day. However, staff at Tiverton will be the first to admit that transport costs and the inability of some parents to collect their children at the end of the day does exclude a number of children from the club.

Partners

Play partners are key to the success of the initiative; they facilitate a range of strategies to ensure that staff from



the mainstream school are familiar with the individual needs of children attending the club. This includes sharing the details of each child's 'communication passport', which provides information and guidance on their specific needs.

Parents are very supportive, citing increased confidence and improved behaviour as the most obvious benefits to their children. Other parents have drawn attention to improvements in speech and language and the social benefits of interaction with mainstream children.

Benefits

Both the schools involved recognise the importance of mainstream pupils taking part in activities with their disabled peers. Arnold Chave highlights five strands of personal development that have benefited pupils over the two years the project has been running:

- the development of relationships with peers and subsequent gains in confidence and self-esteem
- pupils becoming independent through making choices of what activities to do and who to play with
- the exposure to a rich language environment
- the opportunity to develop social and communication skills
- opportunities for mainstream pupils to appreciate and understand the different needs of other children.

Traditionally, many special schools have been relatively remote from the wider community of schools; one of the main criticisms of special schooling is that it can reinforce barriers to a more equitable society by taking children and young people away from their home communities and removing the responsibility of inclusion from mainstream schools.

St Christopher's School

About the school

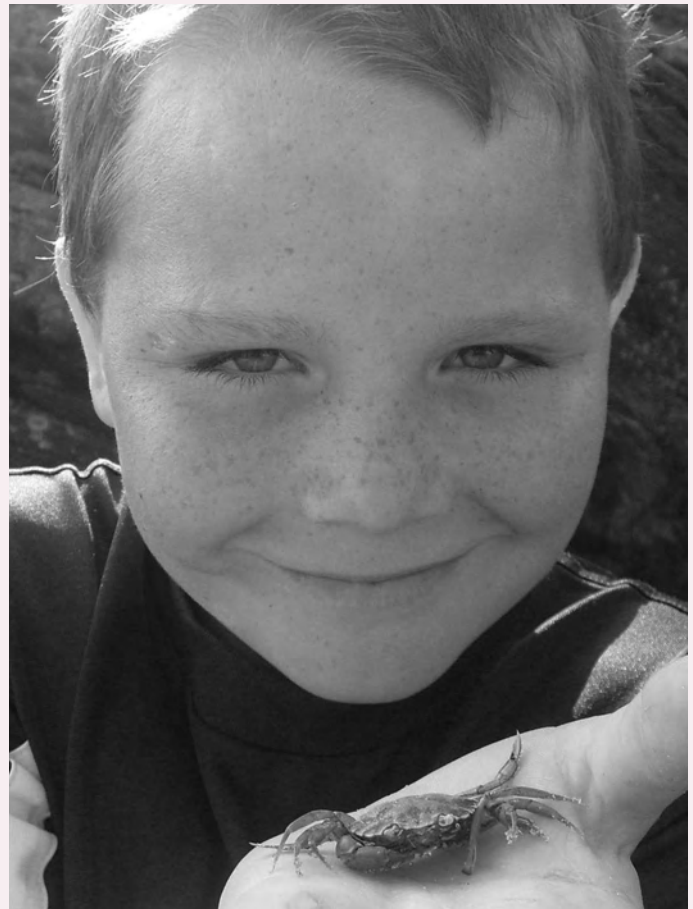
By working in partnership with local schools to provide a range of opportunities and facilities, St Christopher's School in Wrexham is effectively removing barriers and exporting the skills and expertise of its staff. St Christopher's is a day special school for 223 pupils aged from 6 to 19 with a variety of special educational needs; of these, 63 are girls. Many pupils attending St Christopher's have complex difficulties and, in the main, their primary SEN is located in either profound and severe learning difficulties or moderate learning difficulties. St Christopher's also has a behaviour support unit that caters for around 55 pupils with complex emotional and social behavioural difficulties (ESBD), including a number on the autistic spectrum. What is apparent is the effective integration of ESBD pupils within the main body of the school, an element that clearly enhances learning and respect for individual needs and differences.

Involving the community

The school had been involved in community focused initiatives for several years and has a number of outstanding schemes taking place in and around the school that involve the school with the community of Wrexham. The school provides a range of services and activities, often open beyond the school day, to enrich and meet the needs of pupils, their families and the wider community. Talk to Maxine Pittaway, the headteacher of St Christopher's, and she'll tell you that no barrier is insurmountable. The school ethos is underpinned by active citizenship and education for sustainable development, a thread that runs through the school curriculum and seen as essential in building a future generation of young people who are part of their local and wider community.

Environmental issues

The school has permanent Eco School status. It provides numerous environmental learning opportunities across the curriculum, such as the sensory garden and Greco/Roman and Japanese gardens. The pupils make full use of the school grounds and are actively engaged in learning practical environmental skills. The exceptional quality of the school's Millennium Eco Centre, based at the Tarmac Boras Quarry site, is nationally recognised and has Tarmac Central Ltd as its main business partner. The main aim of the centre is to raise awareness within Wrexham County Borough's schools and the wider community of the importance of recycling, waste management issues and, in general, to develop environmental knowledge of the impact of having a more sustainable lifestyle. The centre is run by St Christopher's staff and pupils, together with a management committee made up of individuals from the wider Wrexham community. At the centre, pupils take part in recycling paper, computers, ink cartridges, cardboard, metal, wood and florescent tubes, as well as gaining work experience in the centre café and outdoor areas.



Working in partnership

The school is fully committed to the WAG initiative to 'unlock the potential' of special schools by working in partnership with the LA and mainstream schools in sharing and developing expertise in meeting pupils' special educational needs. This involves offering disaffected pupils from local secondary schools a 'package' of support that includes working in one or more of the community facilities run and managed by the school.

Facilities

One of the more obvious of the community facilities is the Stockwell Café. Open to pupils and staff as well as the local community, it has two shops, one being the tuck shop and the other dealing in fair trade goods. The school was the first fair trade school to be recognised in North Wales and now regularly visits local primary schools with a fair trade workshop. The café opens for a breakfast club at 8am and pupils, school staff, local taxi and bus company staff regularly make use of the facility. The café also supports the conference room by providing a catering service.

Two further outstandingly successful initiatives that are available to both mainstream and St Christopher's students are the hair and beauty salon and the car valeting service, which are open to the public and provide a high-quality training and social skills learning environment for pupils. The Cuts and Curls Hair and Beauty Salon is run by a qualified hairdresser and integrates pupils from the school together with mainstream pupils, providing training up to Level 2 NVQ. The facility caters for both boys and girls and is a popular resource with the local community. It is a similar



story with the car washing and valeting service that opens each day to provide pupils with an opportunity to work towards OCN qualifications in a bona fide work situation. The facility is used extensively by local taxi drivers and residents and the school has recently secured a contract to wash police vehicles. The service is financially self-supporting and all profits go towards the school hydrotherapy pool fund.

www.stchristophers-wrexham.ik.org

2 Partnerships with parents

Home-school partnership work, in its many guises, is an extended service that needs to be a central component of schools' staffing structures, not an added extra dependent on short-term funding. There is no need to remind those in special schools about the gains to be made by working in partnership with parents/carers. Outcomes will almost always be positive. Parents/carers are the key players in their children's development and education, and provision will be considerably stronger for their input. Working in liaison with parents, and involving them in planning and implementation programmes, secures a more consistent approach to a pupil's difficulties across a variety of settings, and provides teachers with valuable information about family dynamics that may be affecting the pupil.

Ysgol Cedewain

About the school

Ysgol Cedewain in Newtown, Powys, is a day special school for pupils aged 3 to 19. While many pupils have complex difficulties, in the main, their primary SEN is located in either severe learning difficulties or a disorder on the autistic spectrum. There is a smaller group of

pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties identified as a multi-sensory group. The school serves the whole of the northern half of Powys, having one of the largest catchment areas in the country. There are currently 91 pupils on roll, over half of whom are of primary school age. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds and all pupils have English as their home language. Ethnicity is mainly white Welsh (73 per cent), with 25 per cent white English and 2 per cent with dual heritage. After their last inspection in 2007 the school was judged to be: *'... an outstanding school that provides added value in all areas of its work. It has no significant shortcomings and there are outstanding features across all areas inspected.'*

Consulting

Ysgol Cedewain has taken a proactive and consultative stance on outreach work. Not only do the school staff manage and run some effective outreach parents' groups; they also support their pupils and families by providing residential opportunities on the local housing estate. Conscious of the needs of disabled young people when they leave the security of the school environment, Ysgol Cedewain has developed what they call the Access 16+ project, aimed at improving young people's chances of achieving a successful transition to adulthood through effective and focused mentoring.

This is partly achieved by encouraging young people to plan and participate in community projects. Jackie Jones, the school bursar, is involved in managing and finding new funding streams for the project. However, the main thrust of the school's work is aimed at developing a greater social independence in their young people through providing opportunities to attend youth clubs and other oshl activities. Jackie has long been concerned about the effect of over-protective parents/carers on the emotional and social development of disabled young people: *'Parents of children with special needs tend to over-protect their children, often focusing on what they can't do, rather than what they can.'*

Supporting families

In an effort to support parents/carers and young people in developing essential life skills, the school has leased a council property to allow students to experience running their own home. The house is managed by two experienced staff who stay overnight with the four students staying there at a time. As well as household duties such as cooking and cleaning, students learn to do their own laundry and keep the garden tidy, all of which provide a base on which good health and safety aspects are taught.

Staying overnight at the house also enables students to attend the local youth club and build relationships with other young people in the neighbourhood. This is particularly relevant to young people living in the more isolated rural locations where social interaction with peers is severely limited. The school is very pleased with the success of the residential experience it offers: *'They are learning practical social and life skills – how to dig the garden, make tea and coffee for each other, help those who are more disabled than themselves, and volunteer to help the elderly on the estate. The point is to facilitate opportunities and develop independence.'*

The success of Access 16+ assists the school considerably in meeting the wider needs of its young people, their families and the communities they live in. Students have had the opportunity to develop a range of practical skills alongside skills such as decision making and co-operation. They have volunteered for service in the community and begun to feel a sense of empowerment. Parents and young people alike are loud in their support of the project:

'It's the best. I love spending time out of school with my friends and the staff. I like going bowling and to the cinema and helping the old people pack their bags in Morrisons.'

'It gives me the skills I would not get at home.'

'Access 16+ has greatly benefited my child. He has become far more confident and helpful around the house.'

'My child has become far more confident and sociable with members of the local community.'

www.cedewain.powys.sch.uk

3 Outreach and professional development work

Outreach links between special and mainstream schools have taken on increasing importance in recent years under the inclusion agenda. Essentially there are three main platforms of contact for a school's outreach service:

- where the outreach teacher is talking to a group of parents/carers in general terms, without any specific reference to the parent's/carer's own child
- where the outreach teacher is discussing the parent/carer's own child, in a one-to-one situation, or within the context of a larger meeting such as an annual review
- where the school provides support for children and young people in other settings or in dedicated provision on the school site.

Blackfriars School

About the school

Blackfriars School in Newcastle under Lyme is an all-age special school for 175 pupils aged 2 to 19 with a physical disability or serious medical condition. It provides specialist provision for the county of Staffordshire and the adjacent unitary authority of Stoke on Trent. More recently it has joined with a local secondary college, and has gained specialist technology status. The school reflects the changing role of special schools and is committed to promoting collaboration, outreach and training to enable other schools in the area to become more inclusive.

Outreach services

The school provides a specialist outreach and support role to physically/medically impaired pupils in mainstream schools/colleges. The outreach service is co-ordinated in school by a deputy headteacher, but involves other teachers and teaching assistants. It supports 134 mainstream schools, plus FE colleges, independent schools, nurseries, playgroups and childminders in its area.

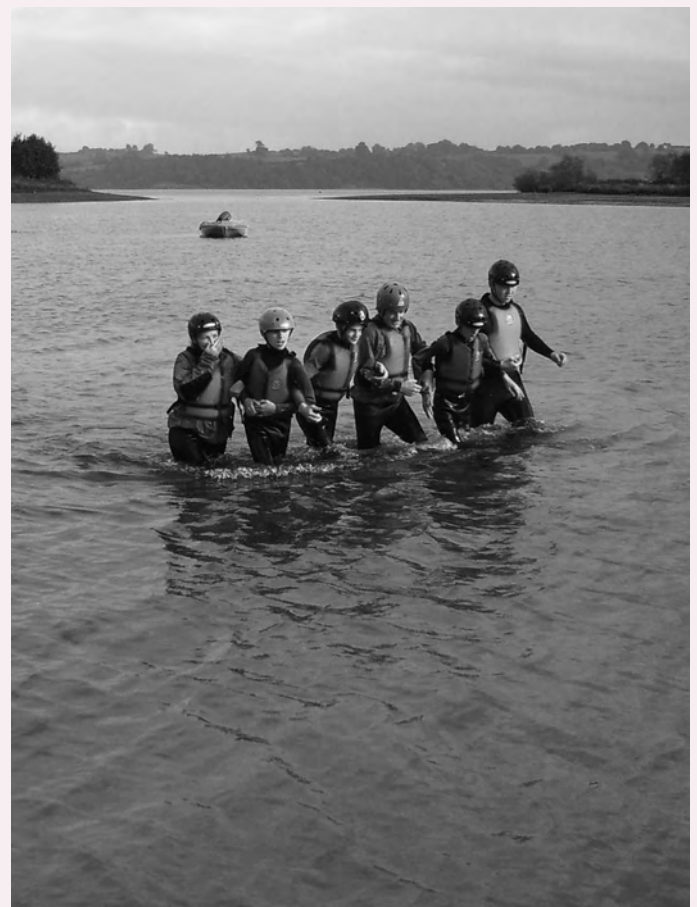
As well as being a technology and vocational college, a Staffordshire Key Learning Centre, the Lead School in the Leading Edge Partnership Programme and an

Enterprise School, the school also has the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Investors in People Award: *'Our vision is one that increasingly takes us beyond the confines of the school's walls and is allowing us to interact and be known not only locally but also regionally, nationally and internationally.'*

Partnership working

In recognition of its work as a technology college the school became the lead school in the Leading Edge Partnership Programme, which enabled good practice to be shared across a wide network of schools, focusing on the work the school undertakes as a specialist school. In its role as a Key Learning Centre, the school now has an outreach role across the whole county, supporting 140 primary and secondary schools, which involves:

- helping the successful inclusion of pupils with limited or no expressive language by making available the school's communication team to provide programmes, advice and support
- assisting in the successful transition of physically disabled pupils at Key Stages 2/3, 4/5, 5/lifelong learning by working with schools/colleges involved in the transition process to ensure that pupils continue to receive the best and most appropriate education
- securing the best learning environment for physically disabled pupils by the loan of specialist resources/equipment; equipment is loaned on a short-term basis to either help a pupil through a specific need or for the partner school to see if it would be appropriate for purchase
- enabling mainstream staff to keep up to date in relation to inclusive education by providing a library



of books, pamphlets, websites and videos on current thinking within inclusive education, research findings and information on specific disabilities

- assisting schools that wish to develop and extend inclusive practice by providing an approved and trained assessor for those seeking the Every Person Matters (EPM) award
- fulfilling the requirements of health and safety legislation and ensuring the well-being of staff and pupils by providing moving and handling training by qualified instructors from Blackfriars staff
- providing professional development for teachers and teaching assistants to enable mainstream schools to increase their capacity to support inclusion
- providing and tutoring a teaching assistants course for those working with physically disabled pupils in mainstream schools (accredited through Staffordshire University).

www.sln.org.uk/blackfriars

4 Relationships with other agencies

Relationships with other agencies take time and patience to develop into effective partnerships. The manner in which school leaders approach the building of partnerships in the future will determine the overall success of the extended school agenda.

Alice Stevens School

About the school

For Ian McAllister, headteacher of Alice Stevens School in Coventry, building relationships with outside agencies is essential if his pupils are to have the opportunity to maximise their achievement.

Alice Stevens provides for 174 students aged 11 to 19 with moderate learning difficulties. An increasingly significant minority have a range of more complex needs, including specific learning, autistic spectrum, sensory, and emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. There are twice as many boys as girls. The school has achieved a number of awards – for example, National Mentoring, Investor in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School and Eco School status.

In October 2007, Ofsted noted that: *'A consistent focus on the needs of individual students and a readiness to be flexible and adaptable in response to the increasingly complex student population is a key component in the school's notable effectiveness.'*

Collaborative working

There is a long history of close collaborative working between colleges, schools and training providers in the south-east of Coventry. Alice Stevens works successfully within this structure, maximising the educational opportunities for its pupils. This climate of collaborative working gives pupils a number of opportunities to interact alongside their peers, not only in other schools and colleges, but also through a successful initiative with the youth service.

Lisa Fairbrother is a youth worker, who is based in the school for two days each week. Since 2005 she has not only established the school's 'Buddies Youth Club', but



has also overseen the development of a programme that enables pupils from the school to access and enjoy activities in their neighbourhood youth clubs alongside their peers. Currently twenty boys and girls from across the age range are successfully attending their local youth clubs, having the benefit of an effective support structure managed by Lisa in co-operation with local youth leaders.

The programme begins at school with an assessment of the pupil's needs; home visits and discussions with parents are followed by a preliminary visit to the local youth club to meet the youth leader. As part of the needs analysis, unfamiliar activity skills the young person is likely to meet in the youth club setting are practised and taught at school. Pupils are carefully monitored and visited regularly by Lisa in their local venues, an element that many Alice Stevens parents feel is important if the placement is to become a long-term feature of their child's social life. Support is unobtrusive and designed not to interfere with the development of peer friendships and independence.

Benefits

Feedback from parents and pupils is consistently positive and reflects the level of preparation and support that is invested in each pupil. Despite some understandable initial apprehension, parents have been surprised at how well their children have integrated with other young people:

'He got involved quite easily and integrated with the others well. As a parent I was surprised. He now knows he can meet local youths on a social level and says he would like to keep up regular visits. The important thing is making friends with teenagers he can trust.'

'He enjoys going out and coming back independently.'

'She likes going to the club so she can meet her friends. It has made her go out more and not just sit in front of the TV.'

Parents have also reported a greater self-confidence evident in their children, both at home and at school, and an increased willingness to interact more with family members. For the Alice Stevens pupils the benefits of social interaction are enormous:

'I have learnt to be with new friends, mixing with people. I feel happy at the youth club.'

'There are rules at youth club to stop bullying. I have made new friends and attend every session.'

'I liked making new mates and being out and treated like an adult.'

Deputy headteacher Julia Bond is delighted with the success of the work and acknowledges the importance of having a dedicated youth worker as a bridge between the school and local communities. She highlights a number of factors that have contributed to the successful outcomes of the project:

- a process that involves seeking pupils' and parents'/carers' views
- a priority list of pupils who would benefit most from access to their local communities
- careful and non-intrusive monitoring and support for pupils
- the appointment of a youth worker with a balance of experience and skills to facilitate and develop the work.

www.alicestevens.coventry

5 Restructuring and remodelling

Extended services should not be about headteachers and senior managers running services or taking on additional responsibilities. Consistent with the aims of workforce remodelling, schools now have the opportunity to ensure that the most appropriate people develop their roles in order to deliver extended services:

'We have to challenge our fundamental concept of the headteacher as the person who is accountable for everything. One of the crucial things that needs to change – and it still hasn't happened sufficiently in every school – is for leaders to delegate strategic responsibility and accountability as well as management and operational responsibility.' (Steve Munby, Chief Executive, National College of School Leadership, England)

Oak Wood School

About the school

Continuing professional development and high-quality training is at the heart of performance management at Oak Wood School in Nuneaton. Following the closure of two all-age special schools, Oak Wood Primary and Oak Wood Secondary School were opened in September 2005. The two schools have the same headteacher and a federated governing body and share the same site. Both schools cater for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities.

Management

With two schools merging, a restructuring of the administrative team to cater for the needs of a larger organisation came at a time when the extended schools agenda was beginning to have an impact on schools. As a consequence, a new tier of management has been introduced to manage the extended schools programme at Oak Wood.

Under the overall leadership of business manager Phamie Toner, the administrative role carried out by the office manager has evolved into that of pastoral support manager. The new role has developed through personal interest and discussions during the performance management process as part of continuing professional development. To support the postholder in the new role, the school is providing the finance for an Open University BA (Honours) in Childhood and Youth Studies. The degree will provide a useful professional framework of knowledge and analytical skills, an understanding of childcare, health and education, as well as developing skills for working with families and young people.

The postholder will co-ordinate and develop extended services within the school, as well as liaising with the South Nuneaton cluster's extended schools co-ordinator. Headteacher RoseMarie Scott recognises that her parents and carers need a readily available point of contact in the school when they have an enquiry about oshl and the extended services offered by the school, and accepts that she is not always available or the best person to take on that role.

This innovative approach is very much part of the restructuring and re-culturing of the school. Through the remodelling of the leadership team and the creation of new roles and responsibilities for staff, the



headteacher is creating a culture of developing the skills and abilities of the staff to meet the growing needs of the school by:

- shaping the school's culture and ethos proactively around children's needs
- creating structures that distribute leadership, spread responsibility and foster trusting relationships
- managing workforce remodelling with a clear understanding of, and sensitivity to, professional expertise and capacity
- placing a high priority on the professional development of all the staff
- managing external relationships and the permeable boundaries between the school and community.

6 Specialist status (England)

Special schools in England were first eligible to apply for specialist school status in 1998. The first three special schools were awarded status in September 1999. The overall aims of the Specialist Special Schools Programme in England are to raise standards and extend opportunities for learning, particularly vocational learning and enrichment activity through the school's specialist work, including its community partnerships, school links and those with the wider community, including the wider educational community. In addition, the programme seeks to strengthen collaboration with schools, services and multi-disciplinary agencies in providing or facilitating quality learning opportunities and outcomes by sharing specialist facilities and resources and disseminating good practice.

Holly House School

About the school

Holly House School in Derbyshire is a small special school for pupils who have severe emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Headteacher Peter Brant is justifiably proud of what the school has achieved over the past three years. They were awarded specialist status in 2005 after an outstanding Ofsted report and at the same time became a Microsoft Partner School, one of only a hundred in the country. Although designated as a mixed-gender school, all the pupils are boys and all have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils come from all over Derbyshire and, prior to their admission, almost all have had a disrupted education and have been excluded from mainstream schools. There is a small residential facility of six beds.

In many special schools, the key resource that can be offered to the local community is their knowledge, expertise and commitment to meeting the needs of all children. Through their outreach work, resource development and training, special schools can, and are, supporting many children and young people in mainstream schools and the wider community. It is this expertise that provides the focus for the three areas the school has identified in its community plan.

The most prominent of these is the development of an on-site nurture centre. This caters for Holly House pupils and identified pupils from partner mainstream schools and agencies that benefit from a more supportive

environment. The aim of the centre is two-fold. Firstly, to prepare new and existing pupils for the more academic and social demands of the main Holly House curriculum and, secondly, to support children in mainstream provision who might otherwise experience difficulties in participating in school life, principally due to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The nurture centre is based around a nurture room known as the 'POD', so called because it provides pupils with a small protective environment, out of which great things grow. While in the 'POD' children are provided with:

- positive role modelling from adults
- support for individual emotional social and behavioural needs
- a variety of opportunities to develop as individuals, with a focus on their strengths and positive qualities
- access to the Positive Play Support Programme, which allows children to express and communicate feelings and difficulties in their lives through a variety of media.

Facilities

The school has also developed an impressive training and conference facility that is currently used for in-house training and by partner schools and agencies as a training suite. The school is keen to extend this facility to partner schools and agencies for specific training targeted to meet their staff development requirements.

As part of the school's desire to open its doors to its community and provide a quality resource for all, a purpose-built climbing wall has been opened in the school gymnasium. Not only does this provide an invaluable addition to the school's extended day oshl provision, but it also acts as a conduit to building better relationships with other schools and agencies. The wall is used by partner schools, the youth service and a local pupil referral unit.

Clubs

Many clubs and activities take place at break and lunchtimes. The school has gone out of its way to alter the structure of the teaching day to enable its pupils to access a menu of enrichment activities. Last year 87 per cent of pupils took part in extended day activities, including the school's climbing wall, roller-blading and trampolining at nearby facilities. There is a big emphasis on outdoor activities and Year 9 pupils take part in outdoor pursuits once a week as part of their curriculum. Two afternoons each week are dedicated to sporting activities or enrichment activities such as photography, music therapy and tuition, Tai Chi and 'puzzle club'. Two classes have a half day each week at a 'Forest School' where they learn teamwork, self-reliance and practical skills.

Outreach

The school is developing its outreach provision for parents/carers and families and has plans to provide evening activities in different areas of the catchment in order to facilitate and support pupils taking part in leisure activities in their own area.

www.hollyhouseschool.co.uk