

Full service and extended schooling: evolving educational systems that aim to tackle inequality **Liz Todd (Professor of Educational Inclusion), Newcastle University, UK**

This paper will address the following questions:

- What do extended or full service schools hope to achieve, and why should services based on schools be any more effective than services operating from other community bases?
- What pattern of services and activities is most effective?
- How is it possible to evaluate complex initiatives in a way that is flexible but robust?
- Beyond the advocacy of 'extended provision', what real evidence is there that schools of this kind make a difference, and how can school leaders evaluate the impact of their work?

Please see the following key publications:

Cummings, Dyson & Todd (2011) *Beyond the School Gates: Can full service and extended schools overcome disadvantage?* London, Routledge. For further information, go to <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415548755/>

Dyson, A. and Todd, L. (2010) Dealing with Complexity: Theory of Change Evaluation and the Full Service Extended Schools Initiative. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, Vol. 33 (2), pp. 119-134.

Cummings, C., Dyson, A., and Todd, L. (2007) Towards extended schools? How education and other professionals understand community-oriented schooling. *Children and Society*, Vol. 21 pp. 189-200.

Cummings, C., Dyson, A., Muijs, D., Papps, I., Pearson, P., Raffo, C., Tiplady, L., and Todd, L. (2007). Evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools Initiative: Final Report. DFES Research Report 852. London

Todd, L. (2007) *Partnerships for Inclusive Education: A critical approach to collaborative working*, London: Routledge.

PAPER SUMMARY

In countries across Europe, and in other parts of the world such as the USA and Australia, a new approach to schooling has emerged in recent years. Full service and extended schooling aims not only to tackle inequalities in educational outcomes but also to make a difference to inequalities in society more generally.

This approach is referred to in a variety of ways including: community-focused or -orientated schools; full service schools (typically in the USA); educative networks; extended schools; integrated schools; and so on. There is no single model, but such schools define their role in terms not just of what happens in classrooms, but of what happens beyond the school gates. They tend to be more broadly concerned with the personal, social, academic, and physical well-being of children and young people. However they go further than these concerns. Schools are reconceptualised as focussing also on the well-being of families and indeed communities. Rationales underlying extended schools vary internationally, but also within country. For some, the focus on family and community is in order to address educational inequalities in terms of learning and academic achievement. In such cases the aim is typically focused on bringing about a change in the culture of families and communities so as to better engage children and young people in learning. For other extended schools, the goal is a more integrated approach to the reduction of inequalities on a range of dimensions for communities, not just educational. Many also see themselves as contributing in a central way to social cohesion. Such schools are likely to form part of a more co-ordinated approach from a range of agencies including employment, life long learning, housing, transport, the environment etc. Indeed, as a result of some of their activities they are contributing directly to wider societal needs. For example, the delivery of courses to families and adult community members, which extended schools often offer, can be seen as part of the development of a life long learning agenda. In some schools there is a significant citizenship and participation strand, which engages both parents and young people as decision-makers.

Rethinking the role of schools and reconfiguring services around schools, in order to be more responsive to disadvantage and inequality, has in general involved the development of the following components:

- activities outside the standard school day and year to extend the curriculum on offer to students;

- additional forms of support for students' learning, social and health needs;
- opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and community engagement;
- support for families on personal, social, health and welfare issues;
- opportunities for families to become involved with the school and, in particular, to support their children's learning;
- opportunities for community members to use school facilities, and engage in arts, leisure, life long learning and vocational development activities.

In the UK I lead one part of a team of researchers that has been working together over the last 10 years on a number of research projects funded by the government into the development of extended schools in England and the effectiveness of such schools (Cummings et al., 2007, Cummings et al., 2006, Cummings et al., 2010, Dyson et al., 2002). We were funded for a further 5 years, that was to continue until 2013, to evaluate the national roll out of such schools in England. This team worked under my leadership at Newcastle University and also under the leadership of Prof Alan Dyson at Manchester University. However, this project was terminated prematurely earlier in 2011 by the change in national government and the consequent change in national policy. We have published academic papers and a joint authored book entitled, 'Beyond the School Gates: can full service and extended schools beat disadvantage?' The authors are: Colleen Cummings, Alan Dyson and Liz Todd.

Internationally, evaluation of such evolving school systems has been challenging. The research evidence to date has been encouraging although much of it has lacked robustness and has made assumptions as to the value of full service and extended schooling. The complex, multi-strand nature of most full service and extended schools make the identification and attribution of outcomes difficult. Despite all the cautions and caveats, it does seem as though full service and extended schools can generate positive outcomes, and that those outcomes are particularly positive for children and families facing significant difficulties. We review international research evidence in our forthcoming book (Cummings et al., 2011, in press). Our 3-year evaluation (1993-7) of the funding of one full-service extended school in each locality in England involved mixed methodology (Cummings et al., 2007a). It was qualitative and quantitative, and looked both at processes and outcomes. For example, it included statistical analysis of large sets of achievement data but also theory of change development with case-study schools over time (Dyson and Todd, 2010). The evaluation was cross-disciplinary and included a cost benefits analysis. Whilst we did not find evidence of an overall effect on attainments, we did find evidence that the gaps in attainment between the more vulnerable groups in full service extended schools (those identified as having special educational needs and/or those entitled to free school meals) and their peers were a little narrower than in other schools. We carried out an investigation of the approaches used by extended schools in England to tackle disadvantage (Cummings et al., 2010).

There is evidence now of the considerable potential of extended schools to contribute to a number of educational and societal inequalities. However, there remain many unanswered questions. There has been no systematic mapping of such schools, or the range of rationales, across Europe. There is much to be discovered about how such schools operate in the different countries, and the facilitating and inhibiting factors. A key issue to be investigated in extended schools are deficit understandings of communities implicit in professional actions. Related to this is the issue of participation of young people, families and communities in the development of extended school offerings (Todd, 2007). A large-scale multi-faceted evaluation of extended schools across Europe could generate much needed information about what is possible from these evolving educational systems. An analysis of these factors has much potential to raise some important and complex issues, and also to determine ways forward in addressing a range of social inequalities. In September 2011 at the European Conference of Educational research I helped to convene a European symposium in extended schools. I am keen to develop a partnership between academics, policy-makers and practitioners across Europe in extended schools.

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