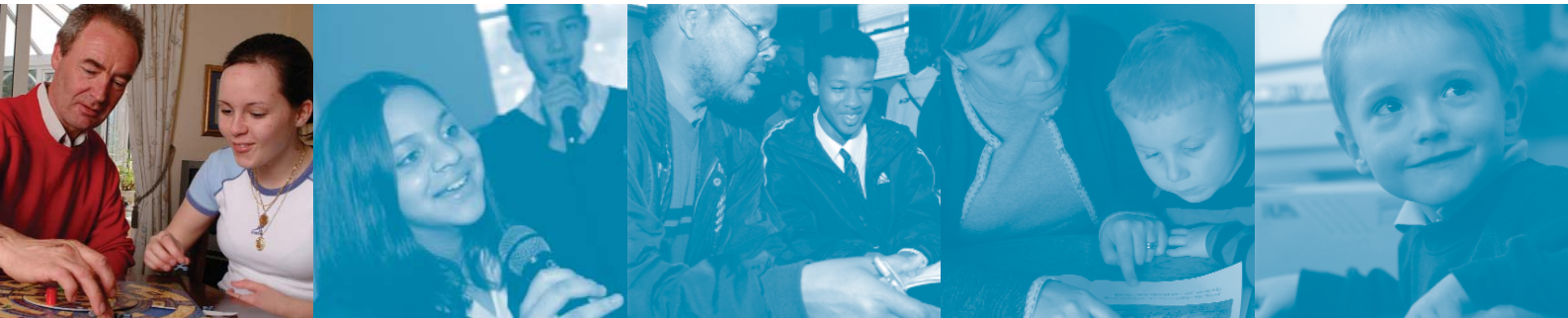


# Supporting Children and Parents



## Summary:

**We will enable schools to support the broader health and wellbeing of children and young people by:**

- ensuring schools develop childcare and other services that give pupils and parents more opportunities and support outside the normal school day;
- ensuring better access to targeted support services for children who need it;
- ensuring every school is able to provide a safe environment for children and young people and identify those who are at risk from abuse or neglect, and take appropriate action; and
- taking action to help schools improve children's health and to improve school food.

**6.1** High educational standards and well-being go hand in hand. Children will succeed best when they are healthy, self-confident and well-motivated. The best schools sit at the heart of their local communities, drawing strength and support from those they serve and, in turn, working with a range of other services to support families and children and young people facing the greatest challenges.

- 6.2** Through extended schools, we will offer a wider range of activities to a larger group of children. This will stretch and stimulate children and young people, ensuring that opportunities to learn and engage in sport and enrichment activities are widely available, particularly to the disadvantaged. This will extend childcare choice for parents with, over time, an offer of 8am–6pm care available in every community, giving them flexible opportunities to work and peace of mind that their children are safe and constructively engaged. As a community resource, these schools, working together and with other agencies, will provide an accessible base for a range of services to support children and families.
- 6.3** Many schools already provide a range of support to help pupils learn and achieve and we set out in Chapter 4 how we propose further to tailor that support. But there is more that schools can do to extend the opportunities available to meet children’s individual needs and talents. This is important for all children – but for those from deprived backgrounds it can make all the difference to their chances in life.
- 6.4** Many children and young people experience problems at some point in their lives. If these become serious, they can lead to a wide range of negative outcomes for young people, including health problems, teenage pregnancy or being out of education or employment. They can also contribute to poor behaviour by young people. Where this happens, we need to provide the right mix of support and challenge.
- 6.5** Many such problems cannot be solved by a school acting alone. Close working is likely to be needed not only with parents but also with other public services, such as the local health service and the police.
- 6.6** We therefore need to ensure that different services working with the same child do so coherently. Too often a child needing additional support has been faced with a slow and incoherent response, with numerous agencies working separately. Equally, some agencies have felt too pressurised to be able to deal with all the demands made of them.
- 6.7** Our reforms to early years and childcare provision are already showing what is possible where services work together effectively to support children and families. Our *Every Child Matters* reforms set a framework for local authorities, health, Youth Offending Teams and other partners to agree priorities and commission services that respond better to children’s and families’ needs. For young people we want these to include more positive activities, and opportunities to volunteer. An integral part of the reforms will be taking forward the National Services Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services – a ten-year strategy that sets national standards for improving children’s health and wellbeing.

- 6.8** At the school level, extended schools will increasingly broaden what schools can offer. From this September, the new school inspection arrangements recognise the contribution schools make to pupils' wider well being – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being – the five outcomes for children to which we are committed.

### Extended schools: support for all children

- 6.9** Our ambitious commitment to schools offering extended 8am–6pm provision to pupils, and our childcare pledge are key to supporting children's learning and to families' involvement and engagement with schools in their communities.

#### Extended services at Galliard Primary School, Enfield

Galliard is a 620 pupil community primary school which has developed a range of extended services to engage parents and families in the school. These include a breakfast club and after-school play and holiday activities. Headteacher Rosemarie Hopkins says "The impact of extended services has been phenomenal. Not only has it encouraged more parents and community members to come into the school, but last year's results were significantly higher than we expected. We attribute much of this improvement to the programmes and support that we offered to pupils and families."

The school collaborates with other agencies to provide different services. Social services provide a family worker one day per week, the Primary Care Trust provides speech and language clinics, and a school nurse provides drop-in clinics for parents. In partnership with other services and the voluntary sector, the school has also established a family drop-in centre to provide a wider range of support.

A study of last year's Key Stage 1 results showed that, in comparative terms, the children in Year 2 who had received this Full Service Intervention support achieved better results than their year group.

- 6.10** We want all schools to work with other children's services and the private and voluntary sector to offer access to a range of extended services at or through their school. These will include homework clubs as well as opportunities for sport, music and drama; special interest clubs such as additional languages, chess or first aid courses; visits to museums and galleries; and volunteering, business and enterprise activities. These will give all children and young people a richer experience that will widen their horizons and help stretch and extend their learning and development.

- 6.11** Extended schools will also offer services for their local community, such as ICT services, sports facilities or adult learning. This may include parenting support, including information sessions for parents at key transition points, parenting programmes or family learning sessions that allow parents to learn with their children.
- 6.12** By 2008, we want half of all primary schools and a third of all secondary schools to be providing access to these extended services, with all schools doing so by 2010. We have already spent £160 million to support this, and will invest a further £680 million by 2008. Local authorities, schools, parents and the private and voluntary sectors will need to work together to plan and develop services in each community, which seek to take account of the problems children and young people from workless and low income families may have in taking part in activities that are charged for.

### Targeted support

- 6.13** For children and young people who have additional needs or who face particular problems, parents and teachers need to be able to draw on appropriate specialist services outside schools, through the stronger links being established by the new Children's Trusts at local level.
- 6.14** Children's Trusts are seeking to shift resources to preventative work designed to catch problems early. That will help ensure an earlier and more effective response to young people, for example those who may be at risk of getting involved in anti-social behaviour or offending. Many Trusts are trialling a Common Assessment Framework, designed to enable practitioners to identify additional needs and intervene early. They are also developing a lead professional role as a single point of contact at local level to co-ordinate services where more than one agency is involved.
- 6.15** More and more schools are choosing to share their premises with professionals from other agencies, meaning on-site support is available quickly when a problem is identified. Some primary schools are co-located with children's centres which bring together childcare, early development, health and parenting support and employment advice for parents of under-5s. Safer School Partnerships are also tackling youth crime by basing police officers directly in schools.
- 6.16** Our Green Paper *Youth Matters* set out an ambition to provide better and earlier support for young people, particularly those with additional or complex needs. Children's Trusts will pilot targeted youth support teams which will work closely with schools and with the new school behaviour collaboratives to improve access to services beyond the school.

## Identifying and helping vulnerable children

- 6.17** All agencies share responsibility for safeguarding children and protecting them from harm.
- 6.18** Schools have a statutory duty to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This means providing a safe environment for children and young people in their care. It means being able to identify children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse or neglect and taking appropriate action to make sure they are kept safe both at home and at school. And it means schools working with other children's services and the new Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to report concerns about children's welfare and play their part in multi-agency work to protect them. Schools need to ensure staff have the awareness and training they need to do this.
- 6.19** Good and up-to-date information is key to ensuring that children at risk do not slip through the net. Without the right information, practitioners cannot form sound judgements, assess needs and decide which services are needed to support a child. We are currently consulting on draft guidance on information sharing for all practitioners who work with children, young people and families, whether in the public, private or voluntary sectors. We have been developing proposals for an index with national coverage of children and young people to support information sharing practice and expect to make an announcement on this later in the autumn.

## Special Educational Needs and disability

- 6.20** Individual children's SEN or disabilities can present significant barriers to learning, and the school environment has a vital part to play in overcoming those barriers. As part of their annual self-evaluation, schools will need to show how all their pupils are achieving, including children with SEN and disabilities. This process will help them to fulfil the duties they will have under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people and develop and publish a Disability Equality Scheme.

## Missing children

- 6.21** A small but significant group of children are missing out on education altogether. These children are a diverse group and by definition, difficult to identify and bring back into learning. Some have personal or family issues that have made it hard for them to access learning; others may be asylum seekers or Travellers who are not settled in one place.
- 6.22** We are consulting through the review of Pupil Registration Regulations on new measures to tighten up the requirements on schools to inform the local authority

of children leaving their school rolls. And we want to build on the good practice in many authorities for identifying children missing education. By December 2005, all local authorities should have systematic arrangements in place for identifying children missing from education, so that suitable provision can be made for them.

## Boarding provision

**6.23** Most parents want their children to be in a local school. However, for some children, this will not always be the right way to meet their complex needs. Boarding schools can meet the needs of some children in difficult family situations who require additional support to prevent family breakdown or a move into the care system. The total number of children falling into this category will always be small, but we believe that boarding provision should be used in more cases than at present, where a careful assessment of the child's individual needs indicates that this would be beneficial. We will, therefore, work with a sample of local authorities and other partners to design a pathfinder project to develop tools for identifying and assessing those children whose needs could be met by appropriate boarding provision

## Looked After Children

**6.24** "Looked After Children" – children in care – remain one of the most disadvantaged groups in our society and need particular support and access to specialist services. Whilst some do well at school, as a group they underachieve. Fewer than 10% achieved five good GCSEs or the equivalent in 2004. We are determined to improve the opportunities they have to succeed.

**6.25** We have introduced a new duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of all the children for whom they have responsibility. We will expect the new School Improvement Partners – described in Chapter 2 – to hold schools to account for how well they support Looked After Children and for improving educational outcomes.

**6.26** We will consult early in 2006 on a more wide-ranging set of proposals for transforming outcomes for Looked After Children. Achieving a step change in life-chances for this group will require continued improvements in fostering and residential care. But we also look at other ways in which these children might benefit from additional help and support.

## Promoting good health

**6.27** If children are to succeed they need to arrive in the classroom ready and able to learn. Poor health – and particularly a poor diet exacerbated by a lack of physical activity or sport – can mean children and young people are unable to

concentrate. This can compound problems of low-level disruption, poor behaviour and poor attendance.

- 6.28** Research suggests that low income is a major barrier to healthy eating – deprived households are more likely to have unhealthy food. And obesity rates are rising. The British Medical Association estimates that 1 in 5 boys and 1 in 3 girls will be obese by 2020. Recent research has found that, particularly among younger children, poor nutrition and obesity are associated with social deprivation.
- 6.29** Improving children’s health should therefore help to improve outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged. Our successful Healthy Schools Programme, run jointly with the Department of Health, brings together healthy eating, physical activity, supporting pupil’s emotional health and Personal, Social and Health Education to help pupils live healthy lives.
- 6.30** More than 16,000 schools and all local authorities are now involved in the programme. Schools with Healthy School status have better results at Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 science. Healthy schools are more inclusive and pupils report other positive improvements such as diminished fear of bullying and a reduced likelihood of using illegal drugs. Another £9.3 million will be available to ensure that, by next year, half of all schools in England should be part of the programme, with the rest working toward Healthy Schools status by 2009.

### **Hammersmith and Fulham Healthy Schools programme**

A Smoothieathon competition created huge enthusiasm about healthy eating amongst the children in Hammersmith and Fulham schools, as part of the Healthy Schools programme last year. All schools that took part were given blenders, and prizes were awarded to the schools and children who produced the best drinks.

The Healthy Schools programme now extends to 53 schools in the borough. Ten schools have achieved the Healthy Schools standard, with ambitious take-up targets for forthcoming years. The programme has introduced a number of borough-wide initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles, as well as supporting individual schools.

The programme has provided vital support to All Saints’ Primary School in Fulham, which has introduced a number of healthy food projects, including a gardening club. The club was part-funded by the programme, and they bought seeds and organised a community gardener and community dietician. The children’s awareness of healthy eating has improved and they enjoy cooking and eating food they have grown themselves.



**6.31** The national school sport strategy is ensuring more and more children and young people do a minimum of two hours of high quality PE and sport each week. The 2004/05 school sport survey showed that 69% of pupils in the 11,400 schools taking part were spending at least two hours in a typical week on PE and sport, up seven percentage points from the previous year. The strategy includes targeted action to engage and encourage those groups – girls, children with SEN or disabilities and those from ethnic minority or deprived backgrounds – who have often been reluctant to participate in sport or physical activity.

### **Healthy school food**

**6.32** Diet can be an important factor in ensuring that children are ready and able to learn effectively. We have taken decisive action which will help ensure a step-change in the quality not just of the main school meal at lunch, but also of the food available throughout the day, for example in vending machines or tuck shops. In March 2005, we announced a £235 million transitional funding package to support schools and local authorities to transform school meals. And in October 2005, the School Meals Review Panel's final report recommended tough new nutritional standards.

**6.33** These standards are currently subject to consultation, but we firmly support the recommendation that, from September 2006, lunches will need to meet tough food-based standards, with stretching nutrient-based standards to be introduced in future years. We also support widening the scope of legislation to enable similar standards to be applied to other food outlets in schools such as tuck shops and vending machines.

**6.34** Many schools already recognise the benefits of improving school meals. Parents are also increasingly putting pressure on local authorities and schools to improve. We welcome this and are establishing the School Food Trust to give independent support and advice to schools and parents to improve the standard of school meals. We must ensure that changes are lasting and that parents have the right information to guide their children's choices.



### Fresh Start menus, Orchard Vale Community School

Orchard Vale Community School is taking part in a pilot with the local authority in Devon and Devon Direct Services to improve pupils' health and lifestyle, as part of the Fresh Start menus programme.

The new menus include roasts, fish, home-made pies, fresh fruit and home-made puddings. Out go high fat, high salt processed meat and in comes fresh produce and dishes cooked from scratch. The new menus have been very popular with the children and take-up of school meals has improved.

The school also involves parents. Recently 200 parents and children took part in a school meal tasting session. Parents could see what food the school has to offer and dispel some of the myths about school food.

Headteacher Jan Baker said: "The new menus have made a tremendous improvement to the quality of our school meals. It is important to give the right sort of 'fuel' to the pupils, making them more able to take part and enjoy our structured exercise programme 'Take 10'. The pupils feel that their work improves after eating healthy food and taking part in regular exercise."

### School nurses

- 6.35** Schools nurses can play a critical role in supporting schools to promote good health. We remain committed to ensuring that by 2010 every Primary Care Trust – working with Children's Trusts and local authorities – will be resourced to have at least one full-time year-round qualified school nurse working with each cluster or group of primary schools and the related secondary school, taking account of health needs and school populations.
- 6.36** We will encourage heads to engage with Primary Care Trusts to consider how school nurses could best help improve the health and well-being of their pupils. We will be providing – in November 2005 – a practical guide for headteachers, *Looking for a School Nurse?*, which will set out both the benefits and some of the practical considerations that are associated with having a school nurse on-site or assigned to a school or cluster of schools.