

Current Priorities and Support Provided by the Learning Plus Team

Background

The Learning Plus Team (established on 1st September 2011) builds on the work that schools and partners have achieved through the Extended Services and Healthy Schools agendas. It is about focussing on the activities and services provided to children, young people and their families in order that they are meeting each school's improvement priorities, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to have a broad range of learning experiences outside of the school day in order to reach his/her potential, celebrate their achievements and to support their learning back in the classroom.

Learning Plus is about assisting schools and partners to identify and deliver local priorities in terms of health, well-being and community development that will close the attainment gap and improve life chances for the children, young people and their families.

Rationale

The focus of the Learning Plus Team is underpinned by a comprehensive body of evidence including:

- The research and recommendations of the Extended Services Select Committee that reported in December 2010.
- Research commissioned and published by the Department for Education into services such as after-school clubs and adult literacy classes found that extended services lead to improvements in pupils' grades and the career prospects of their parents. The research concluded that extended services "can maintain children in school, help them engage with learning and put them onto productive pathways after school". The research team, including academics from the universities of Manchester, Southampton and Newcastle, added: "They can help families deal with crises, encourage better parenting practices, and enable adults to move into learning and employment pathways. This in turn has positive impacts on children, their learning in school and their life chances." **The report states the success of such activities depends on schools being able to target families and pupils most in need.** The study also urges head teachers to ensure extended services are continually reviewed, with close monitoring of their effect on outcomes such as school attainment and attendance. (Extended Services in Practice: A Summary of Evaluation Evidence for Head Teachers, 2011).

- Just 14% of variation in individuals' performance is accounted for by school quality. Most variation is explained by other factors, underlining the need to look at a range of children's experiences, inside and outside of school, when seeking to raise achievement (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007)
- "What happens after the school gates close at 3pm is just as vital as what goes on in the school day. Children who do after-school activities have more confidence, see the world in different ways, have a stronger sense of identity – and this ultimately translates into doing better in exams and getting a better job. We're particularly concerned poorer children are missing out as a result." (Save the Children, 2010)
- "Research shows clearly that out-of-school activities are not just an 'optional extra', but an important part of children's education and development. The evidence is that children with such experiences also approach school learning in a more positive way." (Donald Hirsch, Loughborough University's Centre for Research in Social Policy, 2010).
- "Inequalities in educational outcomes are as persistent as those for health and are subject to a similar social gradient. Despite many decades of policies aimed at equalising educational opportunities, the attainment gap remains. As with health inequalities, reducing educational inequalities involves understanding the interaction between the social determinants of educational outcomes, including family background, neighbourhood and relationship with peers, as well as what goes on in schools. Indeed, evidence on the most important factors influencing educational attainment suggests that it is families, rather than schools, that have the most influence. Closer links between schools, the family, and the local community are needed". Policy recommendations include: extending the role of schools in supporting families and communities and taking a "whole child" approach to education; and developing the school-based workforce to build their skills in working across school-home boundaries and addressing social and emotional development, physical and mental health and well-being. ("Fair Society, Healthy Lives – Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post-2010", The Marmot Review, 2010)
- "Where child learning becomes family learning, and where educators understand that they cannot meet the needs of children and young people alone, true engagement and shared understanding are developed". ("Leadership for parental engagement", National College, 2010)
- Ofsted's evidence suggests that schools offering extended services make a positive difference to:
 - Improved motivation and self-esteem
 - Improved achievement

- Increased attendance and improved behaviour
 - More engaged parents
 - Greater willingness to adopt healthy lifestyles
 - Better community access to local services
- 'Education outcomes do not just depend on schools. They are influenced by a range of factors including poverty, family circumstances, housing and health. If schools are to deliver effectively for children and young people they need to work with other schools, parents, the local community, statutory partners and voluntary organisations.' (School effectiveness framework: building effective learning communities together, February 2008)
- Key findings of the 'The Impact of Parental Involvement in Children's Education' Research report (DfES, 2008):
 - Parental involvement in a child's schooling for a child between the ages of 7 and 16 is a more powerful force than family background, size of family and level of parental education.
 - Parental involvement has a significant effect on pupil achievement throughout the years of schooling.
 - Educational failure is increased by lack of parental interest in schooling.
 - In particular, a father's interest in a child's schooling is strongly linked to educational outcomes for the child.
- "The system' – education, social and health services – has, for as long as schools have existed, failed many young people, closing doors in mid afternoon, weekends and holidays. While there is little evidence to show that more days of school or longer hours in classrooms would be the answer, there is evidence to show that achievement is raised and self esteem enhanced when there are opportunities to learn beyond the school day and outside the classroom (MacBeath 2006)

Focus of Support

Based on the above evidence, feedback from Kent schools and the support provided to schools by the Extended Services/ Learning Team up to August 2011, Learning Plus focuses its support on three areas:

- Ensuring the activities and services offered to pupils and families support school improvement and school development priorities;
- Developing a "total child" approach where issues such as health and well-being, parental involvement, etc are considered alongside achievement and attendance data
- Targeting the appropriate services and activities to the pupils and families that need to access them and who will benefit most from them, and

ensuring that there are learning opportunities and support for learning beyond the school day.

Taking each of these aspects in turn:

a) Ensuring support meets school improvement and development priorities

It is vital that any support and activities that a school offers, or makes available to its pupils and families, ultimately links back to supporting the learning back in the classroom. In the current economic climate it is even more important than ever to be able to justify that the resources available are being appropriately targeted and supporting the schools priorities for its pupils' learning.

As well as being able to support schools in their school improvement planning to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders are involved in its development and implementation, the Learning Plus team are currently piloting a self-evaluation framework for schools (that can lead to a recognised Quality Mark if the school wishes to follow this through) that looks at how the extended services provision supports the school's priorities for their pupils literacy, numeracy and communication skills. This can either be done by a school on its own, together with other local schools, or could be a school and up to 4 other providers (who could be children's centres, local leisure providers, other external providers as well as the school's provision that it runs itself).

b) Developing a "Total Child" Approach

The Learning Plus Team has developed a partnership with an organisation who have developed a set of tools to support schools to identify their pupil's indicators in areas such as health and wellbeing, parental engagement, etc alongside achievement and attendance data to identify issues outside of the teaching and learning that may be impacting on their pupils achievement. This data can be looked at on a pupil by pupil basis, as well as in larger groups. This approach has been piloted with 6 Kent schools and an additional 30 schools have purchased the resources to date and are embarking on this approach.

The first stage of the Total Child approach is to seek the Teacher's perceptions on each of their pupils, and for this it is suggested that they use a template such as the one attached in appendix 1 of this report. This has proved to be a very useful starting point and feedback from schools has been that it has provided a framework for a discussion between teachers and between teachers and support staff. It is also helpful in identifying possible professional development needs for staff where gaps have appeared in the responses recorded on the sheets.

The second stage is then to undertake surveys of the pupils and their parents on their perceptions on a range of issues, primarily based around the Every Child Matters outcomes. Once completed the schools receive a detailed report for their school as well as the data on a pupil by pupil basis. The Learning Plus

Team have then been commissioned to provide support to the schools in terms of identifying appropriate responses and interventions in response to the results of the survey. There is already evidence from the pilot schools that this is providing an additional valuable set of data that the schools have been able to act upon. The intention is that schools would repeat these surveys at a suitable point in the future (once interventions have been completed, or at the end of the academic year for example) to see if there is an improvement in the responses as well as the pupils' academic achievement.

As more schools come on board with the system it will be possible to provide data reports for groupings of schools, as well as providing comparative data across the county as required. It is also anticipated that this tool will be useful to schools in terms of identifying the appropriate support for pupils receiving the Pupil Premium and also for being able to report on and demonstrate its impact.

c) Targeting Services and Activities

As well as the Total Child approach described above, the Learning Plus Team is working closely with schools and partners to ensure that there are a wide range of services and activities available for schools, pupils and families, and that schools look at a range of strategies to target the pupils and families that would benefit most from the interventions. The team is currently supporting this to happen in two ways:

- External Provider Training

The team has now provided training to over 340 businesses and organisations providing activities and services to Kent schools. These range from small businesses to multi-national organisations. As well as ensuring that these organisations are aware of their legal requirements in terms of insurances, CRBs, etc time is also spent explaining the priorities and context that schools are working in and supporting the organisations to identify how their services can best be targeted to support schools.

- Learning Destinations

Based around a Passport for Learning, this is part of a national scheme run by the National Children's University. Children achieve stamps in their passport for every hour of learning outside of the classroom that they undertake – there are certificates at various target points, but for children who reach the gold stage (100 stamps) they are invited to a graduation ceremony that we run with the University of Greenwich to receive their awards and have a tour of the university campus. At the moment the scheme is particularly focussed on years 3 to 8, and stamps can be achieved at out of school activities at their school (if their school is affiliated to the scheme) or at other Learning Destinations across the

county. There are currently approximately 50 Learning Destinations across the county that include many of the large tourist attractions and places of interest across the county, including Kent's County Parks. This provides an opportunity for families to undertake fun learning activities together. In Kent, over 5000 passports have been issued to date.

Impact

As well as the impact of the approaches and interventions highlighted in this report being evidenced going forward at a school level, Canterbury Christ Church University are undertaking some focussed impact evaluation studies on the work of the Learning Plus Team. It is anticipated that this study will be completed by Easter 2012 when the University are planning on also publishing the results in the form of academic papers as Kent is one of a very few local authorities in the country that has a team such as Learning Plus. The focus for the study will be looking at the impact to date for schools and clusters who have achieved the Quality in Extended Services award (over 250 schools in Kent have this award).

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Total Child - Closing the Achievement Gap - Prioritising Evidence

☐ English ☐ Maths ☐ Science ☐

Extent to which areas have a positive or negative effect on attainment and achievement

Positive Negative Don't know

	History			School Support		Self				Home			Make-up			
Evidence	Attainment on Entry	Curriculum Skills Knowledge gaps	Achievement progress	Per Pupil Budget	Degree of Intervention	Health	Well-being	Behaviour	Safety	Social/ Cultural Attitudes	Financial Constraints	Capacity to Support	Attitudes to learning	Attitudes to learning	Physiological medical issues	Cognitive Issues
Priority Indicator Choices	Recorded EYFS APS	Curriculum attainment	School progression profile	Pupil premium	Hours per week in school	Pupil Perceptions Health Indicators	Pupil Perceptions Well-being Indicators	Pupil Perceptions Behaviour Indicators	Pupil Perceptions Safety Indicators	% attendance at parents' evening	FSM status	Parent experiences	Attendance figures	Behaviour record	Symptomatic impact	Official diagnosis
Class 1																
Child 1	P	P	N	N	N	P	D	N	D	N	D	P	N	N	P	P
Child 2	N	N	P	P	P	N	P	P	N	P	N	N	P	P	N	N
Child 3	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N	N	P	P	D	P	P	P	P
Child 4	N	N	N	N	N	D	N	P	P	N	N	P	N	N	P	N
Child 5	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	D	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Child 6	P	N	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	N	P
Child 7	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Child 8	N	P	N	N	P	P	N	P	N	P	P	N	N	N	N	P
Child 9	P	N	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	D	N	P	P	P	P	N
Child 10	N	P	N	P	P	N	P	N	N	N	P	P	P	P	P	P
Child 11	P	P	P	N	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N	D
Child 12	P	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	P
Child 13	N	P	N	N	P	N	P	P	N	N	P	N	N	N	D	N
Child 14	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	D	N	P	P	P	P	D
Child 15	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Child 16	N	P	N	N	N	P	P	N	D	P	P	P	N	N	P	N
Child 17	P	P	P	N	P	P	P	P	D	N	N	P	P	P	N	D
Child 18	N	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Child 19	P	N	P	P	P	N	D	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Child 20	P	P	P	P	N	P	P	D	P	D	P	P	P	N	P	P
Child 21	N	P	N	N	P	N	N	N	D	P	P	N	P	P	P	N
Child 22	P	N	P	P	P	P	D	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Child 23	N	P	N	P	N	N	N	N	P	P	P	N	P	P	N	P
Child 24	P	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	N	D	P	D	P	P	D	P
Staff Confidence/ Awareness																
Staff 1	P	P	P	P	P	P	N	P	D	P	P	N	P	P	P	D

