

Inspecting extended schools and children's centres

Supplementary Guidance

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General overview

The Government's vision for extended schools supports the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* objectives. It identifies types of extended services that all parents and children should be able to access through their school by 2010. The target is that services are accessible in half the primary schools and a third of secondary schools by 2008.

Extended services include:

- high quality childcare provided on the school site or through other local providers, with supervised transfer arrangements where appropriate, available 8am–6pm, year round
- a variety of activities such as homework clubs and study support, sport, music tuition, dance and drama, arts and crafts, special interest clubs such as chess and first aid courses
- parenting support including information sessions for parents at key transition points, parenting programmes run with the support of other children's services and family learning sessions where children learn with their parents
- swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services such as speech therapy, child and adolescent mental health services, family support services, intensive behaviour support
- wider community access to ICT, sports and arts facilities including adult learning.

During inspection, schools and inspectors discuss how the school's extended services are raising standards and contributing to pupils' personal development and well-being. Wherever possible, extended schools will experience a **single inspection event** with one formal feedback and one report. For example, if a school has childcare managed by the governing body, wherever possible, a Children Act inspection will take place at the same time as the school inspection.

During institutional inspections Ofsted does not inspect services which:

- are not directly line-managed by the school
- are at the early stage of development
- do not make a direct contribution to the learning and well-being of the children, pupils, students on the school's roll.

In the future, some aspects of extended schools' services may be inspected through surveys and joint area reviews (JARs).

During FOI inspections of extended schools, inspectors look at the impact of **core** additional services on the *Every Child Matters* outcomes. The inspectors discuss:

- the school's core services and who is accountable for them
- where evidence can be gathered and who to talk to
- who will be at the formal feedback.

In particular, inspectors ask:

- why a school has chosen to develop particular services
- what impact the services have on learners – the difference they make
- how well the school's services are used.

Mostly, inspectors will talk to key people about the services and their impact; they will not inspect the services directly.

Inspectors' findings about the effectiveness of the extended services are incorporated into the formal feedback and, when the report is written, evaluative comments about the services are woven into the relevant parts of the report.

Judgements are always made about the overall effectiveness of the services inspected and, of their leadership and management.

The following notes provide more detail about the different types of services.

Inspecting children's centres

What are children's centres?

There is no blueprint for children's centres; they are being established across the maintained and non-maintained sectors. Children's centres aim to develop:

- high quality early education and integrated childcare, including care for babies up to school age
- family support and outreach support for parents
- access to specialist services
- a range of educational and advice services
- child and family health services.

Practical considerations when inspecting children's centres

Getting started

Look for triggers, especially from the SEF and the centre's last inspection reports (Children Act Part X A, s 122, s 10). How does the centre rate the quality of the integrated care and education and key additional services? Particularly significant questions to ask:

- What support services are provided for children, parents and the community and what difference are they making? (Under the 2006 Education and Inspections Act, from September 2007 school governors will have duties to promote the well-being of pupils and community cohesion. Extended services may be a factor in how well governors discharge these duties).
- Why have these services been established and how well are they used?

- What is the range and extent of provision e.g. childcare and numbers of funded children and what is their impact?
- Who are the key partners and how effective are relationships?
- What is the profile of children and families in the area and are there any particular barriers to learning?

These triggers, where they are significant, may become a focus of pre-inspection issues, should be noted in the PIB and will contribute to the team's early debate with the senior management team at the initial meeting.

Apart from core services such as day care, additional services **will not be inspected directly**, but inspectors will want to talk to stakeholders and key partners about the impact of these services on children's learning and well-being.

Team deployment

There is no preferred model of deployment. The team is likely to be small and inspectors will share responsibility for gathering evidence about the impact of the centre's services. A centre's success in promoting ECM outcomes should be teased out by gathering evidence about the quality of different aspects of the provision. (See protocols for section 5 teams working with childcare inspectors – appendix 1.)

Setting up the inspection

The lead inspector's initial phone call to the centre may include the following, where appropriate:

- what are the head's key areas of responsibility/services?
- who is accountable for these services?
- are they based on the same site?
- is there any other core provision not managed by the head and GB?

Other questions depend on the type of service provided, for example:

- organisation of children 0–3, 3 year olds, 4 year olds; what room are they based in? Who teaches/cares for them? Are they all on the same site?
- agreement on range of evidence needed for the above and possible inspection trails to follow
- which key people should meet with the inspection team? E.g. manager of the childcare provision and wrap-around care, manager of adult education, Sure Start manager, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) manager

Following up the inspection trails

- Discussion with key partners; it is helpful to have interviews at the start of the inspection.

- Sample aspects of core services e.g. observe a few nursery sessions, talk to adult learners, talk to adults that use drop-in sessions, talk to the managers and parents.

Reporting on quality of the additional services

Weave the evaluative comments about the effectiveness of core services into relevant parts of the report

Weighting judgements about care, education and additional services

Composite judgements about the overall effectiveness of the centre are drawn from separate judgements about:

- the quality of registered day care for children up to the age of three
- the effectiveness of provision for children aged three to five in the Foundation Stage, and where relevant Key Stages 1 and 2 in a centre based in a primary school
- the overall effectiveness of any additional significant provision or services including wrap-around childcare and holiday play-schemes for older children.

Under future arrangements, the inspection will include core services that are funded through the Sure Start Children's Centre initiative, the local authority and the DfES. It will also take account of the quality and impact of links with other agencies such as the EYDCP, Health, providers of adult education and Social Services. Judgements about overall effectiveness take account of the extent to which childcare and the additional services impact on, or enliven children's learning.

Consideration must be given to the quality and impact of the care and additional services provided. When considering overall effectiveness, care must be taken to weight the judgements fairly. For example, judgements about overall effectiveness must not be dictated solely by the outcomes of the education provided for a few children. The following points should be kept in mind when this composite judgement is made.

- Weighting must be context specific; it must take account of the core objectives of a setting's work. For instance, in a school the core work is clearly the pupils' education. In a children's centre, the core work **includes** high quality nursery education and care.
- Weighting must encompass the head and governing body's direct responsibilities i.e. the areas of work for which governors provide strategic direction and where line-management falls to the head.
- The common inspection framework (CIF) and early years' frameworks are assembled under strands – inspection judgements should link these strands to the centre's core objectives.
- In a centre (based in a nursery school) or a stand alone nursery school inspectors would need to consider whether the overall provision can be adequate if either the quality of care or the quality of education are not

adequate. In some centres the day care may form the greater part of the provision and this must be taken into account.

Inspecting schools offering extended services

Increasingly, schools in all phases are offering additional services to children, parents and the local community. The Government wants all schools to be offering, either on site or at a local provider with supervised transfer arrangements where appropriate, the core menu of extended services by 2010, with half of primary schools and a third of secondary schools doing so by 2008. Some of these services will be provided on site and some of them might be provided by schools working together in clusters or with local private and voluntary sector providers either using the site or working closely with the school with supervised transfer arrangements where appropriate.

Practical considerations when inspecting extended schools

Getting started

Look for triggers, especially from the SEF and the school's last inspection reports (Children Act Part X A, s 122, s 10). How does the school rate the quality of the extended services and their impact on ECM outcomes? The following are particularly significant questions to investigate through the SEF or to ask about at the school:

- What particular support services are provided for pupils and students, parents and the community and what difference are they making? (Under the 2006 Education and Inspections Act, from September 2007 school governors will have duties to promote the well-being of pupils and community cohesion. Extended services may be factor in how well governors discharge these duties).
- What was the rationale for providing this particular group of services?
- Who are the key partners and how effective are relationships?
- What is the profile of pupils/students and families in the area, are the needs of the most vulnerable being met, and are there any particular barriers to learning?
- What impact are the extended services having in improving pupils' outcomes including their personal development and achievement?

These triggers, where they are significant, may become a focus of pre-inspection issues, should be noted in the PIB and will contribute to the team's early debate with the senior management team at the initial meeting.

Additional services will not be inspected directly, but inspectors will want to talk to stakeholders and key partners about the impact of these services on pupils' and students learning and well-being.

Setting up the inspection

The lead inspector's initial phone call to the school may include the following, where appropriate:

- what are the key services? Which services form the core provision?
- is the school offering services independently or as part of a local strategic partnership?
- who is accountable for the services?
- how is the effectiveness of services monitored and evaluated?
- are they based on the same site?

Other questions depend on the type of service provided and the inspection time available, for example:

- how is the childcare organised?
- how accessible is the provision to the wider community?
- agreement on a sample of stakeholders to track through the impact of the additional services.

Following up the inspection trails

- Discussion with senior leader with oversight of extended services might focus on the following:
 - Why have you established these particular services and what impact are they having?
 - Is their development and evaluation integral to the strategic development and improvement of the school?
 - How do you know that these services are wanted by, and meet the needs of the local community? How well are the services used, including by its most vulnerable groups?
 - What evidence do you have of any difference the services are making to stakeholders?
 - Has the sustainability of the extended provision been planned for?
 - How do they ensure the effectiveness of aspects of the provision?

Consideration must be given to the quality and impact of the additional services provided. As with children's centres, when considering overall effectiveness, care must be taken to weight the judgements fairly. For example, judgements about overall effectiveness must not be dictated by the outcomes of an extended service provided for a few pupils and students.

Reporting on quality of the extended services

Weave the evaluative comments about the effectiveness of extended services into the overall effectiveness, leadership and management and other, relevant parts of the report.