National College for School Leadership

Inspiring leaders;
improving children's lives

Leadership for Public Value

Achieving valuable outcomes for children, families and communities

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Educational settings developing an interactive community approach generating both wider social value and improved educational attainment.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

Report

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Introduction

At the heart of this piece, literally and metaphorically, are stories of educators from a variety of settings, engaging with their local communities. Their work and the work of many others that we have not been able to celebrate here, stand in a long tradition, stretching back through the last century and beyond: educators developing their social contract with pupils and families as a platform to enhance the strength of the local community and, in turn, using the local community as a platform to improve outcomes for young people.

This work comes from a wide variety of educational settings, but although we try to reflect that consistently, we have sometimes tried to avoid clumsy sentences by writing 'schools' when we mean something much wider. We begin by locating the work inside the current, national debate about the nature and purpose of the public education service. We then describe the work and its local impact. We call that second section 'A "new story" for education?', with the question mark that wonders how old or new this story really is while recognising its resurgence. We introduce and explain the phrase 'public value' to which we return from time to time because we think it might be the phrase which will allow us all to talk about this approach and to distinguish it from some other, familiar activities. There are a lot of familiar, traditional threads running through the work described here: diversity, social harmony, community participation and community cohesion are all recognisable elements. We favour public value as our description in part because we want to link the work to the wider public service agenda for which public value is often used. We also think the work in each of these settings transcends its separate elements and represents the best of what public services can do to re-build the public's commitment to them – which is what creating public value means for us. Finally, we draw some summarising conclusions from what we have reported, including the five core tasks in which educational leaders who create public value are successful.

National context

The standards story

For the best part of 20 years education has been organised around a dominant story of what it should be for and how it should be delivered. That story has the merit of clarity and simplicity.

The goal of education is to raise standards of attainment in subjects covered by a national curriculum, to better equip children to earn their way in the world and to play a full part in society.

The main way of achieving this goal is to improve teaching and learning within better organised schools and centres, with improved facilities, better trained teachers and crucially, more effective leadership.

To create common standards of achievement a national curriculum was introduced and with it, a series of tests at Key Stages, which provided information for league tables of performance that in turn were used to push up performance.

That was allied to an inspection regime through the creation of Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills). The power of national government to direct education was enhanced at the expense of local authorities.

This standards-driven story has many merits: not only are the goals clear, but so are the means to achieve them. The field of play and the number of players are fairly contained: schools and teachers. If we get more children, into better-run schools for longer, then we should get better results.

This national standards-driven story has never been, even in its hey-day, the only story to guide what education should be for and how it should be organised. But it has been the dominant, organising story of the last two decades, shared in large measure by Labour and the Conservatives. Nor has it been so rigid that it has not been able to adapt, for example, accommodating a growing emphasis on the creation of new kinds of provision: early years through children's centres and schools primarily through the academies programme.

Yet this dominant story is now running out of steam for four main reasons.

Running out of steam

First, in many contexts, improvements in educational attainments have hit a plateau after early gains in the first few years of the Labour government that were characterised by higher funding and new national strategies. Further improvements are proving stubbornly difficult to achieve with the standard approach. This provoked a search for more effective strategies for driving continued improvements in standards. These turn on personalised learning: motivating learners to learn and equipping teachers to devise strategies tailored to the different needs of different learners rather than relying on central direction and targets.

Second, improved educational performance seems to have done very little to reduce social and economic inequality. Poor educational performance seems to be a reflection of deep-seated deprivation and social dislocation. Some well-funded and well-run institutions have made an impact on the life chances of their pupils despite these social and economic factors, but not many. This recognition has opened up the way for policy makers to explore the connections and complex interaction between educational settings and communities: further gains depend on how educational policy works for communities not just for pupils.

Third, underlying all of this is a nagging debate about what education should be for amid rapid social, economic and technological changes. The British economy is increasingly driven by its capacity for innovation, to combine and re-combine ideas, skills and resources. That puts a premium on people with the social and cognitive skills to work together flexibly and creatively. Society seems increasingly fractured and fragmented, which puts a new value on social and citizenship skills, tolerance and civic responsibility. The spread of the web and the mobile phone is allowing people to search for and access information from many sources. Young people increasingly see themselves as participants in creating information and ideas, not as merely spectators, and the social networks and games they play online encourage a spirit of lateral, peer-to-peer collaboration. An education system designed to impart a fixed body of knowledge and skills from the top down seems hopelessly slow, controlled and cumbersome for a world in which information is emerging the whole time on the web. This puts a premium on equipping people to search and sift information for themselves, rather than relying on what they are told.

Fourth, and finally, the models of centralised, target-driven system improvement are increasingly being questioned. The standards story relies heavily on change coming from without, through inspection and regulation. Instead there is a growing focus on how to generate the appetite and capacity for improvement from within.

These four factors – the achievement plateau, continued deep pockets of inequality, the need for a new story of what education is for and a new model for sustaining system change – have set off a search for an alternative animating story for our education system, one that builds on standards but is not confined to it.

That new approach would have to break through the achievement plateau by shifting cultures of low aspiration and motivation, often in deprived and disinvested localities that are low in social capital, by offering an approach to learning that motivates families and pupils.

Many of these themes are played out in the 2007 *Children's Plan* that announced an important shift in the tenor and approach of policy, to focus on quality of life in childhood, not just educational attainments. That shift in goals from just standards to childhood brings further changes in its wake.

Good teaching and effective learning are part of a wider range of strategies and services to support children. The field of play widens out, from the institution to the community. The number of players also grows, from just teachers, schools and pupils, to a wider range of public agencies – including social and youth services – as well as social enterprises and employers. *The Children's Plan* is based on a wider goal (quality of life in childhood); a larger field of play (the community not just the institution); a larger menu of tools and strategies (not just effective teaching and learning but community-based work with families); and an expanded number of players in the field (not just schools and teachers but a range of public and community agencies).

Policy has become more ambitious, but also as a result more complex and demanding to implement: achieving *The Children's Plan's* more ambitious goals will demand more sustained radical innovation in the way that schools work and especially in how they interact with their communities.

This report is based on a set of schools and centres that are exploring an important part of what that new approach might involve: how 'educational leaders' manage and measure the value it creates.

Like most social innovations few of the ingredients of this emerging approach are entirely new. Indeed this approach is more likely to succeed the more it incorporates existing approaches. One is the growing stress on integrated early years and family services to better prepare children for education. Another is the role of information technology promoted by bodies such as Becta, which offers to link learning in the classroom to learning beyond it. A further strand comes from the growing body of experiments with new forms of school organisation from federations, to studio, community and extended schools.

That is where the schools profiled in this report fit in. All are experimenting with this relationship between schools and their communities to generate not just improved school performance but also better outcomes for the communities they serve.

Four hypotheses

The places profiled in this report are experimenting with four aspects of the relationship between schools (shorthand for all education settings over the next few pages) and communities.

First, schools are likely to be more effective in their core tasks if they draw their community into the work, for example by engaging parents more in school life or engaging local employers and public agencies. The local community should offer a valuable resource to a school that it can call on to undertake its job more effectively. *There should be a direct payback for the school* from investment in services and activities that draw more resources into the school from the community.

Second, schools are more likely to be effective if they reach out to work with their immediate social networks and particularly with families, to encourage them to invest more in their children's education. Thus many of the schools profiled here are sponsoring outreach and family support work that they hope will improve pupil attendance, motivation and attainment. *Support work of this kind with the direct community around the school should have some pay off for the school*.

Third, schools can work with the wider community, beyond the families directly involved with the schools, to help generate social capital and cohesion. This work, with many other agencies and players, should help strengthen the bonds in the local community and in the long run provide a more stable and productive backdrop for the school's work. *The pay offs to the school may take longer to accrue* and be less direct, but there will eventually be some return to the school if it invests some of its resources in these activities.

Fourth, schools may create value for their local communities, for example by providing their facilities as a base for community activities *that have no direct payback to the school*. However, the school may judge that it is nevertheless a good investment of its resources, especially if there are no opportunity costs.

The common ingredient to these approaches is that the education setting has to see itself not as a closed box in which teaching and learning takes place beyond the reach of the community, but more as part of the flows and feedback loops of influence and resources in the community. It has to draw on and influence these flows to do a more effective job, to improve educational standards, but also to help change the culture of the community it operates in.

Key issues

This approach puts the relationship with its community at the heart of the institution's work. It immediately raises a number of thorny issues.

Whose needs in the community are being addressed, just parents and families of the young people on roll or wider needs? How does a leader know where and how to work with a community?

What kinds of working practices, skills and people does this demand?

How should investment in these practices be traded off against investment within the organisation?

How is this wider work in the community organised, led and held to account, particularly when it might involve a wide range of partners, many of whom do no work within education?

What framework of measurement should be used to value this wider work within the community? What is the right balance between national and community priorities for measurement?

Should the pay off be measured purely in terms of improvements in educational achievements and standards? Are other outcome measures equally or even more important?

Is wider community work merely a means to the end of higher attainment scores? Or would it be better to measure it against a wider yardstick, such as public value?

Is this community work an attractive add-on, once the core job of improving standards has been achieved? Is it a vital means to improving standards? Or is it aimed at a different kind of public and social value to be measured in social capital, cohesion and resilience?

How does a leader know when and how much to invest in which kinds of community-based activities, particularly when this investment – for example in parental support – has to be traded off against more resources inside the organisation – for example, an additional assistant?

By exploring the work done by this group of innovative settings we hope to be able to shed light on some of these critical questions.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are alive

When Tom Stoppard wrote his play about two minor characters from Hamlet, he did not tell a 'new story'; instead he put the spotlight on one which had been there all the time, off stage. He also provoked a profound reflection on the Shakespearean narrative we already knew. What follows might be in the same tradition, although less cleverly written.

We report that local leaders as well as national policy makers are searching for a 'new story' for reasons which have shared origins and in which there is enormous potential for shared advantage. The 'new stories' might be a different way of describing some existing practices, but the narrative puts the spotlight on some previously underrated features of the education service and encourages a reflection on what has been emphasised to date.

A 'new story' for education?

Educational leaders from a wide variety of settings claim that important aspects of their work are not recognised publicly, either in the reported outcomes or through the processes for accountability. They claim that this underestimated work is contributing to the attainment of their young people at the end of Key Stages and that, in some contexts, it is an absolute requirement if attainment is going to improve. They also claim that the work has intrinsic value outside the achievement agenda, contributing to a range of outcomes associated with *Every Child Matters* (ECM) and to improved well-being across localities for adults too. All of this, the leaders claim, is an undervalued part of their effort, sometimes overlooked entirely and sometimes, they feel, even demeaned. They might well say that if we are all looking for a 'new story' to tell about young people's learning, development and sense of community, this kind of work should be a substantial chapter.

If their claim that the work is important but undervalued has merit then it should be possible to describe the work, identify its particular outcomes, assess its impact on the core activity and formally celebrate successful examples. How else would we grasp its value? Policy makers and the wider community do not necessarily easily understand what the leaders who are committed to these approaches are trying to do and what the consequences are. The stories these leaders tell can help make that much clearer.

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) has been working with a small group of settings, gratefully acknowledged at the end of this paper, to test these claims and this is a summary account of what that collaborative enquiry has found. The summary is arranged around six themes that emerged from interviews with the leaders, their colleagues, parents and other local contributors:

Leadership and governance
Identifying community needs
Responding to community needs
Impact on standards
Wider impact and community cohesion
Finance and sustainability

In the account we make references to 'public value'. For many education leaders, 'community outcomes', 'community needs' and 'community cohesion' are more familiar terms, so we need to offer a working definition sufficient for all our readers to grasp the particular and different point we want to make – that some places create a sense of interest, support and commitment from their community which is beneficial and can be called 'public value'. They do that at least as much through how they work as by what they work on.

In the conclusion to this paper we will explain our use of public value while for now offering this rough and ready definition:

> Public value is developed when public services not only provide services but also create social outcomes that are also valued.
>
> Public value is created when educational settings work to improve the wider range of outcomes for their young people by engaging with families and communities in places and processes characterised by equal esteem and equitable authority.

Since some of the activity we describe and report on will also be familiar as part of the extended schools work into which all schools and some other settings are now drawn, we need to be clear that it is not provision itself which creates public value. On the contrary, it is possible to create extended services that are provided, accepted and used on a functional, operator and client basis and therefore to some extent experienced as a commercial or quasi-commercial transaction on either side – 'we say, you pay'. Public value is created when the identifying of local need and the decisions about the form of the consequent provision engage the local community as a resource in all parts of the process. It is the way of doing things that forges the commitment and therefore public value.

1. Leadership and governance

Public value is developed by:

- Leadership with a deep-felt personal commitment to community engagement.
- Leaders who appear comfortable with distributing leadership and delegating management authority to others. They do this inside and outside their organisations.
- Leadership with a sense of rounded accountability, including to their local communities as well as national and local policy makers.
- Leaders who are prepared to take balanced risks and make disciplined innovation.
- Leaders who are 'system leaders', comfortable working with people who are not line managed by their leadership team and who may be their professional peers or voluntary collaborators.
- Schools that create an unambiguous capacity in the leadership team with responsibility for community and partnership work. This happens under different titles and might be funded from different sources.
- Schools which introduce targets for this work into their planning prepared to be accountable for more than the end of Key Stage results and see a dividend in taking that on.
- Networks and collaborations where delivery agencies share responsibility for their own and one another's outcomes.
- Accountability and governance remain challenging matters for schools that are working in these directions. Alongside traditional governing bodies, other arrangements are emerging for particular purposes, including ad hoc forums, trusts and other not-for-profit companies. As individual institutions move further beyond their core role, it can become less clear how local accountability should operate and what its rewards and sanctions should be.

Coleshill Heath Primary School

Dave Dunkley, Headteacher at Coleshill Heath, says that: "Headteachers can't do everything. I've moved a long way from doing everything when I started so I can now fit comfortably not only on a broader spectrum – what I call interdependence with the LA [local authority] – but also with the community. 'Never scared alone!' is a motto of mine so every important responsibility with regard to child welfare is shared with at least one other colleague and that there is never a situation where one member of staff stands alone. We also build relationships with other professionals, not about talking the same language or establishing confidentiality but through connections, building relationships with other professionals, complementing one another, adding to one another's thinking".

George Green's Secondary School

Stella Bailey says her title of deputy headteacher at George Green's Secondary School bears little resemblance to the oversight she carries for all of the school's community and extended school activity, including management of the contract to run the local youth service awarded by the local authority to the school after a competitive tender. Her role and the capacity it represents reflect the strong commitment that the headteacher and governors have towards the activity.
"It is helpful to have one person who keeps a focus on this area when the pressure of exams, student behaviour, Ofsted, attainment and the like force the attention of other members of the SLT [senior leadership team] into different directions", Stella says, "Having a responsibility like this at SLT level, places the community work on par with teaching and learning."

Swanlea Secondary School

Linda Austin, Headteacher at Swanlea, is convinced of the value of the school's involvement with its local communities and that the dedicated leadership and operational capacity put into the role of one of her deputies, Andrew Goodman, is absolutely necessary.

Andrew, in turn, is convinced that his experience working with people who are not line managed by the school's leadership team and who may be his professional peers or voluntary collaborators offers him some interesting experiences and intense development for his leadership skills.

The Westwood Secondary School

Roger Whittall, Headteacher at Westwood, has reconfigured the SLT so that two of the assistant heads hold particular responsibilities, one for working with partner schools and adults, and one for community cohesion.

The SLT's third strategic priority for school improvement is 'to build social capital and community cohesion'. To provide focus for the priority, the school has worked out specific targets for community engagement and participation.

2. Identifying community needs

Identifying 'community need' benefits from:

- A reflection on the nature of 'the local community', which often functions in reality as 'the local communities' (diverse groupings rather than a single homogeneous group).
- Tailored local processes – every community has its own traditions, rhythms, narratives and data. The schools had unique, local, sometimes high-tech and more or less formal approaches to engaging with their communities.
- A sense that the medium is the message – the processes and relationships used to identify needs will make an impression and characterise the setting in the community's folklore.
- An awareness that the loudest or most powerful voices can drown out the voices of others.
- Preparedness to court some unpopularity – you cannot do everything for all the people, all of the time.

Castle Children's Centre

Kathy Stevens, Head of Castle Children's Centre, audits need on a cyclical pattern using different sources of information including Geographic information system (GIS) data for the locality, intelligence from the local authority (for example, on an influx of asylum seekers) and qualitative information gleaned from home liaison workers and parents. From this she builds a picture of local need that can be tested in the locality.

George Green's Secondary School

Stella Bailey knows that teachers' views can dominate and that other groups, including other professionals, can find it hard to access schools. Her engagement with the community is built around the school's usual range of parent activities, casual contact with local people created by getting out and about and set piece opportunities created by regeneration projects, business partnerships and local community groups. The local area partnership (LAP), sponsored by the local authority, is also a point of reference.

The school wants to be imaginative to be inclusive so uses a variety of media to check local needs and expectations, including a 'writing wall', a facilitated day with local youth providers, a video diary and an 'open house' event which included a 'tea dance' for some of the older residents.

Swanlea Secondary School

Senior leaders at Swanlea say that the reality of 'community' is complex where they sit. The locality around the school and from which it draws most of its students, houses strong, differentiated strands of ethnicity, religion, gender, politics and continuity. The school has to vary its approach for different sections of the community while developing a coherent and co-ordinated service offer. The school's advice on engagement is to 'listen carefully' and those it has been listening to include:

Parents
Swanlea uses the Kirkland Rowell survey to test parental perceptions and builds its relationships with them in ways familiar to most secondary schools. Literacy and language development are the main needs that parents have identified.

Students
Students are a vital link between school and community in a multilingual community. Students' perceptions of the school are also assessed through Kirkland Rowell surveys.

Local businesses
The school's business and technology specialism underpins a commitment to enhance the skills of the local commercial community.

LAP
LAP is a formal partnership of public services, third sector and community representatives in this locality with links to the borough's children's trust and strategic plan. It identifies priority activities for Swanlea's corner of the borough.

The Mosque
The East London Mosque plays a major role in the religious, cultural, family and social lives of the majority of children attending Swanlea. There are several facets to the school's relationship with the Mosque among which the leaders of both identified, some years ago, a common concern.

The Westwood Secondary School

Westwood abandoned the conventional Parents' Association structure when it became too exclusive and too focused on social activities with benefits for only a few adults. A community working party, representing the university, community police, neighbourhood management, project champions, community engagement officers and people from the Canley regeneration project, now meets in the school once every half term. As a team they look at creating opportunities for the students to become more involved in the community but also to develop cohesion between the various partners. Five of the 12 areas identified for Community Action now have projects up and running and seven more which are longer-term projects will start later in 2008. The role of student voice in this forum is up for consideration and other strategies are being developed to involve a wider spectrum of parents with a strong focus on understanding and supporting their children's learning.

3. Responding to community needs

Responding to 'community need' benefits from:

- A recognisably local offer – the response has to echo what the organisation has heard.
- Tackling misconceptions and building trust.
- Activity above and beyond their core remit.
- A location, facilities to share, whether on or off site. The stereotype is the use of premises for sport or ICT but other examples abound.
- Networks of service providers, not least networks of schools and other settings across phases.
- Support for the development of 'good parenting' that - both the support and the good parenting - can take a variety of forms.
- Enhanced opportunities for adults, in particular general education.
- Learning mentors, especially when recruited from the local community
- Connections with the youth service, regeneration bodies and voluntary groups.

Brixham Community College

Brixham Community College's response to the local need for community regeneration draws deeply on the West Country history of coastal industry and creativity. The 'Red Sails in the Sunset' project, for example, is keeping the tradition of sailing boats alive within the community.
Red Sails in the Sunset, a group run by local volunteer residents, approached the school with the ambition of engaging the students in the heritage of their community. Students produced a DVD and marketing materials on sailing boats and their contribution to the local economy, people's livelihoods and local traditions. As a spin-off from this activity, the Red Sails in the Sunset group facilitated a programme aimed at engaging the most disaffected young people in Year 10.
The young people take part in a vocational programme with a practical application to the fishing industry run by Red Sails in the Sunset volunteers.

Castle Children's Centre

The community being served by Castle Children's Centre has been badly affected by debt, not a matter with which schools would normally feel they could help. However, the problem was affecting the motivation and well-being of families – and therefore children – so badly that the centre established a credit union on the school site. Originally directed at adults, it now offers accounts to children, encouraging them to develop good financial habits. It also runs sessions and promotes information on how to manage a family budget while a Citizens' Advice Bureau representative attends the centre weekly to advise on benefit claims, tax credits, the Children's Trust Fund and the like.

Coleshill Heath Primary School

When local people wanted to work with the children at Coleshill Heath and to learn new skills to enhance their employability, the school set about enabling them to acquire the necessary qualifications. Solihull Further Education (FE) College was invited to run classes in childcare that, in turn, forms part of the FE college's community offer. The now thriving on-site adult education base also contains ICT provision.

George Green's Secondary School

When the local authority invited tenders to run its youth services in the locality, George Green's did not immediately think of itself as the obvious provider but its local connections soon persuaded it. The school tendered with some nervousness and constructed a bid around those existing informal relations with other youth service providers of which the annual summer programme – approaching its tenth anniversary – has been a highlight (www.docklandsyouthservices.org).

St Thomas's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

The negative perceptions held about St Thomas's PRU were challenged when the students responded to local concerns by clearing local alleyways of all the refuse. The young people then went on to use their developing horticultural skills to produce flower tubs for the community. Residents were staggered by this generosity and community spirit. Some from surrounding streets even demanded their turn to have flower beds. The consequently better relations are maturing into an allotment project!

Swanlea Secondary School

Swanlea's business and enterprise links with the local community are increasingly strong and bilateral. Many of the links offer opportunities for activity in the school, including, for example, being the launch venue for National Social Enterprise Day, a 'Female Asian Entrepreneur' event and the 'Ambassadors Programme' (female entrepreneurs visiting the school).

Students' attendance at the school is the focus of priority shared with the East London Mosque. The origins of this are a shared concern for a small number of students or families at the margins of social, cultural and educational engagement. The Mosque has a service-level agreement with the school to work with these families. Originally focused on Muslim students, this service is expanding and is now offered by the Mosque to other schools.

The Westwood Secondary School

Westwood's school improvement targets include some unusual items around strengthening community provision. Examples of the related work include: adult education courses in computer-aided design (CAD)/computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) and CISCO courses (Construction Industry Service Corporation) in response to local LSC targets and in the only Coventry school to be CISCO accredited positive parenting courses, run by the outreach youth worker, providing support to the families of vulnerable students.

4. Impact on Standards

- The social and academic agenda – ECM versus standards arguments – are at least compatible and may be mutually beneficial. That is the emerging evidence of the effect of creating public value.
- Community engagement and the promotion of public value is compatible with the pursuit of high academic standards.
- The general trend is for most of the sites to be improving academic performance year on year, at apparently higher than national rates.
- Attendance rates seem to be improving similarly in most of the locations.
- Some evidence is emerging that shows that young people who are drawn into associated out-of-school learning activity will achieve higher than expected grades at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Other outcomes for the well-being of the young people in these places are also improving.
- These successes do require parallel emphases on 'standards' alongside other outcomes, on teaching and learning alongside other activities. If leaders do not make arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching and learning, standards will plateau abruptly or even decline.
- The proof of cause and effect is elusive although in many localities community engagement is at least contemporaneous and so might well be directly associated with rising academic standards.

Brixham Community College

The college's A*-C or equivalent results have improved from 44 per cent in 2004 to 51 per cent in 2007 and its last Ofsted in 2004 referred to its 'very good quality of education and leadership'.

Castle Children's Centre

When Ofsted inspected the centre in January 2007 it scored outstanding in every category.

Coleshill Heath Primary School

Coleshill Heath's improvement is as shown in its end of Key Stage results where, for example, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 is 40 per cent higher than 10 years ago.

	English	Mathematics	Science
1998	51%	34%	59%
2004	80%	71%	90%
2007	83%	87%	98%

The teacher who is the Extended School co-ordinator is convinced that the additional out-of-school activities available to the children is having a positive impact on their standard assessment tests (SATs) results because they are giving children, who in the past had no identity as learners, the feeling that they can and do achieve.

George Green's Secondary School

The end of Key Stage 4 results at George Green's have been improving steadily for several years and there is hard evidence that a young person who is involved in out-of-school learning – which is an emphasis of the school's youth work – will achieve higher grades at the end of Year 11.

The school has been accredited with the advanced status in the Quality in Study Support (QiSS) kitemark and its last Ofsted inspection (2004) reported that 'Links with the community are excellent and are having a positive effect on students' attitudes, personal development and achievement'.

St Thomas's PRU

St Thomas's Ofsted inspection in 2008 confirmed that 'boys and girls on both sites make good progress and, taking into account prior attainment, achieve well… pupils enjoy lessons, work hard and are keen to do well', which might explain the 'vastly improved attendance rates'! GCSE attainment is double the national average for PRUs. The report also says that 'pupils make informed and sensible choices about healthy lifestyles attributable to the curriculum in the centre.

Swanlea Secondary School

The school has been increasingly and markedly successful in conventional measures over recent years and in 2007, its Key Stages 2–4 CVA was 1,026. The schools' leaders believe this is due to some degree to their community engagement although there are other factors in play.

The Westwood Secondary School

Westwood's 2007 results for the percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C and 5+ A*-C including English and mathematics are the highest the school has ever achieved.

At Key Stage 3 over the past five years there has been an upward trend in the percentage of pupils gaining level 5+ in all core and specialist subjects with the percentage of pupils gaining level 5+ in English almost doubling since 2002.

5. Wider impact and community cohesion

- Work with communities is having a wider impact and contributing to community cohesion, although activity 'beyond the core' sometimes has to be justified and always has to be sustained. Examples of that impact include:
- Targets for participation by local people in adult community classes have been set and met.
- Attendance at parents' evenings and other events requiring parental engagement has been, as one leader said, 'massively improved'.
- One recurring consequence is 'a remarkable reduction in vandalism around the place'.
- Relations with local residents and with faith communities are better and more useful on all sides.
- Schools and centres have become significant local employers of local people.
- Local accountability has been aligned with other statutory accountabilities.
- There is local discussion about how to reflect outcomes such as trust, community cohesion and even the economic benefits of multi-agency working when national performance measures are inadequate.

There has been some criticism of Ofsted inspections that, it is said, are not capable of recognising, still less praising, the work we are writing about here. A reading of the inspection reports from the sites in our small sample reveals an interesting take on that. Most of the schools' Ofsted reports, including the more critical, do celebrate aspects of this work and have been doing so ahead of the statutory requirement to comment on community cohesion. The following quotes are from the most recent inspection at four of the schools and are only illustrative of others. Celebration in the text of the report is, of course, not the same as having a noticeable effect on the overall judgements.

Primary school (2003): 'The involvement with parents and the community increases pupils' achievements… The school works diligently to support their [parents'] working and social needs. Appreciation in the area is consequently growing steadily and a community focus group has been formed to plan and respond to suggestions.'

Secondary (2004): 'Links with the community are excellent and are having a positive effect on students' attitudes, personal development and achievement.'

Secondary (2005 and 2006 Theme Inspection): 'The school has very good relationships with parents and other schools, and excellent relationships with all sections of the community, including particularly strong links with the business community… spreading a culture of enterprise and innovation that closely reflects the values of parents and the community.'
'The impact of parent and carer involvement is overall good and in some aspects excellent.'

Secondary (2006): 'The school is gaining the confidence of a wide range of partners, parents, local schools and of the wider community.'

Brixham Community College

Brixham Community College has positioned itself at the heart of the community's shared goal to become the next St Ives, with artists in residence visiting the college regularly and the local HE providers engaged in joint activities.

Castle Children's Centre

With the credit union on site at the centre, debt and bankruptcies have declined and with the introduction of the Traveller liaison officer and other inclusive activities aimed at the Traveller community, families are now registering their children for mainstream education, not in the centre but in their local school.

St Thomas's PRU

Evidence of improvements in teenage pregnancy rates and sexual health. A reduction in repeat pregnancies.

Coleshill Heath Primary School

Dave Dunkley says: "There were loads of people who wanted to help from the community but they didn't know what to do so they came and worked here as helpers, volunteers, dinner supervisors, and then we put on some training and then we made up a job so we've got a reputation for growing staff". Somewhere between 70 and 80 per cent of staff are not teachers and a similar proportion live locally. Vandalism, which had been a major problem in and around the school, is now next to nothing.

George Green's Secondary School

George Green's is now, like many of these schools, a significant local employer and less than half of its total staff of just over 200 are teachers. The school's extended services embrace a range of services on the school site, including health advice, family therapy, school home support, safer school partnership (a police officer), social work, attendance welfare, learning mentors, young carers support, volunteers, Connexions and other employment advice. Its working maxim is that if it cannot provide the social and emotional support needed by a young person or family, then it will always find someone who can.

6. Finance and sustainability

- There are emerging trends to illustrate the financing and sustainability of these activities.
- Leaders do need to 'wheel and deal'. These settings use the full range of available funding streams and manipulate them towards their organisation's particular aims.
- Sustainability is being developed through leadership patterns – not least the allocation of particular roles and responsibilities.
- These leaders believe that once established, if a role or function is worth its while, ways of maintaining it will be found once the original funding evaporates – and that happens.
- There are often funding sources around that schools and centres would not normally be aware of, some from public funds (for example, regeneration), some from private sources (for example, charitable foundations) and some from agencies which commission services.
- Volunteers are a great resource – there is evidence that parental and community volunteers play a key role.
- There are real, marginal costs. Hard figures are not easy to come by but one secondary school had prepared a ballpark calculation of around £400,000 as the cost of its community engagement including extended services.

Brixham Community College

Every little helps and Torbay Primary Care Trust has commissioned a facility for the direct referral by GPs of patients to the college's sports centre facilities.

Castle Children's Centre

The centre's core budget has changed very little over the years. It uses any and every piece of available external funding for individual projects or to fund additional staffing for outreach work, such as the Traveller liaison officer. Groups are set up, pump-primed and then expected to be self-sustaining. There is not a dependency culture and no expectation that money will solve all the issues.

Coleshill Heath Primary School

The headteacher and business manager at Coleshill Heath both emphasise the sequence of identifying need and then finding the money from as many sources as necessary to make it happen. They are focused on 'making a little go a long way' and know they have to be inventive, accessing as many sources of additional income as possible, combining, dividing and deploying it as identified need requires.

Combating vandalism has saved appreciable amounts of money although sometimes it has been necessary to be creative in order to access funding. After identifying the need to provide activities to occupy children at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity on school INSET days, the school, with the ES community co-ordinator, North Solihull Fusion and the West Midlands Police, successfully applied for lottery funding.

George Green's Secondary School

Stella Bailey uses her wide range of community and business contacts to make sure that George Green's core budget for extended services is supported by the trusts and regeneration funds around the developing area.

St Thomas's PRU

St Thomas's PRU uses what it does very well to help boost its finances and its work with challenging students is now commissioned by local secondary schools to provide the six-day exclusion cover they require.

The Westwood Secondary School

Roger Whittall says that a plateau in improvement will be reached unless we can engage the community and parents more effectively. Despite falling rolls in the area the school has increased its numbers from 400 to 630 because of an increased confidence in the school from the local community. The school's business manager adopts a highly proactive approach to funding. She sees her job as enabling all of the developments deemed desirable by SLT by accessing as many funding streams as possible and making sure that they always get the best value for money. Priorities such as the training budget are always safeguarded.

Most of the groups involved in the community working party have brought some funding to the table – and it is no coincidence that the priorities in the plans they have drawn up can be aligned with other priorities and are expected to attract further funding as a result.

Conclusions

Public value for public services?

So is there an emerging and possibly 'new' story for the education service to tell about the way that its engagement with communities, extended services, other providers, volunteers and ECM is improving a wide range of outcomes for young people? Do communities value their institutions more as a result? Are they more committed to them not just for the outcomes they produce but because they are creating valued social consequences? Do communities make higher demands as a result? Does the way in which the core service is delivered, the manner in which it is pursued, draw the users and stakeholders closer to the provider and closer together as a community? Or is it at best neutral and at worst counter-productive in that sense?

The phrase 'public value' has increasing currency among policy makers, academics and some education leaders as a way of talking about the important social products of the education service's work. Mark Moore's original work (1995) on this idea, arguing that public services not only provide services but create social outcomes which should also be valued, is being used to try to make sense of sometimes contradictory emphases on national initiatives, performance management, diversity and local voice. Run 'public value' through any search engine if you want to be inundated with the analysis and definitions – we think our earlier rough and ready definition is enough for now:

> Public value is developed when public services not only provide services but also create social outcomes that are also valued.
>
> Public value is created when educational settings work to improve the wider range of outcomes for their young people by engaging with families and communities in places and processes characterised by equal esteem and equitable authority.

The education service might harness the idea of 'public value' to explain the causes and consequences of work which might not appear central to their main responsibility for teaching and learning but which raise student outcomes and community expectations. It draws attention to the importance of public perception and to the ways in which the student and adult communities are engaged, and it maintains the importance of outcome indicators. Public value does not happen instead of improved attainment; rather each of those is to some extent integral to and dependent on the other.

A significant challenge, of course, will be how to describe, still more to measure, the public value that a school or centre creates and to show whether that is on the increase or not. Because it is difficult to measure participation, altruism, trust and sociability or to balance tangible, intangible, individual and collective benefits does not mean it should not be done as best it can. Michael Barber (even) concluded 'a crude approach which related the cost of a service to its results, its organisational health, its efficiency and its value in the public's perception might not meet the standards of the National Statistical Office but that's not the point, we just need to know how well we are doing' (2007: 327).

These are the kind of threads which draw us to public value as the shorthand we favour, not because we are certain that it is absolutely the right phrase – there are others in education which are more familiar: diversity, community participation and community cohesion among them.

The education service and its emerging networks, collaboratives and federations will need to find its place in alliances with a range of other public services and providers if the attainment plateau is going to be shifted and if our sense of community is going to have its renaissance. We think the shared language of public value could be a useful contribution to the conversations those alliances will require.

So what, and what next?

This report shows how a set of schools and centres are exploring new ways of working intended to allow them to do a better job both for the young people and families they serve directly and also for the communities they work with and within.

In an instrumental sense the job of the education organisation is made easier the more effectively it can mobilise resources and support from its community. It is rarely enough simply to invite these resources – parents, local employers, social businesses, artists and sports clubs – into the buildings to work. Often, and especially in disinvested communities, people have to be found and their confidence and capability built up before they are able to play a role in the institution's life. Clearly it makes sense to reach out to parents and the direct social networks that surround the setting because these have a direct bearing on the climate in which teaching and learning is conducted and so for educational attainment.

Yet schools also have an interest in the communities they work in and not just because communities have a direct bearing on how the school does its job. The stronger a community is economically, socially and culturally, the more likely a school or centre within it will be successful and a school may be able to make available some of its resources – staff, buildings, grounds, facilities – which allows the community to function more effectively, without disadvantaging the school's ability to undertake its core tasks of teaching and learning. This spiral of mutual advantage creates opportunities for the organisation and community into the future.
The sustainability of effort and impact across a range of social, environmental, economic and educational activity becomes a more realistic ambition.

Our analysis suggests that leaders seeking to develop a creative interaction with communities would have to be ready to take on five core tasks.

The first is to continue to manage the core resources to deliver effective teaching, learning and standards of achievement. Education settings that let basic standards slip risk losing the legitimacy and support of key stakeholders they will need to undertake this wider community-based work. Almost all of the schools we looked at could point to improved results in Key Stage tests or GCSE examinations. For all the leaders we spoke to securing a baseline of good standards was essential to win space to innovate in other aspects of the school's work. Ofsted reports have also begun to give support to the community engagement work of schools, especially where it clearly contributed to better standards of achievement.

However, there is also a clear agenda for schools and centres to develop how they work, which will enhance their relevance to the communities they work in. This is one reason why approaches to personalised learning are a vital link to a more community-based approach. More personalised learning based on a wider curriculum, alternative forms of assessment, more collaborative, exploratory and real world learning, is more likely to make it possible for the community to engage with the school and to make the school more relevant to the community. The more professionalised and regulated the school, the less room for external, non-teacher involvement in its work. Education provision can run itself well and still be open to community engagement by

offering personalised learning that connects the institution to life in the community. Student voice is on a continuum with community voice. Leaders who are open to one, are surely more likely to engage with both to good effect.

The second leadership task is to complement the resources available within the institution by drawing in resources from within the community.

These are resources – people, skills, facilities, technology – the school can mobilise, but which it does not own and control. This (and other tasks) is also about providing a richer and more relevant learning experience for young people. The wider the range of sources of this support that can be called on, the richer the range of options to mix internal resources with those of outsiders.

Dave Dunkley, Headteacher at Coleshill Heath Primary School, talked about working through interdependence with his local authority and community rather than standing apart from both. His leadership style encourages sharing of information and risks. The school helped parents who wanted to get more involved in the school to acquire care qualifications, building up their capacity to play a role in the school's life. Brixham Community College's Red Sails project came from the community and was designed to connect learning in the school and in the community more directly. Many of the schools, colleges and children's centres we looked at had become adept at mobilising resources beyond education to help improve the services they offered. George Green's Secondary School education budget, for example, is complemented by local regeneration funds.

The third leadership task is to invest some of the resources the institution controls into work with families, parents and social networks around the locality where there is a clear case that this community outreach and support work could pay dividends for the school or centre.

A good example is the trend to employ parental support workers who work with parents at home in the hope that this will improve their capacity and motivation to support their children's approach to learning. In many places, this investment is being made easier by working within children's services departments, which should allow much more joined-up work between teachers and staff from across the agencies. Swanlea's efforts to raise pupils' attendance are shared with the East London Mosque. The Mosque has an agreement with the school to work with a smaller number of families where children are at high risk of low attendance. The Mosque now offers this service to other schools. Westwood Secondary School runs positive parenting courses run by an outreach youth worker, providing support to the families of vulnerable students.

The fourth task is to invest some of the institution's resources in helping build wider social capital and cohesion, drawing in people well beyond parents and families connected to the setting. For example, some sites help run adult learning classes or provide their facilities as a venue for local voluntary groups. The pay off from this investment may be longer term and less direct. Schools and centres cannot on their own change communities and address deep and underlying social and economic inequalities. But they can play a role, with other agencies, in helping to build up social capital in areas where it is in decline. A prime example in our research was the credit union created by Castle Children's Centre to help ease parental anxieties about debt. A Citizens' Advice worker attends the centre weekly to advise on tax and benefit claims.

The fifth task is for the institution to make its resources available to the community as a platform for activities that will generate community benefits but with little direct payback for the setting. Examples of this include providing a base for community group meetings, classes, organic food schemes and cultural events. This strand of activity should be considered out of a sense of corporate social responsibility and to create the greatest possible public value from their assets.

In this approach little attempt will be made to capture the value it creates; most of the value it helps to create spins out into the community rather than being internalised back into the setting. The Westwood Secondary School, for example, has a community working party and the Head, Roger Whittall, says that the school's work with the community is vital if it is to improve further. Children from St Thomas's PRU work in the community – clearing rubbish and graffiti.

These five flows are set out in the figure below.

1 Managing resources internally, better teaching and learning, measured by educational attainments.

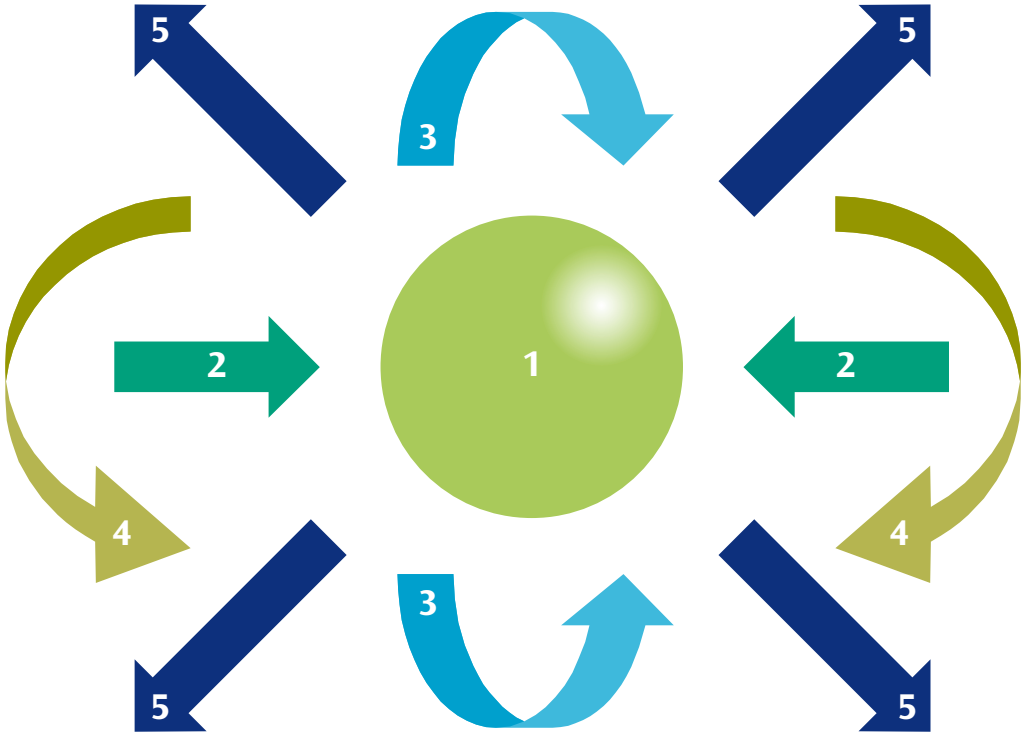
2 Drawing in more resources for within the community to supplement and complement those allocated.

3 Reach out to the immediate social networks/families involved with the setting to help them enhance performance, pupil attendance and attitude. Direct investment of resources externally generates direct pay offs.

4 Institution invests some of its resources in creating social capital and capacity in the community, which has a payback but the effect is less direct and longer term.

5 The institution makes its resources available as a the basis for community activities which have neither direct nor indirect payback. Most of the value 'escapes' into the community, which may well be stronger as a result.

Modelling the flows into, around and out of the setting and into its community



Educational settings that seek to develop this kind of interactive community approach because it is the most appropriate to their circumstances are trying to generate wider public and social value as a route to delivering better outcomes within the school measured in educational attainments. Yet inevitably some of the social and public value they help to create has to 'escape' or be shared with the local community.

Managing the five activities set out in this figure involve different styles of leadership and forms of measurement.

The task in 1 is to effectively manage the resources the organisation owns and controls to deliver better teaching, learning and educational attainments internally.

The task in 2 is to reach out to attract and mobilise resources the organisation does not own and control, nonetheless to be used internally to do a better job judged by standard measures.

The task in 3 is to invest in new forms of working with parents, families and social networks where there will be a dual payback, one to the setting in terms of attendance, attitude and attainment but also to the families. The value of this investment needs to be measured in more than just educational attainments but in family attitudes and behaviour over a longer period of time.

The task in 4 is to invest in the creation of social capital outside the school that may have a long-term payback for the school. The best measures of this will involve aspects of social capital – including trust, relationships in the community – rather than educational attainments.

The task in 5 is for the institution to act as a platform for community activity in which much of the value escapes capture and flows back into the community. To guide this activity educational settings could use measures of return on social investment used by companies that invest in corporate social responsibility.

A key requirement running through all these tasks is the need to be able to understand and communicate to staff, young people, parents and the community, the moral purpose and vision that unites these potentially disparate activities and makes them greater than the sum of their parts.

From task 1 through to task 5 forms of leadership are likely to become more collaborative, open and less education service and teaching-based; there will be a growing role for external players and partners; the value of the activities the school makes possible goes from a focus on educational attainment to increasingly involve wider measures of social capital and public value.

As the school engages more in relationships with its community so the way that the community – parents, family, employers, local partners – judge the value being created should matter more. In the first two or three of the five tasks set out above the goals and measures are improved 'educational' performance. In the last two the goals and measures need to reflect social capital and community well-being to a greater extent.

In other words it is not just a question of how the institution's performance is measured but who does the measuring and in whose interests: families, citizens and the local community may use different measures of an effective setting to those employed by Ofsted. To be effective educational provision needs not just new measures but a different sense of accountability to stakeholders to undertake this work.

In the practices of the settings in this report we have identified a range of ways that others can engage with their communities, to invest and attract resources to generate returns for the school and the wider community at the same time.

Any education organisation should be able to select from the range of approaches outlined in this report, developing the best mix of approaches that suit its circumstances. For some in some communities this work with the wider community will be vital. For others it may be more akin to a form of corporate social responsibility. To still others it may be a useful add-on. It would be a mistake to prescribe a single approach. However, it is clear that schools that undertake this work effectively are generating value for their communities that extends well beyond traditional and relatively narrow measures of educational performance. For the education service to do this work more effectively and systematically, however, they will need to know how to lead these activities more effectively, which will often involve people and resources outside the traditional institution and beyond its control, and how to measure and make evident to its stakeholders the value these approaches create.

Contributors

The schools to which we are particularly grateful for contributing to our early enquiries, finding time for interviews and filming, include:

Brixham Community College
Castle Children's Centre
Coleshill Heath Primary School
George Green's Secondary School
St Thomas's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
Swanlea Secondary School
The Westwood Secondary School

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