

# Educational Improvement and the Impact of Integrated Children's Services

---



© NAEIAC 2005

**Members** FREE

**Non-members** £3.50

**Product code** NAEIAC P002

First published June 2005

Front cover image drawn by Reece Baxter

To obtain an additional copy, contact:

**The Association of Professionals in Education and Children's Trusts (Aspect)**

**Woolley Hall, Woolley, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 2JR**

**tel** 01226 383428 **fax** 01226 383427 **email** [info@aspect.org.uk](mailto:info@aspect.org.uk) **website** [www.aspect.org.uk](http://www.aspect.org.uk)

Extracts from this document may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is not used in a misleading context and that the source and date of publication is acknowledged.

# Contents

Introduction	p5
Local coordination of services for children	p6
The role of school improvement	p7
The range of children's services	p8
The Scottish experience	p8
Key skills relevant to integrated children's services	p10
Development issues	p10
Organisational and system development	p12
Conclusions	p13
Appendix	p15



# 1 Introduction

**L**ikely future demands on local school improvement specialists should be seen in the context of recent history. Throughout the 1990s, with the implementation of the 1988 Education Act and the consequences of the 1992 Schools Act, it was regularly predicted that LEAs faced either extinction or, at best, a downgrading of their role to little more than routine administration. Yet this did not happen: instead, they started to change.

By the end of the 1990s, the Government was offering fresh definitions of LEA roles in the key area of school improvement, while expecting them to augment capacity from private sector sources. In the 21st century, the emphasis has been placed increasingly on schools' ability to plan and manage their own improvement, but the beneficial role of a 'middle tier', albeit in modified forms, is widely recognised.

It is evident that LEA school improvement officers have already learned new skills and established effective relationships with schools, with fewer LEA curriculum advisers and a greater emphasis on support for school management. Broadly, Ofsted judgements of school improvement teams, within the inspection regime for LEAs, reflect high and growing levels of effectiveness.

The 'New Relationship with Schools' programme, initiated early in 2004, reinforces the sense of constant change that LEA school improvement teams have experienced. Equally, the move to more integrated children's services – which fundamentally changes a long-established framework under which LEAs have operated – is now leading to heightened uncertainty.

Structural reform of local authorities is accelerating following the appearance of the *Every Child Matters* green paper and the subsequent passing of the Children Act 2004. New children's trusts, rather than LEAs, will provide the future framework. Although the *Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools* document, published by the DfES in late 2004, sets out to clarify the interface between schools and other children's services, official announcements

to date have proved relatively weak in defining the precise position of schools inside the new arrangements.

The authorities are evolving into local service-commissioning agencies, with single local authority directors of children's services posts already taking over responsibilities previously held by directors of education and the child-focused aspects formerly managed by directors of social services.

---

**“Structural reform of local authorities is accelerating following the appearance of the *Every Child Matters* green paper and the subsequent passing of the Children Act 2004. New children's trusts, rather than LEAs, will provide the future framework”**

---

The objective is to radically alter working relationships across former education and social services departments and with other relevant agencies such as health authorities and the police, leading to integrated, multi-agency service delivery.

The new children's services agenda is also meant to be consistent with proposals set out in the Government's 'New Relationship with Schools', in that it alters LEAs' position vis-à-vis school improvement, with more autonomy given to 'effective' schools to procure services independently. However, greater school autonomy and the simultaneous promotion of more integrated services may introduce tensions, at the point of delivery, due to conflicting priorities.

The proposed changes to Ofsted school inspections, with fewer inspectors, shorter visits and a greater emphasis on institutional self-evaluation underline the same policy trend.

It will be interesting to see how the increased emphasis on encouraging networks of schools, promoted by some within the DfES, will embrace the children's services agenda, although some local authorities have already established highly effective practice in facilitating such collaboration.

The purpose of this document is to consider the probable impact of the roll-out of the children's services agenda on school improvement specialists, and to suggest that, while the future appears confused at this stage, their role can be both relevant and, indeed, enhanced.

---

**“The *Every Child Matters* framework reinforces the notion that schools have an important contribution to make to the overarching children's services agenda, which will impact on the curriculum, teaching and learning practices, pupil involvement and community engagement”**

---

## 2 Local coordination of services for children

Following examination of local initiatives adopted in US states such as Missouri and Vermont, the British Government established the Children's and Young People's Unit in 2000 – a cross-departmental agency aimed at improving the coordination and resourcing of relevant services.

The objective of this agency was reinforced by the 2002 expenditure review, which required local authorities to coordinate a Local Preventative Strategy (LPS) from April 2003. All public, statutory and voluntary agencies working with children and young people were to be involved with this strategy.

In essence, the Government's determination to counteract social exclusion was being re-shaped, influenced by an understandable belief that the system required greater coherence and more effective methods of providing early intervention to help children 'at risk'. The approach was gradual, with many local authorities working in a variety of ways, and at differing paces, to implement their LPS. This helped to advance local solutions – which prioritised actions on the basis of evidenced risk and differing regional needs – as the main method of operation.

These practices have now been overtaken by the *Every Child Matters* agenda and the Children Act 2004, which require local authorities to adopt more regularised arrangements. Strategic leadership has come from a range of sources and, where the LEA has been prominent, the focus of involvement has been predominantly from an 'access and inclusion' standpoint. To many LEA advisers, the 'new' agenda is not so new: many already work to ensure the delivery of integrated services to children and young people.

Early years advisers have routinely worked with colleagues in social and health services, either at nurseries or daycare centres, to ensure that the full breadth of child development is supported. Special educational needs (SEN) advisers, particularly through their local work with special schools and units, are familiar with interacting with education, health and social services workers. Furthermore, child protection and multi-agency strategic and operational work necessarily entails the close involvement of advisory service colleagues.

The Association of Professionals in Education and Children's Trusts (Aspect) fully supports the principle of

effective inter-agency liaison, and overall coordination which is in line with the fundamental aims of the Children Act 2004. The Association maintains, however,

that the work of school improvement specialists is important to the practical success of this strategy.

### 3 The role of school improvement

The limited references, to date, to the precise role of schools under the Children Act 2004, represent a weakness in the policy. A strategic approach to the ways in which schools need to respond to the implementation of the Act, and, in particular, how they should meet the needs of children with different forms of vulnerability, should be overt, prominent and viewed as integral to further policy development.

Low educational attainment and the need for additional support are often linked and require parallel tracking. A range of barriers to learning exist: some are cognitive, but other influences certainly include social and environmental factors. Working with schools, in order to support vulnerable children and young people in need of additional support and to improve access to multi-disciplinary provision, is a very important agenda, and deserves more detailed policy consideration, particularly with respect to the ongoing priority of local authorities to support school improvement.

How external educational support, monitoring, challenge and, where necessary, intervention can be incorporated into multi-agency commissioning needs to be carefully discussed and analysed. Not only are the experiences of early years and SEN practitioners extremely compelling, but the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills currently widely embedded in local authority school improvement teams are important to the successful development of children's services. In a wider context, the changes that impacted on school improvement teams in the early 1990s meant that many have become accustomed to delivering elements of their work on a commissioned basis, in order to meet specific local needs and priorities.

Some of the skills required are generic; though it must be accepted that professional development issues remain substantial for all who work with children if

multi-agency working is to truly thrive. The issue of common existing skills, and skill gaps, within school improvement teams is addressed in further detail later in this document.

As with other forms of underachievement, a strong correlation exists between pupil disaffection and vulnerability in children and young people. Many school improvement teams have responded to issues of disaffection and disengagement by introducing posts which champion study support strategies, and recognise the need to encourage multiple approaches and dispositions to learning, and highlight the benefits of offering a range of learning environments.

A close scrutiny of the five outcomes of the *Every Child Matters* framework reinforces the notion that schools have an important contribution to make to the overarching children's services agenda, which will impact on the curriculum, teaching and learning practices, pupil involvement and community engagement. The emphasis will be on pupil achievement, engagement and inclusion. Significantly, school improvement professionals are especially skilled in providing support and, where necessary, challenge to schools in relation to these aspects of local provision.

It is broadly accepted that motivation, self-esteem and favoured learning styles are idiosyncratic, making out-of-school study support an attractive method of addressing issues associated with low levels of attainment and vulnerability and providing a range of alternative curriculum strategies. This is well understood by, and often promoted, supported and managed through, school improvement teams whose members frequently engage with the school as a whole, groups of professionals, individual headteachers, senior managers, governing bodies and classroom teachers and, on occasion, individual pupils.

## 4 The range of children's services

---

**E**very *Child Matters* offers a picture of service provision within a hierarchy of incidence-related vulnerability. In the recent PricewaterhouseCoopers report, *Scoping the Market for Children's Services*, commissioned by the DfES in October 2004, particular services are classified on the basis of specialist, targeted or universal categories, as shown in figure 1.

The Association argues that in categorising 'school improvement' as just one of the universal services,

the contribution that members of school improvement teams can, and do, make across the whole child development field may be missed. Indeed, the DfES' personalised learning policy must be viewed as an integral factor to improving services for all children, and members of school improvement teams – who have the experience and expertise to deal with such issues – are some of the best-placed individuals to take forward the most appropriate and necessary courses of action at school level.

## 5 The Scottish experience

---

**H**er Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in Scotland is working collaboratively with the Social Work Services Inspectorate (SWSI) and the Health Improvement Strategy Division (HISD) of the Scottish Executive to promote Integrated Community Schools (ICS). ICS is a key component of the national strategy in Scotland to raise the level of young people's achievements and improve facilities for social inclusion. The strategy clearly recognises the importance of the relationship between educational achievement, attainment, health and socio-economic factors, and the consequent need for a more integrated delivery of associated services.

ICS aims to expand and join together educational, health, social work and other services offered to children, young people and families, including the contribution of the voluntary sector. As with the *Every Child Matters* agenda in England, coherent assessment, early identification of needs and the planning and delivery of children's services via integrated teamwork is intended to complement the discrete services provided by each partner, in order to meet the wider spectrum of children's needs.

The ICS initiative was launched in 1998 and piloted between 1999 and 2003. A key aim of the pilots was to encourage local authorities and their schools to

---

**"ICS is a key component of the national strategy in Scotland to raise the level of young people's achievements and improve facilities for social inclusion. The strategy clearly recognises the importance of the relationship between educational achievement, attainment, health and socio-economic factors"**

---

develop common objectives and more integrated methods of delivering services, with other partner agencies also providing services to children and families. There was a strong emphasis on local initiatives and innovative working. The Scottish Executive has set a clear target for all publicly-funded schools in Scotland to achieve ICS status by 2007.

The 2004 HMIE report, *The Sum of Its Parts: The Development of Integrated Community Schools in Scotland*, outlines the lessons learned from these pilots, indicating several 'key factors for success' which underpin the development of good practice and highlight

Figure 1: Universal, targeted and specialist services



how further improvement to achieving real partnership working can be made. The skills and expertise of school improvement teams are shown to be particularly relevant in realising the vision of joined-up services.

Some of the key practices included in the list of success factors include: integration with mainstream provision (the most successful ICS-related initiatives were built into mainstream provision, rather than viewed as add-ons); evaluation, review and planning (with the objective of sharing good practice between schools); curriculum flexibility (with a range of formal and informal components offered to schools, including extra-curricular activities, health-promotion initiatives and out-of-school care and learning opportunities); personalised learning (to meet individual needs and to remove barriers to learning).

The report also indicates where successes had proven to be difficult. Progress in transforming the ways

in which schools and other services work together could be slow, and in these instances, there was also a limited effect on overall achievement levels. The need to combine effective school improvement with integrated service delivery – which is seen as having a positive impact on the effectiveness of services – thus becomes evident.

The Scottish experience is a useful model to learn from. In placing schools at the heart of an integrated children's service delivery, key issues were allowed to emerge during over the period since 1998.

The linking of ICS to a framework of national education strategies will place school improvement teams (quality improvement officers as they are normally known in Scotland) at the forefront of support mechanisms in Scotland.

## 6 Key skills relevant to integrated children's services

Many of the qualities required of members of school improvement teams – including effective multi-agency working techniques and the deployment of interpersonal skills – are particularly pertinent to the demands of the evolving children's services agenda. Integrated approaches to meeting the needs of all children and young people require skills in:

- Data analysis and interpretation, with an ability to hypothesise and ask appropriate questions
- Tackling underperformance through a range of strategies and at different organisational levels
- Performance monitoring based on a wide knowledge of work and systems
- Recognition and dissemination of good practice
- Evaluative quality assurance founded on both challenge and support
- Professional leadership aimed at building capacity
- An understanding of learning processes
- Organisational development
- Developing and sustaining partnership working.

While these skills do not meet all the criteria set out in the children's services agenda, they are essential components of the necessary qualities required to work within multi-agency teams and are central to

the work of school improvement professionals. A holistic understanding of learning processes and frameworks, with a knowledge of, and ability to use, relevant research methods are required in multi-agency service delivery: key areas where members of school improvement teams can contribute effectively.

Equally, the vital technical and interpersonal skills of facilitation, coaching and mentoring of others, and the improvement of provision through external influence and holding stakeholders and partners to account, are areas of work in which school improvement professionals have specific strengths and relevant experiences.

The Association is currently engaged in redrafting the DfES-endorsed *National Standards for School Improvement Professionals (NSSIPS)*, originally launched in 2003. NSSIPS need to reflect present-day priorities and, in this Aspect-initiated review, critical consideration is being given to the impact of the Children Act within several associated areas of knowledge, and the actions school improvement professionals will be required to undertake and what particular professional qualities they will have to possess in order to deliver the new agenda effectively.

## 7 Development issues

Naturally, the children's services agenda influences the skills, knowledge and understanding required of all relevant professionals, including those focused on school improvement. With regard to the principal development issues, The Association argues that members of school improvement teams are both practised at skill adaptation (as proven over the last decade and a half or so) and are already gradually operating in ways which support the Government's new agenda.

The focus on more customised learning – including small group activity as well as individual child

development – necessitates an understanding of the interactions and interventions undertaken by a range of organisations, agencies and individuals working in partnership with schools. Personalised learning also necessitates a deep understanding of the learning process itself.

In relation to the emphasis on service delivery through multi-agency partnerships, school improvement professionals are accustomed to the principles of promoting sustainable networks and partnership working, and possess distinctive skills in these areas. The challenge, however, will be to manage this across

a diverse group of professionals, and in working in particular areas of linked disciplines.

Similarly, the growing interest in new partnerships for schools is highlighted by the publication of a DfES prospectus, *Education Improvement Partnerships: Local Collaboration for School Improvement and Better Service Delivery*.

Published on 30 March 2005, the prospectus introduces the concept of Education Improvement Partnerships (EIPs; formerly known as foundation partnerships) and emphasises a range of associated development issues. The questions raised in the document – of what constitutes social education and what approaches are necessary to make a fundamental impact on deprived and disadvantaged communities – lie at the heart of improving outcomes for all children.

EIPs are one of eight key reforms set out in the DfES' 'Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners', and aim to enable groups of schools to work together to take collective responsibility for raising standards for children and young people in their local area. The prospectus advises that an EIP should include within its aims:

- School improvement: raising attainment and improving behaviour and attendance in all schools within the partnership
- Personalisation of provision for children and young people
- Delivering the outcomes of *Every Child Matters* in all schools and through childcare and extended services.

This suggests a greater emphasis on more radical inputs to schooling, with partnerships involving youth services, and a variety of pedagogical modes of provision including more work in small groups, in communities and with families. A number of school improvement teams already embrace youth service linkages and organised wide-ranging study support. The involvement of early years practitioners in Sure Start programmes likewise demonstrates that existing and relevant partnerships can already be effective. The

pressure for more diverse forms of provision will grow, with a range of providers offering choice and flexibility of services to schools and wider opportunities for outside school activities.

*Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools* highlights the contribution of schools to children and young people's wider well-being as:

- Helping each pupil achieve the highest educational standards they possibly can
- Dealing with bullying and discrimination and keeping children safe; becoming healthy schools and promoting healthy lifestyles through personal, social and health education lessons, drugs education, breakfast clubs and sporting activities
- Ensuring attendance, encouraging pupils to behave responsibly, giving them a strong voice in the life of the school and encouraging them to volunteer to help others
- Helping communities to value education and to be aware that it is a way out of the poverty trap
- Engaging and helping parents in actively supporting their children's learning and development.

---

**“The focus on more customised learning – including small group activity as well as individual child development – necessitates an understanding of the interactions and interventions undertaken by a range of organisations, agencies and individuals working in partnership with schools”**

---

Within the 'New Relationship with Schools' the Government envisages that School Improvement Partners (SIPs) will focus on schools' individual improvement priorities, and help to identify how well

different groups of pupils are progressing and explore whether there are barriers to pupils' learning that can be tackled by supporting their wider well-being. However, the SIP concept is still in its early stages and may require modifications.

This focus on 'wider well-being' therefore broadens the areas of consideration for school improvement teams into complex and more theoretical aspects of children and young people's development.

In addition, the contribution of a number of different staff from other services and sectors working with children in schools, as well as in other services and sectors, to meet the challenge and opportunity of an increasingly personalised agenda, raises strategic challenges for the children's services workforce and other individuals who either regularly engage with, lead or manage the workforce.

The recent DfES document, *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce* builds upon *Every Child Matters* in developing the proposition that everyone working with children, young people and families should have a common set of skills and knowledge. Six areas of expertise are identified as follows:

- Effective communication and engagement
- Child and young person development
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child
- Supporting transitions
- Multi-agency working
- Sharing information.

The *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce* also highlights a set of common values for practitioners who promote equality,

respect diversity and challenge stereotypes, and help to improve the life chances of all children and young people by providing more effective provision through the delivery of integrated services. The future design of induction and in-service and inter-agency training will clearly play a significant role in realising the potential of the children's services agenda, and strategies that establish a greater shared language and understanding across different parts of the workforce, both as a tool for training needs analyses and for workforce planning, become an essential requirement of the new agenda.

Given the above, it is difficult to envisage that the formal educational context will not be placed at the very core of the new children's services agenda. Yet the principles behind the Children Act 2004 mean that it is important to recognise that this context alone cannot meet all needs, and that our traditional understanding of optimal service delivery to all children and young people is incomplete. Further research and development, with an enquiry-based approach to promoting change through cross-agency links, is also an area where school improvement professionals can contribute as they have the necessary skills and attitudes to do so.

Their ability to deal with a wide range of complex issues, to be creative in problem solving, to appreciate the impact of change on organisations with due sensitivity, to understand and interpret data and use it to construct holistic views, are all key components of the projected developments towards an integrated children's services. Indeed, transferable skills such as networking, managing interactions and conflict, and building bonds, are vital – especially if the effective implementation of improved and coordinated children's services is to be fully realised.

## 8 Organisational and system development

**C**ooperative capacity building, for all organisations involved, should be a principal outcome of improved multi-agency working. The strategic facilitation of leadership – along with a mutual

understanding of stakeholders' roles and responsibilities – represent development areas for all parties. Experience of multi-agency service delivery exists, but, it is currently very uneven across the country.

School improvement specialists will need to build on their existing understanding of systems thinking, and move from a predominant focus on the internal workings of a school to an understanding of the place of schools within a wider social system. They will also need to develop a greater appreciation of national frameworks and how they function, and garner a deep understanding of the new change processes and how they can best work with other services to effect change.

Fundamental features of organisational development, such as shared vision, teamwork and learning will need to be set in a broader, collective, cross-agency context. Shared vision, in particular, requires a common core purpose, and in order to promote mutual and accepted responsibilities, principles and practices will need to be unified. The Association's *A Set of Core Principles for Education Improvement Professionals*, published in the summer of 2004, embraces the concept of collective working, providing six principles for educational improvement professionals as the basis for service delivery and a commitment to the highest levels of professional standards and moral leadership.

Principle four states that educational improvement

professionals must "recognise and build upon interdependence between individuals and within and between organisations". However, team learning to transform collective thinking and mobilise actions to progress towards a common purpose is necessarily complicated where several agencies are involved. The organisation, as well as the delivery, of combined learning opportunities across disciplines, takes considerable time, effort and commitment.

There is a growing body of knowledge available about how organisations learn and systems develop. Such thinking, however, is sometimes restricted to single organisations, and managing the interdependency of colleagues to promote whole-system capacity building is obviously more complex on a multi-agency basis.

The Association's *A Set of Core Principles for Education Improvement Professionals* reaffirms sound approaches to meeting the holistic needs of all children and young people by linking all aspects of personal development which the children's services agenda aims to deliver. As principle six reiterates, it is important to "value professional and systematic approaches to learning and promote self and

## 9 Conclusions

In promoting new and integrated approaches which enhance the educational and social aspects of the development of young people, The Association would like to draw attention to the considerable experience available from other countries. In Poland, for example, a nationwide network of children's centres is run by local authorities on a flexible basis, and provide daycare, after-school care, sports, leisure and other facilities. Children choose small groups they want to belong to, which are facilitated by professional social pedagogues and educators, to develop their self-identity and independence.

Elsewhere in Europe, there are often common elements which emphasise an inclusive, normalising approach to whole-child development, which can be

deployed across a range of different settings – from secure units and mainstream schools to informal children's group activities. This active 'bridging' role in turn affects the daily work of school teachers and of classroom assistants; at a deeper level, it raises significant issues about the relationship between formal and informal educational processes. In England, the 2005 DfES consultative paper on the 'Children's Workforce Strategy' draws specific attention to this concept of social pedagogy, which initiates a potentially important debate over the future of education and all children's services.

There is much to learn from educational research – as well as practical experience – which shows that real advances for children and young people raise

issues for schools which will influence integrated multi-agency developments. Students rarely learn or develop in isolation. Group activity is important to delivering positive outcomes through mutual respect culminating in greater independence, and its mechanics are only partially understood or, in some instances, accepted. Classroom learning is multi-dimensional, with interaction playing a key role. Developing the impact of pupil groupings on 'effective learning' requires far greater planning than has so far been conducted in highly adaptable approaches to classroom management.

The partnerships and varied approaches to learning and the settings for delivering learning also show that schools may well need to adjust their administrative structures. This will entail reconfiguring curriculum planning and timetables in order to provide experiences and opportunities which strengthen student learning and motivation through a range of enrichment programmes including learning projects, off-site learning and real-life experiences. These challenges are significant for all professionals

This is only the start of an agenda that is intended to fundamentally alter existing cycles of underachievement and social failure. Social pedagogy in other countries indicates that individuals and groups can be enabled to develop their all-round potential: the implications for future teaching and learning are profound.

Cooperative working within education services requires dedicated effort – across a set of varied service disciplines, the challenge is enormous. Nevertheless, it is of paramount importance that the Government's children services agenda is delivered successfully. This short Aspect paper suggests that the issues are complicated and multi-faceted, and the developmental pressures for all parties will prove to be considerable.

Integration of services and partnerships across education, social work and health authorities is a starting point, although early children's trusts and childcare partnerships have normally embraced a wider range of relevant agencies. Aspect acknowledges the training and continuing professional development needs of all parties, including school improvement

---

**“Addressing the effects on children of poverty and multiple forms of disadvantage is a driving force behind the Children Act...future Ofsted school inspections will include judgements about how they seek to secure the five outcomes”**

---

who will be working together in integrated children's services, and breaking down long-established specialist boundaries as well as dealing with related sensitivities will prove to be a real test. School improvement specialists will need to meet these demands, as much as others. However, the pressures on schools to meet these demands will be immense, and the role that educational improvement professionals can play in helping to move towards an integrated children's services agenda is, potentially, highly significant.

Children's centres and early years practice already lead the way. Extended schools represent a key development.

teams. However, The Association considers that the existing knowledge, skills and understanding of school improvement officers underlines their role as key players, who will be central to the delivery of the emerging children's services agenda.

A relationship to long-standing or recently-developed roles of school improvement teams can be derived from the nature of the five outcomes (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well being) for children and young people envisaged in *Every Child Matters*. Some of these aims would be the concern of individual school improvement specialists, others

(notably enjoy and achieve, and make a positive contribution) are more embedded in the focus of whole teams.

If the role of school improvement team members is thought to be anything other than integral, there is evidence to the contrary. Research evidence on the impact of early years experiences on later life chances eg the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project, indicates that an early start to pre-school has significant positive effects on the cognitive and social development of children. The contribution of educationalists as well as care specialists is clearly crucial to effective pre-school provision.

Addressing the effects on children of poverty and multiple forms of disadvantage is a driving force behind the Children Act. The importance of effective schooling in helping to break entrenched cycles of poverty and disadvantage is well known. Indeed, future Ofsted school inspections will include judgements about how they seek to secure the five outcomes. Again, this points to the core role of school improvement specialists within the delivery of the wider agenda, as they are accustomed to working with

schools both prior to, and in the follow-up from, formal inspection.

At the same time, partnerships with parents and carers, and genuine community involvement as well as cross-service and inter-professional partnerships are growing in importance.

The Association welcomes and fully endorses the fact that the needs of children and young people have become a central policy focus. It remains the case, however, that in spite of considerable advancement in children's lives, (including as indicated by various education measures), deep-rooted problems continue for too many individuals and within particular communities. The challenge to effect real social change extends to all areas of public service. Each aspect's role has to be considered, but schools and education providers, working in concert with others, must be at the heart of the new developments.

School improvement teams will need to adapt, in working with others on a multi-agency and commissioned basis, but they enjoy significant practical experience on which to draw. In turn, colleagues from across the spectrum of relevant public

## Appendix

In 2004 the Association published *A Set of Core Principles for Education Improvement Professionals* which it believes is important to the establishment of underpinning practice within the specialist area of educational improvement. The full set of core principles, however, remain pertinent to integrated multi-agency service delivery and are worthy of consideration across the various relevant disciplines.

In promoting educational improvement, educational improvement professionals should adopt the following six principles:

- Encourage success and enrichment for all learners
- Exert professional leadership through vision, strategy and initiative

- Advocate equality of opportunity in all respects
- Recognise and build upon interdependence between individuals and within and between organisations
- Demonstrate integrity and display sound personal behaviour, approaches and relationships
- Value professional and systematic approaches to learning and promote self and organisational development.

The endorsement of these principles provides a moral basis for defining the nature of service delivery, and signifies a commitment to the highest professional standards and moral leadership.

**The Association of Professionals in Education and Children's Trusts (Aspect)**

Woolley Hall, Woolley, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 2JR

**tel** 01226 383428 **fax** 01226 383427 **email** [info@aspect.org.uk](mailto:info@aspect.org.uk) **website** [www.aspect.org.uk](http://www.aspect.org.uk)