

Schools for All-

The Future of the Raising Attainment Project (RAP)



A Report by Martin Yarnit Associates for Sheffield City Council

July 2003

Summary

This report falls into two parts.

Part One

- Sets out the history and development of RAP
- Analyses its impact and how it is achieved
- Assesses the available evidence about the project's impact on behaviour, attendance and attainment.

Part Two

- Identifies the elements of a new model
- Provides costings
- Indicates possible sources of funding in the medium term
- Proposes stop gap funding to wind down the existing project.

RAP has pioneered new ways of engaging parents and children in learning and has impacted on policy and practice in Sheffield. It has also brought about a long-term culture change in the way that parents relate to local schools in the Southey-Owlerton area, that can be seen in more parental involvement, improved attendance and calmer schools where teachers are better able to concentrate on teaching.

How has that been achieved? In part through the enthusiasm and commitment of project workers, parents and headteachers. But the main impact has been achieved through two tried and tested elements:

- the offer of three mutually reinforcing activities that draw strength from intimate knowledge of the workings of the community and the school: home-school link; school/child focused learning (literacy, language and number and parenting); adult learning by Home School Link and Family Learning Workers (sometimes the same person combining all roles)
- the engagement of parents in five interlocking roles: as co-learners with their children; as learners in their own right; as partners with schools; as supporters of each other; as trainers and tutors.

This is the model that lays the basis for positive change – of improved behaviour and attendance in the short-term, of long-term gains in attainment for parents and children.

The main recommendations are:

1. To set up a new project with a Partnership Board comprising parents, headteachers, NCH, SPELL, LEA, College, Children's Fund, WEA.
2. To establish the role of Parents as Partners
3. To appoint a Project Manager and Administrator
4. To appoint Home School Link Workers
5. To appoint Family Learning and Literacy Outreach Workers
6. Take steps to provide Family Rooms and Facilities in all schools

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Part One: Achievement | |
| History and Development | 5 |
| RAP: Its Impact and How It Is Achieved | 15 |
| Behaviour, Attendance and Attainment: the Evidence | 17 |
| Part Two: Model for Replication | |
| The Model | 17 |
| Long-Term Solutions | 20 |
| Appendix 1: Interviews and Meetings | 29 |
| Appendix 2: Behaviour Improvement: A DfES Perspective | 30 |
| Appendix 3: References | 31 |

Additional copies of this report are available from
Vicky Wells, Project Coordinator, RAP, Sheffield Education Department, Derwent
House, 150 Arundel Gate, Sheffield, S1 2JY.

Martin Yarnit Associates can be contacted on 01886 822194 or by email at
martin.yarnit@virgin.net



Introduction

How can parents in the most deprived areas achieve the same value from schooling for their children and themselves as do their counterparts elsewhere in the city? An important part of the answer lies in the experience of the Raising Attainment Project. Set up in 2000 in the Southey-Owlerton area and funded largely through SRB5, it has demonstrated that parents want to be involved with their children's schooling and that this is creating a new relationship between parents and schools that means higher attainment for children and adults in the long run. The signs can already be seen in fewer exclusions, improving attendance rates, calmer, more purposeful classrooms and a steady increase in adult enrolments well above the city trend.

The report shows that RAP has a significant contribution to make to the development of integrated children's services in Sheffield.

The first three years of RAP have tested a number of approaches that form the basis for a new model of parent-school engagement that could soon be rolled out across the city. This report, produced by Martin Yarnit Associates for Sheffield City Council, drew on three main approaches:

- Review of documentation and data
- Interviews with stakeholders (see appendix for list)
- Focus groups with parents, headteachers and project workers (see appendix for list).

The research was carried out between May and July 2003. It was supported by the Children's Fund.

MYA would like to thank Lynda Hill and Vicky Wells for their enthusiastic help in setting up meetings and collating documentation as well as the support given by parents, project workers and staff of schools, the local authority and many other agencies.

Martin Yarnit

Part One: Achievement

History and Development

The four thematic objectives underpinning the original bid for SRB5 funding in late 2000 were:

- Home-school liaison
- Family learning
- Poor attendance
- Improving schools ICT.¹

At the time, attainment in the eighteen secondary and primary schools targeted by the project in the Southey-Owlerton area was below the city average. Only 15% achieved five GCSE A-C grades in 1999 and over 20% left school with no GCSE passes. Nearly 25% of secondary pupils were absent for more than half the time.

The project was designed to interlink with and complement other programmes and agencies including Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) and SPELL. It would support the LEA's City Achievement Strategy, a key element of the Education Development Plan, that set attainment and attendance targets for all schools. The project was organised in three pyramids based on the three local secondary schools. Home School Link Workers (HSLW) would be focused on securing 'full attendance and effective learning'² in primary and secondary schools, working with target groups of pupils. In secondary schools, these would be Y10 pupils whose attendance was a cause for concern but had not yet triggered the intervention of EWOs. They would also work with parents reluctant to engage with their children's education by, for example, attending parents evenings. In primary schools, HSLW would help parents support their own children's learning. It was likely that the workers would be local residents, have no formal qualifications and therefore be given an initial opportunity on the employment ladder. They would work alongside learning mentors but on a different caseload.

Family learning workers' (FLW) role would be to explore and pilot strategies to 'help parents connect with schools' by engaging them in the education of their own children and their own education. There would be a Family Learning Coordinator with three FLWs appointed to each pyramid. Their role would include

- Establishing a family learning development plan for each school
- Setting up literacy, numeracy and ICT courses
- Targeted help with parenting skills, with a special focus on men
- Support to enable parents to extend their skills and qualifications

FLWs have developed two closely related activities:

- Adult focused: learning opportunities for adults
- Child-focused: family literacy, numeracy and language programmes that enable parents to support their children's learning effectively through schemes such as Paired Reading and parenting courses.

The project also would fund electronic registration systems in the secondary schools and ICT technicians to promote electronic networking of schools and community centres. These two

¹ *Raising Attainment Agenda in Southey/Owlerton*, SRB5 Project Proposal, November 2000, Sheffield LEA.

² Full attendance is the term used in the project proposal.

elements have since been integrated into school planning and budgets. Shortage of funding led to a re-focusing of the project onto the primary schools.

Current Structure

The project effectively delivers three closely linked services in schools:

- home school link: acting as the intermediary between parents and schools, tackling and preventing crises, making referrals to specialist agencies where necessary
- child-focused learning for parents: enabling parents to help their children to learn, including parenting skills programmes
- adult learning: learning opportunities for parents in their own right, mainly delivered through SPELL.

The current structure of the project comprises

Project Coordination and Administration (1.3 fte shared between three staff)

0.4 Family Learning Coordinator

5.6 Home School Link Workers and Home School Support Workers³

3.8 Family Learning Workers

3.8 combined FLW/HSLW

- total 15.5 fte

The original structure of the project comprised

1 Project Manager

9 Home School Link Workers – 3 per pyramid

0.4 Family Learning Coordinator

9 Family Learning Development Workers – 3 per pyramid

10.5 IT Technicians

- total 30.5 fte

Creche Workers providing 900 hours of crèche support.

Several changes have occurred over the three years since the project began in mid-2000:

- funding cutbacks have reduced the number of staff, limiting the project to a presence in primary schools: there are now roughly four workers per pyramid compared with six in the beginning
- the post of Project Coordinator is now shared between three members of staff
- a post of Family Learning Coordinator is now funded by the LEA Community and Lifelong Learning Team (CALL) from a discrete LSC budget for Family Learning, Language and Numeracy (FLLN)
- a number of HSLW and FLW posts have been combined to take account of staff strengths and opportunities
- IT technician posts have been transferred to mainstream budgets

Policy Context: National

The design of the project reflected the emerging national policy context with its emphasis on

- Raising schools standards through Excellence in Cities (Excellence in Cities),

³ Home School Support Workers are paid at entry level (scale 1/2 compared with scale 4/5 for Home School Link Workers) and theoretically cannot carry out some more senior tasks such as taking part in case conferences.

- Developing extended schools as a contribution to raising standards, tackling social exclusion and promoting neighbourhood renewal.

The SchoolsPlus report, from one of seventeen thematic policy action teams set up to provide an agenda for the newly created Social Exclusion Unit, aimed "to identify the most cost-effective "Schools Plus" approaches to using schools as a focus for other community services, reducing failure at school, and to develop an action plan with targets to take these forward." The report vividly demonstrated the social and financial costs of under-achievement and exclusion and mobilised clear evidence that 'parental involvement in children's education produces positive effects on children's attainment, especially in literacy and numeracy in the early years'.⁴ Key points from the report were:

Outreach work, in relation to both children's and adult education can help to break down barriers and encourage parents into school and to participate in their children's learning. Particularly impressive are the family learning and support activities which some schools are undertaking and which the PAT would like to see developed further.

Schools should have the support of paid Community Learning Champions (CLCs). The CLCs would be from within the community rather than being "parachuted in", and have an enabling and co-ordinating role - talking to parents and the wider community and encouraging them into the school.

The SchoolsPlus agenda, especially the focus on extended or full service schools, has been integrated with a more recent focus on behaviour improvement. The DfES Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP), in turn, is closely linked with a developing focus on an integrated model of children's services that parallels the Connexions Service for 14-19 year olds. The recent appointment of a Children's Minister and the forthcoming Green Paper on children's services have given a new impetus to attempts to bring together a range of sometimes poorly connected services and initiatives into a coherent whole. In Sheffield, this new approach is reflected in a proposed new model of working and delivering services to support children, young people and their families managed through a Children's Trust. *One Partnership – One Plan* has been put forward by the City Council on behalf of a consortium including Education and Social Services, the voluntary sector, the Children's NHS Trust and the four Primary Care Trusts.⁵

A key feature of this approach is area hubs each with its own Behaviour Education Support Team (BEST). These multi-disciplinary teams are able to draw on a range of services including Sure Start, Youth Offending Teams, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, depending on their assessment of the need of individual children and their families.⁶

⁴ To quote the report, 'Recent reviews of research include Mog Ball (1998) on school inclusion, Dyson and Robson (1999) on school-family-community links in the UK, Moss et al (1999) on international practice in school inclusion, Sharp et al (1999), Keys et al (1999) and Keys and Wilkinson (1999) all on study support and Morris et al (1999) on disadvantaged youth. In addition, evaluations of individual strategies or schemes are prolific but typically small scale, such as the evaluations of the Pyramid Clubs (reported in Makins, 1997), the ten case studies of the relationship between school exclusion and the presence of schools councils (Davies, 1999) and the 14 case studies of year 10 students participating in the BIZTEC course which involves vocational experience to reduce disaffection (Evaluation and Development Agency, 1999).'

⁵ *One Partnership – One Plan*, Access and Inclusion, Sheffield LEA, 2003; *Sheffield Children's Services – A Children's Trust Pilot: An Expression of Interest from Sheffield*, NHS/Sheffield City Council, 2003

⁶ See the DfES Behaviour Improvement Programme for a description of the role of BESTs at <http://eicadmin.dfesstandardssite.net/eic/BIP-Toolkit-03-03.DOC>

Some elements of this new model draw on approaches piloted by the Raising Attainment Project, setting them more firmly in a multi-agency framework. In other important respects, however, the new model may not take sufficient account of the RAP experience, especially

- the impact of Home School Link Workers with their detailed knowledge of children and families arising from everyday contact
- the value of a multi-dimensional school-based service integrating home school links
- the centrality of parents to improving children's attainment, attendance and behaviour, to improving relations with schools and to engaging other parents in positive activities in support of children.⁷

This argument is developed in a later section of the report. *As important, though, is to recognise that the future of RAP must make sense within the context of the developing plan for integrated children's services in the city.*

RAP: Its Impact and How It Is Achieved

But for the Raising Achievement Project, J., the piggy in the middle in a custody battle would have been excluded from school, at age 8. Instead, he's settled down, making good progress and attends school every day on time. The project helped his dad to give his son a fresh start, showing him how to help with maths and reading. And it's been a godsend for the father, involving him in a parents group that provides support and friendly advice.

In the short-term, RAP is principally about social inclusion. In the long-term, it is about a cultural change in the relationship between parents and schools that should lead to raised attainment for children and adults. This judgment is based on a reading of the available evidence about the impact of the project.

In this section, we set out what the project workers do, assess the outcomes from RAP before reaching some conclusions about its contribution to behaviour, attendance and attainment (parents as well as children).

What the project workers do

There are two types of project workers:

- Home School Link Workers (HSLW)
- Family Learning Development Workers. (FLDW)

⁷ A point well made by a piece of research that can be consulted on the DfES website for parental involvement: 'Parental Involvement in raising the Achievement of Primary School Pupils: why bother?' by Edwards, Anne and Warin, Jo in *Oxford Review of Education*, (1999), Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 325-341. Overall, they concluded that perceptions of parental involvement by teachers and schools represented less a partnership than a "colonisation of home by school". They argued that a new view of parental involvement is needed which might require teachers to have a better understanding of the social conditions of identity construction, a fuller understanding of the demands of literacy and numeracy pedagogy and more time to prioritise curriculum demands. See: <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/research/digests/ThuJun191655242003/567425>

Ten out of the twelve schools participating in the project in June 2003 had both types of workers, and in half of these the two roles were combined in one person. Two other schools had a HSLW only. The box below provides a snapshot of the some of the work of one of these teams.

Working with Parents – A Snapshot

An hour in the working day of a Home School Link and Family Learning Development Worker Team at a Sheffield primary school (Wednesday 16th July, 8.30-9.30am)

- Single parent with special needs- problems with head lice in family and not able to get rid of live lice. Recent bereavement leading to inability to cope.
Action Regular meetings with HSLW & support from school nurse.
- Meeting with parent of child with A.D.H.D regarding the non administration of medication before school.
Action HSLW to monitor situation and liaise with family
- Child new to school with very poor attendance. A & I service visited previous evening. Parent brought child to HSLW. Both parent & child very upset. Difficulties due to child having worms. Mum depressed: infestation of carpet bugs and worms in carpet in rented accommodation.
Action counselling, advice & support, referral to school nurse. Parent and child know that either can drop in to HSLW as and when required.
- Excited single parent waiting to share news that Job Centre have approved her stage two training for self employment. This follows 3 years of adult and family learning in school.
Action A big hug!
- Parent wanting to start an Access Course in September wanted to know how to get on to GCSE Maths and English Course.
Action Referred to SPELL (Community Education Programme)
- Following a number of adult courses and volunteering in school, parent wants to gain more experience of working in school and gain more qualifications.
Action- involvement with SPELL and introduction to possibility of working in an ILMI.

It reveals the importance of availability, of being there when you are needed, in averting crisis, and it shows how project workers act as a point of referral to specialist support. (Parents surgeries have been set up in some schools to formalise the approach, providing set times when project workers are available to listen to problems.) This does not represent the major part of the working day – we come to that in a moment – but it does illustrate vividly how project workers earn the trust of parents by making a practical difference, often in small ways. This is in many ways the core of the project's success, a point that was made to me in conversation with parents and headteachers more than once:

'C. is fundamental to our school. Her work frees teachers to get on with teaching. Attendance has gone up.'

Or

'D. lives in the community, knows our parents well. She rarely has to ring people up in the morning these days. There has been a culture change and attendance has improved.'

Family Learning Development Workers

Much of this close contact work with parents inevitably falls to the Home School Link Workers, but the snapshot above also shows Family Learning Workers operating in a similar way. Knowing your students well is a fundamental of effective community education that requires an investment of time outside the classroom.

Family Learning Workers work with parents and with parents and children together on two broad types of learning programme:

- School or child-focused
- Adult learning

Together, these constitute the area of activity known by the LSC as FLLN – Family Learning Literacy and Numeracy. The aim is to enable parents to support their children's learning in order to improve their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Amongst professionals, there is a lively debate about the relative importance of these skills.

Examples of literacy and numeracy school or child-focused programmes include

- Keeping up with the children, a Basic Skills Agency scheme that involves parents working in tandem with children
- Paired reading
- Share, a CEDC scheme that provides sessions for parents followed by sessions at home with children
- Books for Babies and Storysacks
- Mad about Maths, similar approach to Share
- Stay and play days

Examples of adult learning and parenting programmes include

- Introduction to computers
- Arts and crafts sessions
- Coping with kids
- Local history group (Parson Cross Heritage Society)

Home School Link Workers

The contribution of the HSLW is illustrated by this extract from a recent Ofsted report for Meynell School about efforts to improve attendance:

The school has excellent procedures to monitor and encourage pupils' attendance. These are helping to stem a downward trend in attendance and to change perceptions about the value of schooling.

The home-school link worker takes on this particular responsibility from the teaching staff, and has instigated a range of successful strategies: all unexplained absences are followed up the same day; very detailed analysis of attendance data takes place right down to tracking individual pupils; a half-termly attendance newsletter goes out to all parents and displays in school track individual classes' attendance rates against the school target.. This work ... does show a move towards the current target of nearly 93% which has been agreed with the local authority.

The HSLWs lighten the load, too, of Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) by intervening early to deal with unauthorised absences, and helping to prevent attendance problems taking a more serious turn. HSLWs, trained to detect signs of distress, attend case conferences and in at least one school attend SMT meetings for inclusion issues.

HSLWs and FLDW often operate as a team, when their roles are not combined in one person in any case. Typically, they refer problems to each other as well as to other professionals. In

one school, the HSLW was able to support a child with ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder) by watching out for her over the lunch break. Meanwhile, the FLDW was helping the mother to make the case for extra help: ‘...she was on my side and believed me’. As the child became calmer, her interest in reading grew. The transformation in another family was remarkable. The enthusiasm for reading spread to all the children and the parents. They all joined the library and now claim that the tv is hardly ever switched on.

HSLW/FLDW teams promote

- Breakfast clubs
- Fruit sales
- Special assemblies when parents can show off their certificates
- After school curricular activities
- Parent groups and parent involvement in PTAs and other forms of volunteering
- Closer ties with other professionals such as learning mentors

The Evidence: A Cautionary Note

Several points need to be made about the evidence used here:

- the outputs originally set for the project do not generate data that demonstrate improvements in attendance and attainment – for example, the output ‘pupils benefiting from projects assigned to enhance/improve attainment’ simply calls for the numbers of pupils involved
- the later recognition of the need for attendance and attainment data means that there is no baseline data for purposes of comparison
- much of the evidence consists of fragmentary quantitative data and a large volume of case studies and that is what has been drawn on here
- finally, even if the quantitative evidence were stronger, it would be difficult to isolate the RAP effect from the overall school effect.

The result is that, as often in school improvement studies, causal links remain elusive and the best that can be said is that RAP is closely linked with improvements in attendance and attainment.

Assessing the Outcomes

Not only did RAP help to ensure that children were in class, it also helped to ensure that they were there ready to learn. Schools were calmer and more purposeful places than previously.

Our study of RAP suggests that it creates a number of outcomes leading to improvements in behaviour, attendance and attainment:

- It smoothes a path between parents and schools, enabling schools to be inclusive
- It averts and resolves family crises that stand in the way of children attending school and learning
- It develops parenting skills that all parents need, but that some parents in deprived areas need more than most
- It enables parents to support and learn from each other
- It promotes collaboration between parents and schools and other agencies
- It sets parents on the path of achievement themselves through learning and employment.

These statements need to be examined in turn.

Enabling schools to be inclusive

'But for L⁸, my boy would be in special school.'

Breakfast clubs, lunch clubs, after schools clubs are some of the activities organised by HSLW and FLDW that promote attendance and participation by children. Perhaps the most significant interventions are those involving parents and children in learning together, improving speaking, listening and reading skills, the real key to accessing schooling. Paired reading generated many exciting stories. One father described how he had seen his daughter transformed by the experience. Now in her first year at secondary school, she had become an avid reader who was in the top set for German, an unthinkable achievement 16 months previously. In another case, a boy had learnt to read, discovered he liked poetry and had joined the library. Evidence collected by participating schools showed that 18 month gains in reading ability after six week's activity were not unusual, for a very small investment in worker time.

An interview with the headteacher of a school renowned for its willingness to take in children excluded elsewhere underlined the importance of a range of RAP interventions, leading to a growing awareness by schools and parents of what makes each other tick. As parents gain in confidence, they are better able to explain their needs and to get the appropriate support. The result is better attendance, fewer unauthorised absences and improved punctuality and, to quote one headteacher, 'fewer hostile parents'. Schools are thus enabled to cope with a broader range of challenging behaviour without resorting to exclusions or expensive specialist provision.

The result, as a group of RAP school headteachers told us, was a long-term cultural effect, of a growing partnership between parents and schools. Not only did RAP help to ensure that children were in class, it also helped to ensure that they were there ready to learn. Schools were calmer and more purposeful places than previously.

Averting family crisis

RAP workers collaborate closely with the school they are based in, targeting children whose behaviour, attendance or attainment gives cause for concern. HSLW, especially, are a visible and daily presence, available to help parents and children tackle problems that lead to lack of or late attendance such as bullying, school phobia, maternal illness. HSLW tend to carry out daily calls – by phone and sometimes in person – when children fail to attend. They may also transport children and parents to and from school. Family Learning Workers also have a role to play in averting family crises through, for example, home visits before Reception children start school

An example is J., the child whose parents were involved in a bitter custody battle and who ceased to attend school for prolonged periods and finally was facing exclusion. Now in Y2, J. is a consistent attender, is working well and takes part with his father in family learning activities. The HSLW was critical in brokering and supporting a solution between the school and the family, provided daily liaison with the child and his father. The FLW was able to involve the

⁸ Family Learning Development Worker.

father in family learning programmes and to invite him to take part in a parent self-help group of which he remains a keen member.

Incentives are a key ingredient in achieving results and avoiding the involvement of specialist agencies including weekly reward for individuals and classes with highest attendance and lunchtime clubs for vulnerable children.

Three examples from Montenev Primary over five terms beginning Autumn 2001 show how the Home School Link Worker helps to bring about improvements in attendance despite temporary setbacks caused by illness. In each case, the worker was involved in regular contact with the family and staff. (Average class attendance in italics.)

| | Term 1 | Term 2 | Term 3 | Term 4 | Term 5 |
|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Child 1 | 84.6 | 69.1 | 94.1 | 100 | 100 |
| | <i>94</i> | <i>95.9</i> | <i>95.4</i> | <i>96.7</i> | <i>96.9</i> |
| Child 2 | 76.9 | 83.8 | 62 | 100 | 100 |
| | <i>92.5</i> | <i>96.6</i> | <i>94.1</i> | <i>97.4</i> | <i>94.4</i> |
| Child 3 | 82 | 76.5 | 76.5 | 86.7 | 72.2 |
| | <i>93.3</i> | <i>95.7</i> | <i>92.2</i> | <i>96.4</i> | <i>93.3</i> |

Developing parenting skills

Parenting skills courses can provoke hostility from working class parents who feel that they are being stigmatised. But our study reveals many examples of enthusiastic participants in parenting courses such as Coping with Kids, Surviving Adolescence and Keeping Safe who eagerly promote them to other parents. The parenting courses link strongly with other activities such as Paired Reading that also demonstrate the value of patience and encouragement in children's development.

Enabling parents to support each other

'There's been a big change in this area: people help each other, take each other's kids to school.'

-Headteacher

Parenting skills are also passed on informally at the school gate and in the meetings of parents that take place at a number of schools. It is difficult to document the effect of parental support but it was frequently referred to in our interviews with parents as a way of getting involved in the work of RAP and the school generally. 'When we meet here, we can share things together and hear about fresh ideas about dealing with problems with kids', we were told by a member of the Watermead parents group. 'If people don't know one another', adds another, 'they can be quick to judge each other. But as they get to know others better, they realise that they are not bad parents and they understand their problems better'.

This approach contrasts dramatically with the dark days at Mansel Primary when parents formed 'a lynch-mob', according to the previous headteacher, and held their own meetings in and against the school before order was restored. Now parents groups operate as a powerful communication point with the school and a catalyst for change. Parents in another school may not yet have persuaded the school to open up assemblies to them, as is the case in some schools in the area, but they are busy organising a post-SATs celebration ball, have converted a disused patch into a garden and have arranged some joint courses with parents from a

neighbouring school. One remarked, 'I spend more time in school now than when I went to school'. Another knew nobody when her son started school, but with his problems sorted out, she now attended college three days a week, visited a gym regularly and was a volunteer with Sure Start.

Some parents groups have given rise to independent groups in their own right including a poetry group and a local history group.

Promoting collaboration between parents and schools

Meeting every Thursday morning, they have raised £700 for the school in six months, organised a magic show for 180 children and parents. Two members of the group have become parent governors.

RAP activities are designed to improve parents' awareness of how the school sets about teaching and learning and to engage them in learning alongside their children. Joint family learning activities include

- Paired Reading, the CEDC Share project,
- stay and play days aimed at parents with nursery-aged children,
- arts and crafts afternoons,
- Keeping up with the children (detailed introduction that anticipates the curriculum by two weeks so that parents are equipped to help their children with maths and reading).

One parent pointed out that *'it's all very well signing partnership agreements with the school, but many parents don't know how to help their child with Maths and reading'*.

Interviews with parents revealed a firm basis of understanding about how number is taught these days ('It's not enough to have the right answer, you've also got to show how you got there'.) and the basics of phonetic reading such as sounding out the parts of words. Parents have also become antennae for the schools, alerting HSLW to signs of impending trouble amongst friends and neighbours. RAP acts as a bridge between parents and schools, providing feedback in both directions: in one school, lunchtime arrangements had been altered to reflect parents' views. In another, *'we've listened to parents and agreed to keep the perimeter gates locked at certain times to improve security'* (Headteacher). For another head, RAP had helped to turn the school into a popular school, with 62 applicants for 30 places, despite falling rolls in the area. For some parents, conversely, *'the school has become a more open and interesting place. They're more interested in our ideas now.'* Parents are often hesitant to approach teachers, partly because they are seen to be very busy but, said one, *'it's easier to see T (the HSLW).'*

Setting parents on the path of achievement

Of the 29 who enrolled on first aid, 23 passed level 1, 9 submitted portfolios for level 2, 4 have enrolled at Parson Cross College for other courses including childcare, medical reception and ICT.

Family Learning Development Worker⁹

By involving parents in their children's learning, RAP soon draws parents into their own learning through school-based courses such as parenting and first aid, leading onto courses in

⁹ Quoted in Eventus report, *Raising Attainment Project*, June 2002, p. 15.

community centres and then enrolment at college. RAP has also provided employment for parents as Home School Support Workers. Some parents have acquired large numbers of certificates for courses completed. Others have embarked on the first step to becoming adult or classroom teachers. A typical path is volunteering in class, to HSLW to learning mentor in the space of seven years. The numbers involved in this way are impressive as is the gain in confidence: *'Now I can show my son how to do things like maths and computing, I'm a better Dad as a result'*. In the view of one headteacher, RAP's contribution was important to the regeneration of the area: *'Parents are looking for jobs and motivated to try for higher paid ones. We've got more Dads coming to school now and more parental involvement. Thanks to the work of the Home School Link Worker, our PTA is entirely parent run.'*

More than the sum of the parts

A question for this study is the impact of the various elements of the project viewed separately and together. Some headteachers and parents did express the view that the Home School Link Workers were the lynchpin of the project. Project workers themselves, however, and most parents were more likely to refer to the interlocking effect of the HSLW and FLDW. This seemed to occur in two ways. First, workers would liaise on a daily basis, exchanging impressions and information, alerting each other and the school to impending difficulties. Second, each would refer cases to the other. There were many accounts of parents who had been drawn in by one or the other and had then gone on to widen their involvement.

Other Factors

Two key factors in the success of the project, alongside the efforts of project workers and parents, are clearly crèche provision, without which many parents simply could not take part in activities at school or in the community, and parents rooms which provide a space for parents to meet and exchange experiences.

Behaviour, Attendance and Attainment: the Evidence

Attendance and Exclusions

Although the attendance picture is not universally bright, there *is* evidence of an improvement in several schools. Typically, in one school, average attendance had risen from 91.17% in 2000-1 to 92.42% in 2002-3 and would have been higher still in that year if the average had not been depressed by just one class. What was notable, however, was the steady growth in high attending classes. And even where attendance was no better than three years ago, as in the case of one school, the headteacher told us that unauthorised absences were down. This, in his view, was part of a culture change that had reduced the number of hostile parents and created an atmosphere of trust.

It seems likely that RAP has had a positive impact on exclusions. Certainly, there is a wealth of anecdotal information concerning children who faced exclusion but were helped to avoid it. The headteacher of one school was explicit about this effect.

Attainment: Children

Paired reading transformed my daughter. 16 months later she reads the daily paper and is in the top set for German at her secondary school.

Hard evidence of the impact of the project on attainment is not readily available, partly because the period covered by datasets is still too short, as a previous evaluation by Eventus noted.¹⁰ The most concrete evidence of the impact of the project on attainment is offered by the results of Paired Reading. The technique is a way of encouraging parents to help their children to read by reading aloud for a few minutes everyday over a five or six week period. Bear in mind that Southey Ward ranks amongst the most educationally deprived in England with a functional illiteracy rate of more than 20%, involving the parents of the children who are lagging behind most is an achievement in its own right.

Given that schools target participants differently, it is hard to demonstrate the effectiveness of the scheme. However, results suggest impressive gains for reading accuracy and comprehension. 16 Y5 pupils started in one school and 11 completed whose average gain was 7.3 months on reading accuracy and 11.7 months on comprehension. This compares with the five pupils who did not complete who averaged a 0.8 month gain on reading accuracy and 0.2 month gain on comprehension over the same period.

It is not clear how these gains translate themselves into a whole school effect. Certainly there is some evidence that some of these children are achieving level 4 at KS2. It is possible that there is a delayed effect on school attainment outcomes. A delayed effect could be expected if it takes time for success in paired reading to lift individual SATs results. If, moreover, RAP support enables schools to take in children excluded (formally or informally) elsewhere, this could have the same effect of depressing SATs results overall. The important issue in either case is that individuals are enabled to continue their schooling.

Attainment: Parents

RAP has played a significant role in the enrolment statistics for the area as a recent evaluation shows. Between 97/8 and 00-01, adult enrolments from S5 and S6 postcodes grew by 22.7%, compared with 5.5% for the city as a whole.¹¹ Evidence from SPELL suggests that RAP accounts for perhaps the majority of these enrolments. Parents from RAP courses helped to turn a May 2003 Adult Learners Week presentation by local MP, David Blunkett, into a massive event with 700 participants. In addition, a local school paid host to a further event for parents from three of the area's schools. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive tracking of parental achievement. Instead, there is case study evidence of individuals who have gained level 1 and 2 certificates for RAP courses completed, who have enrolled for level 3 courses and who have gained employment, principally in local schools, as a result of their involvement with the project.

There is, in conclusion, ample anecdotal evidence of parents progressing from involvement with the project through to

- volunteering roles with Sure Start, as parent governors and PTA officers
- paid employment as learning mentors and similar roles.

¹⁰ See p.19

¹¹ These figures overlap with the first year of the RAP project. From *SPELL Impact Evaluation*, EKOS Consulting, March 2003, p.54.

Part Two: Model for Replication

Many innovative schemes have been initiated to encourage parents to support their children's learning and to ensure that they attend on a regular basis. These excellent schemes are now having a positive effect with a growing minority of parents, with whom the school has developed a good relationship.

Mansel Primary School, Ofsted Report, 2001

The purpose of this section is to

- define a model for RAP 2, that builds on tried and tested approaches piloted by RAP, that is relevant to and adds value to the changing policy environment.
- propose ways of taking it forward in the medium-term
- propose a stopgap approach that enables the project to survive its short-term funding problems

The Model

This sub-section begins by defining the key elements of RAP, show how they relate to new policy frameworks and sets out the shape of a new project.

In three short years, the policy field that RAP occupies has changed almost beyond recognition: Excellence in Cities is now well established and BESTs are a growing feature.. But it is clear that the project still has much to offer. RAP has pioneered new ways of engaging parents and children in learning and has impacted on policy and practice in Sheffield, mainly through the direct agency of key figures who have moved on from the area into influential positions in the local authority. It has also brought about a long-term culture change in the way that parents relate to local schools in the Southey-Owlerton area, that can be seen in more parental involvement, improved attendance and calmer schools where teachers are better able to concentrate on teaching.

How has that been achieved? In part through the enthusiasm and commitment of project workers, parents and headteachers. But the main impact has been achieved through two tried and tested elements:

- the offer of three mutually reinforcing activities that draw strength from intimate knowledge of the workings of the community and the school: home-school link; school/child focused learning (literacy, language and number and parenting); adult learning by Home School Link and Family Learning Workers (sometimes the same person combining all roles)
- the engagement of parents in five interlocking roles: as co-learners with their children; as learners in their own right; as partners with schools; as supporters of each other; as trainers and tutors.

This is the model that lays the basis for positive change – of improved behaviour and attendance in the short-term, of long-term gains in attainment for parents and children. To that extent, the name of the project misrepresents where its principal value lies. It is less about attainment and more about inclusion.

New Developments

There has been until recently a tendency in official circles to under-estimate the awful gap between schools and parents in the most hard-pressed areas of our cities. Parents are intimidated by and fearful of schools, ignorant of the changes that have taken place in the processes of schooling since they were at school themselves, easily angered by the sometimes dismissive attitudes they encounter amongst education professionals. They do not always know how to gain the best deal for their child, or how to tackle difficulties that arise. These parents, many of them young, some of them lone parents and very poor, are often also contending with grave family crises such as domestic or racist assault or serious illness.

But there is a new momentum, partly propelled by the Climbie case, to establish integrated children's and family services. A whole series of separate initiatives and policy frameworks are being drawn together and a forthcoming Green Paper will lay down the basis for a national and local children's service, probably organised through children's trusts. Sheffield has already put forward a plan for just such a trust and shown how a range of services and agencies could be brought into closer partnership to provide more effective support for children and their families.

Key elements of this new approach are

- A focus on preventative early intervention to avert serious crises and to limit the call on expensive, specialist services
- A systematic focus on the estimated 41000 most vulnerable children in the city to prevent their problems spilling over into serious crisis, especially at the transition points where children are moving between institutions such as at 4+, 7+ and 11+
- The building of a tracking system (SHIRT)¹² to provide comprehensive coverage and data
- Establishing a hub system with multi-agency teams of professionals or BESTs (Behaviour Education Support Team) serving small groups of schools and able to draw on the services of a whole panoply of agencies such as Sure Start to provide appropriate solutions.

RAP's Contribution

So, what is RAP's contribution and how does it add value to the new arrangements?

RAP has demonstrated its value to inclusive learning. It has already saved the public purse many times its cost in the last three years. One child removed from the mainstream, and lost to view, or transferred to special schools, who falls foul of the criminal justice system and spends a decade or more locked away can cost in their lifetime the same as the global cost of RAP.

What it costs when things go wrong

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Child in care – 1 week | £1000 |
| Child in Pupil Referral Unit – 1 year | £60-70000 |
| Youth Offenders Open Institution- 1 year | £31668 |

As a senior EWO puts it:

¹² Sheffield Identification, Referral and Tracking project funded through Children and Young Peoples Unit trailblazer scheme.

Interactions between the HSL at this school, working alongside the headteacher, teachers, EWO, learning mentor and BEST team has helped to prevent a specific number of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties being excluded from school...HSL workers eliminate the routine work from the inclusion team, freeing time to deal with more urgent cases.

HSLs, in other words, are the missing link in the proposed new BIP (Behaviour Improvement Programme) arrangements, the first line of intervention, the broker between home and school, the people who enable teachers to teach and BEST teams to concentrate on serious problems.

But what about the family learning side of the project? The evidence is that the dual approach – home school link and family learning – builds the capacity of parents to work supportively with their children and teachers by enhancing their understanding of schooling and engaging their own interest in learning. Policy makers in health and education often fail to realise that adult learning is the cheapest medicine the state can buy. The healthiest societies are the best educated.

But does every school need its own RAP team? It has been a constant theme of interviews with project workers and parents that access to detailed know-*who* is a vital commodity. Familiar faces who are available to socialise with parents at the beginning and end of the day are more likely to be confided in than unknown, untrusted professionals who appear when there is trouble but who are not around to perform the countless small favours that win parents' confidence such as picking up siblings and taking them home when another child has to be taken to hospital.

700 parents at an awards evening for Adult Learners Week are not generated by an advert in the Star. Many of them were there as a result of their contact with RAP. They reflect hours of one to one contact, the intensive work that is the indispensable condition for a thriving adult learning community. That also takes local knowledge and the slow building of trust. The nurturing of parents groups to provide mutual support and to act as a bridge between parents and the school requires the same approach: community development never appears cheap until you experience a community without social glue.

But why not employ more learning mentors? Or extend their role? The value of learning mentors is derived from their child-focused approach. Their job is to enable children to access the curriculum. It is also, and this is where it overlaps with the Home School Link Worker, about smoothing over the barriers to taking part in learning. Mentors should certainly work closely with RAP workers, as we witnessed in several of the schools, but their role is complementary to and distinct from that of the Home School Link Worker. Merging the two roles would lead not to a strengthening but to a dilution.

To summarise, the contribution of RAP is that

- It frees teachers to teach and EWOs and others to concentrate on the serious cases
- It works with at risk parents and children and reduces their vulnerability
- It targets the learning of vulnerable pupils and improves their skills and self-esteem
- It provides a bridge between parents and schools that enables parents to get the best for their children, improves attendance and reduces the incidence of crisis in the classroom
- It enables parents to support their children's learning
- It sets parents on the path to their own fulfilment through learning and employment
- It enables parents to support each other as parents.

For the new integrated children's service, RAP is the missing link that enables BEST teams and other specialist support services to focus on the most vulnerable. *RAP helps to ensure that parents and children do not rise up the tiers of need and intervention.*

Long-Term Solutions

If there is a significant role for RAP in the long-term, what steps need to be taken to secure it? How can RAP become a replicable and affordable model for the whole city? There are a number of key issues that need to be resolved in answering these questions.

The most fundamental issue is, should RAP continue?

Continuation

This report argues that RAP has had a significant impact on schooling in the SOAR area. The elements and approach that have made a difference have been identified. It is important that these are able to continue and, in time, are made available to schools in other areas. However, we would also argue that there is a need for a change of direction to

- Refocus project management
- Sharpen the focus on children's inclusion, attendance and learning skills
- Find new funding sources
- Strengthen the role of parents
- To re-locate the project.

That change of direction is best accomplished by marking a clear break between the existing project and a new project. What should characterise the differences between the old and the new?

Project Management

Project management has a number of critically important roles to perform in a new project:

- To develop ways of combining local initiative with an emerging understanding of what works best in promoting children's inclusion and attendance, and the learning skills of children and parents
- To give a voice to the key stakeholders
- To ensure that the new project is strategically situated in the fast changing policy area and is not left behind by new initiatives and partnerships
- To develop a funding strategy.

Several points follow from this:

- A new partnership Management Board should be set up to provide strategic direction
- A Core Group should be created to manage the project between Board meetings and to ensure that key stakeholders are suitably involved in decision-making.¹³
- A new post of project manager should be created to implement the Board's broad plan.

¹³ This met for the first time in July.

Sharpen the Focus

Children, parents, headteachers, EWOS have all provided eloquent testimony to the transformational effect of RAP. Parents, who have seen it work for them, have become enthusiastic missionaries on its behalf with other parents. Governing bodies have been willing to contribute financially to the costs of project workers. Achieving and deepening this practical impact on inclusion, attendance and learning skills, however, will require

- A continuous focus on improving practice when project workers, parents, headteachers and other professionals come together to exchange ideas and experience
- The support of specialists from related fields such as behaviour improvement, family support, inclusion and inspection in reviewing and debating effective, value for money interventions
- Improved collection and use of data to pinpoint effective practice.

An Affordable Model

The withdrawal of SRB funding poses the need for a reassessment of funding arrangements and the development of an affordable model.

The current cost of the project is £265,000 a year. The current cost of an experienced scale 4/5 FLDW or HSLW is about £23900 with on-costs. We would argue that the minimum staffing for a large primary school of 350-400 pupils should be 0.7 of a HSLW and 0.4 or 0.5 of a FLDW, with smaller schools pro-rata, taking into consideration social and educational need (perhaps with % fsm as a proxy for need).

In fact, if we look at the current pattern of staffing for six larger schools, it looks like this

| School | fte | Staffing | Monthly cost | Grade |
|----------------|------------|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Longley* | 1 | HSLW/FLDW | 1890 | 4/5 |
| Meynell | 0.5 1 | HSLW FLDW | 926 paid by CALL | 4/5 |
| Southey Junior | 1 | FLDW/HSLW | 1989 | 4/5 |
| Fox Hill | 0.6 0.6 | HSS FLDW | 785 paid from coordination | 1/2 teacher |
| Monteney* | 1 0.6 | HSS FLDW | 1285 1982 | 1/2 teacher |
| Mansel* | 1 0.6 | HSS FLDW | 1291 2080 | 1/2 teacher |

Southey Green and Longley approximate to a funding model of 1 fte with both roles. All these larger schools run with between 1 fte and 1.6. This may reflect the availability of external funding or it may also reflect the value that these schools place on the project staff. (Asterisked schools currently contribute £5000 from their own funds towards staffing.)

0.7 of a HSLW is the bare minimum for larger schools whilst a FLDW could be shared between three schools. This might be advantageous in promoting more work between schools and in making space for volunteer learning champions to cut their teeth as organisers. However, the current pattern shows that schools are as likely to favour a part-time HSLW/HSS as a FLDW. In

the end, the pattern may reflect the impact made by particular individuals rather than a careful consideration of resource utilisation.

Given the ending of large scale SRB funding and despite a danger of undermining the impact of the project model, it may be necessary to consider a significant reduction in per school costs, to 0.5 of a HSLW and 0.25 of a FLDW for schools of 350-400 pupils, or £18000. Assuming the current school membership of 12 schools and 3425 pupils, this would still mean a total project cost of around £242000 including a Project Manager and Administrative Assistant. Compared with the current project fte of 15.3, this would amount to 10 fte, a reduction of 35%. It would provide a workable staffing minimum and a full time Project Manager, a vital consideration for this project. This provides the basis for an affordable model.

The Cost Calculation

| | |
|---|--------|
| 5 HSLW (average size of 12 schools: NOR 285; 0.4 fte per school rounded up; @£23900 | 119500 |
| 3 FLDW (1 per pyramid; approx. 0.25 per school) @ £23900 | 71700 |
| 1 Project Manager | 25000 |
| 1 Administrative and monitoring assistant | 14000 |
| Office costs | 12000 |
| Total | 242200 |

Putting Funding on a Secure Basis

So, how could this model be funded? There are three main sources to be explored:

- mainstream
- special funds
- charities

The target amount is large and ultimately the aim must be secure mainstream funding once there is a thoroughly tried and tested model capable of being replicated across the city.

In the meantime, from April 2004 onwards, there will need to be a medium term funding strategy. The HSLW represents the biggest challenge, in terms of scale and funding sources. Currently, there are no dedicated mainstream funds for this type of work. The special funds and charities that provide the best hope are indicated below. Mainstream funding should provide much of the support for FLDW as indicated below, with additional support from special funds. An application to a charitable source for project management accompanies this report.

Mainstream

Mainstream funding, by virtue of its greater security, should provide at least 40% of total project costs. FLLN may be able to draw on mainstream funds set out below.

| Source | Activity | Remarks |
|---------------|---|---|
| LSC | Match parent learning and activities to OCN units and draw down unit funding for approved qualifications from LSC | Well regarded WEA Helping in Schools programme provides model. First step is to audit programmes and qualifications on offer in RAP and match to LSC Approved Qualifications. |
| LSC | Draw down LSC Skills for Life | Employment Unit calculates that |

Raising Attainment Project

23

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| | funding by complying with national framework. | 100 enrolments at level 2 for 20-29 weeks with 80% retention/completion rate would raise £14000 less management fee. This figure rises to £23,760 for 30-39 week course. |
| LSC | IAG referrals | Low rate of return per head. Arguably all staff/volunteers should be equipped to do referrals. |
| LSC | Joint SPELL/CALL/College bid to FLLN for FL coordinators | |

Special funds

Because of their uncertainty, special funds should account for no more than 40% of total. These may provide funding for home-school link activities.

| Source | Activity | Remarks |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Deprived Communities Learning Fund | Via SPELL Total fund in excess of £50,000 supports work throughout area. | Could contribute towards preparation costs for basic skills – outreach, materials, organisation. Could contribute to preparation costs for non-accredited work involving parents groups – tutor training, course development, materials. |
| FutureBuilders | New Government fund to enable voluntary and community sector to grow and develop capacity | Case should be made for a contribution towards capacity building of parents as partners. |
| Neighbourhood Renewal Fund | Via City Council | Case should be made for a contribution towards project funding for 2004 onwards |
| Objective 1 | | Case should be made for a contribution towards capacity building of parents as partners and perhaps e-networking of project and parents with schools and other agencies. |
| WEA Helping in Schools | DfES funding | Not currently operating in Sheffield. Could provide funding for OCN qualifications. |
| Standards Fund | May provide funding for aspects of the project in the future. | |
| Children's Fund | | Case should be made for a contribution towards project funding for 2004 onwards |

Charities

Charities are unlikely to provide more than a fraction of total costs, say a maximum of 20%. May provide funding for project manager and aspects of home-school link work.

| Source | Activity | Remarks |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Esmee Fairbairn | Recruiting and training parents as home school link workers | A new approach to the fund should be considered. |
| Trawl with help of SOFIADS | | |
| Tudor Trust | Funding Project Manager | Funding application being written by MYA |
| National Lottery | Home-School Link Workers | Long lead-in. Could provide basis for expansion of project. Should be treated as windfall funding. |

Stop Gap Measures

In the immediate short-term, there is a pressing need for a stop gap solution to wind down the existing project, ensuring continuity, protecting expertise and existing school and inter-agency networks and thereby paving the way for the new project. The old and new projects should run in tandem for a period to ensure the safe transfer of these intangible assets.

The first consideration is leadership and management to provide direction and continuity and to ensure project survival. The person or persons required to lead the project at a difficult time would need to combine

- expertise in the fast developing children's services policy area
- project management and funding skills
- preferably experience of adult learning and or family learning in schools

Stop Gap Funding

It could be April 2004 before additional funding is found for the project. To cover the 9 month period July 03 – March 04, the best use should be made of existing resources. The aim should be to

- Fund project management
- Focus remaining resources to best effect rather than spreading them thinly around existing project schools.

Putting Parents at the Centre

There are several reasons for putting parents at the centre of a new project:

- Harnessing their energy and commitment still further is key to the impact of the new project:
- Parents are the best advocates for the RAP approach: they will draw in others more effectively than professionals with a less personal stake in the outcomes
- The development of parents' leadership capacity is vital to the regeneration of the area.

What does putting parents at the centre mean? In our view it should mean

- Giving them a major voice in a newly formed project partnership board
- Establishing their learning and development as a key element
- Consciously preparing them for paid roles in the new project and related initiatives.

In developing the parental role in the new project, it is worth considering similar approaches elsewhere. AMBER and Helping in Schools are two initiatives that provide a model for parental involvement in schools. AMBER, which operates throughout Nottinghamshire, was set up to provide volunteering opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic Parents in schools. It is based at New College Nottingham. The WEA's Helping in Schools project operates in 60 LEA areas with support from DfES. It has an impressive record in terms of qualifications and employment.

Re-location

RAP's mainstream location has brought a number of advantages, especially access to and ownership by schools and LEA support. But the launch of a new project provides the opportunity for re-considering the issue of location. There are three good reasons for establishing the new project in the voluntary sector:

- It would remove the temptation to believe that the local authority should provide continuing financial support
- it would enhance the independence of the project in the eyes of parents and voluntary sector partners
- it would open up access to a variety of funding streams including charitable trusts.

Voluntary sector status, it is worth stressing, will not be an obstacle to receiving mainstream funding direct from Government, the LSC or the City Council.

It will be important to clarify the significance of the change to schools. There may need to be a protocol with governing bodies about access to and use of pupil data.

Should the project look for a host organisation to promote it and to provide a stable management base? Or should it seek its own independence? At this stage, there is a lot to be said for finding a host that is in sympathy with the aims of the project, can sponsor its value to other organisations and support applications for financial support. There may be a case when the project has found its feet for independent status but that must be a couple of years away.

NCH has emerged as the most suitable host organisation during the course of recent discussions.¹⁴ It is well placed by virtue of its location in the area and its existing role as the accountable body for Sure Start. Subject to further discussion, it now seems likely that NCH will take on the role of accountable body for the new project. A partnership agreement will be prepared for discussion by the newly formed partnership board.¹⁵

Finally

Two final issues need to be considered.

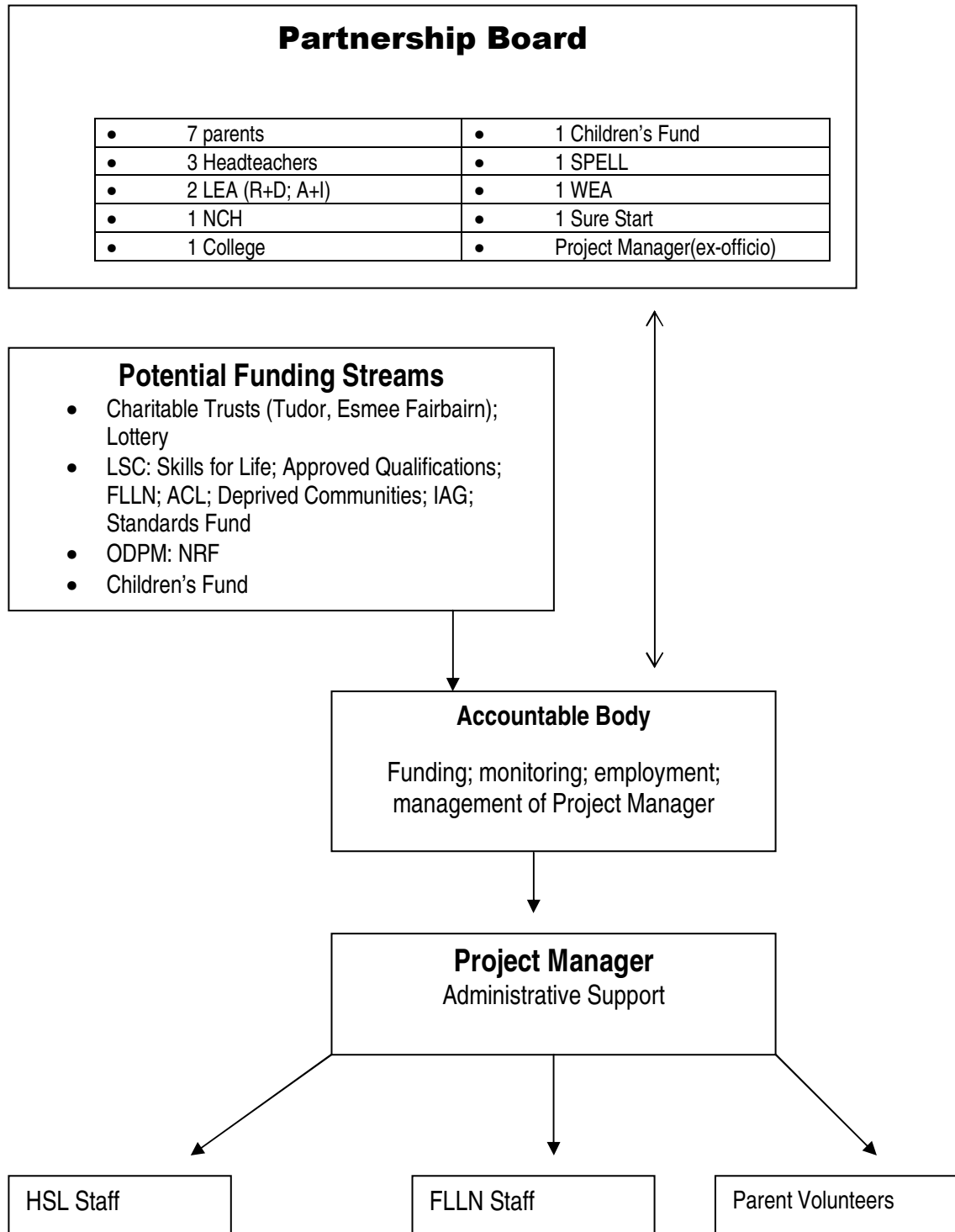
SRB5 or Wider?

Although there may be scope to extend the project across the city, the new project requires a period of consolidation before it is ready to contemplate expansion. But it is vital that the project is set up as a replicable model for the rest of the city.

¹⁴ In meetings of the steering group for this consultancy on 25 June and 11 July.

¹⁵ Due to meet for the first time in September 2003.

RAP 2 – Proposed Future Structure



Change of Name

A change of name will also be required to reflect the above changes.

Summary of Recommendations

In summary, the recommendations made above are these:

1. Set up Partnership Board

- Management Board for project
- Sets strategic direction termly, reviewing progress, pinpointing effective practice and building on it – action groups deal with second order issues: impact and evaluation; career development; staffing; finance.
- Create Core Group to provide day to day direction.
- Members of Board comprise: parents, Headteachers, NCH, SPELL, LEA, College, Children's Fund, WEA.

2. Establish Parents as Partners

- Involved in managing the programme as Board members
- Involved as volunteer workers
- Career development plan
- Perhaps a careership programme (linked to Modern Apprenticeship) with a wage

3. Appoint Project Manager and Administrator

The Project Manager for the new project should be appointed as soon as funds become available.

The Project Manager will

- Oversee and lead next steps
- Develop strategy for roll out
- Build relationships with parents and stakeholders
- Make links to related policy and delivery areas
- Develop governance, management and staffing of new project
- Develop funding strategy
- Service the Partnership Board and Core Group

4. Appoint Home School Link Workers

- 0.4 per school – preferably local roots and networks
- managed jointly by school and Project Manager
- career development plan

5. Appoint Family Learning and Literacy Outreach Workers

- organise adult learning programme and school-focussed literacy and numeracy programme
- 1 per 4 schools
- managed by school and Project Manager
- close collaboration with SPELL, CALL, College and WEA

6. Take steps to provide Family Rooms and Facilities in all schools

- to be provided for all schools (funded from capital funds eg ERDF)

7. Draw in expertise

- fund to buy in expertise eg networks and know-how
- tap into other models eg Helping in Schools
- evaluation and identification of effective practice

Appendix 1: Interviews and Meetings

In addition to those listed below, we also

- attended two meetings of the consultancy steering group (25 June; 11 July),
- a newly formed Core Group of the Partnership Board (15 July)
- convened a meeting to consider funding for family learning (16 July)
- spoke to and corresponded with Ian Whiteside, head of Behaviour Improvement Team, DfES.

| Who we talked to | Organisation | Date |
|---|--|---------|
| Lynda Hill | Project Development Worker | 21 May |
| Alan Chapman, Emma Cawley | SPELL | 22 May |
| Ann Hudson | SOFIADS | 28 May |
| Parents, RAP workers and HT | Fox Hill School | 11 June |
| HTs: Nicola Shipman; Montenev, Ann Stafford on behalf of HT Mansel; Bill Lee, Longley; Diane Woodward, Parson Cross | At Montenev School | 11 June |
| Parents and RAP workers | Montenev School | 11 June |
| Parents and RAP workers | Watermead School | 12 June |
| Miranda Plowden and Chloe Aspinall | SOAR | 12 June |
| Parents and project workers | Meynell School At Mount Tabor Church | 12 June |
| RAP Workers | At Southey Green Junior School | 13 June |
| Parents and RAP workers | Parson Cross School | 13 June |
| Diane Haswell with Vicky Wells | CALL | 17 June |
| Tony Tweedy, Vicky Wells and Bhadar Singh | Regeneration and Development Section, Sheffield Education Department | 17 June |
| Jenny Lindley ¹⁶ | STEPS, Sheffield Education Department | 17 June |
| Mary Binns | Young Children's Service, Sheffield Education Department | 18 June |
| Vicky Wells | Project Coordinator, RAP | 18 June |
| Alan Chapman | SPELL | 18 June |
| Tony Tweedy | | 10 July |
| Brian Lawson | Children's Fund | 10 July |
| Gill Raistrick | Sheffield College | 11 July |
| Cllr. Angela Smith ¹⁷ | Cabinet Member for Education | 18 July |
| Richard Deeks | Access and Inclusion Section, Sheffield Education Department | 23 July |

¹⁶ By phone

¹⁷ By phone

Appendix 2: Behaviour Improvement - A DfES Perspective

We asked Ian Whitehouse, Divisional Manager, Improving Behaviour and Attendance Programme, DfES, to consider this report at an early stage. Here is his response (11 July 2003).

We have had a look at the paper. I have set out below the key points we think it raises from the BIP perspective:

- BIP is not a prescribed measure, or set of measures, designed to tackle poor behaviour and truancy. Rather, it is a number of measures which vary from LEA to LEA but which are all designed to meet the objectives of the programme and reduce exclusions, improve behaviour and raise attendance in targeted schools where these problems present serious barriers to learning. Some measures are based on models used nationally while others are the result of local innovation tailored to local needs.
- In Sheffield, this has meant the introduction of some new initiatives as well the expansion of existing good practice over the past year. In Sheffield's BIP schools, the programme has included the creation of BESTs, the appointment of Lead Behaviour Professionals and delivery of specialist training, development of existing LSUs, the introduction of an innovative primary development programme as well as lunch and breaktime projects and delivery of flexible alternative provision for years 8-11. The programme is about to go into its second year.
- While some of this activity is designed to provide for the needs of pupils already on fixed-term exclusions or with serious behaviour problems, the focus of much of the programme is early intervention. The aim is to prevent exclusions from happening in the first place and tackle problems of behaviour and attendance before they become a real barrier to learning. Therefore, the note on page 2 of the paper - '*The limitation of the BIP approach is that it is primarily about damage limitation*' - is potentially misleading.
- This is particularly the case with BESTs, which have been established in the vast majority of BIP LEAs. These multi-agency teams take referrals of individual pupils who have generally not reached the threshold for normal intervention from CAMHS or Social Services, for example, but who would benefit from some early and rapid joined-up intervention from the appropriate agency. The other aspect of the BEST team is whole-school behaviour and attendance work, again with a focus on early intervention.
- Other aspects of the programme reinforce the emphasis on early intervention. For example, as part of the programme all BIP LEAs are asked to identify the children who are at risk of exclusion and serious behaviour problems and assign a key worker to each one. In addition, the programme includes more than 550 primary schools as well as 130 secondaries.
- However, the programme does not have an explicit emphasis on making the link with parents. In this area, there may be scope for development in many LEAs, within or beyond BIP. In developing this kind of work it would be important that it linked with the LEA's over all strategy for improving behaviour and attendance at a strategic, management and practical level, as well as with the wider school improvement agenda.
- There are, however, some examples of good practice in BIP where the link with the home as well as schools and pupils has been key. BESTs are an example of this as is the work of many Learning Mentors. However, the key area where the link is made with parents, and with the wider community, is in the development of extended schools. Each BIP LEA will develop a full-service extended school which will include services available to the wider community, including health services and facilities for family learning.

Appendix 3: References

Documents

Edwards, Anne and Warin, Jo (1999) 'Parental Involvement in raising the Achievement of Primary School Pupils: why bother?' in *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 325-341

EKOS Consulting (2003) *SPELL Impact Evaluation*, March, Sheffield

Eventus (2002) *Raising Attainment Project*, June, Sheffield

NHS/Sheffield City Council (2003) *Sheffield Children's Services – A Children's Trust Pilot: An Expression of Interest from Sheffield*

RAP (2003) *Planning Session* Anne Hudson, SOFIADS, 13 March

RAP(2002-3) *Quarterly Reports* Family Learning Development Coordinator

Sheffield Education Department (2000) *Raising Attainment Agenda in Southey/Owlerton*, SRB5 Project Proposal, November

Sheffield Education Department (2003) *Adult Learning Plan 2003-4*

Sheffield Education Department (2003) *One Partnership – One Plan*, Access and Inclusion Division

Wallace, Wendy (2002) 'Made in Sheffield – Parents in School' (feature about Mansel School), *TES*, 18 January, pp12-14.

Websites

Family Learning: NIACE Evaluation for LSC

http://www.niace.org.uk/Research/Family/LSC_Funded_Family_Progs_ExSum.pdf

Home School Links at Weston Coyney (Stoke on Trent)

<http://www.renewal.net/Preview.asp?Ref=/Case%20Study/Homeschoollinks.doc&doctype=Case%20Study>

Research on parent involvement

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/research/digests/ThuJun191655242003/567425>

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/parentalinvolvement/pics/>

Amber Project, Nottinghamshire

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/parentalinvolvement/pics/pics_notts/

DfES Behaviour Improvement Toolkit

<http://eicadmin.dfesstandardssite.net/eic/BIP-Toolkit-03-03.DOC>