

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	11 January 2013
Subject:	Community Access to School Facilities - Initial Report

Summary:

1. The report is the outcome of a survey requested by the Committee to which around 27% of Lincolnshire maintained schools and academies responded.
2. The report indicates that more than 85% of responding schools share their facilities with their community in some way.
3. On the evidence received so far, all secondary schools give access to the community and a large proportion of primary and special schools share when possible.
4. Lack of out of hours cover and the availability of larger or better facilities nearby are the most commonly cited reasons for not sharing facilities.

Actions Required:

1. The Committee is requested to receive the results of the preliminary investigation it requested.
2. The Committee is requested to make clear what further investigation it would find useful.

1. Background

1.1. In June 2005 the then DfES published *Access to opportunities and services for all – An extended schools prospectus*, which set out a core offer of extended services which the Government expected to be available in or through all schools by 2010.

1.2. The core offer included:

- A varied menu of activities (study support) including fun and stimulating activities which motivate and reengage children and young people
- Parenting support – including information sessions and family learning sessions
- Swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services
- High quality childcare provided on the school site or through other local providers

- Wider community access to school facilities to support the *Every Child Matters* agenda

1.3. The *Extended Schools* initiative was supported by a specific grant that was available to participating schools and that supported a number of Fully Extended schools across the country.

1.4. From April, 2011, ringfenced funding for Extended Schools was transferred to the Dedicated Schools Grant and effectively redistributed across all schools. The requirements for a 'core offer' were removed and left to schools' discretion. The *Every Child Matters* outcome framework was also withdrawn.

1.5. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has requested a survey of levels of community access to school facilities in the absence of national directives and in the light of the transfer of significant numbers of Local Authority maintained schools to academy status.

1.6. All 345 maintained schools and academy schools within Lincolnshire were approached in November 2012, and asked to complete a short questionnaire regarding community access to their facilities. The results of that survey are summarised in the Conclusion below.

2. Conclusion

2.1. Responses have been received from 97 out of the 355 schools in Lincolnshire. This is a 27.3% response rate.

2.1.1. 69 out of 276 primary schools responded (25.0%)

2.1.2. 17 out of 58 secondary schools responded (29.3%)

2.1.3. 11 out of 21 special schools responded (52.4%)

2.1.4. Of the primary schools, 60 were maintained and 9 were academies.

2.1.5. Of the secondary schools, 8 were maintained and 9 were academies.

2.1.6. Of the special schools, all 11 were maintained schools.

2.1.7. Of all the responding schools 83 out of 97 shared some of their facilities with the community. This is 85.6%.

2.1.8. Of the responding maintained schools, 68 out of 79 (86.1%) shared their facilities with the community.

2.1.9. Of the responding academies, 15 out of 18 (83.3%) shared their facilities with the community.

2.2. The breakdown of the schools sharing their facilities with their communities is shown in Table 1, below:-

	LA Maintained	Academy	Total
Primary	88.3%	66.7%	85.5%
Secondary	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Special	63.6%	-	63.6%
TOTAL	86.1%	83.3%	85.6%

Table 1: Percentage of Schools sharing facilities

- 2.3. Schools and academies reported sharing their facilities with a range of groups including parental groups, community groups and sports clubs.
- 2.4. The facilities shared include sports fields; the school hall; kitchens; ICT rooms and family rooms.
- 2.5. Special schools also reported sharing specialist facilities such as their sensory room and sensory garden space.
- 2.6. All secondary schools let their facilities in some way.
- 2.7. Special schools that did not have community use cited restrictions due to PFI (Private Finance Initiative) restrictions and the lack of a caretaker or specialist personnel (eg pool lifeguard) to be available to oversee the use. One reported problems in isolating particular sections of the building.
- 2.8. Community access was slightly higher in LA maintained primary schools than in primary academies. Primary schools that did not have community use cited lack of demand or the availability of equivalent, better or larger community facilities nearby. Lack of car parking facilities and complaints from neighbours were also mentioned occasionally. Some cited lack of a caretaker or personnel to be available to oversee the use. One academy reported 'lease complexities'.
- 2.9. In general, schools that are smaller, in terms of space and staffing, appear to have the greatest difficulty in sharing their facilities with the community. However, the overall proportion of schools that do share their facilities is pleasingly high.

3. Consultation

Policy Proofing Actions Required - None

4. Background Papers

A copy of *Access to opportunities and services for all – An extended schools prospectus*, DfES, 2005 can be found in the National Archive at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20060213211319/http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-1408-2005&>

The *Every Child Matters* outcomes framework can also be accessed through the National Archive at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100406141748/dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/about/aims/outcomes/outcomescyp/>

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