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Family Support: Raising educational achievement and tackling social exclusion

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Synopsis

This paper derives from an evaluation of the Family Support Service (FSS) within one of the local authority councils in Scotland and its contribution to the development of Integrated Community Schools. The FSS comprises some 46 personnel from a range of backgrounds including education, social work, community education and libraries and is located within the Council's Education Department. Its work, focusing on primary and secondary sectors, was conceived as part of the strategy of implementing New Community Schools (NCS), later Integrated Community Schools (ICS). Initially targeted on areas of most severe disadvantage, it became universal service as ICS embraced all schools. The policy contexts for its work included the Inclusion and Raising Attainment agendas of the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) and the move towards an integrated children's services model of joined-up provision for vulnerable families. The evaluation, too short-term to include pre-and post-implementation measures of pupil attainment, was largely qualitative in nature, focusing on four secondary and four associated primary schools. Interviews took place with headteachers and senior staff; FSS staff; pupils, both those in receipt of help from FSS and those not; parents; and representatives from all other relevant agencies. The conclusions of the report are wholly positive with FSS emerging for many as a central and indispensable element in the Council's Inclusion strategy.

Introduction

The creation of the Family Support Service (FSS) in the Scottish Local Authority Council which commissioned this study is set within the wider context of the new Scottish Executive's policy imperative on Inclusion within the school system. Within this Council, the approach to the creation of Integrated Community Schools was to set up a service which was interdisciplinary in make-up with a mission to work with other Council departments and external agencies through the schools to support vulnerable parents and their children.

The paper details the evaluation process, sets out the findings and discusses the issues which emerge in

terms of their policy implications. The evaluation was commissioned by the Council as part of its Best Value process. The need to have external evaluation, in this case from a university, is central to Scottish Councils' accountability processes.

The context: New Community Schools

The Family Support Service within this Scottish Council was created within a policy context which had its origins in the election of a Labour Government in 1997. The establishment of a Scottish Parliament two years later saw Inclusion emerge as a major educational policy initiative. This section looks at some of the policy context which led to the designation of schools in Scotland as Integrated Community Schools and the establishment in one Council in Scotland of a Family Support Service as a major element in its drive to promote inclusion in all of its schools.

In 1998, following the election of a New Labour government in the United Kingdom, the *New Community Schools* programme was launched in Scotland. New Community Schools (NCS) were intended to 'make integrated provision of school education, family support and health education and promotion services' and 'have clear management arrangements for the integrated management of these services' (Scottish Office, 1998). They were seen as central to:

- the modernisation of schools and the strategy to promote social inclusion;
- increasing the attainment of young people facing the destructive cycle of underachievement;
- maximising every child's opportunity to achieve his or her potential through early intervention to address barriers to learning;
- meeting the needs of every child and focusing the services which support children and their families;
- raising parental and family expectations and participation in their children's education.

The outcome measures and targets set out in *New*

Community Schools: A Prospectus (Scottish Office, 1998) were:

- raised attainment to be set out in terms of an increase in the percentage of pupils attaining particular qualifications or 5 – 14 levels, or an increase in the number of pupils attaining each measure;
- raised attendance and reduced exclusion;
- improved service integration;
- improved learning;
- improved social welfare;
- improved health.

Within a year of the establishment of five pilot projects, each of the 32 councils in Scotland was invited to identify one New Community School; within a further year, this was two. In 2004, the terminology changed to *Integrated Community Schools* (ICS) and a target was set by Government that every school in Scotland should be an ICS by 2007. Thus, in a relatively short period of time in the context of system change, New Community Schools had not only changed their name to emphasise integrated service provision but had moved from being a targeted to a universal provision.

New Community Schools: An evaluation

Interim findings from the first phase of the national programme found that New Community Schools were 'diverse both in the extent and nature of their associated activities (Sammons *et al.*, 2002). Even within one local authority, the structure of New Community School initiatives has varied depending upon local situations. Cluster (i.e., a secondary school and its associated primary, nursery and special needs schools) models sat side by side with individual school models. Local cluster initiatives have organised along both geographical and thematic lines (Duffield & Allan, 2003). Management and co-ordination of New Community Schools have also shown wide variation.

Cross-agency liaison and practice had been substantially enhanced. While there had been significant school-based developments to promote pupil engagement with a range of extra-curricular activities, developments to promote family and community engagement were taking longer to establish. A number of approaches had been adopted, however, including: formal steering committees involving wide community representation; community consultation events; community information days; home visiting programmes; a community-based environmental improvement project; a parent drop-in facility; a community- learning resource library.

Collaborative working: Challenges for professionals

In Scotland, joint working between social work, education and other agencies has a long history. The Children's Hearings system has encouraged inter-professional discussion and collaboration and collaborative responses have been incorporated into local authority 'youth strategies' (Kendrick, 1995a, 1995b). Individual projects, such as the Home School Employment Partnership, have been evaluated positively (Boyd & Bowes, 1996) and have demonstrated that, given the right conditions, inter-agency work can make a difference to the lives of young people and their families. The principle of inter-agency work has been central to legislation and policy since the mid-1990s. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 required local authorities to produce and publish Children's Services Plans in consultation with other relevant agencies.

School exclusion and problem behaviour in school have been addressed in a number of policy and funding initiatives which have also highlighted the importance of inter-agency working, including Promoting Positive Discipline, the Ethos Network and the Alternatives to Exclusion Initiative (Lloyd, Stead, & Kendrick, 2003; Munn, Lloyd, & Cullen, 2000). The report of the Discipline Task Group, *Better Behaviour, Better Learning* (Scottish Executive, 2001), identified the need for multidisciplinary work.

Recent studies of inclusion within local authorities in Scotland (Hamill & Boyd, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; 2002; 2003; Hamill, Boyd, & Grieve, 2002) have highlighted the continuing difficulties associated with inter-agency working. These difficulties arise at all levels within the system, from senior management to those working in the field. Mistrust and suspicion, variations in professional values and priorities, staffing levels and funding all contribute to the difficulties at an operational level. Solutions which include joint training, flexible contracts, teamwork and local autonomy are frequently identified by those working in the area of inclusion, but the difficulties inherent in such collaborative practices appear difficult to surmount.

Measuring effectiveness

While it is increasingly accepted that school effectiveness is a complex and multi-faceted issue, a number of common features or characteristics have been identified. Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore (1995), drawing on nearly 30 years of school effectiveness research world-wide, set out 11 factors for effective schools:

- professional leadership (firm and purposeful, a participative approach, professional authority in the processes of teaching and learning);
- shared vision and goals (unity of purpose, consistency of practice, collegiality and collaboration);
- a learning environment (an orderly atmosphere, an attractive working environment);
- concentration on teaching and learning (maximisation of learning time, academic emphasis, focus on achievement);
- purposeful teaching (efficient organisation, clarity of purpose, structured lessons, adaptive practice);
- high expectations (high expectations all round, communicating expectations, providing intellectual challenge);
- positive reinforcement (clear and fair discipline, feedback);
- monitoring progress (monitoring pupil performance, evaluating school performance);
- pupils' rights and responsibilities (raising pupil self-esteem, positions of responsibility, control of work);
- home-school partnership (parental involvement in their children's learning);
- a learning organisation (school-based staff development).

In Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) has published the third edition of *How Good is Our School* (2007) which includes quality indicators as well as supporting materials for schools to aid in the process of self-evaluation (HMIE, 2001). The 'quality process' is well established within Scottish schools and the concept of 'continuous improvement' is one within which local councils work. Much of the evidence from school effectiveness research has been translated into the work of HMIE and informs the practices which schools are expected to undertake on an ongoing basis.

School self-evaluation is a process which is also well established in Scottish schools. School Development Planning, use of Quality Indicators in a formative way and the annual production of Standards and Quality reports by every school in Scotland have all contributed to this culture of improvement. At a council level, Best Value reviews can be in-house or may involve external evaluators (e.g., Boyd & Simpson, 2000, looking at S1 and S2; Hamill & Boyd, 2001, looking at Inclusion) and are part of the evaluation process. For many years, HMIE have published their Quality Indicators so that schools might use them in a formative way. These processes emphasise the quantitative and the qualitative

elements of the evaluation of complex institutions whose aims include aspects of process and well as product.

There exists in Scotland a commitment to 'ethos' as a key aspect of school effectiveness. Since the publication in the early 1990s by HMI of the ground-breaking *Ethos Indicators* (1992), there has been a recognition that qualitative and quantitative measures of school effectiveness are both important. While in the 1990s the publication of examination results seemed to dominate the political debate, professionally there was a commitment to looking at process measures as well as outputs. Indeed, the Improving School Effectiveness Project (ISEP), funded in the 1990s by HMI and carried out by the Universities of London and Strathclyde, developed qualitative and quantitative measures, and used case studies to identify the factors associated with school effectiveness (Mortimore & MacBeath, 2001).

New Community Schools, by their very nature, have an enhanced set of aims, targeting not just those young people who are underachieving but all pupils. Ethos is central to the NCS project and an 'ethos of achievement' is often at the heart of their attempts to tackle social exclusion. Thus, evaluation of pupil self-esteem, self-efficacy, aspirations and ability to exercise informed choices should run parallel to evaluation of harder indicators of attainment, attendance, behaviour and offending.

The Family Support Service: An evaluation

The Council's profile was summarised in an HMIE report as follows:

> [It]… is Scotland's ninth largest council and has a population of around 170,600 people. It is an authority of contrasts with significant urban centres and a number of more rural communities. In economic terms, pockets of affluence sit alongside areas of extreme disadvantage. A few areas are among the most deprived in Scotland. A key challenge for the Council is to capitalise on the strengthening economy and on major investment in the area. Challenges for Education and Leisure Services (ELS) relate to working for inclusion and equality and raising aspirations and achievement.

This Council's Family Support Service is one of the additional support structures which assists all schools deliver outcomes related to the Integrated Community School agenda. The evaluation of this Council strategy was to be informed by the findings of the initial evaluation (Sammons *et al.*, 2002) and would take account of the criteria used for that evaluation and for the phase two specification.

The scope of the evaluation

The Council has been developing its strategy since 2000. Since 2001, there have been extensions and the roll-out has been underway since 2002. A key aspect of the proposed research was to look at how the Family Support Service assists schools in delivering outcomes relating to Integrated Community Schools. In line with the Government's advice, the Council had moved towards universality of provision of family support, using indices of social disadvantage (most notably, free school meal entitlement) as the basis for allocation of staff. The Council wanted an independent evaluation of the contribution of the Family Support Service to the achievement of the aims of the ICS. The scope of the project was to include four clusters, to be agreed with the Council. The sample would give a spread across the three main geographical areas and would include ICSs from the denominational and non-denominational sectors.

Methodology and timescale

(i) The timescale was to be from October 2004 to March 2005 for the collection of data with the writing of the report taking place between April and June 2005.

(ii) The methodology was to be qualitative, including some or all of the following, depending on time available:

- visits to schools to interview staff, pupils and parents, to observe processes and to examine how joint working takes place;
- interviews with key staff in other services who engage with the school and the pupils but who are not part of the school staff;
- interviews with people from the communities served by the ICSs about impact of the Family Support Service;
- surveys of other key people by questionnaire;
- case studies of young people and of initiatives/schools;
- collection and analysis of relevant documentation;
- analysis of criteria used to measure pupil achievement.

In such a short time-frame, there was no expectation on the part of the funder that any direct causal links between the interventions of the FSS and quantitative outcomes such as examination success would be investigated. And yet, raising attainment and tackling social exclusion are the twin policy directives underpinning the ICS in Scotland. Thus, no pre-test and post-test were feasible and no data were available to engage in any multilevel modelling of the kind employed in the *Improving School Effectiveness Project* (cf. Mortimore & MacBeath, 2001) in which the researchers had

participated. Nevertheless the impact of the work of the FSS on levels of achievement both of individuals and for cohorts would be as difficult to ignore as it would be to prove. The scope of the research was shared with key Council staff in advance of fieldwork taking place. At two separate meetings, headteachers, FSS staff and representatives from other agencies and Council departments (including Social Work, Community Education and Psychological Services) were invited to make an input into the research design.

The four clusters of schools were agreed. In each, the secondary and one of the associated primary schools were to be the main focus of attention, while the possibility of visiting other establishments would be open. The main approach was semi-structured interviews, with questions drawn from the statements in:

- the Council's literature on ICS;
- FSS documents;
- national policy and guidance on ICS.

In each cluster, all headteachers were interviewed individually; other senior managers were interviewed either individually or in groups; other key teaching staff such as Guidance (pastoral), Support for Learning and Behaviour Support (these staff were almost exclusively in secondary schools) were interviewed individually or in groups/departments; pupils, namely those in receipt of FSS support and those not, were interviewed in groups; parents were invited to come into the school to meet the researchers in small groups; and staff from other agencies were interviewed individually, in the main. In addition, scheduled meetings of key staff were attended by invitation, intervention groups of various kinds -- from breakfast clubs to drama groups -- were attended, again by invitation. Documentation, voluminous in its extent, was scrutinised. Thus, interviews, observation and documentary analysis served to provide some triangulation of data. The whole of the Family Support Service, some 70 in number, participated in a workshop session led by the researchers, in which they used a SWOT analysis to examine the service itself, considered the challenges facing their own area team and were given the opportunity to complete an individual and anonymous comment on any issues they wished to raise.

Some key research questions

The research questions derived from the Council's documentation and in particular from the Director of Education's presentation to heads of establishments following an inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE).

Essentially they were as follows:

- What has been the role of the Family Support Teams in helping the ICS meet its objectives?
- What successes have been recorded since the establishment of the first NCS schemes?
- What criteria should be used to measure success? What quantitative and qualitative evidence exists within the ICSs?
- How do the stakeholders see the role of the FSS within the ICS?

Framework for evaluation

The key aims of ICS, as reiterated by the Director of Education, provided a framework for evaluation:

- focus on needs of all pupils;
- engagement with families;
- engagement with communities;
- integrated provision;
- integrated management;
- integrated objectives and measurable outcomes;
- commitment and leadership;
- multidisciplinary working.

Findings

A total of 12 days was spent on school visits, two days per secondary and one per primary school. All headteachers and Family Support Service staff in these schools were interviewed; groups of parents, ranging from three to 12, were also interviewed; groups of pupils involved with FSS were interviewed, as well as, in the secondary schools, groups of pupils not involved; meetings of school committees on which FSS staff are represented were attended; staff from other agencies who attend these meeting were also interviewed; and specific pupil support groups were observed, from breakfast clubs before school starts, to drop-in sessions at school intervals and lunchtimes, to groups extracted from classes during the school day, to after-school study support groups.

The aims of the Family Support Service are used as an organising framework for the initial findings:

- providing greater understanding and better communication between home and school;
- promoting social inclusion by providing additional support to those children and young people who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged;
- involving children, young people and parents in opportunities which will improve self-esteem and personal and social development;
- working jointly with other agencies to ensure integrated approach.

(Family Support Services Review Working Group, November 2004)

Providing greater understanding and better communication between home and school

According to all the staff interviewed, this is the key function of the FSS. Indeed, the very name 'Family Support Service' is seen by many as problematic since not only is it confused with a Social Work function which has the same name but also it fails to highlight the 'home-school' nature of the relationship. In other words, the former name 'Home-School Link Service' clearly delineates the extent of the relationship; anything which supports the partnership between home and school in order to enhance the development of the child or young person is the remit of the FSS staff.

The main advantage of the FSS service as currently organised is the quality of the staff. An early decision, based on experience of a previous Government-funded initiative (Boyd & Bowes, 1996) to recruit people with degree-level qualifications and to pay them a proportionate salary, has resulted in a workforce with an impressive range of backgrounds – from teaching to social work, from community education to health workers – and a wealth of experience. In some cases, individuals have worked in the communities for more than ten years, and have built up relationships and trust with parents. The area-based allocation of staff means that there is continuity from primary to secondary school, and support for vulnerable pupils and parents at transition points is available.

Promoting social inclusion by providing additional support to those children and young people who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged

One of the most vexed questions facing the Council in the provision of this service is whether to target it at the most disadvantaged schools or to make it a universal service. Its decision to do the latter, based on the Government's requirement that Integrated Community Schools should be universal by 2007, was controversial. It meant that some schools in socially advantaged areas were given a (small) allocation of FSS staff time, and not all of them were sure how to deploy it. None of the most disadvantaged schools lost FSS time, but new staff who were recruited often found themselves working with a large number of schools, often for very short periods of time -- for example, one morning -- each week.

The service is, therefore, universal but also targeted. The targeting is done by the application of a formula based on an index of disadvantage, namely Free (school) Meal Entitlement (FME) though no one in any of the schools, including headteachers, was able

to explain exactly what the formula was and how entitlement was calculated. Thus the phrase 'most vulnerable and most disadvantaged' remains problematic. Hamill and Boyd (2000) found that while there was significant overlap between disadvantage and vulnerability, the two categories did not always overlap. It was left to schools, through the mechanism of an EST (extended support team), a multidisciplinary committee involving FSS, to decide on their target groups.

Recently, a new category of assistant home-link worker has been created specifically to work towards the prevention of exclusion from school.

Involving children, young people and parents in opportunities which will improve self-esteem and personal and social development
This issue of targeting is one which schools face also. None of the schools was comfortable with the notion that FSS workers should only work with designated children, either in terms of geographical area of disadvantage or of criteria of need. They did target young people who were vulnerable and whose families needed support, but they also included others, often to prevent the stigmatisation of the children themselves. Thus, some of the groups would be self-selecting (the breakfast club), others would be targeted (the anger management group or the primary-secondary transition summer scheme), while some would specifically involve high-achieving and advantaged young people (the peer mentoring reading club or the social skills group).

The focus varies from young person to young person, from family to family and from school to school. It might be attendance, late-coming, behaviour, personal hygiene, homework, transition or examination success. In specific cases, the focus was out of school, with week-end trips, summer schemes and even, in one case, a Saturday evening sports programme designed to prevent gang violence.

The extent to which the FSS staff were conscious of the need to promote inclusion was visible in almost everything they did. They were located within the body of the school; they attended important decision-making committees; they had links to senior managers and regular meetings with them; they took part in and led staff development activities. They were known to all of the pupils in the school and often ran activities which attracted a wide range of young people.

Working jointly with other agencies to ensure integrated approach
Collaborative working lies at the heart of the Integrated Community School concept. However, as the literature demonstrates, it is difficult to achieve. Lloyd *et al.* (2003) found that 'many do not have a comprehensive picture of the rights and responsibilities of families or professionals' and that 'there are no simple answers' to the problems faced by vulnerable young people. They argue that while clearly understood systems are desirable, 'plans or strategies worked when they were right for the young person at that time – when they were individualised responses' (p.71).

The Family Support Service as observed in this study certainly echoed these sentiments. There was clear evidence of collaborative inter-agency working, but there were tensions too caused by lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities. There was even suspicion between the FSS and another service, occasioned by the confusion of name as well as of role. However, it was the personalisation of the FSS which shone through in the comments of those with whom they worked. It was humbling to meet parents, mainly mothers, who themselves have problems of poverty, mental health, addiction, domestic violence and so on, coming into the school to meet academics, telling with such conviction how the FSS workers had been their lifeline. Indeed, FSS was often a conduit through whom families could communicate with professionals. They provided a unique service, working in the spaces between other agencies, inspiring trust and facilitating communication.

Family Support Service – The issues

It would be difficult to find a section of the education or social services provided by a council which attracts such praise. Not only have some of the individual FSS become 'legends' in their locale, but the staff of schools, not renowned for a positive outlook on support agencies, were unstinting in their praise for the work of the FSS: 'We couldn't do without them' were the words of one senior school manager and were echoed by many others in all of the schools. Pupils and parents, class teachers and senior managers, psychologists and health professionals, were lavish in their praise. So, in the light of such unanimity, it may seem churlish to raise issues, but they must be addressed:

- The universality/targeting dilemma needs to be addressed. What is clear is that provision of one half-day per week is not only spreading the service too thinly but is causing stress among FSS staff who have too many schools to support. In addition, the success of FSS staff in the most disadvantaged schools, which have a greater allocation (up to 0.4 FTE in primary and 1.0 FTE in secondary schools), has meant that workloads have increased

while staffing levels have remained constant.

- The success of FSS in primary and secondary schools begs the question as to why there is no provision in preschool centres or nursery schools. The Early Intervention initiative, launched around the same time as the New Community Schools, does not appear to have led to 'joined-up' thinking.

- The name Family Support Service does not adequately describe the nature of the work carried out and may, in fact, set up false expectations (especially in the view of social workers). Home-Link Service may enable greater clarity of role to be achieved.

- Time allocation and management need to be addressed. It is easy for FSS staff to take on too much, a fact borne out by a list of more than one hundred different groups and activities going on across the schools involving FSS staff. Some prioritisation of activities is needed, partly to preserve the sanity of staff but also to ensure that 'best value' is achieved in terms of effort expended. The FSS is managed from the centre but priorities are determined locally; this creates tensions.

Challenges for the researchers

Conflict
The Council which commissioned the research had already committed itself to an internal evaluation of the FSS after HMIE had inspected the education authority. Indeed, an early problem which arose was the realisation that even while the research was ongoing, there was a working group deliberating on 'Recommendations for change within the FSS'. The tension caused by this was evident at points throughout the research, and the Council attempted to clarify the position at the half-day workshop with FSS staff and separately at headteachers' meetings.

Timescale
The timescale of the evaluation was tight and the funding modest. Thus, the amount of time in each cluster of schools was limited. There was no time for pupil-shadowing, for example, or for gathering pre- and post- data on any of the key indicators such as attendance, behaviour/exclusions, attainment or pupil attitudes. Instead, it was a wholly qualitative study but with little time to take an ethnographic approach. The findings, therefore, are drawn from individual and group interviews with some observation of FSS activities and attendance at meetings, all over a six-month period.

Objectivity
Given the weight of positive evidence advanced by almost everyone involved as to the contribution of the FSS to the aims and objectives of Integrated Community Schools, it was difficult for the researchers to maintain a constructively critical stance. The senior managers within the Council with whom the researchers liaised were clearly committed to the service, and so any criticism of its functioning might be seen as attaching to them. However, the role of the external researcher must be to illuminate the issues so that policy-making can proceed on the basis of the evidence available.

Joined-up thinking
This Council is one of 32 in Scotland. It faces problems associated with poverty and disadvantage which are greater than most of the other councils but not as great as others (one of the secondary schools visited was the 25th most disadvantaged out of 350 or so in Scotland while one of the primary schools has more than 80% of its pupils entitled to free school meals). Like all the others, it is implementing the Integrated Community School programme. Does it make sense for each of the 32 to be commissioning small pieces of research, the findings from which may not become known to the others, unless the researchers can find outlets for their writing which are accessible to professionals as well as academics?

Conclusions
The literature on the relationship between poverty and underachievement in the United Kingdom is extensive and New Community Schools/Integrated Community Schools were a Scottish response to this enduring problem. In 2003/2004, HMIE carried out an evaluation of the progress made by the New Community School initiative. Its conclusions were that although

> it is clear that the ICS initiative has been a catalyst for beginning to enhance joint working between schools and otheragencies to provide support foryoung people...it is equally clear however, that the ICS initiative has not been fully successful in its aim of establishing a new over-arching vision and framework for the delivery of education and other children's services, using schools as the hub. (HMIE, 2004, p.28)

HMIE suggested that while 'there had been little effect on overall levels of pupil attainment in schools, there was clear evidence that the broader achievements of some pupils had improved'. They also suggested that 'the challenge for all involved is to ensure that [these] benefits are extended to all of our children and young people' (p.28).

The Council in this study has tried to target schools in areas of disadvantage while maintaining an FSS presence in every school. The main concern of FSS staff has been to promote social inclusion and to improve 'broad levels of achievement' but the challenges posed by HMIE remain; how can FSS help schools to improve levels of *attainment* as measured by examination results and how can they extend the benefits of their service to all young people?

Indeed, on the evidence of this study, the question must be whether the HMIE challenge is reasonable. On the basis of the evidence of this study, FSS is arguably one of the most effective interventions associated with the ICS initiative. Yet, raising *attainment* is not seen by anyone as the main objective for most of the young people involved. Their needs are more complex and social skills, anger management and prevention of exclusion, often are more immediate needs. Extending the benefits of FSS to all young people is an aspiration on the part of the Council and the staff involved, but the staffing levels make this an impossibility.

It is in the area of joint working that the FSS experience has most to offer. Their success in working in the spaces between other agencies, acting as go-betweens, sourcing services for families, offering support to schools which are having difficulty eliciting a response from a child's home, all suggest that their role is key if the aims of ICSs are to be achieved.

Postscript: A new paradigm?

It would be wrong to expect FSS alone 'to solve and satisfy and set unchangeably in order' (Philip Larkin). There needs to be a parallel focus on the learning needs of young people and their families of a kind which is long-term and fundamental if the poverty-underachievement cycle is to be broken. In this way the social and cognitive aspects of young people's development could be addressed at the same time. What Feuerstein calls a 'new conceptual paradigm' (Feuerstein *et al.*, 2002, p.93) may be required which challenges basic assumptions about the nature of intelligence and identifies the types of changes which can be produced in the cognitive structure of the individual.

At this stage it can only be surmised as to the impact the FSS might have if allied to a coherent and comprehensive intervention strategy which targets cognitive development as well as social integration.

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