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Inspecting Community Education

11–16

with guidance on self-evaluation

From the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

Inspecting Community Education

11–16

with guidance on self-evaluation

Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Telephone 020 7421 6800

Web site: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is intended to help school inspectors, headteachers and staff to evaluate aspects of community education in secondary schools for pupils aged 11–16. It complements the inspection *Handbook(s)*.

The booklet gives guidance on the context, inspection focus and evaluation of evidence for some elements of community education. You will find advice on what issues to explore, points to consider when gathering first-hand evidence and brief information on funding. Inevitably, the scope of a booklet such as this is limited; only some of the facets of community education affecting 11–16 education are featured, and these are in a state of evolution.

The general advice in this booklet is illustrated with examples of evidence and evaluations, *italicised* and presented in boxes, sometimes with a commentary to give further explanation. These examples show a range of ways in which evidence and findings can be recorded and reported. They are not meant to endorse any particular method or approach.

On full school inspections, judgements about these developments should be recorded in whatever sections of the report might be appropriate: standards, attitudes, teaching, curriculum, care, partnership and management. In some circumstances, judgements will be presented in subject sections, the report summary and among the things the school does well or should improve. Some of the commentaries on examples of evidence in this booklet give an indication of the aspects of the school's work to which judgements relate (these are identified in **bold**). The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspection covering this area of a school's work is likely to be a collaborative undertaking. A lead inspector should co-ordinate the gathering of first-hand evidence by other members of the team.

All the subject guidance booklets can be downloaded from OFSTED's web site (*www.ofsted.gov.uk*).

Our School Inspection Helpline team, on 020 7421 6680, will respond to any queries (or you can e-mail *schoolinspection@ofsted.gov.uk*).

COMMON REQUIREMENTS

Inspectors or evaluators in schools should have a good understanding of the key characteristics of the school and its pupils. The achievement of individuals and the different groups of pupils in the school must be evaluated to judge how effectively their needs are met. Credit should be given where, against the odds, pupils achieve well even though they may not have reached the levels of attainment expected for their age.

As an evaluator, you must be thoroughly familiar with the specific requirements for community education in the National Curriculum. You will need to consider how successfully the subject contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and how effectively it helps to prepare pupils for adult life in a culturally and ethnically diverse society.

When evaluating community education, you should consider how well planning and teaching take account of the following principles of inclusion:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils;
- promoting racial equality.

You need to be informed about the responsibilities and duties of schools regarding equal opportunities, particularly in respect of discrimination on grounds of gender, race and disability. These are covered by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, and their respective Codes of Practice. These Acts underpin national policies on inclusion, on raising achievement and on the important role schools have in fostering better personal, community and race relations, and in addressing and preventing racism.

In many schools you will find additional resources and initiatives aimed at promoting educational inclusion. You must know about any nationally funded or local initiatives in which the school is involved so that you can assess their effectiveness. [1] There is guidance on this in the OFSTED publication *Inspecting New Developments in the Secondary Curriculum 11–16 with guidance on self-evaluation* (published 2001).

[1] Notably, Education Action Zones, Excellence in Cities, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Grant (EMTAG), and other programmes funded through the Standards Fund, the Single Regeneration Budget, the New Opportunities Fund and New Deal for Communities

1 WHAT IS COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community education has two main aspects:

- engagement of the community to strengthen the work of the school;
- engagement of the school to strengthen the community.

While the most immediate interaction will be between a school and the parents of its pupils, most schools will be involved to mutual benefit with local business, commerce, church and social groups; many have productive links with communities overseas.

In section 10 inspections, the focus is to assess:

- the impact of this community engagement on the quality of education provided for the pupils;
- its contribution to raising pupils' achievement.

The term 'community education' is often used loosely to describe aspects of lifelong learning that now fall within the remit of the Adult Learning Inspectorate and OFSTED's arrangements for the inspection of youth work. It is important to note that OFSTED inspection of secondary schools, under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996, has no locus with regard to adult education or youth work, though these may take place during the day or evening on a school's premises. Some schools have integrated provision.

1.1 Mission and vision: defining the inspection focus

The term 'community school' now serves as the designation of maintained schools which are neither 'foundation' nor 'voluntary'. Traditionally, about 20% of secondary schools described themselves as 'community schools'. Such schools often have an overarching commitment to community education that is articulated at governing body level by a mission statement. Inspectors should be aware that:

- there is no universal definition of 'community education' – if schools see themselves as having such a mission, they will define their own aims and objectives;
- inspectors will need to tease out an inspection agenda, within the OFSTED remit for section 10 inspection, from what the school claims to be doing.

Mission statements often express intentions at a very general level. Before inspection or self-evaluation, evaluators should explore how governors and managers think the statement should be translated into action, for instance, in **teaching**, organising the **care** system and **management** of finance.

After discussion of a mission statement, evaluators might identify the following as some of the points to pursue in gathering documentary and first-hand evidence.

- In selecting teaching methods, do teachers have an eye to taking advantage of people and facilities in the school's wider community? For example: do they exploit the 'oral archive' of local knowledge (in history), or explore land use and commerce in Europe through e-mail links with twin schools (in geography)?
- Do pastoral co-ordinators have the vision to recognise the potential of recent former pupils or grandparents as learning mentors?
- Do administrators ensure that opportunities offered by central funding are pursued in a way that is efficient with time and that there is proper accounting?
- Are classroom teachers, parents, pupils and 'friends of the school' consistent in what they say about the school's community mission? Do they share the same vision?

1.2 Sources of evidence

In addition to the usual sources of evidence, it is likely to be especially useful to talk to representatives of the parent teacher association (PTA) and members of the school council. A particularly rich vein of evidence is to be found in talking to the school's community education partners and providers such as:

- officers from the health education authority;

- a family numeracy co-ordinator;
- education–business partnerships or organisations;
- adults who come into the school for learning;
- partner school headteachers.

Schools may wish to share with inspectors material such as: Schools Curriculum Award submissions; Investors in People assessment reports or Sports Mark/Arts Mark portfolios. These may well provide evidence of supported school self-evaluation and may give an insight into some community-related activities that can be investigated further. However, for section 10 inspections, evidence must be set within the inspection Framework and considered against the criteria when making judgements about value, effectiveness and, crucially, the impact on quality of provision and pupils' learning.

Example CO1 gives an illustration of the nature of documentary evidence and what might be gleaned from it. Often, a particular document will shed light on a number of aspects of a school's work. Comparison of different documents will sometimes reveal issues that are not apparent from consideration of the documents separately. A review of documentation is likely to raise further points for exploration.

Example CO1: school documentation – a few samples

- *Prospectus: '… seek to serve the needs of the wide and small communities of which we are part … to develop strong and mutually supportive links with the wider community and to be an integral part of that community'.*
- *Home–school agreement: covers the usual range of parents' responsibilities and makes reference to behaviour as pupils go to and from school.*
- *Newsletters to parents: exchange visits to France, Finland, Germany; fund-raising for pupils at a school in Ecuador; news of Sports Council bid for squash-courts for joint school–community (weekend) use; art links with primary feeder schools; report of joint barber shop choir performing at senior citizens' homes; list of evening adult education classes on the premises; note complaining of behaviour on buses to and from school; request for help with an 'industry day' in Year 9, and so on … Cordial tone.*

Commentary

Activities in the newsletters seem broadly in keeping with the aims set out in the prospectus. However, it cannot be assumed that all the ventures are worth the opportunity costs or have a positive impact. The following would be some points to explore. What are the benefits to learning and the curriculum of an exchange with Finland (**curriculum**)? What is the contribution (**attitudes and curriculum**) of fund-raising for Ecuador? What benefits accrue in terms of progression and continuity of learning from the art links with partner schools (**curriculum**), and how is this managed to best advantage (**management**)? How does the school decide about appropriate inputs to 'industry day' (**curriculum and management**)? Is the home–school agreement about behaviour while travelling to school not working (**attitudes, care and partnership**)? Do these activities, which attempt to promote community engagement, demonstrate coherent and well-**managed** policy and practice?

Example CO2 gives an illustration of the nature of first-hand evidence and what might be gleaned from it. Often, a particular interaction will shed light on a number of aspects of a school's work. As with evaluation of documentary evidence, first-hand evidence may indicate further points to explore.

Example CO2: evidence from a buffet lunch meeting of inspectors with two dozen 'friends of the school'

- *Former pupil, now aged 25, who established a small upholstery business with support from the Prince's Trust, takes four Year 11 boys two days a week for 'alternative curriculum'. Says links with head of upper school are excellent; pupils now skilled at stapling webbing and stitching in springs, but not yet to be trusted cutting cloth; pupils behave – 'I just warned them what would happen if they messed about.'*
- *Elderly Indian, whose great grandchildren are pupils and who leads a weekly twilight-time club on Indian literature for adults and pupils, engages the English inspector in animated conversation. Was E M Forster, and even Kipling, influenced by Tagore? Scholarly quotations in Bengali and English from Gitanjali: 'This is my delight, thus to wait and watch at the wayside where shadow chases light …' 'They call me Professor Godbole!', he laughs.*

Commentary

These two learning opportunities suggest that the school has been creative in identifying and marshalling members of its community who have a special talent to share (**curriculum**). Perhaps there are a few points to follow up. Do staff call unannounced at the upholstery workshop to check that things are as they should be (**care**) and are the pupils there making skills progress as well as progress in their **attitudes**? Is there evidence from the perceptions of staff and pupils that the work of 'Professor Godbole' contributes to the promotion of good community relations in addition to a love of literature (**attitudes** and cultural **curriculum**)?

1.3 Impact on aspects of the school's work: reporting findings

Effective community education should raise the quality of most aspects of a school's work. However, some community education initiatives might have little impact, or could even be detrimental, in that time is spent on unproductive community activities at the expense of the school's core work. In evaluating outcomes, evaluators should take cognisance of the school's stated objectives and desired outcomes for elements of community education while, at the same time, considering whether the objectives themselves are reasonable. Some schools may ask for OFSTED inspection of community education as a special feature.

In the main, OFSTED reports will refer, where appropriate, to the effect that community education has with regard to the aspects listed in the *Framework* for inspection. This is illustrated below for the aspects in the current *Framework*. Where relevant, community education matters may be reported in subject sections. Example CO3 gives an illustration of how some findings relating to community education might be reported. In setting an agenda for the inspection, identifying sources of evidence and in recording and marshalling that evidence, inspectors need to keep in focus the reporting requirements in the *Handbook*.

Example CO3: reporting the impact of community education

Standards

- *Science subject section: 'Achievement in science in Key Stage 3 has been improved through close liaison with feeder schools to eliminate repetition of work already covered.'*
- *Physical education (PE) report section: 'Progress and motivation in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) PE is impeded because the sports hall is often in use for adult education when lessons are timetabled.'*

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- *'Provision of a private and supervised bus by the local parish, which picks up particular pupils from their door, has greatly improved attendance and these pupils' attitude to coming to school.'*
- *'There are frequent unpleasant incidents between pupils from this school and a neighbouring secondary school at lunchtime; the canal bridge has been the scene of a number of fights between gangs of older boys. The school is working closely with its neighbours to contain this unacceptable behaviour.'*

Teaching

- *Drama subject section: 'Work in Key Stage 4 has benefited greatly from support by members of The People's Players, who have come into lessons to rehearse small groups and assist with make-up and props.'*
- *General aspect section: 'Many teachers draw on members of the community to make inputs to lessons and longer-term projects. Most of these inputs are well tuned to pupils' needs. However, in too many cases, visitors have not been briefed adequately and have talked at too great a length and 'over the heads' of pupils.'*

Curriculum

- *'Class assemblies, while generally of a Christian character, have been significantly enriched by involvement of members of the local community who have shared their personal philosophy of life. For example, an exponent of existentialism gave a Year 11 group a straightforward and inspiring outline of the tenets of Hegel and Kierkegaard and what they mean for her.'*
- *Sociology subject section: 'While inclusion of adults in the GCSE class improves the financial viability of this small group and promotes maturity of discussion, the considerable difficulty experienced by the adults in attending regularly is a serious brake on progress.'*

Care

- *'Members of the community who are able to form a ready rapport with pupils whose achievement is precarious are prudently recruited as learning mentors. For example, a master jeweller, who settled in the town as a teenager on his expulsion from Uganda in 1972, meets on a daily basis with pupils who are asylum-seekers from the Muslim world.'*
- *'Though the school is entrepreneurial in inviting adults from the community to share their skills and give opportunities to pupils, it is not always scrupulous in making checks through the Criminal Records Bureau, when individuals are given unrestricted access to pupils, for example, in sports coaching and off-site 'community service'.'*

Partnership with parents

- *'The school goes out of its way to arrange meetings with parents on territory where they feel more comfortable than at school: for example, the Muslim women's centre and a factory social club. This is greatly appreciated by families.'*
- *'Lack of an appointments system at parents' meetings in school results in queuing for over half-an-hour to meet some teachers, so that not all of a pupil's teachers are seen.'*

Leadership and management

- *'The school has been forward-looking in engaging the services of a retiring feeder school headteacher, as a part-time member of the senior management team. He co-ordinates community education and, in particular, promotes the inclusion of pupils from the large newly built housing development.'*
- *'Indiscriminate letting of facilities for youth work and adult education has led to dilapidation and maintenance costs out of all proportion to the rents received and the benefits gained by the community. For example, over-use of water-logged playing fields has reduced them to a quagmire.'*

2 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Guidance on evaluating partnership with parents is set out in the current *Handbooks*. Responses to the parents' questionnaire give an initial perspective on this area of the school's work. The key statements are as follows.

- 'I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.'
- 'I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.'
- 'The school works closely with parents.'

Following these up might provide evidence which illuminates, for example, how happy or otherwise parents are to attend information sessions, meetings and courses at the school; how the parents' association builds skills and confidence among parents; and how they feel about the learning environment of the school and its contribution to sharing facilities and resources for community learning and development. Issues raised by questionnaires and letters can be explored at the parents' meeting. There should be opportunity provided for parents or careers advisers to meet with inspectors in private or to talk on the telephone if they have matters which they would feel uncomfortable airing in a public meeting. It is important to recognise that strengths and weaknesses in this partnership may reflect positively and negatively on either side. Assertions made by the school or by parents should be tested by seeking the view of the other party, or by examining impartial evidence.

There may be evidence of the partnership with parents through family learning activities. Family learning programmes cover a variety of learning opportunities, but often focus upon literacy, numeracy and provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Family learning days and weekends are regularly run by many schools. These contributions to raising the achievement both of pupils and of their parents are surveyed and exemplified in *Family Learning: a survey of current practice* (OFSTED, 2000), which is available on the OFSTED web site (*www.ofsted.gov.uk*).

The role of the PTA is likely to be significant in promoting effective links with parents. Examples CO5 and CO7 refer to work by PTAs. Another example is CO23.

Example CO4: evidence about use of a community centre for curriculum evenings (based on interview with deputy head)

Analysis of attendance at curriculum evenings showed that ethnic minority parents were poorly represented. In response to these findings, curriculum evenings are now organised at a local community centre. Leaders of ethnic minority communities are invited. The community liaison officer and sixth form students act as translators. The recently held information evening on the Numeracy Strategy was well attended by over 50 parents. Parents were given the opportunity to try out practical sample activities and discuss, in small groups, how these activities related to the Numeracy Strategy and how they could support their child's learning.

Commentary

All this appears to be a successful outcome of well conceived innovation to include parents in **curriculum** development: it would be prudent to talk to others who attended, to test the evaluation.

Example CO5: evidence about use of a community centre for 'parents' surgeries', involving liaison with the PTA and others (based on interview with head of lower school)

Pastoral staff had difficulty in getting parents to attend meetings in school to discuss problems with behaviour and attendance and to agree pastoral support plans. Weekly 'parents' surgeries' were set up in a local community centre, located near to shops. Meetings were organised out of school hours for those parents unable to attend because of work commitments. Social inclusion funding was used to hire a room at the centre and to remunerate staff for out-of-hours work. The PTA organised a crèche for younger children. The education welfare service (EWS) undertook home visits to encourage parents to attend during school hours. The majority of parents attended appointments at the community centre and some progress was made in looking at strategies and setting review dates to measure progress. Parents now attend for six-weekly review meetings and are more responsive to the school's requests for assistance than previously. This has resulted in a more consistent approach to behaviour management between home and school. Where attendance was the problem, condoned absence has decreased. The school is planning to extend 'parents' surgeries' into other community centres. Notes on parents' questionnaires confirm that parents are much happier to discuss problems with school and attend review meetings.

Commentary

Innovative use has been made of social inclusion funding (**management**). There was effective liaison with the PTA and EWS. The community centre chosen was a convenient venue. A unified approach to behaviour management seems to be being established with some parents, though it is still early days (**care**). Partnerships between home and school are being developed to manage difficulties when they arise.

Example CO6: evidence about communication with parents

[S = strength, W = weakness]

Termly newsletters celebrate the success of pupils and detail significant events in the life of the school (S). Details of forthcoming events, such as visits, consultation and information evenings or examination dates, are not included (W). Letters are sent to parents, notifying them of these events separately, but often parents have only short notice (W). Dates for Year 11 examinations are sent out in the spring term. There is no system to ensure that all correspondence is given to parents (W). Written communications are not translated into a language accessible for ethnic minority parents and communication with this group depends on the level of language acquisition of the pupil (W). The prospectus is attractive, well laid out and meets statutory requirements (S). It states that homework diaries are a daily means of communication between home and school. Parents and tutors are expected to sign them weekly. However, scrutiny of diaries showed little evidence of their use as a communication medium and few were signed (W). Most did not record homework (WW). The home–school agreement asks parents to ensure that both homework and coursework are completed and handed in on the due date.

Commentary

On this evidence, written communications with parents are unsatisfactory: the weaknesses outweigh the strengths. Communications are not well **managed**.

Example CO7: interview with parent-governor about a PTA initiative

The PTA had been aware of some informal criticism of arrangements for parents' evenings to discuss pupils' progress, and of the Key Stage 4 options. The PTA has worked with the parent governor and the headteacher to send to parents a consultation paper on these issues and at the same time to undertake a comparison with common practice elsewhere.

Parents' evenings

In the past, parents have queued to see teachers, with no appointment system. It was not unusual to queue for 40 minutes to see one teacher. In consequence, parents had been unable to get to all the staff they hoped to meet. This was resented as a waste of parents' time and seems to suggest inefficient organisation on the part of the school. There was overwhelming support for a system of arranged short interviews. Other schools were able to detail such systems that work effectively. In view of these findings, the system was changed with immediate effect.

Key Stage 4 options

The school has offered Italian for many years and numbers have fallen steadily to fewer than ten pupils a year. Meanwhile, the school has become a 'technology specialist school'. Yet there is no Key Stage 4 examination course in information and communication technology (ICT). The PTA and parent governor pursued this issue in a similar way to that of parents' evenings. The outcome of the consultation and comparison amounted to a strong case for replacing Italian with an ICT course. In view of staffing and hardware difficulties, this has been put on hold for the time being.

Commentary

The PTA and governor have taken initiative in advancing the principles of best value: compare, challenge, consult and compete – this is potentially a helpful support for **management**. They have gathered evidence to put together a convincing case for changes on both points. The school has responded with appropriate speed on the issue that had no significant resource implications. How the Key Stage 4 curriculum now features in the school development plan is a matter for further investigation.

3 USE OF COMMUNITY FOR CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT

Expertise in the community may be used to support work in lessons at suitable junctures in a programme of study. Pupils might be taken out to establishments as diverse as the local library or cattle market to further their skills and understanding. They may also go out on work experience and other placements. Keen practitioners from the community may come into the school to broaden the range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils may make gains by learning alongside adults in the classroom and by participating in community ventures such as street parties. The sections that follow relate to the formal curriculum and to that for attitudes and values. This is not to imply a polarisation, but rather a continuum of purpose and outcome.

It is important to stress the importance of **planning** these activities and opportunities so that they are integral to a coherent curriculum. Such community engagement directly in the curriculum is likely to be most effective in enriching quality and enhancing achievement if it is neither incidental nor accidental. These approaches succeed with careful and considered **management**, so that they are seen to be worthwhile by all involved – pupils, teachers and community contributors. In particular, careful attention needs to be given to the clarity of learning outcomes. It is then possible to gather evidence in monitoring so that the activities are evaluated against the intended outcomes.

3.1 Formal curriculum and extra-curriculum

In lessons, the key purpose is to raise pupils' achievement against specific objectives, such as those in the National Curriculum programme of study or specifications for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). For example, in Key Stage 3 geography, consideration of the changing distribution of economic activity in a rural area could be lifted considerably by input from a well-briefed local farmer or planning officer. Some extra-curricular activities also have a clear objective with regard to 'raising the game'. For instance, in soccer coaching, a session could have a specific focus on controlling height or accurate range with a ball that is already moving. Such sessions are often conducted admirably by professional footballers from the local team, with much associated enhancement of motivation for the pupils. The effectiveness of lessons and out-of-hours sessions with focused learning objectives should be appraised by evaluators who are able to judge standards and therefore learning in the context. An arrangement that includes links with the local or wider community may well have substantial incidental learning gains (for instance, appreciation of a farmer's perspective on issues). However, the key issue has to be whether the pupils are meeting the learning objectives effectively. The motivation of the pupils involved may well be enhanced by the presence of professionals and their sharing of skills. In evaluation, this further supports the focus on teaching and learning outcomes – has this different teaching approach, involving others from the community, produced the appropriate learning outcomes, thereby contributing to raising levels of achievement?

Example CO8: history Year 8 (average ability group); seventeenth-century Puritans; visit to seventeenth-century Quaker meeting house; presentation by a Quaker who is a former primary teacher

Quick question-and-answer work about the Civil War: dates, King and Commonwealth, questioning authority – pupils show coherent and eager recall. This enables pupils to consolidate their knowledge and allows the presenter to gauge the extent of it.

Cartoon and quotation from Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress; a matching one of the 19-year-old George Fox 'boozing' with his cousin Bradford and a quotation from Fox's journal. Pupils quickly pick up the parallel notion of 'rejecting the world', showing that, through their work in school, they have assimilated something of the mood of the times.

Cartoon prompts questions from pupils about 'thee' and 'thou'.

Series of cartoons about formal and informal (thee) speech in the seventeenth century and the notion of superiors and inferiors – pupils asked to give examples of those they might address as thou/thee and you (difficulty with object [thou] and subject [thee] – presenter explains that, in Quaker dialect, 'thee' was used for both). Cartoon of refusal to address judges correctly and do 'hat honour' in court (introducing 'Friends of Truth' and 'Quaking at the name of the Lord'). Framed print of 'The Presence in the midst' (showing ethereal Christ in a 'meeting') and another print showing a Friend 'speaking in the ministry' – the only one with hat removed, being in the presence of God. Pupils notice the original hat pegs in the meeting room. Hence pupils get the idea that the early Quakers refused to show normal 'respect' except to God. Indications are that pupils have been well prepared to benefit from this learning opportunity.

Selected pupils read one-line quotations from Fox's journal: 'Woe unto the bloody city of Lichfield!' 'I saw an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness . . . I saw the infinite love of God.' Hence pupils come up with idea of the early Quakers as a sincere but troublesome people who added to the disquiet and uncertainty of the times. The strength of their

underlying knowledge enables them to interpret new information robustly: they are showing good achievement for average ability pupils in Year 8.

As they leave: 'Look at the gravestones – why are they all the same, even the modern ones?'

The knowledgeable presenter has a ready rapport with the pupils and has prepared resources that engage their interest, involve them, and convey fairly straightforward points. This suggests very good briefing by the history teacher and consequent very good use of time.

[Teaching and learning very good (2); attainment well above average (2); attitudes and behaviour excellent (1)]

Commentary

This evidence, gathered by the history inspector, indicates very worthwhile curriculum provision with quality enhanced by this well-planned visit and presentation. The presenter keeps to the brief of interpreting evidence to weigh up the social impact of Quakers in the seventeenth century. The lesson is well matched to the National Curriculum programme of study and the specified learning outcomes are met. The presenter does not dwell unduly on the theological basis of Quaker faith and practice or on present-day attitudes in the Society of Friends. Pupils' knowledge, understanding and willingness to respond reflectively to the situation show very good established achievement and excellent attitudes. There may have been wider spin-offs – arousing curiosity about the unusual place of worship and the possible nature of the worship (**spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning**).

Example CO9: chess club; age range 11–16; 11 boys and 7 girls; with two expert and two inexperienced adults

(T+ = teaching strength, L+ = learning strength)

Pupils are grouped as two players, two evaluators at single-sex boards (to combat the traditional dominance of boys in chess clubs). The non-expert adults are integrated as a 'boy' and a 'girl'. End games with one unsupported king. Pupils have to consider king v king plus two bishops and king v king plus two knights. Pupils are considering the proposition 'is it a draw or is it winnable – if so, in how many moves?' (T++). One girl group is recording moves from reasonable random towards mate position for the bishop game (L+); another is working backwards from a mate position in the knight game (L+). Boys are playing quick games from reasonable random towards mate with much argument, to get a general feel for routes through the problem (L++). All appreciate that the net must sweep to R1(a8) and that R2(a7), Kt2(b7) and Kt1(b8) must also be put under attack (to tie the king in a corner) - secure attainment. Both girl and boy groups come to the view that the bishop game is winnable (but believe it to be about 30 moves) (L++). Pupils are uncertain about the knight game (L+/-). There is well-focused plenary debate (T++) that shows very good achievement in relation to the number of terms for which pupils have been playing the game. Leader intervenes after half an hour (T+) to say that masters consider the bishop game winnable in about 20 moves but regard the knight game as a draw. Play continues to test these propositions; pupils are keen to avoid inefficient moves (L+) they show very secure attainment. Even the youngest pupils believe that the cost of losing a piece in early play relates to its end-game efficacy – excellent achievement. Any pupil with something worthwhile to say gets a fair hearing (T+).

[Teaching and learning are very good (2)]

Commentary

The strategy of separate girl/boy boards is common and allows girls to engage fully with the game. The leader has posed challenges that promote collaborative research and debate; the less experienced learn from those who are more practised in problems of this kind. The task is worthwhile in stretching talented pupils, but accessible to beginners; it encourages pupils to clean up their end game. They are also sharing an adult pastime with adults. All the recorded evidence of teaching and learning is good and often very good; there is no reason why the evidence should not be graded to clarify the judgements. There is real quality in this extra-curricular provision (**curriculum**).

3.2 Curriculum of attitudes and values

Some activities in school are conceived as opportunities for pupils to work with or alongside members of the community in order to engender empathy with the community's values and the aspirations and concerns of its different sections. The agenda may have a high profile, for example, in timetabled 'community service' one afternoon each week for all classes in Year 9: a pair of pupils may go to play dominoes with residents in a care home, largely with the purpose of 'getting to know them'. In other activities, such as joint adult/pupil rehearsals for a Morris dancing presentation at the village carnival, the 'getting to know one another' agenda may be more subtle.

Example CO10: talking with people about activities during the year

Concert at residential home for the elderly. Photographs show choir of two dozen and residents joining in. Parts of the performance with visitors singing along recorded on tape. Matron (governor at feeder primary school) asks to talk to inspector on telephone: little need for organisation on her part - a 'looked-forward to' annual event. Two Year 11 pupils say they enjoyed the concert and rehearsals; they gave them a high standard to aim for. The old people were really responsive. This suggests that the concert stimulated high standards. There were substantial mutual benefits at modest cost in time for organisation.

Calls are arranged to decorating/construction projects. Premises used by playgroup – painting cupboards as 'community service'. Playgroup leader says pupils were keen, but not sufficiently skilled. Evidence of uneven coverage, with paint runnels and drips on the floor. Adults had to do a lot of cleaning up. Insufficient supervision seems to have resulted in unhelpful work that gives a poor impression of the school and leaves pupils with the attitude that third-rate work will do for the playgroup.

Calvary at the presbytery. Five-metre wooden cross in a garden. Curate shows video of project involving 10 Year 11 boys (some quite 'difficult'), a science teacher and two technology teachers for five evenings. Guy lines to manoeuvre and stabilise cross; emphasised safety. Load of concrete (teacher explains about getting centre of gravity low). Plants 'puddled in' with peat mix and fertiliser – for example, St John's wort and Jacob's ladder. Two parents help with digging and tugging. Parishioners bring in lemonade and sandwiches. A good time had by all. A first-class job. Two lads who left school came back to weed garden. The project provided a focus for applying construction skills. It promoted good relations between pupils and staff and with the parish. It was well managed, involving a significant time commitment by staff. The parish priest was very obliging in risking a garden makeover by this 'ground force'.

Commentary

The projects have a 'doing something for the community' and 'pulling together' aspect. Unfortunately, because of inadequate **management**, the painting has a negative effect on attitudes; the others have a convincingly positive effect for reasonable expenditure of time on the part of the school.

Example CO11: discussion with the Education Service for Traveller Children

[S = strengths)

Context. The number of children in school varies according to the time of year. Recently, several Traveller families have accepted local authority housing, or taken a place on a residential site, and a more stable group is being created. Though the service is initially funded through the LEA, additional monies from the European Social Fund have improved the provision significantly in the form of additional resources and staff.

Developments. Relationships with families have developed with the introduction of an additional post to work specifically with families, to help them integrate into the community (S). This has resulted in a group of parents mounting an exhibition in the school's foyer on the Travellers' culture (SS). The exhibition coincided with the termly theme for assemblies: 'Celebrating the diversity of cultures within the community' (S). Traveller children took part in an assembly, sharing their culture and traditions with the rest of the school (SS). Project work produced during their individual literacy sessions, based on their culture, is being collated by the school to form a book to celebrate the Travellers' culture (S). The antipathy that some pupils had towards Travelling children has been reduced through increased understanding (S).

Commentary

Good **management** and planning have ensured that resources have been well used to develop constructive relationships. There has been an effective social inclusion strategy and celebration of cultural diversity within the community (**curriculum**).

4 LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY FOR PASTORAL SUPPORT

It is increasingly recognised by many schools that their local communities can be engaged and contribute towards possible solutions to some of the most challenging circumstances they face. These issues often arise from the socio-economic, cultural and environmental context in which schools find themselves. Most effective community engagement is secured when schools listen to their wider communities, acknowledge and recognise their circumstances and actively exhibit positive, sensitive and welcoming approaches to working with and utilising the resources of their communities.

School life itself is a challenge to some individuals, both pupils and parents. Movement between schools is complex and unsettling for many. Pupils may face specific difficulties at particular times in their school lives. Groups of schools serving a community may experience common challenges in working to promote learning and the value of school to individuals, families and groups within their community.

In those communities lie resources of people with skills, talents and qualities to make a considerable contribution to the life and work of the school. The impact of this, not only in curricular terms, but also in contributing to pastoral support to the school, can be significant. Often, because such people are seen to be part of the real world – of the local community, as opposed to the perceived isolated world of school – they carry credibility and currency which considerably enhance their contribution and value to the school. Such people – individuals, groups and organisations – can thus substantially enhance the quality of service provided by schools and contribute significantly to improving the levels of motivation, behaviour and attainment of pupils.

Again, the most successful harnessing of these community resources comes from positive leadership and management by the school and clarity about purpose and outcomes.

Example CO12: notes from an interview with the deputy head about links with other schools

Excellence in Cities funding has been used to establish a number of ventures in a local cluster of schools.

A team of learning mentors has been recruited; they support pupils through transition from primary to secondary school. Information about Year 6 pupils having difficulty managing their school life is shared before transfer. Learning mentors stay with the pupils for the first half term after transfer, to ensure a smooth transition.

Two summer schools for Year 6 pupils are hosted, staffed by teachers both from the primary and from the secondary schools. One is for pupils who need additional literacy and numeracy support; the other is for the gifted and talented. The local community enriches pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy skills when they visit places of work. Gifted and talented pupils took part in a two-day master class for mathematics held at the local university and they visited a North American Indian project as enrichment of their work in history.

Schools in the cluster have established a common behaviour management system. Local residents are encouraged by the schools to notify them if pupils are misbehaving off school premises. This has improved behaviour considerably and reduced the amount of litter that residents find in their gardens - culprits have to go in their lunchtime to remove it. Other pupils are quick to identify the perpetrators. Residents are invited to attend school productions and the Christmas concert. Shopkeepers often notify the school if they think pupils are playing truant. The community police officer often 'accompanies' pupils to school.

Commentary

This seems to be a well-conceived, coherent and successful series of initiatives relating to **behaviour** and **care**. However, it should not, by itself form the basis of evaluation. In investigating and evaluating further, it would be prudent to talk with some Year 7 pupils, one of the Year 6 primary teachers and a local shopkeeper, to verify this favourable view. Example CO13 illustrates how hearsay evidence can be corroborated.

Example CO13: notes from interviews about the involvement of the Senior Citizens' Club for pastoral support

Source: interview with headteacher

The headteacher is currently the chair of the local community council. Last year concerns were raised by the local police officer about the amount of juvenile crime being committed during the school day. The headteacher outlined strategies the school employs to minimise truancy, but admitted that a number of pupils regularly failed to attend. After discussion, it was agreed that

the Senior Citizens' Club would organise first-day telephone calls to homes. This had been a successful initiative and attendance had improved significantly, while at the same time the incidence of juvenile crime had reduced. Some of the senior citizens, after being in school for this purpose, volunteered to support the curriculum by sharing their wartime experiences. Others offered to support lessons in a practical way by sharing their engineering experience with pupils in design and technology lessons. This enabled the school to enter the Young Engineers competition, and pupils achieved success by reaching the area finals. Some of those involved in the competition had previously been among the truants. The school continues to benefit from the skills, expertise and commitment of the senior citizens.

Source: interview with group of senior citizens

Initially, their involvement was to organise a roster of people to go into school to make first-day telephone calls. Most of them went with trepidation, because it was a long time since they had been in a school. It had been difficult to get people to volunteer. The headteacher was very welcoming, gave them a tour of the school and introduced them to the office staff they would be working with. They were usually in school for about two hours in the morning. They had reported to the Senior Citizens' Club about the success of the project and how the school valued their contribution. Attendance levels have improved and they have a sense of achievement from this. Many of the families contacted were known to this group of people. They had spoken to senior members of these families when they met them at the shops or Senior Citizens' Club meetings, to let them know their grandchild was not in school on a regular basis. This had also met with success. The support they provided for lessons grew out of their involvement with the school. When they asked at Senior Citizens' Club for assistance with a particular topic or project, there was no shortage of volunteers. Many of them felt it gave them a greater understanding of the difficulties encountered by schools these days compared with the time when their children were at school. They also felt they were contributing towards the education of the younger generation. At a recent meeting of the local community council, the police officer had reported a reduction in the incidence of juvenile crime. One senior citizen said she had been worried about her grandchild getting into trouble because she was always missing school. Now she is part of the Young Engineers' Group and never misses school, because a condition of being part of a team is 100% attendance.

Commentary

Taken together, these independent pieces of evidence, that the evaluator gathers at second hand, can form a reliable basis for the evaluation. The evidence adds up convincingly to worthwhile initiatives in **behaviour** management (such as truancy) and in **curriculum** support.

Example CO14: satellite learning centre notes from interview with headteacher on managing disaffected pupils.

Last year, certain Year 10 pupils had poor attendance and presented some concerns about their behaviour. They were unable to sustain concentration for the length of the taught component of lessons, and disturbed others. Learning was slowed down because teachers constantly had to bring these pupils back on task. Many of these pupils were working with youth and social workers and with agencies such as the Youth Offending Team.

A multi-agency meeting was held to discuss this group of pupils. It was suggested that a computer-based satellite learning centre be set up in the local community centre as a pilot scheme. The school used social inclusion monies to fund this initiative. The youth service provided the youth workers. The centre was networked to the school and youth workers arranged to supervise and support pupils. Most of these pupils were assessed to be capable of gaining several GCSE passes. A combined programme of a college course, work experience and study at the satellite centre was agreed with the pupils. Attendance at all placements had to be 100%. Initially, the work set at the satellite centre concentrated on revision and completion of missed coursework. One-to-one tutorials with subject teachers covered new material and corrected misunderstandings. The youth workers provided extra activities for pupils, such as rock-climbing and community service. They worked with pupils on an individual basis to try to resolve difficulties preventing them from learning.

The pilot scheme was evaluated at the end of the year and deemed successful for 7 out of 10 pupils. Most had managed at least 90% attendance throughout two terms and had completed their mock GCSE examinations, gaining satisfactory grades and completing their coursework. They were happy to continue the programme based in school. The other three pupils had regularly attended their work experience placement, but had been unable to cope with the academic content of their GCSE work. Lack of time-management skills had affected their college course work, though attendance had been satisfactory. The Connexions team looked into alternative curriculum provision for these three pupils which would be better for their needs.

Currently, the satellite learning centre is being used for a wider age range of pupils to help them to reintegrate into mainstream education after periods of absence through poor attendance, illness or exclusion. Pupils on fixed-term exclusion have to attend the centre to continue their studies. The centre is now managed by a learning support unit manager and is staffed by a combination of teaching assistants and youth workers, as appropriate to the needs of the pupils.

Discussion with the education welfare officer bears out the impression given by the headteacher.

Commentary

This account of a largely successful venture to improve **attitudes** and raise **standards** has convincing internal consistency. There have been tangible benefits in terms of improved attendance and examination outcomes and there is frank analysis of disappointing results. This venture has been successful in reintegrating pupils who otherwise could have been troublesome in the community. Besides the well co-ordinated multi-agency approach, a significant key to success has been use of the community centre as a halfway house for a fresh start.

Example C015: use of mentors from business and industry to support disaffected pupils - interview with industrial mentor

He had been approached by the education–business partnership (EBP) to provide a mentor to a poorly motivated Year 10 pupil who was unlikely to achieve his predicted GCSE grades if his attitude did not change. He had been intrigued and decided to act as a mentor himself. A year later he felt that it was the most worthwhile thing he had done: he had been able to instil in his tutee the value of education as the gateway of opportunity. The EBP had provided training for mentors and held regular support meetings to deal with any concerns the mentor had. These were excellent opportunities to exchange ideas and to gain mutual support. He had been introduced to his mentee during the school day when a session had been set aside. At first, he had found it difficult to relate to the pupil and suggested that further meetings might take place at his office. This had proved to be very successful and they now met every two weeks to review progress. They occasionally shared a meal at the local pizza place. Sometimes his tutee would telephone him if he had any problems. He knew that the standard of work had improved, as his mentee was keen to share his grades with him and any comments from the teacher. The mentee was now on target to achieve his predicted grades. At the start of the project, he had felt it important to meet the parents to assure them that he was only interested in supporting their child to achieve. The EBP had run a child protection check on all prospective mentors and this had allayed parents' concern. There was regular communication now between them and recently they had all gone out for a meal. Next term his mentee would sit his examinations and he was helping him prepare a revision plan and making arrangements to be available should the boy feel under pressure. He had also been involved with post-16 choices and felt he had been instrumental in helping his mentee raise his aspirations and consider university – a first time for a member of his family. Though his commitment ended when GCSE examinations had been taken, he felt that his relationship, in the form of support, would continue. He was planning to nominate another member of staff to act as a mentor next year.

Commentary

The role of the EBP was crucial in establishing a team of mentors. The industrial mentor was clearly happy with his brief; he felt rewarded by seeing his mentee not only change his attitude towards his studies but also consider going into higher education. The story convinces the evaluator that the pupil was able to relate to the mentor and understand why it was important to gain the best possible grades in examinations. This was a well-**managed** extension of the school's care provision.

Example CO16: notes from discussions about a city learning centre

Discussion with manager

The city learning centre (CLC) was built with Excellence in Cities funding and use of it has developed over the year since it has been open. Teachers have to book a session during the day for lessons. Twilight sessions are generally reserved for pupils to do homework. Special literacy and numeracy sessions for targeted pupils are held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Evening sessions have a range of courses available, such as graphics and video making. The CLC is also used by local businesses for training purposes and, on occasions, video-conferencing. Recently the centre has run a course on accessing the Internet. There has been a flood of applications and three more courses have been planned. Members of the local community are keen to use the cybercafé, particularly those with family and friends overseas. Staff are kept busy helping them to scan photographs on to the computer to send as part of their e-mails. There has been an increase in demand for other courses run in school by the adult education service.

Interview with student attending homework club

She has been unable to study at home because the house is overcrowded. She shares a bedroom with a younger sister. She goes to the centre on average three times a week after school and sometimes at a weekend. She has used the Internet to research information and produced coursework on computer. She is in regular e-mail contact with a friend she made on an exchange visit to France. She found it much easier to write an e-mail than a letter and thinks this has helped to continue the friendship. She finds the environment stimulating and the technology amazing. Staff were very helpful and she became much more confident about using the computers.

Discussion with adults using cybercafé

Their ages range from late teens to senior citizens. Most of them come in to use the e-mail to contact relatives or look things up on the Internet, such as the price of flights or holidays. They regard it as the sort of place where you can come and go when you like. There is always somebody to talk to if you need help. They all feel it is great to have such a wonderful facility on their doorstep. This is particularly important for the unemployed and the retired, because they do not have to travel to use the facility. The unemployed are able to use the technology to write letters and CVs to apply for jobs.

Observation of video-conference between sixth-form students and their link college in Hamburg

The context is the organisation of a timetable for the forthcoming exchange visit. The conference is planned to have 30 minutes of live interaction. The first 15 minutes are conducted in German, the second in English. Personal introductions are carried out, because this is the first time the group has met. Good use is made of both languages throughout: very little reversion to mother tongue. The arrangements are negotiated well and suit both groups. Interaction is lively and animated because it is possible to see the response on one another's faces. Confidence in use of the German language is evident and there is some very good use of colloquial expressions to extend the students' language skills. Very effective use is made of this medium to build confidence, develop conversation skills and pave the way for the forthcoming visit.

Commentary

These accounts triangulate together to give a convincing impression of cost-effective use of a shared resource, and therefore good **management** of resources. The video-conferencing facilitates strengthening of the link with the school's wider community in Germany.

5 SPECIALIST SCHOOLS' COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

The booklet *Inspecting New Development in the Secondary Curriculum 11–16* (OFSTED, 2001) contains advice on the evaluation of curriculum development and other work funded by the specialist schools programme. At least a third of the additional funding for specialist schools must be spent on the community development plan to benefit other schools and the wider community in the area. The OFSTED report *Specialist Schools: an evaluation of progress* (October 2001) gives an overview showing how things stand nationally. The main findings on the community role are set out below.

> *'With few exceptions – notably among the sports colleges – the community dimension was the weakest element of specialist schools' work. Most schools have found their community role challenging to define and pursue. There were good examples of support for other schools, required under the scheme, in about half of technology, language and arts colleges visited. In the remainder, objectives were vague and support did not focus sharply enough on learning outcomes. Where implementation had resulted in limited benefits, the resourcing and management of the activities was often inadequate. Support for specific groups in the community was patchy and was a weakness in many school plans. However, sports colleges have responded well to this opportunity: the community role is one of their strengths.'*

It is important that OFSTED section 10 reports give a candid evaluation of the value for money of specialist schools' community programmes. The schools themselves should be able to demonstrate robust probity, prudent management, quality control and cost-effectiveness.

Example CO17: science master-class with 15 Year 6 pupils, 15 Year 11 pupils, a professional from the community, a primary teacher and three parents of Year 6 pupils

[+/- indicate strength/weakness in teaching (T), learning (L), community links (Com) or curriculum (Cur)

Context. At this technology college, a top set takes GCSE double award science in November of Year 11. Thereafter, expansive work focuses on these pupils' preparation of practical investigations for gifted Year 6 primary pupils. Projects are built around input from professionals. This half term, it is the proprietor of a dressmaking business. (Com+, Cur+)

Last week. Excellent resources prepared by Year 11 for optical illusions such as the Müller-Lyer (shortening of a double-headed arrow)). Year 6 and 11 pupils worked together to design clothes – for example trousers with coloured darts. The aim was to 'improve' physical features. (Cur+)

Today. Professional hands round pictures of actual designs. Keen discussion in Year 6/11 groups about key factors (for example, tapering skirts 'narrow' the waist – the Wundt illusion) (T++, L++). Very enthusiastic question-and-answer session with the professional (T++, L++). Adults have brought photographs of drainpipe/flare trousers etc. Everyone has a good laugh (Com+, T+). Fierce argument about what would be best for stumpy guys (T+, L+). Adults and some Year 11 pupils model 'old clothes' and others – for example, with horizontal/vertical stripes; very enjoyable. Realising the significance, Year 6 pupils urge their broad/slim Year 11 'buddies' to swap a striped T-shirt (L++).

New problem. Getting a close fit before elastane. Professional shows slides of Victorian lace-up, 1920s' bias-cut (45o to weft and warp) and knitwear (T+). Pupils admire the slinky bias-cut effect, drawn tight by gravity (L+). Year 11 pupils and adults model samples. Year 6 very eager to feel fabrics (L+). Practical work measuring Poisson's ratio for bias-hung silk and knitted cotton/wool [(% sideways contraction) $\prod$ (% lengthways stretch)] (Cur++). Admirably organised by well-prepared Year 11: for example, already started spreadsheets for results; adults keen to join-in (T++, L+, Com+). Year 6 pupils recognise emerging issues: 'weight' of cloth, 'slipperiness' of thread and 'stitch' of knitting (L++). A good time had by all; much knowledge and technique learnt (L+++).

Next week. Session will have a plumber (Com+). Year 11 pupils have already started on Poiseuille's equation (don't get your pipes too long and narrow) (Cur+). They have a good 'feel' for the relevance of science to this important trade (L+).

Secondary and primary teachers explain joint decision to do 'off-piste' topics to avoid overlap with National Curriculum and at the same time introduce more relevant science (Cur+). Primary teachers attend by rotation; they greatly value the wide-ranging methodology in practical work and the secondary teacher appreciates their suggestions: welcome liberation from National Curriculum constraints (Cur+). Year 6 parents are thrilled at the pace of learning and are glad to join-in (Com++). Professional feels valued and is delighted to show off her trade. (Com++)

[Teaching and learning excellent (1)

Commentary

Teaching is excellent. During the lesson it is largely in the hands of the well-briefed professional and Year 11 pupils. Planning is first rate. Very well-conceived contexts have been chosen to catch the imagination of both Year 6 and Year 11 pupils. Expertise in the community is well engaged. There has been productive sharing of expertise between secondary and primary staff, going well beyond normal liaison. The activity fits well with the needs of the primary school curriculum. The topics give pupils a feel for the application of science in work done in the community. The 'buddying' of gifted Year 6 pupils with similarly gifted Year 11 pupils is working well, to mutual benefit. Over time, it involves a rotation of primary staff and a range of people from the community; it is sustainable from year to year in that demands on any individual are reasonable.

Example CO18: performing arts link with adult college's basic skills provision

[↑= strong feature, ↓ = weak feature]

Context. Adult education in the town is largely based at an adult college which has coherent daytime provision for adult learners with special needs. This includes ICT, basic numeracy and literacy, together with drama in liaison with this specialist school. The aim is to build confidence and enhance employability (↑). At the same time, Year 11 pupils following a drama course have a sharp focus for pair work and application of technical skills such as lighting and props (↑↑).

Rehearsal and performance make use of the school's excellent drama studio (↑). To 'raise the game', an ambitious tour has been arranged: adult learners and pupils are to perform excerpts of Shakespeare plays in France (a scheme funded by the European Union) (↑↑). Video of Macbeth rehearsal. Pupils setting up special effect boiling cauldron – red and green spotlights. Two adult learners cued on dimmers. First witch (adult in wheelchair) being pushed by second witch (pupil). Special effects well done; much vigorous boiling. Pace and incantation led by pupil; effective work on the dimmers (↑↑↑).

Costs. The activity takes place every week in an hour of timetabled time and running on half an hour beyond the end of afternoon school. The extra half-hour counts as part of the teacher's timetable and she has a further one hour remission in consideration of the time needed for planning, preparation and liaison. Thus, about 1½ hours out of a 20-hour teaching contract is used - about £2,000. Additional use of resources is about £500 (↑↑).

Commentary

Learning opportunities are extended and greater interest is motivated. There is good involvement of adult learners and pupils and appropriate modifications have been made to accommodate the adult learners' special needs. Organisers have been enterprising in tapping into European funding to finance a tour that gives everyone a high standard to aim for. The demand on staff and facilities and the integration of the project with the curriculum at college and school make this a sustainable undertaking. On the evidence so far, the project is at least good value for money; it could be very good or excellent. To get a firmer fix on this, it would be useful to talk to pupils involved, and the adult college teacher or managers.

Example CO19: after-hours lesson for GCSE astronomy; 8 adults and 6 Key Stage 4 pupils

[√ = strength, × = weakness, ≈ = balance of the two; T = teaching, L = learning)]

Context. Mathematics and computing college. The course is presented by a teacher with a higher degree in the subject (√ staffing)). Adults are mostly parents (including one pair), half of whom have a higher education background; they include the young laboratory technician and a governor (≈ limited audience, but realistic). Pupils have been 'talent spotted' by the department as good Oxbridge prospects (√ provision for gifted). The course is 1½ hours after school for a year and is offered in alternate years, hence pupils are in Year 10 or Year 11 and work less than the normal GCSE time allocation (√ value for money). Results have been mostly B grades for adults and A grades for pupils - who had a high proportion of A grades in other subjects (√ ratio of benefits to cost).*

Session. Very good overhead projector diagram of solar system with earth plus one inferior and one superior planet (T√). Hence definition of terms: 'opposition', 'conjunction', 'quadrature' and 'elongation' (T√). Clear exposition to show why inferior planets appear only morning and evening close to the sun; Mercury, the elusive twinkler (T√). Adult asks the angle subtended by Mercury/sun at elongation and hence the time after sunset or before dawn for visibility (L√). Response: 28° at maximum elongation – so how many minutes do you think? (T√√). But may be as little as 18° at elongation – why? (T√). Learners and teacher push one another hard (T√, L√). Teacher has never seen it, nor did Copernicus – why? (T√). Teacher suggests spring evening and autumn dawn – meteorology (T√). Pupil asks time between elongations (L√). Period is 12½ weeks – so? (T√). Six weeks? (L√). Not quite, look at the diagram (though it is for Venus, and Mercury has half the average radius) (T√). Right, maybe after five weeks, then after seven weeks, then after five, then after seven – why 'maybe'? (T√, L√). OK, 'eccentricity' (L√). Good: 29/43 million miles actually (T√).

Shows track of Mars against the star background, with retrograde motion. Explains that Earth moves at 18.5 miles/second and Mars at 15 miles/second. Gives class ten minutes to draw own orbit diagrams to account for the retrograde motion of superior planets – very challenging (T√√). So the lesson continues …

Commentary

This has the makings of a lesson where teaching and learning are very good or excellent. GCSE success in less than half the normal time allocation and with some pupils in Year 10 is remarkable. There is reasonable community involvement. It gives an enthusiastic expert the satisfaction of working with equally enthusiastic pupils and adults. The arrangement is enabling the school to expand its mathematical curriculum and raise **standards** (pupils' total points scores and overall mathematical attainment). Costs might reasonably be apportioned in part to the community programme budget and in part to the standards and in-school curriculum budget. Teaching six pupils (even with high GCSE outcomes for low time-input) would not be cost-effective. As both community and school agenda were served, the benefit-to-cost ratio looks good.

Example CO20: five pupils at a sports college, preparing for junior leaders sports award; topic of discussion is their sunday soccer coaching of 12 year olds from a range of schools

These pupils, generally supported by PE teacher, coach about two dozen youngsters. Pupils explain how they plan sessions as: skills practice; relating skills to the game; and a coached game.

- *For example: in threes 15 metres apart, kicking a moving ball to redirect it; demonstration, then groups of three round the field.*
- *Also: again in threes, bringing a high ball to the ground, followed by a low drive.*
- *Then: heading the ball downwards in pairs.*
- *Skill in game: lining up for pair work. No. 1 low drive to No. 2, who controls it on the run and finishes with low shot at goal – coaches aware of need to organise well, keeping the stream very fast and with the players behind goal to retrieve footballs.*

This suggests that the coaches know what they are about. They are likely to be building their own coaching skills, improving the youngsters' soccer skills and giving structure to their weekend.

Apparently, Neighbourhood Watch had got the project started. The committee, which includes sixth formers, had picked up that 'a lot of the kids on the streets at weekends would appreciate structured sporting activity'. They had explored possibilities with the school and parents. A transport rota had been arranged and also a rota for competent adult supervision on the playing field, so that PE staff need not necessarily be present. Very effective involvement of the community.

Commentary

This is fairly typical of effective work at sports specialist schools that meets a community need. It would be worth following up the discussion by talking with staff and, possibly, with Neighbourhood Watch people, to establish how needs were identified and objectives defined. It may also be helpful to enquire how the work relates to the objectives of the schools the youngsters attend.

6 OVERSEAS LINKS

Many schools have an annual exchange with a school in a European country to enhance language development. Over time, friendships flourish: pupils and their families make return visits to their hosts, with reciprocal visits the other way. Likewise, strong social links are often established between staff at the schools. There is commonly wider civic involvement, particularly where the schools are in twinned towns. Sometimes the links expand to the wider curriculum. A number of schools have been able to arrange European Union funding (Comenius) for exchanges: for instance, a school in Liverpool arranges work experience in the Polish shipping town of Gdansk and has developed social links with friends there.

Example CO21: notes from discussion with Canadian teacher on exchange for 12 months

This geography teacher has exchanged jobs with a teacher from the school through arrangements facilitated by the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges. His school is in Vancouver where his counterpart is now based. Joint projects have been set up between the schools and a comparison of the different areas has been ongoing throughout the year. For example, a field trip for Year 9 has looked at the geology of the area in both countries, with comparisons made of the similarities and differences. Sixth-form students are carrying out surveys of land use in both countries and the effect of climatic conditions. There is regular communication between the two schools via the Internet. Each term they have held a video-conference that has been anticipated with great enthusiasm. Sixth-form students are planning exchange visits in the summer holidays. The teacher feels that the exchange has been an important professional development for him. He also thinks that it has brought to life for pupils the real differences between the two countries in a practical way. Pupils are very keen to share their findings with each other and to discuss the reasons for the differences. One of the unplanned benefits has been the rekindling of enthusiasm among some members of the department for teaching their subject. He hopes the links with the school will continue to develop when he returns to Canada.

Commentary

This is a unique opportunity for these teachers to extend their professional development (**management** of staffing) and share good practice. The ability to compare two environments between the schools brings theory to life and extends pupils' **learning**. Use of ICT to communicate with each other is a good example of its practical application in a real-life situation, particularly the video-conferencing. It is interesting to note that the stimulus of an overseas teacher, with a different approach to teaching, has rekindled enthusiasm among some members of staff. The interchange has made manifest the notion of the 'global village'.

7 FUND-RAISING

7.1 Funds for the school

Parents, grown-up former pupils and pupils themselves traditionally raise funds to support the work of schools. Some state schools have raised over a million pounds for particular projects through subscriptions from 'friends of the school'. The specialist schools programme requires schools to raise at least £50,000 of unconditional private sector sponsorship. This often comes from local firms or charitable trusts; a maximum of £25,000 can come from a PTA, plus donations from individual parents. Some private finance initiatives involve a commitment to ongoing joint use of facilities by the sponsors. In the process of fund-raising, a school is likely to 'network' extensively with its community. PTA events may have a declared objective of fund-raising, but generally include a significant social dimension.

Example CO22: discussion with chair of parent–teacher association (PTA)

She has been involved with the PTA for five years and chair for the last two years. She says that the PTA has a good working partnership with the school in the main, though at times she feels that staff could be more supportive of fund-raising events. The senior management team is generally in evidence, but other members of staff rarely put in an appearance. The association had lost some parents from the committee because of this. The PTA runs discos for pupils and provides refreshments at parents' evenings and school performances. They have a representative on the governing body. Usually they raise funds for projects which the headteacher has identified. Last year they raised about £5,000 through Christmas and summer 'fayres', a bonfire party and donkey-racing on the beach. 'Plenty of tourists are keen to spend their money if they know it is going to a good cause.' Last year they suggested to the senior management team that part of the monies raised be used to support pupils whose families were unable to afford to let them go on exchange visits. The governing body thought this was a good idea, but it never came to fruition because senior managers felt it more important to spend the money on resources. Some parents feel that the monies they raise should not be used to provide basic resources, but extras. There has been no opportunity to discuss this concern in any depth and some members of the committee are unhappy about this. The accounts are audited annually by a local accountant, who is also a parent, but not a committee member.

Commentary

This PTA is obviously active in fund-raising. It is very supportive and committed to the school. However, the lack of staff representation at fund-raising events has led to the loss of some members. The relationship between the senior **management** team and PTA seems to be one-way and the school is in danger of losing goodwill. Reasons for not accepting the PTA's suggestion, for example, need to be discussed to establish a mutual understanding. The arrangement for auditing the accounts annually ensures that no irregularities can occur.

Example CO23: discussion with group of Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE) students

These students are trying to raise money to buy a set of tents for the school to use on DoE expeditions. Currently they have had to borrow or hire them each year. They have researched the best type, obtained competitive quotations and know how much money has to be raised. They have approached the PTA, which has offered matched-funding. They are raising funds in their own time mainly by washing cars and baby-sitting at weekends, and have virtually reached their target.

Commentary

These students have used their own initiative to set about raising funds to purchase tents. The project has involved them in successful negotiations with the PTA and tent suppliers. They have been using their own time to raise funds by performing a service to the community. This is indicative of **attitudes**: showing initiative and willingness to take responsibility.

7.2 Funds for the community

Fund-raising by pupils for local or wider charities is likely to give impetus to interaction with the community. There can be wide-ranging associated benefits, not least for 'enterprise education'.

Example CO24: discussion with year council representatives

Each year group decides on its own charity for the year. Tutor groups work independently to raise funds. At the end of the year, the most successful group is awarded a shield to recognise its achievement. The year council invites representatives of charities (chosen by the tutor groups) to come into assemblies to talk to the pupils. A vote is taken and the charity for the year selected.

Funds are being raised this year for a local hospice, and representatives of this organisation have been invited back to talk at greater length to pupils about their work. There is always something going on at break and lunchtime, such as a jazz band concert or a talent show. Behaviour problems at lunchtime have reduced because of this. Last Christmas one tutor group produced calendars, using their ICT skills to scan in photographs of staff as children. This was so successful that they had to involve the rest of the year group to meet the demand. They also ran a competition to guess which photograph belonged to which member of staff. Staff are always supportive in helping them to overcome any difficulties and talking ideas through with them.

Commentary

This example shows the 'empowerment' of pupils to make their own decisions about which charity to support. The invitation to charities to send representatives to speak at assemblies gives the whole year group the chance to make a collective decision. This also encourages pupils to understand the needs of the wider community and the work of voluntary agencies. Lunchtimes have become a hive of activity, thus reducing the number of bored pupils getting into mischief. Planning fund-raising and negotiating the use of school facilities contribute significantly to pupils' personal development (**attitudes**). Relationships with staff are good and this helps to develop an effective partnership outside the formal curriculum.

8 FUNDING SOURCES FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Funding sources for this type of work fall into four categories:

- funding deliberately targeted at schools for curriculum enhancement or extension work;
- funding not explicitly aimed at schools, but from which some can take advantage, if they have invested in the necessary structures for effective bidding – sometimes with LEA support;
- support from agencies funded centrally with the intention that they spend some of their time working in schools, thus making a contribution to schools 'in kind';
- other sources.

Funding targeted at schools is mostly through the Standards Fund, which has six categories: school improvement, inclusion, standards and curriculum, diversity and excellence, teachers and support, capital and infrastructure. Examples of initiatives supported by the Standards Fund are:

- specialist schools;
- literacy and numeracy strategies;
- inclusions policy (for instance Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), Traveller Achievement Grant and dispersal scheme funding for refugee and asylum-seeker children;
- support for pupils with special educational needs;
- National Grid for Learning;
- beacon schools;
- Education Action Zones (which direct funding or support to schools);
- New Deal for Schools (devolved capital for schools);
- Seed Challenge (capital investment on a matched-funding basis);
- Excellence in Cities, which funds (for instance) provision for gifted and talented pupils, city learning centres, learning mentors and learning support units.

There is also funding for partnerships between independent and state schools, and between selective and non-selective schools.

Examples of central funds not specifically targeted at schools but for which schools can apply are:

- Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), which supports (for instance) environmental improvement, vocational skills, raising educational achievements and public–private partnerships;
- European Union community action programme funding, which includes Socrates (the European Union's main education programme) and Youth for Europe (which works to promote exchange partnerships);
- Lottery funding, which is available from the Arts Council, the Sports Council, the National Heritage Lottery Fund, National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts and the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), which aims to support such initiatives as Community Access to Lifelong Learning and Out-of-School Hours Learning (such as holiday schemes);
- The Children's Fund, which features preventive work (for children 'showing early signs of difficulty') and local network initiatives run by voluntary and community groups;
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) that includes Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders, Community Empowerment Fund and Community Chest (to finance small projects that communities run themselves – from £50 to £5,000).

European Social Fund and Learning and Skills Council funding may also be channelled through local authorities for work in schools that have a community dimension.

Examples of centrally funded teams working in schools are:

- education–business partnerships;
- Project Trident;
- Connexions services;
- youth services in some LEAs;
- sports development officers in some local authorities.

Other sources of funding include charities, trusts and business sponsorship. Some state schools have their own trusts that can realise an income in excess of £100,000; others benefit from trusts with a wider mandate.

There are two important issues for evaluators:

- whether the school has robust means of assessing the benefits of additional resources compared with the effort it puts into obtaining them;
- whether any of the conditions attached to external funding are diverting the school and its management from its main purpose.

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Office for Standards in Education
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