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Increasing the Use of School Facilities

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Part A: UK and International Evidence

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Part B: Evidence from Wales

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Summary

- There is good international evidence that using school facilities to provide community based services can have positive impacts on a range of outcomes for children, families and communities. Bringing services together in a single site can generate a cumulative ‘community school effect’, help address child poverty, and solve some of the challenges posed by declining budgets for community services.
- Community schools come in many forms and can serve many purposes. To be effective, it is essential that policy makers and school leaders clarify the purposes they expect community schools to serve.
- The right fit between schools and other providers of services will vary depending on the nature of the community – there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach. School leaders should be clear about how the role of the school is nested within wider initiatives at area level.
- Using school assets in this way requires high level support from government, school leaders and governing bodies. It is important to pay attention to the selection and professional development of staff to work in these schools, particularly at leadership level.
- Wales already has examples of good practice and it is possible to achieve a lot with relatively small amounts of pump-priming funding. But it is important to recognise the limited capacity of most schools to work in community contexts, and to put in place structures and incentives to link them to the world beyond their gates.
- Community school initiatives should not be seen as quick fixes for low levels of student attainment. School improvement strategies and curriculum-related interventions are likely to be much more effective in this respect. However, there is no evidence that community school initiatives distract leaders from the business of school improvement, and there is some evidence to suggest they can provide useful support to those efforts.
- A Task Group should be formed to:
 - provide high level leadership and a national direction based on a clearly articulated purpose for increasing the use of school facilities;
 - develop practical recommendations for relevant stakeholders based on the evidence reviewed; and
 - develop guidance addressing the practical issues highlighted in this report.



Part A: UK and International Evidence

Alan Dyson and Kirstin Kerr

Context

There is a long history, both internationally and in administrations across the UK, of schools opening up their facilities to community use and in other ways seeking to become resources for the areas in which they are located. In the US, for instance, the idea that schools should play a central role in the wider community is frequently traced back to the early twentieth century and to the work of Jane Addams and of John Dewey (Benson et al., 2009). In the UK, its origins dates back even earlier, to the work of Robert Owen at New Lanark, though of more immediate relevance to the role of schools in the twenty-first century is the development of Village Colleges in Cambridgeshire under the leadership of Henry Morris (1925). Here, recognisably 'modern' schools were developed as community hubs, designed to act as educational, leisure and social facilities for the community as a whole. Developments in the mid-twentieth century included the emergence of Community Colleges in Leicestershire and other local authorities (see, for instance, Watts, 1974), and the advocacy of community approaches in primary schools by the Plowden report (Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967). The final years of the twentieth century saw the development of New (latterly, Integrated) Community Schools in Scotland, of community-focused schools in Wales, of full-service schools in Northern Ireland and of various forms of 'extended' schools in England. At the same time, international developments continued apace in the USA, Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands and many other places (see Cummings et al., 2011b).

There is, in other words, nothing new about schools engaging with children, families and communities in ways that go beyond their core academic role. There is, therefore, substantial UK and international experience that can be drawn upon. However, this idea has been interpreted in widely differing ways. In the US, for instance, 'full service' and 'community' schools are typically seen as providing additional health, social care and other services to children and families in highly disadvantaged areas where standard public services are unable to cope effectively with the level of need (Dryfoos, 1994). This is quite different from Henry Morris' idea of the school as the social and educational hub of a sustainable village community, or, say, from the 'SchoolPlus' initiative in Saskatchewan, Canada, where schools are seen as the embodiment, guardians and developers of

democratic values in a diverse society (M. Tymchak (chair) Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School, 2001).

Even in the same administration and in closely-related initiatives, the understanding of why and how schools should act as facilities for communities tends to vary. One obvious example is the shift in England within a few years during the 2000s from 'full service extended schools' acting as bases for additional services in highly disadvantaged areas, to schools in all areas acting as part of a network of local services, resources and opportunities to the benefit of all children and families (Cummings et al., 2011b; Dyson and Jones, 2014). Indeed, experience in Wales closely parallels experience in other administrations in this respect. As we shall see elsewhere in this report, the Community Focused Schools initiative appears to have been interpreted in many ways and to have left a legacy of many different forms of provision. The variations in labels applied to these initiatives is indicative of the lack of consensus around their purposes. The term 'community school' is probably the most widely used one internationally, and is the one we use in this report. However, it should be viewed as a convenient umbrella term rather than as a designation of a precisely-defined approach.

Evaluation and Evidence of Effectiveness

The multiple possible rationales for community schools have made it difficult for evaluators to establish clear evidence for the effectiveness of initiatives of this kind. It is difficult to know whether an initiative is effective if it is not clear in the first place what it is supposed to achieve. Equally, it is difficult for individual schools to become effective if the aims of their links with local communities are never fully clarified. Even where purposes are clear, there are multiple problems in the evaluation of school-community links (Dyson and Todd, 2010; Wilkin et al., 2003). Typically, initiatives in this field are multi-strand, bringing together a range of interventions and forms of provision. They aim at multiple outcomes (not all of which are easily quantifiable), and are set in open environments where many factors other than the initiative itself are likely to impact on outcomes. It does not help that evaluations are often inappropriately designed, underpowered and underfunded. The lack of robust evaluative evidence implies that it is imperative that initiatives of this kind are accompanied by robust evaluations, with designs that are able to accommodate the complexity of the initiatives and the openness of their environments, and with sufficient scale and longevity to make it possible to detect and attribute outcomes. In the meantime, the evidence we have is patchy – but it is by no means non-existent.



Overall impacts

There is a large body of evidence to suggest that community schools can have impact on a wide range of outcomes. Whilst the strength of the evidence base varies, there is a broad consensus among researchers as to the kinds of impacts that might be expected. Reviewing the evidence on linking schools more closely with other family and community services in a US context, for instance, Walsh lists a range of likely outcomes:

- *Improvements in:* Student achievement. Parent participation in the schools. Improved classroom behaviour. Enrolment in Medicaid and other benefit programs. Access to health and dental care. Access to child care and transportation. Parenting skills and family functioning.
- *Reductions in:* Student mobility. School violence. Suspension rates and unexcused absences. Grade retention. Unmet needs for food and clothing.

(Walsh, 1998: 7)

Similarly, Blank et al. claim that the evidence on community schools shows impacts on:

- Student learning: Community school students show significant and widely evident gains in academic achievement and in essential areas of nonacademic development.
- Family engagement: Families of community school students show increased stability, communication with teachers and school involvement. Parents demonstrate a greater sense of responsibility for their children's learning success.
- School effectiveness: Community schools enjoy stronger parent-teacher relationships, increased teacher satisfaction, a more positive school environment and greater community support.
- Community vitality: Community schools promote better use of school buildings, and their neighborhoods enjoy increased security, heightened community pride, and better rapport among students and residents.

(Blank et al., 2003: 1-2)

Such overviews mirror closely the claimed benefits of Community Focused Schools and similar approaches in Wales, as documented in the second part of this report. Despite the limitations in quality of evidence, therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that community school approaches are capable, under the right conditions, of impacting positively on a wide range of outcomes for children, families, communities and, indeed, for schools themselves. We shall turn shortly to the question of what constitute the 'right conditions'.



This conclusion is strengthened by a closer inspection of the evidence. Community schools typically combine a variety of interventions and forms of provision. Evidence for the overall impact of their work is difficult to come by for the reasons stated above. It is often necessary, therefore to infer overall effects from what we know about individual interventions (Jenkins and Duffy, 2016; Dyson and Kerr, 2013) – and that evidence is often very strong. There is, for instance, good evidence for the impacts of after school programmes on children's social and personal development and, particularly, for the impact of out-of-hours learning activities on achievement (Durlak et al., 2010; Afterschool Alliance, 2011 and 2014; MacBeath et al., 2001). Similarly, there is good evidence that interventions targeted at supporting the personal and social development of particularly vulnerable students can have positive impacts. For instance, City Connects is a well-evaluated initiative in Boston (Massachusetts) which identifies children and young people 'at risk' in schools and then links them to a customised package of services. There is evidence of the effects of these services on health-related knowledge and behaviour (Boston College Center for Child Family and Community Partnerships, 2009; Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support, 2011). There is also evidence for positive impacts on attainment, well-being, behaviour, attendance and drop-out reduction as well as on school climate and teacher's practice (Boston College Center for Child Family and Community Partnerships, 2009; Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support, 2011 and 2012; City Connects, 2011).

Examples such as this could be multiplied many times over. They have, we suggest, two implications. First, if interventions that are known to be powerful are brought together in a single site, it is reasonable to suppose that they might support and enhance each other's impacts to generate a cumulative 'community school effect' (Dyson and Kerr, 2013). In particular, where the issues faced by children's and families' problems are complex, the availability of a range of interventions increases the chances that all of these issues can be resolved (Cummings et al., 2007a). Second, whether or not such an overarching effect exists, it seems likely that the impacts of particular community school initiatives will be determined by the precise configuration of components which make up that initiative. Schools which wish to support their most vulnerable students, or engage parents more fully, or improve the well-being of all of their students should be able to do so by putting together the right 'package' of powerful interventions. The corollary, of course, is that schools which assemble interventions randomly and without any clear strategy may find that they have minimal impact.

Community schools and student attainment

Not surprisingly, given the direction of education policies internationally, particular attention has been focused on the extent to which community schools and their like have an impact on student attainment. The evidence here is becoming increasingly clear, though it tells a complex story. As we have seen already, there is evidence that community school approaches often accompanied by improvements in student attainments and other immediate educational outcomes such as behaviour (see, for instance, Blank et al., 2003; Coalition for Community Schools, 2010; Dobbie and Fryer, 2011; Whitehurst and Croft, 2010). However, such increases in attainment do not follow from every community school initiative and may be somewhat limited overall, even if the effects on particular 'targeted' groups of students are more impressive. Evaluators sometimes find that even substantial initiatives generate at best only small improvements in attainments, at least during the time scale of the evaluation. This has been shown to be the case both in different parts of the UK (Sammons et al., 2003; Cummings et al., 2007a) and elsewhere (see, for instance Heers et al., 2015).

Where larger impacts are noted, it is not always clear how far it is the community-related aspects of the initiative that are the principal driver. For instance, many initiatives offer students additional leisure and learning opportunities outside of normal school time. Not surprisingly, we know from experience in England that such offers have an impact on attainment, particularly when they are focused on increasing curriculum-focused learning time (MacBeath et al., 2001). However, this is really about extending teaching time rather than about extending school-community links. Likewise, there is evidence from the internationally celebrated Harlem Children's Zone initiative in the US that remarkable impacts on attainments are possible within school-community initiatives, but that these are largely attributable to standard school improvement measures rather to any more community-oriented aspects of these initiatives (Dobbie and Fryer, 2011, Whitehurst and Croft, 2010).

An important implication of these findings is that community school initiatives should not be seen as quick fixes for overall low levels of student attainment. Well-rehearsed school improvement strategies and curriculum-related interventions are likely to be much more effective in this respect. However, this does not mean that such initiatives are irrelevant to the business of raising attainment. There is increasing evidence that standard school improvement efforts may be better at raising overall levels of attainment than at closing the gap between more and less disadvantaged students. This is because they fail to target the students who are at greatest risk and/or fail to address the social and family factors which

hold those students back (Strand, 2014; Muijs, 2010). However, many community schools initiatives target precisely these students and factors. The impacts may be small on the school population as a whole, but may be significant for those students who are targeted most directly (Cummings et al., 2005; Heers et al., 2015).

Moreover, it seems likely that community school initiatives can actually enhance other school improvement efforts. For instance, there is some evidence from long-term school reform efforts in Chicago that schools which develop positive relations with their students' families and with wider communities are able to generate higher levels of attainment than those which do not (Bender Sebring et al., 2006; Bryk et al., 2010). In the UK, we know that community school initiatives are often not separate from school improvement efforts but emerge as part of a multi-strand turnaround plan for hard-pressed schools – a plan that might for instance include strengthening school leadership, improving teaching and managing behavior more effectively (Cummings et al., 2005; Crowther et al., 2003). The evidence is difficult to interpret, therefore, but it seems likely that, while community school initiatives are no substitute for other forms of school improvement, they can form a useful support for and supplement to those efforts. It is perhaps worth adding that, despite the fears that are sometimes expressed by school leaders, there is no evidence from anywhere in the world that involvement in community school initiatives 'distracts' leaders from the business of school improvement.

Barriers and Success Factors

Our understanding of what makes community schools more and less successful is complicated by two factors. One is the overall limited nature of the research evidence in this field and the tendency that we noted above for evaluations to be underfunded and underpowered. The other is the diversity of purpose – and therefore of definitions of success – in community school initiatives. A school which is successful in letting out its premises to community use might, of course, be less successful in engaging marginalised families, just as a school which offers outstanding inter-agency support to vulnerable students will not necessarily offer a thriving adult learning programme.

Nonetheless, there are a number of factors that seem to be important to a range of community school approaches, and around which there is some consensus in the literature.



School leaders and staff

Not surprisingly, school leaders emerge as important determinants of the success of community school initiatives. More accurately, such leaders determine whether initiatives get off the ground at all. It is clear that leaders have very different views of the communities their schools serve, and take very different positions about how and how far the school should extend its role beyond the classroom (Crowther et al., 2003; Cummings and Dyson, 2007). By no means all school leaders view this wider role positively and, even where they do, they are not necessarily able to free themselves of deficit-oriented views, focusing on the supposed shortcomings of the children, families and communities they serve rather than on their strengths (Cummings et al., 2007b). What seem to be necessary are school leaders who are able to 'cross boundaries' (Blank et al., 2006) between the traditional academic view of schools and a wider community view, and who can, therefore, work comfortably with leaders from communities and community agencies, and with non-educational staff in their own schools. The strategic development of community schools, therefore, requires that school leaders be appointed who have an appropriate breadth of vision or, if they cannot be appointed, that there is some kind of supportive process which enables them to extend their vision.

Although school leaders may be crucially important, they do not always manage or deliver the 'extended' aspects of the school's work directly. Typically, they employ co-ordinators or site managers, who in turn lead teams of non-teachers. There is surprisingly little research on the characteristics which make these staff more and less effective. However, one issue that has emerged is that of the integration of 'community' staff with the school's teaching staff. As Jenkins and Duffy explain:

"Integration is critical to successful school reform initiatives, including the development of community schools. For example, Coburn argues that reform must "spread within the school...into the fabric of the system." As explained by Beth Tomlinson, Assistant Director for K-12 Education at the United Way, the community school coordinator should "work very closely with the principal...like a co-pilot, so that everything [s/he] does is really a reflection of the principal's vision...and is aligned with the school improvement plan." This helps foster trust, communication, and collaboration towards shared goals."

(Jenkins and Duffy, 2016: 11, citations omitted)

As this implies, integration in this sense is about more than establishing good social relationships between different groups of staff. It is also about a shared ‘vision’ in which the aims of the community aspects of the school’s work are in line with those of its academic aspects. This may be difficult where a community role is added to an existing school, but there are many examples in the UK, stretching back to the Village Colleges and Community Colleges referred to above, of schools where teaching and learning, support for vulnerable students, engagement with families and an extensive community role have been seen as part of a single endeavour (see Dyson et al., 2016, for a recent example). It is certainly the case that, without an adequate level of integration, the community aspect of the school can easily become divorced from its academic aspect. The consequence is that the former is seen as a way of ‘fixing’ children so that they can do well academically, leading to a division in the staff body and the danger that two ways of working with children emerge that effectively undermine one another (Edwards et al., 2010; Rowley and Dyson, 2011; Rowley, 2013).

National and local leadership

Community school initiatives can emerge at the level of individual schools and be driven entirely by the vision and determination of school leaders. More typically, however, community schools develop as the result of initiatives led by local or central government, or by non-governmental organisations. Again, the literature is full of guides as to how to develop initiatives at scale (Melaville et al., 2011), but the evidence base for such guidance seems to be anecdotal rather than robust.

Fortunately, the experience of the various community school initiatives across the UK from the late 1990s onwards offers some sort of evidence. It is clear, for instance, that much can be achieved by determined policy efforts, supported an intensive implementation process and a relatively modest amount of additional funding. Under these conditions, England moved from a few pilot schemes in the late 1990s to a position in which very nearly all schools offered some form of additional provision a decade later (Dyson and Kerr, 2014). These developments seem to have been aided by being part of a wider reform of children’s services – the *Every Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2003) – which sought to ensure that all child and family services shared a common set of purposes and that governance structures at local and national level were appropriately integrated. Despite the change in policy direction in 2010, there is evidence that these initiatives left an enduring legacy in some places (Dyson et al., 2012b). In the same way, the case studies set out elsewhere in this report imply that even relatively short-lived government initiatives, such as the Community Focused Schools initiative in Wales, may have enduring impacts in some places.



However, the English initiatives at least were also beset by a fundamental lack of clarity of purpose. Although the main strands of provision for community schools were specified centrally, the purposes and expected outcomes of those actions were never clarified (Cummings et al., 2011b). As a result that there was considerable confusion at school level not only about what community schools were for, but, in the view of some school leaders, whether they were for anything worthwhile at all – a situation that was only exacerbated by the aggressive focus in other parts of government education policy on narrowly-defined standards of attainment (Dyson and Jones, 2014). The implication would seem to be that government initiatives can do much to stimulate the development of community schools, but they need to focus as much on clarifying and building a consensus around purposes as they do on specifying provision.

There are two further lessons from the English experience. One is that the funding of community schools need not be excessive. Although the government claimed to invest £1.3bn in the roll out of extended services to all schools (Carpenter et al., 2010), much of this went on developing a supportive infrastructure, leaving individual schools with relatively small amounts of seedcorn funding. The consequence was that the bulk of provision appears to have been resourced by turning to other sources of funding (e.g. from charities) or, even more, by using the existing resources of the schools and of other services in a different way (Carpenter et al., 2010). This contrasts markedly with some US initiatives – the Harlem Children's Zone being the obvious example – where initiatives rely on substantial amounts of additional funding which allow them to substitute for missing public services (see Harlem Children's Zone, 2015). The implication is that policy makers need to decide whether they wish to invest heavily in community school initiatives in order to substitute for other community services, or whether they wish to invest at a lower level in order to catalyse innovative and more effective uses of the services that already exist. The evidence both from England and from elsewhere is that the investment of additional funding in community schools is in any case repaid – in some cases, many times over – by the benefits that accrue to children, schools and ultimately to the economy (Cummings et al., 2007a; Jenkins and Duffy, 2016; Martinez and Hayes; 2013). In other words, while governments and other initiative leaders may choose to invest heavily in provision, and while it may be necessary for them to invest some seedcorn funding, even relatively modest levels of investment can stimulate high levels of activity, which in turn can generate substantial economic returns.

The second lesson relates to the issue of supportive infrastructure. Large scale initiatives in many countries do not simply fund and/or mandate community school initiatives, but designate consultants and facilitators to help schools develop their provision. In Wales, the



Community Focused Schools Support Service provided support of this kind. In England, this took the form of a network of 'Extended Schools Remodelling Advisers' (ESRAs), working within local authorities, partly to communicate national requirements, but also to link schools together and to help them to cross boundaries to other services and community groups. Although responses to these ESRAs depended to some extent on their individual skills, the evidence suggests that they were viewed very positively by the majority of schools because they reduced the burdens on head teachers and brought a knowledge of the 'outside world' that schools did not possess for themselves (Cummings et al., 2011a). In this they were helped by the wider efforts at service integration that were taking place within local authorities. The implication is that it is important to recognise the limited capacity of most schools to work in community contexts, and to put in place some structure to link them to the world beyond their gates.

Clarifying Purposes

The issue of the multiple purposes that community schools can serve and the multiple forms that they can take has surfaced throughout this review. The potential for a lack of clarity to compromise policy efforts and undermine the work of schools is considerable. It is essential therefore that both policy makers and school leaders ask not only **what** they should do to develop community schools, but **what they hope to achieve**.

There are various frameworks that can be used to aim this process (see, for instance, Cummings et al., 2011b; Kerr et al., 2014; Dyson et al., 2012a). In general terms, it seems helpful to think in terms of two interacting dimensions along which community schools might develop:

- The first is to do with the **scope** the school's actions. At one end of a continuum, schools expand their work beyond the classroom only insofar as this serves directly their core academic purposes – or at least does not interfere with those purposes. For instance, they may offer out of hours learning activities for students, invite the community in for fund-raising events, or let their facilities for community use. Beyond this, they may offer additional services to their students and perhaps work with students' families to overcome problems that are interfering with students' learning and well-being. At the furthest end of the continuum, they may seek to play a role alongside other agencies in tackling community problems, driving regeneration and promoting community development.



- The second is to do with the **aims** of any links. Here it is useful to think of a continuum of approaches between a deficit-oriented and an assets-oriented approach. The former assumes that children, families and communities face significant problems, and that the school has resources that are useful for fixing these problems and making good the gaps in existing services. It is an approach that is particularly prevalent, for obvious reasons, in schools serving highly disadvantaged populations. The latter assumes that schools do indeed have valuable resources, but these should be used to enhance the quality of life for everyone rather than simply to fix problems. In this way the school becomes an asset for children, families and communities and seeks to enhance the other assets that are already available. It might do this on a small scale – perhaps simply by offering additional opportunities to individuals. However, it might also be more ambitious, seeking, like Morris' Village Colleges, to contribute to the capacity of local communities to thrive. Such an approach need not be confined to deprived areas, though in such areas schools may see themselves as playing a crucial role in helping to mobilise the assets of their students and of the community as a whole.

Viewed from this perspective, a particular action, such as 'opening school facilities to community use' might be interpreted in many ways. It may simply be an isolated action with strictly limited aims. For instance, if there are no sports facilities locally, opening the school's facilities brings some obvious benefits without impinging on the core academic work of the school but also with little prospect of having significant effects either on students or on local communities. Alternatively, opening facilities may be part of a wider regeneration strategy and/or it may be part of a long-term school strategy for offering additional support for vulnerable students, promoting engagement with families, and rebuilding of relationships between school and community. The aim of these wider strategies may indeed be to transform the lives of children and the local population, and to change the characteristics of the area. There is no evidence to suggest that any one of these approaches is inherently better than any other. The question is one of the appropriateness and viability of an approach in its particular circumstances.

Finally, it is worth noting that the focus of this review has been on the school as the centre of any engagement with families and communities. This school-centred approach is indeed what has informed most initiatives in this field, though there are some obvious tensions in asking an educational institution to take a lead on family and community issues. However, there is evidence of a new generation of approaches which involve schools but are not necessarily centred upon them (Dyson et al., 2016; Lawson, 2013; Kerr et al., 2014). These approaches seek to develop strategies at an area level, bringing together a wide range of

agencies and community groups, including but by no means restricted to schools. The Harlem Children's Zone, referred to above, is the most internationally well-known of these approaches, though it is not necessarily a model that can or should be imitated in the UK. Home-grown versions are, however, beginning to appear which have more local currency (Dyson et al., 2016; Dyson et al., 2012b). The final question that policymakers and school leaders need to ask, therefore, is not just how might the role of the school be extended, but how that wider role might be nested within wider initiatives and strategies at area level.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, then, the international and UK evidence suggests that community schools, in their various forms, are capable of having important, positive impacts on the children, families and communities they serve. Those impacts are likely to come not just from the individual interventions which make up these initiatives, but, quite possibly, from a cumulative 'community school effect'. The development of community school approaches may well support efforts at school improvement and is entirely compatible with schools doing well in their 'core business' of raising their students' achievements.

For all of these reasons, it makes sense for policy makers to support the development of community schools in their administrations. There is much they can do using relatively small amounts of pump-priming funding and creating local and national infrastructures to support development. Some thought also needs to be given to the selection and professional development of staff to work in these schools, particularly at leadership level.

Policy makers also, however, need to be realistic about what community schools can achieve and what conditions are needed for them to achieve most. They should not be seen as 'quick fixes' for overall low attainment – other strategies are more effective in the short term. Nor is there any proven blueprint for how community schools work best, so appropriately robust evaluation should be built into any initiative.

Above all, community schools come in many forms and can serve many purposes. Policy makers therefore should be clear about the purposes they expect such schools to serve. In particular they need to think about how extensive the aims and scope of community schools should be.



Part B: Evidence from Wales

Ian Bottrill and Pam Boyd

Context

The concept of ‘community schools’ has a long history in education and community development. In Wales a more specific focus was put on this in the early 21st Century with the development of, and financial support for, Community Focused Schools (CFS). The Welsh Government strongly supported this development and enabled the establishment of the Community Focused Schools Support Service (CFSSS) by ContinYou Cymru (now CaST Cymru) in 2006. With many funding streams being coalesced to help create the forerunner to the Pupil Deprivation Grant in 2011-12 the specific funding support for CFS ceased and although many schools still work in a community focused way, it is largely un-coordinated at local or national level.

In 2003, the National Assembly for Wales published a Community Focused School Guidance Circular which defined a Community Focused School as: “... one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.” This was followed in 2005 by a Joint Vision by ADEW and ContinYou Cymru which stated that: “We believe every school in Wales should be a community focused school, and should be able to demonstrate this in its practice, either individually or as part of a cluster or family.” Further guidance, a Tool-Kit (2006) and participation in the pilot ‘International Standards for Community Schools’ (2007 – 2009) also took place. However, with many other often conflicting pressures on schools and their communities, that vision was never fully realised and practice varied considerably across Wales, both within and between local authorities and schools.

In Wales, the need for a whole community approach to schooling and community could hardly be more pressing because of the additional pressures brought about by austerity. Child poverty and its educational impacts are still very much a feature of education in much of Wales. Alongside this, local authorities face significant budget pressures forcing them to consider serious service reductions and closures. **A more community focused approach to the provision of all local services, including education, could help address both challenges – the impacts of reducing community services and the impacts of child poverty.**



Fundamental to this work is an understanding that this is not an issue for education alone – it is very much a challenge to all service providers and users in an area of the sort discussed in the introduction to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

“It will make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach”.

Responding to the Challenges

The meaning of community use of schools has been interpreted in a range of different ways in Wales. The following typology covers most of those interpretations.

- **Direct provision** – the school ‘sells’ its services to others (school staff running family learning or sports clubs). This can be ‘free’ activity if it is mainly provided by the school for pupils whilst activities for families and the wider community may incur a charge.
- **Hosting / dual use** – this is the most common understanding of ‘community use’. The school opens its facilities to other users, usually community groups and local sports clubs. Examples include adult education classes using classrooms, sports clubs using the school field or gym, the school hall being used by local community groups. This may often be at no or extremely low cost to the group as the school sees it as part of its community responsibility.
- **Separate use of the same building but under indirect school control** – the school relinquishes the main use of a part of the school building for use by another organisation but retains the right to use that part of the building for school use by agreement with the main user. For example, Communities First or an FE college may take over part of the school building for adult education and establish a computer suite which could be used by the school by prior agreement with the main user. This is usually at a competitive but realistic charge to the group.
- **Separate use of the same building but under alternative user control** – a part of the school is placed under the direct control of another organisation and the school relinquishes the possibility of using that facility/building for the time of any agreement. For example, social services or the Police take over control of part of the building and take on responsibility for all associated costs. This is usually at a ‘business rate’.

In all of these circumstances, school managers (head teachers and governors) will want to ensure that the alternative use will: support the ethos of the school, not ‘cost’ the school



and/or may assist the school financially, benefit the education of the children directly or indirectly, and ensure the safety of all users of the site, especially the safeguarding of the children. Equally they will want to ensure that the alternative use will not: present any safeguarding or health and safety issues for site users, damage the fabric of the school, damage the reputation of the school, impact negatively on the education of the children nor present the school with unforeseen costs.

We were asked to examine the differential impact of working in a more community focused way in rural and urban contexts. There certainly are many differences and also many similarities. In more urban areas there are often a number of possible deliverers, several buildings that can be used for these sorts of activities and schools are not necessarily the right place for the delivery of some services. There needs to be a rationale for co-location and/or the delivery of services from schools with a clear business and moral case for offering other services from school premises. In some contexts, Church Aided or Welsh Medium schools provide a range of services akin to those in rural areas – they become cultural hubs.

In more rural areas, often the only community facility locally is the school and it is usually seen as a positive resource. There are however very significant issues concerning transport, and attaining the number of participants to make activities viable. According to the Director of Education/Deputy Chief Executive at Ceredigion Council:

“New Area Schools are not just schools – they are our community hubs. In our programme of school re-organisation which involved closing thirty schools we needed to focus on rebuilding a sense of community – we needed to demonstrate that there were benefits to the wider community, not just the school. There are few if any other local providers – we created a single point of contact with excellent signposting. If we didn’t do it there was no one else to do so.”

In the opinion of Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids’ Clubs (an organisation that helps set up and support out of school childcare clubs), funding support is required for out of school childcare clubs to be able to provide a service for parents so that they may work, thereby contributing to the economy of the area. Small, geographically isolated schools often do not have adequate numbers for a club to be self-sustaining.

Getting the right fit between schools and other possible routes to service delivery depends on the nature of the community. There can be no ‘one size fits all’ solutions for urban or rural communities, as the case studies summarised below demonstrate.



Analysis of Case Studies and Investigative Work

Case studies

This section provides a brief overview of 12 case studies collected specifically for this report in January and February 2016¹. They cover seven different local authority areas, while three are taken from other sources. We are very grateful to all those who contributed to these case studies.

- **Case study from Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs**² – Following the closure of an after school provision within a local community centre, the local head teacher was keen to ensure that the service continued for families. With school support a management committee was formed to facilitate the running of the club.
- **Bryn Elian (Foundation) High School, Old Colwyn, Conwy** – This school offers a wide range of school run out-of school-hours learning and family engagement activities. It has worked hard to develop its role in the local area. These activities are managed by the school Business Manager and it is on target to cover all associated costs.
- **Ysgol Maes Garmon, Mold, Flintshire** – This is an urban Welsh medium secondary school with around 600 pupils. The school has a hiring policy for use of its facilities but some agencies feel they should be exempted (for example those who are promoting Welsh language and culture) which causes some issues as the school would then have to bear the direct costs. As with many schools of a similar age, the site restricts what can be achieved in terms of use by others.
- **John Bright (PFI) High School, Llandudno, Conwy** – The campus comprises the school and leisure centre. The school best describes this as 'a triangle of responsibility regarding the facilities and day-to-day management'. The school contract with Sodexo covers school use of facilities for 195 days, 8.00 am - 6.00 pm. This results in the school being restricted in relation to use of the building outside the contract times. However, relationships are carefully managed, trust has been developed and the contract does not cause problems on a day-to-day basis.
- **The Lewis School, Pengam, Caerphilly** – This school has been a Community Focused School (CFS) since 2006 and through this they were able to begin using the school premises extensively, for example for educational and recreational activities involving the

¹ Further details of these and other examples can be accessed from the 'Increasing the Use of School Facilities: Evidence from Wales – Case Studies' report available on the PPIW website. Space prohibits including all of them here.

² An organisation that helps set up and support out of school childcare clubs.

pupils, parents and the local community. The position of the school within its catchment area (which has high levels of socio-economic deprivation) has an effect on all the activities offered in the school because transport is a problem for many of the elderly and others. According to school leadership the benefits of becoming more community focused have been huge; the schools standing within the community has increased considerably due to the intergenerational work but also to the work done by bringing the rest of the community into school.

- **Eastern High School, Cardiff** – This will be a new build Community Secondary School, co-located with Cardiff and the Vale College, expected to open in 2017. Throughout the design phase the need to include facilities for community and dual use was 'built in'. As a result, core/teaching sections of the school will be able to be 'locked off' to prevent any safeguarding issues while the public and the school are both using the facilities.

The next two case studies, Yr Eos and Maesincla, demonstrate how different facilities and opportunities in what are very similar schools and communities can impact on what the school and partners are able to offer.

- **Yr Eos Integrated Children's Campus, Ceredigion** – This campus is located in the Penparcau area of Aberystwyth and consists of Ysgol Llwyn yr Eos, Penparcau Family Centre, Penparcau Community Education Centre, Flying Start and Ffrindiau Bach yr Eos Nursery. The co-location of a wide range of related services on one site is seen as a major positive factor in accessing families, particularly those who might in other circumstances be difficult to access.
- **Maesincla Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Caernarfon, Gwynedd** – This school with 315 pupils in older buildings serves a Communities First Area with 40 per cent of the pupils eligible for free school meals. The design of the building and the lack of any dedicated community facilities restricts the use of the site by others despite a welcoming and enthusiastic ethos. Around a third (35 per cent) of the children on roll are on the Additional Needs register but there are no other services on site. This contrasts greatly with the otherwise similar situation at Yr Eos Children's Campus in Aberystwyth where dedicated on-site access to other professionals is fundamental to the ethos of the Integrated Children's Centre (ICC).
- **Yr Hendre County Primary School, Caernarfon, Gwynedd** – This new build primary school with 411 pupils serves a Communities First area with 24 per cent of the children eligible for free school meals. It has dedicated facilities for the community, for health professionals and is the base for a social services intervention programme which



contributes to the income of the school. External funding supports the work of a member of ancillary staff who manages the community use taking some of the pressure off the Head Teacher. Enthusiastic school management and governors, the excellent facilities and good access have enabled a range of outside bodies to use the school outside of school hours. The strategic and supportive involvement of senior officers from the local authority was crucial in the success of the redevelopment of the school.

- **Ysgol Terrig Primary School, Treuddyn, Flintshire** – This is a Welsh medium primary school with around 70 pupils on roll. It serves a very rural area with a dispersed population. Currently they offer a limited range of non-curricula opportunities. Restricted sites are unable to offer a wide range of community opportunities for safeguarding reasons and because on costs in small schools with restricted budgets are prohibitive.
- **Esgob Morgan Junior School, St Asaph, Denbighshire** – This school provides a broad range of out of school hours learning opportunities including childcare. The school is working to engage families and the community even more in the life of the school and does not charge other organisations for using the school.
- **Pontprennau Primary School, Cardiff** – This new build primary incorporates a community hall and other facilities that can be used by the community whilst ensuring appropriate separation from the children during school hours (safeguarding). Some activities that previously took place in a separate community hall have transferred to the new school, including a crèche and pre- and post- school wrap around child care. There are separate showers and changing facilities available for community users.
- **Cae Top Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Bangor, Gwynedd** – This relatively new build school in Bangor is close to the university and the 242 pupils speak 21 different languages. The county's EAL (English as an Additional Language) centre is located in the school which has excellent facilities, including a sprung-floor hall. However, despite the best efforts of an enthusiastic school leadership, the school has a limited range of community uses because of its location next to a new build secondary (which has much more extensive facilities) and the university (which has a wider range of opportunities).
- **Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services** is the independent representative body for the youth work sector in Wales. Some youth organisations have a good track record of working in and with schools, however this is patchy across the country. Many schools have a long standing relationship with one or more youth organisations including, for example, the Urdd. However, for many it is very challenging to make links, develop and maintain relationships and for some young people the school is not the place they would choose to take part in activities.



Community benefits of increasing the use of school facilities

The benefits of a community focused approach to education (and education resources including buildings, facilities, land) are many and are well documented (see, for example, ContinYou Cymru 2006 and 2008; Estyn, 2008 and 2014). The observations that follow are based on a wide consultation and discussion with a range of organisations and interested parties. They focus, in turn, on the benefits primarily for schools and those that are more related to benefits for the community and/or other providers and users.

Potential benefits for schools to consider:

- The potential to assist in keeping small and/or rural schools open even with falling rolls and surplus capacity. In many rural areas the only remaining social resource is the local school and using it as a resource base or 'hub' can reduce time away from school for pupils, for example for doctor visits. This is especially clear in schools with ICCs on site, as in Penparcau where co-location can bring significant benefits. In disadvantaged areas, the school often provides the best (sometimes the only) opportunity to bring partners (education, health, police, social care) together to develop the holistic approach needed to tackle long standing challenges.
- The provision of a wider range of activities, services and experiences for pupils. The emphasis in the Donaldson (2015) recommendations on the informal curriculum and Personal, Social and Health Education could be well matched by increased community use.
- The ability to provide services for families who may then engage more effectively with the school.
- Raised awareness of the school and improved standing within the community, leading – as evidenced by schools – to the potential for increased rolls.
- The potential to realise savings on large cost items and the provision and maintenance of facilities and buildings by spreading the responsibility (see, for example, Trefonnen, Llandrindod Wells and Penparcau, Aberystwyth).
- As evidenced by schools, improved community cohesion and potentially improved social capital that can result in reduced vandalism as the community has greater ownership of the facilities (it's 'our school'). The capacity to undertake 'intergenerational work', such as at The Lewis School, Pengam, has potential benefits for the pupils and the older people, particularly in disadvantaged communities.



Potential benefits for communities, providers and users to consider:

- Better use of facilities in and outside the school day, especially more effective use of 'surplus capacity' in schools where it exists.
- Shared facilities and co-location offering potential cost savings for:
 - local authority services (e.g. library, leisure and social services);
 - other public services (e.g. Communities First, pharmacy services and police); and
 - voluntary sector services (e.g. out of school childcare, arts groups and family support services).
- Potential for business engagement and development of small local business. For example, incubator units could help develop social enterprises and Community Interest Companies that could deliver a range of services. Alternatively, a school could set up its own company to deliver additional services.
- Local services remain local (in many rural areas the only remaining social resource is the local school) with reduced transport costs within communities (use of facilities locally)
- Improved community cohesion and potentially improved social capital, not just for schools but for other providers (housing associations, health, police) and the community.

The factors enabling or preventing a more widespread take-up of the opportunities presented by being more community focused

Our wide consultation and discussion has provided a raft of ideas on how school facilities could be utilised more fully. Despite the potential benefits outlined above, the experience of Community Focused School development demonstrates that increased use will not happen if nothing is done to provide strategic direction, and to address nationally and locally the major challenges of this approach. At its simplest, school governors and head teachers will need to be assisted in recognising the benefits, both educationally and (potentially) financially. Local authorities, the Welsh Government and others will need assistance in seeing this as a cross-cutting 'corporate' and not just an 'education' issue requiring joint ownership. Strong, consistent and persistent leadership is needed at every level if this is to be successful and that leadership needs to be nurtured and supported.

"The Head Teacher needs to be the driving force behind the inclusion of additional services using school premises." (Jane O'Toole Chief Executive Officer, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs).

A consistent theme throughout the discussions was that the structures for delivering 'schooling for pupils' (the curriculum and associated regulations) do not encourage the wider

use of public assets that are seen very clearly as ‘school’ facilities, not community assets. One of the more radical suggestions is that the ‘facility/building’ could be funded centrally, for example by the local authority. Each element of service delivered from the facility would then have its own specific budget, with the overall management of the facility undertaken by a local ‘board’ including representatives from all providers and users (‘locality management’).

Some services are more easily identified as currently being delivered from school facilities, for example pre-school and out of school hours childcare, youth provision and Flying Start. These have often developed because of the easily identified link to what the school wishes to provide for its families as part of its community focus. Others are less likely to be happening currently, for example links with health and social services, the police service, public libraries and third sector services. The ‘Hubs’ in Cardiff are currently bringing together library services with health services, GP surgeries and housing offices, but not on school premises. This may be because schools and other organisations/agencies have limited understanding of how each other work and how working together might benefit the pupils. It may also reflect the ‘this is not corporate, it is education’ attitude found in some places.

The positive factors which support and enable a more widespread take-up of the opportunities presented by being more community focused are:

- By far the most important factor is effective, consistent and passionate leadership from senior staff and governors. No level of high quality facilities will be of use if there is reluctance by the school to encourage its wider use. If this can be built on existing effective partnership working that is even better.
- High level, strategic, support from senior officers in the local authority.
- High quality facilities and easy access: e.g. the new build Eastern High in Cardiff has considered quality and appeal to the providers and end users throughout its design. This is more difficult to achieve in older schools but not impossible if the will is there. If the aim is to attract parents (not only those from the school) to the school for educational and social reasons, the training rooms need to be near to the crèche. For example at a small primary school in Llangeinor, Bridgend the IT training room was able to be ‘locked-off’ from the main school and was next door to the crèche.
- Clarity in process governance, induction and effective and simple dispute resolution procedures are essential. Some have excellent, clear, user friendly processes and systems, and the resource and capacity to manage them, however many do not. It is noticeable that a ‘tipping point’ is reached where relatively modest additional use can be ‘managed’ within the school then becomes unmanageable as the provision increases. The need for appropriate resources/capacity and understanding is essential.



- The need for charging policies that reflect the ability of potential providers and therefore end users to pay.
- A shared vision developed by all the users of the facilities. The opportunities for shared training (as in Penparcau for example) cement effective shared working practices and support a holistic approach. This contrasts with the lack of any such facilities or opportunities at the equally enthusiastic Maesincla School.
- Early recognition of, and effective action/capacity to address, safeguarding issues. This is much more easily achieved if these are 'built in' rather than 'bolted on'.
- In many areas alternative facilities are in decline either in quality or availability (or both). The school may well be the only viable option and 'competition' is rarely (not never) a problem.
- Support and clear understanding from the Welsh Government and leadership from local authorities in the design of 'New Build' schools has been very helpful in securing effective community use of school premises and facilities.
- Sustainability – it is vital that programmes that are started or access that is developed are not subject to rapid, uncoordinated change. Often schools become over-reliant on one member of staff and pay little attention to succession planning if that person were to leave. If outside bodies have a disappointing experience in using school facilities they will be less likely to try again.
- Training and support for Governors and Councillors to see the benefits of working this way, and appreciate general needs of the whole community.
- Some schools welcome youth services within and from the school. Some organisations have a good track record of working in and with schools but it is patchy as it is down to the school to make its own arrangements. A significant provider is the Urdd which delivers and supports services in the Welsh language.
- Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs believes that start-up funding from the Welsh Government is fundamental to the continued establishment and sustainability of childcare clubs.

The negative factors which challenge and restrict a more widespread take-up of the opportunities presented by being more community focused are:

Many of the restrictions and challenges relate to inappropriate sites even where there is support (e.g. Ysgol Maes Garmon, Mold, Flintshire) or lack of support where the site would be suitable, or a mix of inappropriate buildings and lack of effective leadership.

- The absence of supportive leadership at every level. In some cases, head teachers and governing bodies are reluctant to accommodate other providers. For example, schools in



some authorities still seem resistant to allowing Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs on their property. This has led to clubs being established elsewhere where refurbishment, rental and transport costs are high and which makes establishing convenient, affordable childcare very difficult.

- The failure to see school buildings as corporate assets can lead to uncoordinated asset management plans. For a more co-ordinated approach three questions need to be addressed: how can these corporate assets be made to 'sweat' more, how could they be best used to support the school and the community and what other services could we reasonably deliver from this school site. The idea of 'locality management' would provide an interesting model.
- Some restricted sites are unable to provide a wide range of community opportunities for practical reasons including safeguarding, catering facilities, toilet facilities and parking.
- Other sites have little or no available space because of rising school rolls. As a result rooms that were designated for community use have been absorbed in to the school as classrooms. This highlights the need for co-ordinated local plans to identify 'best place' for service delivery.
- The on-costs for small schools, for example without zonal heating, can be prohibitive.
- PFI contracts have many advantages but if community use isn't considered early on and included in the contract changes can be costly and lengthy.
- Transport issues are not solely an issue in rural areas – Aided and Welsh Medium schools can serve very wide preference areas. The situation is complicated by the option to serve 'the community' (local area) and/or 'your community' (the pupils of the school and their families) or both.

If the school competes with other established venues it can cause issues in local relationships. Equally if a school provides child care this can cause difficulties with other local providers (Registered Child Minders, for example).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The seeds of a community focus to education in Wales were planted at least a decade ago. The impacts of a challenging mix of declining resources and increasing demands on local authorities and schools give renewed significance to ensuring that schools develop strong community roots. With appropriate support the fixed, community funded, assets represented by schools could be made to 'sweat' more effectively for the social, economic and



educational benefit of the whole community (as suggested in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) without any negative impact on education. It is potentially a win-win situation. The evidence demonstrates that to make this happen, high level support and local leadership, together with innovative use of small amounts of capital and revenue funding to ‘pump-prime’ local initiatives, can make a real difference across whole communities throughout Wales. An existing legislative framework to enable this is provided by the Education Act 2002 (Sections 27 and 28) and the Control of School Premises (Wales) Regulations 2008 (see Annex for more details).

On the basis of these conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. The evidence suggests that leadership is required at national, local and community level. One option for achieving this would be to establish a Task Group³ to develop a clear understanding of the benefits to multiple service areas (not only education) of working in this way. This group should :
 - a. provide high level leadership and a national direction based on a clearly articulated purpose for increasing the use of school facilities.
 - b. develop practical recommendations for relevant stakeholders based on the evidence reviewed; and
 - c. develop guidance addressing the practical issues highlighted in this report – particularly with regard to the issue of safeguarding.
2. The evidence suggests that the identification and sharing of effective practice and support for the development and piloting of a range of possible models for change, including ‘locality management’ identified earlier, would be helpful. The recent announcement of further funding for 21st Century Schools could include criteria to facilitate one or more new models.
3. In order to incentivise schools and local authorities, ‘initiative pots’ could be considered (with small amounts of capital brought together from different government budgets) to assist in getting the best possible outcomes from the joining up of service provision. This should be funded by the Welsh Government as a whole, not only by Education. To ensure this is effective local authority Asset Management Plans should be clear that school premises are corporate assets, not ‘school assets’.

³This could comprise of Ministers (including the Minister responsible for public services), councillors, Welsh Government and local authority officials, and key organisations from the third sector.

4. Ensure that when new build school re-modelling is planned the specific needs of the local community are considered at an early stage (including inclusive Governance arrangements).
5. Ensure work concerning community/other use of school premises and facilities features in development programmes for head teachers, in initial teaching training and in in-service training for school governors, councillors and for key stakeholder providers.
6. Welsh Government may want to consider making mandatory a community 'audit of community learning and other opportunities' across Wales. This could be a community focused programme by local authorities, consortia, third/voluntary sector partner(s) to identify needs and inform potential.
7. Welsh Government to develop procedures for all stakeholders that safeguard crucial education/school imperatives but allow for creative partnership development and delivery, for example 'locality management' or 'area service partnerships' to bring local stakeholders together and plan for the services of the area and who can best deliver and where. Allied to this is the need for the resourcing of appropriate capacity to manage increased use of school facilities, whether directly through the school or via other models including 'locality management'.
8. Estyn should be encouraged to make more explicit the potential to improve educational outcomes through developing a more community focused approach.



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Annex: Summary of the Legislative Framework

Education Act 2002 (Section 27): Power of governing body to provide community facilities

Section 27 of the Act:

- Gives governing bodies the power to provide any facilities or services whose provision furthers any charitable purpose that benefits their pupils, their families and people who live or work in the locality of the school..
- Allows the governing body to enter into arrangements or agreements with any person; co-operate with, facilitate or co-ordinate the activities of any person; and provide staff, goods, services and accommodation to any person.
- Enables governing bodies to charge for some services, and to incur expenditure.

For further information, see <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/27>

Education Act 2002 (Section 28): Limits on power to provide community facilities

Section 28 of the Act provides that the governing body cannot do anything which might significantly interfere with its main duty to educate pupils, its responsibility to promote high standards of educational achievement, or which is restricted by the school's instrument of government or the local authority's scheme for financing schools.

Before exercising the power under Section 27, the governing body must consult the local authority, school staff, parents and pupils where appropriate and subject to their age and understanding along with other people as the governing body consider appropriate. .

In exercising their power to provide facilities and services or in consulting governing bodies must have regard to any guidance given to them by the Welsh Government or the local authority, and to any relevant children and young people's plan.

For further information, see <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/28>

Control of school premises (Wales) Regulations 2008

At maintained schools, the governing body usually controls the use of the school premises both during and outside school hours. There may be exceptions to this in voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation schools if a trust deed states that someone else has



control of the use of the school premises. Also at community, community special and voluntary controlled schools, and maintained nursery schools the governing body has to follow any directions set by the local authority as to how the school premises must be occupied and used. In the case of voluntary aided schools, the governing body has to follow local authority directions to provide free accommodation at the school for purposes connected with education or the welfare of young persons. There is no provision for a local authority to direct foundation schools.

The governing body may enter into a transfer of control agreement with any body or person if their purpose in doing so is to promote community use of the school premises. The other body known as the 'controlling body' will continue the occupation and use of the premises during the times specified in the agreement.

The governing body of any maintained school except a foundation school may not enter into any transfer of control agreement which includes provision for the use of school premises during school hours unless it has first obtained the local authority's consent to the agreement. In respect of foundation schools the consent of the Welsh Ministers is required.

Outside of school hours, the governing bodies of most schools control the use of school premises. The exception is the governing bodies of voluntary controlled schools, which control the use of school premises on Saturdays if those premises are not required, by the school or the local authority for purposes connected with education or welfare of young persons. The foundation governors of voluntary controlled schools control the use of the premises on Sundays.

In exercising control of the occupation and use of the premises of the school outside school hours, the governing body must have regard to the desirability of those premises being made available for community use.

For further information, see <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2008/136/contents/made>



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