

SCHOOLS' ROLE IN PROMOTING PUPIL WELL-BEING

DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR CONSULTATION

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Questions following paragraph 4.12 – Operational engagement with other services

1a) What is your experience of how effectively children's services (including health) currently support and respond to schools?

This question is best answered by schools, but responsibilities need to be clear – when they are unclear, problems arise – speech and language therapy is a good example of this. Shared responsibilities, rather than as school and children's services having separate responsibilities, can be beneficial in promoting collaborative working, but roles need to be clear. Where services are co-located, working relationships are often more productive – this included where children's centres are on school sites and used by health professionals to deliver services. Funding difficulties in some PCT areas and the lack of school nurses has posed problems in many areas.

1b) What are the key barriers to more effective collaboration between schools and other children's services?

Limited locally based decision making; funding and thresholds; schools' capacity to engage with children's trust arrangements.

The core challenge is how the individual school can engage with the trust and how the trust can engage with all schools in its area. See also 2(b).

1c) What are the key enablers to more effective collaboration between schools and other children's services?

Effective and responsive local decision-making. A strong sense of shared responsibility and shared working to resolve issues; clear thresholds and good use of CAF. Co-located services can promote effective collaboration (see 1(a)) but is much more difficult to achieve in geographically large or rural areas. Social work training placements in schools can also lead to improved mutual understanding. A commitment to deliver shared targets.

1d) What further support do schools need in this area?

Best answered by schools, but a clear duty which is reflected in a broader inspection regime must help.

1e) Should DCSF develop national protocols setting out the roles and responsibilities of schools?

It would be very helpful to have roles and responsibilities set out centrally by DCSF, but structures and protocols need to be agreed locally, taking into account local arrangements.

1f) Should we leave this for local agreement?

See 1(e)above

Questions following paragraph 4.15 – School to school collaboration and well-being

2a) What are the key barriers to collaboration between schools?

Capacity – workforce, management and distance for rurally isolated schools. Perceived sense of competition and pressure of attainment targets. Reluctance to share funding. Governance which is focussed on the individual school rather than the wider needs of children and young people.

2b) What are the key enablers to collaboration between schools?

Willingness on the part of schools and governors, based on perceived mutual benefits – but this can be facilitated by an overarching body with oversight; this should not be an old style LEA, but a headteacher led partnership that can pool knowledge and resources and recognises its responsibilities for the wider needs of all children within an area. Such arrangements have been developed in a number of areas – an example would be Wolverhampton where a partnership exists all schools, with a board of headteachers working in partnership with the local authority and tied into the Children’s Trust – this board pools substantial resources to fund shared developments to benefit groups of pupils across the city. Heads need to be involved as leaders of strategic, authority wide approaches to improving outcomes across a local area.

2c) What would you like to see to support inter-school collaboration?

Clear duty on all schools to promote well-being (the consultation refers to “new academies” only). Similarly the legislation to require secondary schools and PRUs to work together in local behaviour partnerships must include all schools (not just “future academies” again) if there is to be a genuine partnership and full co-operation. The wider role of schools, including the duty to promote well-being needs to be fully recognised in any inspection regimes. While we can argue that the benefits of collaboration are self evident, schools can be encouraged round the table if additional benefits, such as tied resources, can be identified – such as with the Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships. Most importantly though, Children’s Trusts must ensure that universal services, such as schools, are fully involved in developing local priorities and strategies.

Questions following paragraph 4.17 – Schools working with parents to promote well-being

3) What further support would be helpful to schools in developing effective partnership with and support for fathers and mothers, including non-resident parents?

While many parents appreciate the opportunities to have online contact with schools, online reporting is unlikely to benefit the most disadvantaged families – it will further widen the gap between these families and others. Personal contact is key to narrowing this gap – through effective engagement, but schools need clear guidance on how to engage with non-resident parents. Extended services have a key role in this – ensuring they offer the services parents want and need. Closer engagement at transition points is to be welcomed.

Questions following paragraph 4.19 – The workforce and leadership of the 21st century school

4a) Do you agree with the outline of the core competencies and range of skills which schools need to develop in order to effectively support well-being?

Generally, yes, but there is no mention of the skills required to work with parents and families.

4b) What are the key barriers for schools in developing their workforce to match the 21st century school vision?

Current structures of pay and conditions, and significant pay differentials. It is easier for larger schools to structure their workforce to make best use of skills and reward the varied skills across the workforce – this is less easy for smaller schools. Also need to take account demographic factors – developing the next generation.

4c) What are the key enablers for schools in developing their workforce to match the 21st century school vision?

Whole school approach to workforce development and training.

4d) What further support would schools find useful in developing their workforce?

Ways of meeting the challenge of integrating school workforce with the wider children's workforce, following years of separate development which had resulted in a significant divide between school staff and others.

Questions following paragraph 5.7 – Planning and review of school contribution to well-being

5) What further guidance would be helpful for schools to inform their self-evaluation of their contribution to well-being?

The impact of issues such as exclusion, alternative and part-time provision on well-being are largely ignored in this guidance, but are key influences on the well-being of the children and young people affected by them.

The role of governors is key in addressing these issues.

Further guidance on some of the “invisible” groups– such as young carers, children with parents in prison – who are at risk of poor outcomes.

6) How easy did you find it to respond to this consultation?

Fairly easy, although for some questions it would be more appropriate for schools to respond.