

PERCEIVED IMPACT OVER THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PILOT NEW COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAMME

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SYNOPSIS

This paper provides a brief outline of the New Community Schools (NCS) Programme launched in November 1998 (Scottish Office, 1998) and the research design adopted by the national evaluation of pilot phase 1 NCS. It describes one of the approaches to local data collection adopted by the national evaluation, namely the development of self-report questionnaires. The questionnaires collect indicators of key NCS activity as part of the process of monitoring the development of the pilot NCS across phase 1. A selection of interim findings from the responses to key questionnaire items is reported, exploring perceived impact over the first year of the pilot programme.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The New Community Schools (NCS) programme is intended to represent a significant and innovative attempt to use a community based approach to modernise schools, raise attainment, improve health and promote social inclusion (Scottish Office, 1998). It seeks to encourage the delivery of 'joined up services' by encouraging multi-agency collaboration in the three fields of health, education and social services, recognising the evidence of strong links between education and health inequities (Whitty et al, 1998) and significant disparities in the educational outcomes of vulnerable groups of pupils (especially looked after children) (Jackson, 2000; HM Inspectors of Schools and Social Work Services Inspectorate, 2001). Such joined up thinking lies behind a number of international education initiatives such as inclusive schools, full service schools and Education Action Zones (EAZs) (see Dryfoos, 1996; Campbell, 2002; Power, 2001).

Historically, targeting resources on the most disadvantaged has been an approach implemented to tackle the effects of social and economic disadvantage, for example Educational Priority Areas (EPAs) in England (Sammons, *et al.*, 1983) and Areas of Priority Treatment (APTs) in Scotland. During the 1990s there was a resurgence of interest in such policies, for example the NCS programme and EAZs, exemplifying government intention to raise overall educational achievement within the wider context of rebuilding social capital 'in areas of severe deprivation and educational underperformance' (Garmanikow and Green, 1999). The concepts of social capital and social inclusion are central to the discussion of the NCS programme and are further explored in Garmanikow and Green (1999) and Campbell (2002).

The NCS programme, as one part of the Scottish Executive's wider Social Inclusion Strategy, provides an example of an area-based approach to combating disadvantage (Scottish Executive, 1999a & b) with the pilot projects focusing on areas of greatest disadvantage within each local authority. The stated policy intention is for all schools in Scotland to become NCS, with experience from the pilots informing the 'roll out' of the NCS programme across Scotland. Wider issues associated with both the targeting of resources on the most disadvantaged and the subsequent 'roll out' of interventions to the wider population (as discussed in Riddell et al, 2001) will be explored in the national evaluation's final report.

Funding for the three-year phase 1 NCS pilots became available to local

authorities early in 1999 with a total of 37 projects involved, comprising over 170 schools or institutions from 30 Scottish Authorities. Each of the pilot phase 1 NCS projects was allocated £200,000 each year from the NCS budget with the money funding a number of single school projects but, more commonly, clusters of nursery, primary and secondary schools. Subsequent funding became available for a number of phase 2 and 3 projects in 2000 and 2001 respectively (for further details see Scottish Executive, 2000 & 2001) and a programme of 'roll-out' of the NCS approach across all schools now exists (see Scottish Executive, 2002a&b).

NATIONAL EVALUATION: AIMS AND EVALUATION DESIGN

Given the potential importance of the ambitious NCS policy and the large investment made, it is critical that the various impacts of the NCS pilot projects are evaluated. The national evaluation of the pilot phase was commissioned from the Institute of Education, University of London in Spring 2000 with final reporting due in March 2003.

Aims

The three main aims of the national evaluation outlined by SEED are:

- to inform the development of the phase 1 NCS pilots and aid future decision making.
- to provide easily accessible data on key outcome measures so that a comprehensive national overview of these is available at regular intervals.
- to provide a summative judgement on the effectiveness of NCS and hence inform local and national policy making about their longer term future.

In addition, the evaluation team included additional aims in seeking to identify factors which facilitate implementation as well as any barriers to success and to provide guidance concerning aspects of good practice.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation has adopted a mixed methods research design, employing a range of quantitative and qualitative approaches, involving three main phases (Sammons, *et al.*, 2000 & 2001).

Phase 1: An Audit of NCS. This phase involved the collection of NCSs' initial bid applications, action plans, local evaluation strategies and other relevant documentation resulting in the creation of a typology of NCSs' strategies (see Power *et al.*, 2001) and an investigation of NCSs' approaches to local evaluation (see Campbell, *et al.*, 2001).

Phase 2: The Collection of Baseline Data. In order to monitor the later impact of NCS on a range of outcomes, suitable baseline measures for the period before the official introduction of the pilots were collected from questionnaire surveys. This paper focuses on an interim analysis of key features of the baseline and subsequent year 1 questionnaires evaluating impact over the first year of the pilot programme.

Phase 3: Monitoring Outcomes and Impacts. The third phase of the evaluation focuses on measuring the impacts of NCS and the extent of any change in terms of a range of pupil outcomes using longitudinal statistical data. Aggregate school level data¹ for pupil attainment (5-14, Standard and Higher grades), absence and staying on rates over the four year period 1998/1999-2001/2002 has been provided by SEED. Analyses of the outcomes will include:

- an examination of variation within and between the 37 pilot phase 1 projects

- a comparison of trends in pilot phase 1 NCS from those in Scottish schools at the national level
- an exploration of any relationship with phase of NCS involvement (i.e. phase 1-3), after statistical control for other relevant features.

Phase 3 also includes a primary and secondary school questionnaire exploring the promotion of inclusion and support for vulnerable groups of pupils (on which the NCS initiative places a special emphasis). The instruments include four sections: looked after and accommodated children; the lowest achieving group; permanent exclusions, fixed term exclusions and children at risk of exclusion; other vulnerable groups.

Case studies of different NCS projects are an integral part of Phase 3. These seek to explore different aspects of NCSs' activities and processes and examine the experiences of different stakeholders engaged in the process. For further details of preliminary case study findings, see Sammons, *et al.* (2002).

LOCAL DATA COLLECTION: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEYS

In order to monitor the later impact of NCS on a range of outcomes, a local data collection manual was developed to obtain information about common features of NCS activity on a comparable basis across the 37 pilot NCS². In contrast, case study analyses are being used to highlight specific issues or aspects of the initiative in more depth (see Sammons, *et al.*, 2002).

The local data collection manual comprises a series of questionnaires (for the baseline year, Year 1 and Year 3 of the pilot programme) providing a basis for longitudinal investigation of particular features of impact during the duration of the pilot NCS programme. The project level questionnaires request, for example, information on NCS team composition, management structure, multi-disciplinary staff development and training and types of funding. The school level questionnaires comprise items relating to five areas important in terms of NCSs' underlying aims:

- general indicators, including involvement in other initiatives and transition across sectors;
- health indicators, such as health promoting school status and health promotion in curriculum and school development planning;
- curriculum and educational indicators, for example baseline assessment and supplementary learning provision;
- parental and community involvement indicators, including parental learning initiatives and local police involvement in NCS;
- inclusion indicators, such as anti-bullying provision and policy and home supervision orders.

It should be noted that NCS phase 1 pilots were already under way when the national evaluation commenced. Thus both baseline and Year 1 questionnaires were completed retrospectively which, for some schools, posed difficulties where records were not readily available or key staff had left the school. Furthermore, it is unclear whether perceived impact and change reported by phase 1 pilot projects can be attributed directly to involvement in the NCS programme or whether similar trends of change may exist in Scottish schools in general. The Year 3 questionnaires attempt to explore this issue by examining the extent to which respondents report that involvement in the NCS initiative has been a determining factor in perceived change and impact in different key areas. All Year 3 questionnaires additionally explore implications for the future and, more specifically, the issue of sustainability after the initial three year funding programme.

PERCEIVED IMPACT OVER THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PILOT PROGRAMME

The recent evaluation of 'Excellence in Cities' provides a four-stage model of impact. The framework comprises first-level impacts that largely change inputs and institutional processes; second-level impacts that focus on the key players and their everyday routines, experiences and attitudes; third level impacts that change outcomes for the target population(s); and fourth-level impacts that are associated with longer-term, more durable, more stable and more embedded change to infrastructure, systems and processes within institutions and more widespread transference of practices and ideas to institutions outside the initiative (Kendall, *et al.*, 2002;1).

This framework can tentatively be applied to the interim findings reported in this paper from the national evaluation of NCS. The main types of impact appear to be first-level changes to funding; second-level changes such as involvement in other initiatives and progress towards health promoting schools; and the start of third level changes to outcomes for the target population facilitated by personal learning plans (PLPs) and provision of initiatives linked to pupil, parent and community engagement.

This summary presents some key interim analyses based on baseline and Year 1 evidence exploring change over the first year of the pilot programme in a number of important indicators of NCS activity³. The high response rate – above 90 per cent for baseline and Year 1 questionnaires at project, primary and secondary level – provides confidence that the surveys will present information across the full range of phase 1 pilot projects⁴.

Funding

'In principle and in the main, the cost of service delivery will continue to be drawn from existing programmes – education, social work and health.' (Scottish Office, 1998: 16).

'Authorities should also seek to attract and use other potential sources of funds.' (Scottish Office, 1998: 17)

The problems and pitfalls of schools' work with other agencies, including funding issues, is widely documented (see Tett, *et al.*, 2001). The Year 1 project questionnaire asks about the extent of any matched funding from health and social work services and also about other additional funding. It was anticipated that social work departments and health boards/trusts would match the NCS funding from education.

Table 1 shows that over two thirds of phase 1 projects report receipt of matched funding from health trusts or boards and half of projects report matched funding from social work services. Just under half of pilot projects receive matched funding from *both* health boards and social work services. However, a number of projects comment that, although there had been no direct financial input from health boards and/or social work departments, they receive 'in kind' funding, largely through staffing.

Table 1 also summarises information on additional funding and resourcing received. For just under two-thirds of projects, the Core Programmes of the Scottish Office Excellence Fund provides additional funding in the first year of the pilot phase. These include initiatives such as Alternatives to Exclusion, Family Support Worker and Early Intervention. In addition, just under one third of projects receive finance for out-of-school-hours work through the New Opportunities Fund resourcing, for example, breakfast clubs and study support. In all, just four of the 34 pilot phase 1 projects responding reported no additional funding. In contrast, another four projects reported receiving additional funding from all three areas (the Core Programme, the New Opportunities Fund *and* other sources).

Table 1: A summary of matched and additional funding in Year 1 of the NCS initiative across the 37 pilot projects

—	n	%	(N)
Expected matched funding:			
- health services	24	70.6%	(34)
- social work services	17	50.0%	(34)
Expected matched funding:			
- from neither health or social work services	3	8.8%	(34)
- from both health and social work services	16	47.1%	(34)
Additional funding provided:			
- under the Core Programmes of The Scottish Office Excellence Fund	20	62.5%	(32)
- through the New Opportunities Fund	10	31.3%	(32)
- from other funding sources or non-monetary resources	18	56.3%	(32)
Additional funding provided:			
- from none of the 3 sources above	4	11.8%	(34)
- from 1 of the 3 sources above	16	47.1%	(34)
- from 2 of the 3 sources above	10	29.4%	(34)
- from all 3 of the 3 sources above	4	11.8%	(34)

Non-responses excluded

Research on multi-agency working in England and Wales (Atkinson, 2001) identifies one of the strategic-level benefits of multi-agency work to be improved access to funding or resources, although this was only considered a benefit where all three agencies (i.e. education, health and social services) were involved. This research also identified funding and resource issues as the major challenge for the implementation of multi-agency initiatives, particularly in cases where the funding is for a finite period, as ensuring sustainability is considered to be a major concern. The Year 3 questionnaires will explore the issue of sustainability of pilot phase 1 NCS projects beyond the initial funding period.

In evaluating the impact of NCS, the extent to which matched and additional funding is received is likely to play an important role in the nature and range of additional activities undertaken. It is probable that, in many cases, NCS status both stimulates and facilitates the attraction of additional funding and indeed this appears to be a policy intention in the original documentation (Scottish Office, 1998). The lower level of matched funding for social work if it continues throughout the pilot phase does however raise issues about the extent to which multi-agency work will become effectively embedded.

Involvement in other initiatives

'New Community Schools will... make integrated provision of school education, family support and health education and promotion services.'
(Scottish Office, 1998:5)

The NCS initiative, in common with the EAZs initiative, employs a *'cocktail approach to intervention, tackling obstacles from many directions and providing a wide range of programmes in which individuals and institutions can participate'*

(Power, *et al.*, 2001; 2). This is intended to encourage diversity and local flexibility in responding to perceived needs and challenges.

Table 2: Number of schools reporting involvement in other education, health policy and social policy initiatives

	Education Initiatives				Health Policy Initiatives				Social Policy Initiatives			
	Baseline		Year 1		Baseline		Year 1		Baseline		Year 1	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Nursery	24	45%	25	51%	18	34%	22	44%	9	18%	14	29%
Primary	79	73%	94	86%	31	28%	60	52%	33	31%	50	46%
Secondary	13	54%	20	80%	9	36%	15	63%	7	30%	11	46%

Non-responses excluded

As Table 2 shows, more schools in each sector report involvement in other education, health policy and social policy initiatives (either local government, Scottish Executive, Health Board or Social Services) in Year 1 than prior to the start of the NCS pilot. In particular, almost twice the number of primary and secondary schools report involvement in health initiatives during the first year of the NCS initiative compared to baseline. In Year 1, just over double the number of nursery, primary and secondary schools report involvement in all three types of initiatives. This increase suggests that joint ways of working, bringing together education, health and social work in the delivery of services, have substantially increased following the start of NCS work, although still under half report involvement in social policy initiatives.

The extent to which involvement in other initiatives can be seen as separate from NCS activity in some projects is unclear. In any evaluation where participants are engaged in a number of overlapping initiatives, it is difficult to separate out the individual effects of each initiative. However, initial findings from the questionnaires and case studies suggests that NCS funding and philosophy appear to support the combination and integration of varied initiatives, acting as a catalyst to promote change more effectively.

Health Promoting Schools

The pre-requisite for eligibility for participation in the NCS initiative will be commitment by schools to work towards achievement of the formal status of a health promoting school.’ (Scottish Office, 1998: 12)⁵

The goal of becoming a ‘health promoting school’ (HPS) received considerable attention in the NCS policy document. Aims highlighted in the NCS prospectus are:

- to promote the adoption of lifestyles conducive to good health
- to provide an environment which supports and encourages healthy lifestyles: and
- to enable pupils to take action for a healthier community and healthier living conditions.

The HPS whole school approach to personal and community health promotion first

gained prominence in the mid 1980s (see Denman, *et al.*, 2002) and is clearly linked to the issues of social capital and social inclusion (Parsons, 2001).

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which their schools could be described as health promoting for both baseline and Year 1. Figures in Table 3 suggest respondents feel that there is evidence of positive change in some schools, with proportionately more schools now being seen to meet the *moderate* and *considerable* category rather than being rated as *none/minimal* or *limited*. To a greater extent than primary or secondary schools, nursery schools/classes are perceived to be ‘health promoting’ in both years.

Table 3: Extent to which school could be described as health promoting

	Nursery Classes/ Schools				Primary Schools				Secondary Schools			
	Baseline		Year 1		Baseline		Year 1		Baseline		Year 1	
	n	% (N=53)	n	% (N=50)	n	% (N=113)	n	% (N=113)	n	% (N=23)	n	% (N=25)
None/Minimal	6	11.3%	3	6.0%	18	15.9%	7	6.2%	5	21.7%	1	4.0%
Limited	14	26.4%	7	14.0%	47	41.6%	32	28.3%	10	43.5%	9	36.0%
Moderate	21	39.6%	21	42.0%	40	35.4%	55	48.7%	6	26.1%	12	48.0%
Considerable	12	22.6%	19	38.0%	8	7.1%	19	16.8%	2	8.7%	3	12.0%

Non-responses excluded

Parsons describes health education/promotion, at its simplest, as ‘*information giving and exhortation about not engaging in hazardous behaviours or developing health threatening lifestyles. Topics such as hygiene, diet and exercise are regarded as legitimate foci.*’ (Parsons, 2001: 7). Comment by respondents generally falls in this category with a focus in nursery and primary schools on healthy eating; dental hygiene; monitoring growth, height and weight; general hygiene and movement/exercise. Secondary schools priorities are reported as the promotion of healthy living, drugs and smoking awareness, HIV issues and sex education.

A number of comments relate directly to the criteria for HPS proposed by the World Health Organisation (Parsons, 2001):

- *Active promotion of the health and well-being of the staff.* One primary school respondent details a ‘Feel Well – Be Well’ staff in service day;
- *Using every opportunity to improve the physical environment of the school.* A primary school has developed initiatives to improve the school grounds through ‘Grounds for Awareness’;
- *Active promotion of self-esteem of all pupils.* A number of secondary schools emphasis psychological aspects such as creating a positive school ethos and raising self-esteem.

Additional questions seek to elicit more detailed information concerning health (including substance abuse, relationship and sex education) issues and the curriculum, and the extent of involvement of health professionals in planning and delivery. This supplementary information, particularly from the Year 3 questionnaires, will provide further evidence of the extent to which schools perceive themselves to be health promoting.

Personal Learning Plans (PLPs)

'New Community Schools will be based on the development of personal plans... individual learning programmes developed and discussed with parents and reflecting the full needs of the child and his or her family.'
(Scottish Office, 1998: 3)

Key features of PLPs, identified in the NCS prospectus are:

- an assessment of children soon after entry into education, forming the starting point of the plan;
- a programme of development agreed with, and to be supported by parents, including targets for attainment which will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it remains relevant to the pupil's needs throughout his or her time at school;
- the involvement of the pupil, with an increasing responsibility for their own learning as they get older; and
- an outline of the responsibilities of the school, the parent and the pupil.
(Scottish Office, 1998: 11).

The introduction of PLPs is thus intended to be an integral part of all pilot phase 1 NCS projects work and was the subject of a training seminar organised by SEED. It is the Scottish Executive's intention to extend PLPs to all schools in Scotland (Baron, 2001).

Table 4: Reported Implementation of Personal Learning Plans in Schools

	Nursery Classes/ Schools				Primary Schools				Secondary Schools			
	Baseline		Year 1		Baseline		Year 1		Baseline		Year 1	
	n	% (N=52)	n	% (N=45)	n	% (N=113)	n	% (N=114)	n	% (N=23)	n	% (N=25)
None/Minimal	30	57.7%	25	55.6%	90	79.6%	69	60.5%	20	87.0%	13	52.0%
Limited	12	23.1%	10	22.2%	13	11.5%	18	15.8%	3	13.0%	10	40.0%
Moderate	5	9.6%	3	5.7%	7	6.2%	12	10.5%	0		0	
Considerable	5	9.6%	7	13.2%	3	2.7%	15	13.2%	0		2	8.0%

Non-responses excluded

Table 4 shows that for both baseline and Year 1 the majority of nursery, primary and secondary schools report that PLPs are not yet in place, or that their implementation was only *minimal*. However, there are indications that in Year 1 a minority of schools, particularly primaries, made some progress in developing or implementing PLPs.

Comment on the survey forms suggests that for all three phases of education, only a small number of schools had implemented PLPs prior to the start of the phase 1 NCS pilots. In Year 1 most PLP activity is associated with planning and piloting. Schools more commonly have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for children with special needs and considered this higher priority. Alternatively, PLPs are often used to support very small numbers of young people with particular difficulties or

vulnerability. Issues about identification or stigma may be raised if such provision is seen as only for vulnerable groups. A few primary schools report in Year 1 implementing PLPs with all pupils and one secondary school has given significant attention to the planning of PLPs. Previous research concludes that the embedding of the PLP activity within the systems of the school allow it to be accepted as the norm, and as an entitlement for all pupils, and so raising its status (Bullock, *et al.*, 2000).

Although PLPs continue to be developed and piloted in some projects, others report that they chose not to work on these during the first year, in the hope of further national guidance and exemplars. Reported difficulties in implementation relate mostly to workload and staffing echoing previous evaluation findings (Bullock, *et al.*, 2000) that the implementation of PLPs can be demanding on staff time. Progress in implementing PLPs and parental involvement in the process (which was reported to be *none/minimal* in Year 1 by half of the respondents) will be further explored in the Year 3 questionnaire analyses and detailed in the final national evaluation report.

Pupil, Parent and Community Engagement

New Community Schools will '*adopt strategies to encourage pupil and parents, together and separately, to develop positive attitudes to learning*' and '*provide an important opportunity and mechanism to build the capacity of the local community.*' (Scottish Office, 1998: 5&8).

While three key elements related to pupil, parent and community engagement can be identified namely, provision, collaboration and participation (Tett, *et al.*, 2001), this section focuses on aspects of pupil, parent and community engagement *provision* reported from the NCSs' perspective. These are the provision of extra-curricular activities for pupils; the provision of learning opportunities provided for parents and other adults; and the provision of activities in the community under the auspices of NCS.

The majority of secondary schools report provision of extra-curricular activities as *moderate* or *considerable* for all year groups (from baseline to Year 1, the ratings for these two categories combined increased from approximately 75% to 95%). Whilst in primary schools, the perceived extent of extra-curricular activity also increases during the first year of the pilot, being most marked for older primary pupils (ratings for combined *moderate* and *considerable* categories increase in P1-P3 from 20% to 30% and in P6-P7 from 40% to 60%). Commentary describes a variety of extra-curricular activity in primary and secondary schools, including, for example, sport, hobby clubs, arts and crafts, cultural trips and residential experiences. The majority of nurseries rate the extent of extra-curricular activities for both 3 and 4 year olds as *none/minimal* in both years.

The concept of fostering parental and family involvement in the child's education is fundamental to NCS policy. Embedded in many school improvement initiatives, it also underpins a number of the questions in the school questionnaires concerning, for example, learning opportunities provided for parents and other adults and parenting skills advice or courses. Table 5 shows that, for the baseline year, over half of nursery and over 60% of primary schools report *none/minimal* learning opportunities for parents and other adults. Similarly, very few secondary schools offered such provision. In Year 1 of the NCS initiative more nursery and primary schools reported *moderate* or *considerable* learning opportunities. Schools reported a fairly diverse range of learning opportunities available to parents and other adults, including: free literacy and numeracy classes; summer school for adults; and taster courses, jointly with Community Education in aromatherapy, stress busting, local history, introduction to computers, sewing, cookery. The results suggest that the

lifelong learning agenda for parent and other adults has been emphasised less in the secondary sector than in nursery and primary schools, most probably reflecting the greater opportunity for parental contact although not necessarily greater need.

Table 5: Extent learning opportunities were provided for parents and other adults

	Nursery Classes/ Schools				Primary Schools				Secondary Schools			
	Baseline		Year 1		Baseline		Year 1		Baseline		Year 1	
	n	% (N=53)	n	% (N=47)	n	% (N=112)	n	% (N=117)	n	% (N=24)	n	% (N=24)
None/Minimal	29	54.7%	17	36.2%	67	59.8%	56	47.9%	15	62.5%	11	45.8%
Limited	15	28.3%	12	25.5%	30	26.8%	26	22.2%	7	29.2%	9	37.5%
Moderate	5	9.4%	14	29.8%	10	8.9%	23	19.7%	2	8.3%	4	16.7%
Considerable	4	7.5%	4	8.5%	5	4.5%	12	10.3%	0		0	

Non-responses excluded

With regard to community engagement, the Year 1 school questionnaires ask about the extent of increased involvement in activities within the community under the auspices of the NCS initiative. Table 6 shows that, in general, perceptions of community involvement for secondary schools are stronger than in the primary and nursery sectors. For all sectors, however, over half of the responses fall in the *none/minimal* categories in Year 1 for nursery and primary schools. While this indicates that increasing community engagement has generally made little progress during the first year of the pilot, commentary suggests that more schools are in the process of becoming involved in the community's strategic planning process. The types of community involvement engendered in the first year seem to be services led and initiated in most instances, for example: nativity concert at hospice and entertainment for the elderly; Community Art Project; and management and development of Credit Union.

Table 6: Extent of involvement in activities within the community under the auspices of the NCS initiative

	Nursery Classes/ Schools		Primary Schools		Secondary Schools	
	n	% (N=49)	n	% (N=114)	n	% (N=25)
None/Minimal	33	67.3%	62	54.4%	5	20.0%
Limited	10	20.4%	35	30.7%	15	60.0%
Moderate	6	12.2%	13	11.4%	3	12.0%
Considerable	0		4	3.5%	2	8.0%

Non-responses excluded

SUMMARY

NCS phase 1 pilot projects are diverse both in the extent and nature of their associated activities. In a national programme where local authorities have had freedom to interpret Scottish Executive policy, this variation would be expected, reflecting the multiple influences within local history and strategy development, and in the communities served. The mixed method design of the national evaluation allows an in depth analysis of elements of this diversity using case studies of particular NCS projects whilst, by contrast, the questionnaire surveys reported in this paper explore common patterns across all 37 pilot NCS projects.

Some clear patterns are emerging from the analyses of key indicators of NCS activity, providing helpful indications of reported emphasis, change and impact over the first year of the NCS pilot programme. In terms of first level impacts of NCS, additional funding from a variety of sources has been obtained, enabling a wide range of new multi-agency activities to be undertaken. This finding is particularly encouraging as funding and resource issues are often reported as the major challenge for the implementation of multi-agency initiatives (Atkinson, *et al.*, 2001). Second level impacts related to education based initiatives have, perhaps not surprisingly, been readily implemented with many projects also reporting increased involvement in a wider range of initiatives, in particular progress towards health promoting schools. Third level impacts are more difficult to determine at this interim stage, often only realisable in the moderately long-term. There has, for example, been relatively slow development of personal learning plans and initiatives designed to augment parent and community engagement. However, significant school-based developments to promote pupil engagement through extra curricular activities have been reported.

Further analysis of the baseline and Year 1 questionnaires, results from the Year 3 questionnaires and data for vulnerable pupil groups, will combine with case study findings to provide a more complete picture of impacts, successes and areas of difficulty. In addition, the analysis of school outcome data concerning attainment, attendance and staying on rates from SEED will supplement the evidence collected directly from NCS projects. These current interim findings point to areas in which progress has been made but also indicate that significant change will be needed to meet some of the main aims of the initiative, such as the achievement of HPS, universal entitlement to PLPs and the embedding of multi-agency approaches. Such challenges have implications for policy makers at national and local level and for practitioners engaged in implementing the 'roll out' of the NCS programme across Scotland. Wider policy issues in relation to the role of the NCS programme in promoting social inclusion and rebuilding social capital will be explored in the national evaluation's final report.

NOTES

- 1 The evaluation recognises the limitations of the use of aggregate data which can only provide a picture of broad trends. To investigate questions of school effectiveness and improvement over time, it is necessary to adopt value added approaches and multilevel modelling techniques (McPherson, 1992; Sammons, *et al.*, 1997). Such analyses require linked data about prior and later attainment at two time points at the level of the individual pupil to estimate the school's contribution to pupil progress over a given time period. Further information on value added in the Scottish context can be found in Thomas *et al* (2001) with a critique given by Sparkes (1999).
- 2 The framework for the national evaluation (Scottish Executive, 1999c) details indicators identified by SEED. However, concerns were raised over the need to minimise additional workload for NCS, and, in particular, to avoid all schools conducting time consuming and costly pupil level surveys.
- 3 A summary of these findings have been published in a recent Interchange document (Sammons, *et al.*, 2002). These findings are framed in the present tense to emphasise the ongoing nature of the national evaluation and its associated analyses. Further analyses, in particular of the Year 3 questionnaires, will be included in the national evaluation's final report.

- 4 It is important to note that the number of secondary schools in the phase 1 pilot NCS sample is a fifth of the size of the number of primary schools in the sample. Therefore, the effect of one additional school on the secondary school sample's percentage return is 3.8%, whilst the effect of one additional school on the primary school sample percentage is less marked at 0.8%. In terms of the nursery sample, one respondent equals 2.0%. All tables show both the number of respondents and percentages for clarity.
- 5 As yet, there is no formal mechanism to test or award health promoting status.

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