

New Deal for Communities

The National Evaluation

Research Reports

Raising Educational Achievement

Research Report 10

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is currently sponsoring the 2002-2005 national evaluation of New Deal for Communities. This evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations co-ordinated by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

Those wishing to know more about the evaluation should consult the evaluation's web site in the first instance
<http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/home.asp>



Sheffield Hallam University

Raising Educational Achievement

Research Report 10

Authors:

Marie Lall
David Gillborn

Institute of Education, University of London

July 2003
ISBN: 184387 038 X

CONTENTS

Executive summary	i
Introduction	1
The Local Context	1
Socio-economic context	2
Ethnic Diversity.....	3
The Policy Context	4
Main barriers to raising achievement as seen locally	5
Nature of the interventions	6
Tower Hamlets (Ocean)	6
Ocean Maths Project.....	6
Educational Improvement Project (EIP).....	7
Hackney (Shoreditch Our Way - SHOW)	8
Reading Recovery (RR)	8
Out of school hours	8
Home school links project (HSLP)	8
Southwark (Aylesbury)	9
Home/School Support Workers (Transition project).....	9
Learning Support Assistants (LSA).....	10
Newham (West Ham and Plaistow)	10
Capital projects	10
Teacher retention	11
Aims and objectives	11
Beneficiaries	12
Delivery	13
Reaching the pupils	13
Working with parents	14
Working through/ with schools	14
Working with the Local Authority.....	14
Outcomes and impact	15
What works	17
Problems encountered/ Barriers to be overcome	17
The Future:	19
Conclusions	19
Key Issues for Partnerships: Raising Educational Achievement	20
References & Useful Sources	21

Executive summary

The single most common educational goal across all New Deal for Communities (NDC) partnerships is to raise the level of educational attainment. This report is based on case study visits to four NDC partnerships where a variety of projects are in place. Different models of project delivery have been developed focusing on local need and community requirements. The differences between the schemes reflect the potential for a great variety of approaches to the issue of raising achievement. All projects are in the relatively early stages of development and findings from the research at this stage should be treated as provisional.

The aim of the schemes was to help overcome barriers experienced by individuals with regard to doing well at school. Issues that were seen as barriers locally include:

- **High turn-over of staff:** Schools cannot always provide stability for their pupils
- **Poor condition of school buildings:** This impacts on service delivery and gives a poor impression of the priority accorded to education
- **Irregular or insufficient contact between school and parents**
- **English as an additional language:** It was felt that many students experienced limited opportunities to practice English outside the school
- **Parental roles:** There are few local role models, in terms of high educational achievement, and many parents do not have any qualifications

To date the research has identified a number of key attributes of effective projects to raise achievement:

- **Local area knowledge:** From an organisational point of view it seems to be essential that the local NDC staff have a good understanding of local needs
- **Delivery:** The organisation that delivers projects on the ground is a key ingredient in the success of the project. Links/networks with other organisations can widen the scope of NDC work, avoid duplication and help with mainstreaming of projects
- **LEA involvement:** The Local Education Authority can be a helpful factor in terms of efficient delivery
- **Pupil involvement:** At a project/school level, involving pupils in something they find interesting helps towards the project being adopted by the pupils and their families
- **Community requests:** It has been found that projects tend to work better when the ideas have evolved from meaningful consultations, especially if the community has requested the initiative

The research also suggests that the following areas require particular consideration:

- **Staff recruitment and turn over:** There is a lack of continuity on some projects
- **Clarity/ transparency of where funds go:** Where there is confusion over the allocation of funding there is the possibility of frustration, anger and resentment
- **Measuring success:** This is especially pronounced in relation to initiatives that are seeking to change patterns of experience and attainment that have a long history
- **Black and Minority Ethnic Inclusion:** Greater sensitivity and awareness is necessary in this field. The hurdles are real but an awareness of the problem is a good starting point

Introduction

Every NDC partnership has so far included some form of provision aimed at improving standards of attainment among local school pupils. For this reason, the evaluation of the education theme in the NDC initiative will include an element focusing on 'raising achievement' in each year of its existence. This is our first detailed report on the issue and arises from work in 2002/03.

NDC partnerships have begun a very wide ranging series of projects that address the need to raise achievements in compulsory schooling. Some of the projects address only primary or secondary schools while others work across numerous age grades. Some projects focus on developments that are largely school-based while others work with different parts of the local community and different education providers. For this first report on 'raising achievement' projects we wanted to explore some of the different types of project that are taking shape. In order to bring some element of consistency to the context, we decided to concentrate on developments in a number of London partnerships:

- Hackney (Shoreditch Our Way)
- Newham (West Ham and Plaistow)
- Southwark (Aylesbury)
- Tower Hamlets (Ocean)

The projects that are in progress vary in focus and size, but all aim to raise achievement in schools at the various Key Stages. Whilst some projects have been running for two years, others have only recently been established. All are still in the relatively early stages of development and long-term impact is as yet difficult to evaluate.

This report covers the following areas:

- The context in which the raising achievement projects have been established and the problems they are trying to address;
- The nature of the intervention in terms of objectives and targeted beneficiaries;
- The way in which the raising achievement projects have been delivered, in particular focusing on the different types of interventions that are offered and the assumptions behind these interventions;
- Current outcomes and impact of the projects (although these are limited given that the projects are in the early stages of development);
- Key lessons that have been learnt so far.

The Local Context

Projects to raise achievement in NDC areas are a major part of partnerships' broader education strategies. Consequently, the projects should be seen in the context of a wider set of interventions which, in turn, might aim to widen participation in further and higher education, help avoid school exclusions, or improve lifelong learning for the community. Many interventions also run hand-in-hand with specific youth programmes, some of which have been established under a different thematic heading.

Socio-economic context

The socio-economic context in which the raising achievement projects have been developed is common to many NDC areas, with pronounced levels of disadvantage. A brief review of some key indicators gives a snap shot of some of the main issues.

Table 1: Unemployment levels locally and nationally

Area	Unemployment
Hackney NDC	16%
Newham NDC	14%
Southwark NDC	16%
Tower Hamlets NDC	20%
National	3.1

Source: Partnership baseline information

There are very low levels of household income. Nationally around 7% of households receive income support and 19% housing benefit: in Hackney 40% of residents are in receipt of income support and 47% receive housing benefit; in Newham 62% of the local households have incomes of between £5-10,000 pa, 33% receive income support and 19% receive housing benefit; in Southwark 27% receive income support and 47% housing benefit; and in Tower Hamlets 51% of local households have incomes of less than £10,000 pa, 33% receive income support and 55% receive housing benefit. These figures highlight significant levels of poverty and social disadvantage. It is well established that levels of educational achievement tend to be lower in areas of economic disadvantage: certainly, attainment in the NDC areas is traditionally well below the national average (see Table 2).

Table 2: Residents (working age only) without qualifications

Area	No qualifications
Hackney NDC	36%
Newham NDC	29%
Southwark NDC	29%
Tower Hamlets NDC	41%
National	16%

Source: MORI: NDC National Evaluation: Wave 1 Household Data: our thanks to Dr Mike Grimsley of Sheffield Hallam University for additional analyses of these data.

The low levels of adult certification suggest that a lack of local role models might also be a problem in relation to school achievement in these areas. A further worrying factor is that local parents appear to have little confidence in local schools. Table 3 shows the proportion of NDC residents expressing distrust of local schools when questioned by MORI. Clearly there is much to do in addressing historical patterns of mistrust between schools and communities.

Table 3: Distrust of Local Schools

Area	Distrust local schools
Hackney NDC	19%
Newham NDC	20%
Southwark NDC	18%
Tower Hamlets NDC	16%

Source: MORI

In more general terms, the same survey also reveals that a high proportion of respondents in the NDC areas do not view the locale as a good place to raise children. In each area a majority of respondents described the area as a 'bad' one for children (see Table 4).

Table 4: Bad Area for Children?

Area	Bad area for children
Hackney NDC	66%
Newham NDC	52%
Southwark NDC	73%
Tower Hamlets NDC	57%

Source: MORI

Ethnic Diversity

The NDCs involved in this particular study each have higher than average proportions of minority ethnic residents. Although the partnerships do not, as yet, have access to a common set of monitoring categories, each area is characterized by considerable diversity: ranging from Hackney, where 32% of residents self identify as of minority ethnic heritage, through to Tower Hamlets, where the figure is 67%. This is, of course, a source of cultural richness that can be a powerful local resource. However, minority residents sometimes experience certain problems in a more pronounced way than other groups; they are often more likely to be unemployed and are considerably more likely to fear, and to experience, racial assault (see Table 5).

Table 5: Racial assault (fear and experience of)

Area	Worried about racial assault	Racial abuse in last year
Hackney NDC	34%	4%
Newham NDC	37%	6%
Southwark NDC	51%	7%
Tower Hamlets NDC	47%	5%

Source: MORI

Nationally, it is known that, on average, African Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils tend to complete their compulsory schooling with lower than average GCSE grades. This means that in some NDCs there may be a particular need to address the attainment of minority ethnic pupils. It is important to remember, however, that patterns of achievement are more complex than is often assumed. For example, there is at least one part of the country where each of the main minority ethnic groups is the highest achieving of all. In Tower Hamlets, for example, Bangladeshi pupils consistently perform to a higher level in their GCSE examinations than white pupils.

A recent Government consultation document has highlighted the need for a concerted effort to support pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). This is likely to be of special significance in the NDCs considered here (Table 6).

Table 6: English as an additional language

Area	English as an additional language
Hackney NDC	27%
Newham NDC	25%
Southwark NDC	31%
Tower Hamlets NDC	53%

Source: MORI

The NDCs in Hackney and Southwark have identified racial disadvantage as being a significant problem in the local area and are trying to address it across the NDC themes of education, housing and health through various programmes and projects.

The Policy Context

The volume and pace of reform associated with the Labour government's education agenda has been significant. While reform of all stages of schooling has been promoted, the emphasis has shifted during the Labour governments' period in office. Initially, there was a strong emphasis on the primary sector, with support for the reduction of class sizes at Key Stage 1 (see Table 7) and the implementation of national numeracy and literacy strategies. More recently, there has been an emphasis on Key Stage 3 (the so-called 'middle years' and, in some of the latest reforms, significant emphasis has been given to developing both a coherent and flexible curriculum offer and learning approach which will encourage participation and high achievement at ages 14-19. With an emphasis on standards and targets, there has been a strong drive to raise educational attainment, especially at age 16.

Alongside the push for excellence in educational standards has been the pursuit of diversity in educational provision. The specialist schools policy, first introduced by a Conservative government, has been expanded; involving specialist status for arts, language, sports, technology and more recently science, engineering, business and enterprise, mathematics and computing. The number of faith schools is also to expand.

Table 7: National Curriculum Stages and Associated Tests and Tasks

Stage	Age range	National Curriculum 'Year'	Associated National Tests and Tasks
Foundation	Age 3-4 Age 4-5		
Key Stage 1	Age 5-6 Age 6-7	Year 1 Year 2	National tests and tasks in English and maths
Key Stage 2	Age 7-8 Age 8-9 Age 9-10 Age 10-11	Year 3 Year 4 Year 5 Year 6	National tests in English, maths and science
Key Stage 3	Age 11-12 Age 12-13 Age 13-14	Year 7 Year 8 Year 9	National tests in English, maths and science
Key Stage 4	Age 14-15 Age 15-16	Year 10 Year 11	Some children take GCSEs 'early' Most children take GCSEs, GNVQs or other national qualifications

Source: DfES

City Academies have been established and are to be expanded across England, with a particular focus currently on London. These schools have to secure sponsorship alongside direct part-funding from central government. Academies are not part of the Local Education Authority (LEA) system.

There is growing evidence that specialisation is associated with more pronounced social polarization between different schools. In particular, children living in challenging areas (such as NDC partnerships) may find themselves under-represented in specialist schools, especially as the schools' attainments improve and demand for places increases. This will be an important issue for partnerships to bear in mind: the profile of local schools may change over time and this is likely to have an effect on patterns of attainment among young people.

Alongside the government's focus on diversity between individual schools, there has also been a promotion of new forms of collaboration between schools and with other agencies. The *Excellence in Cities* (EiC) programme combines a range of initiatives (Gifted & Talented; Learning Mentors; Learning Support Units; City Learning Centres; EiC Education Action Zones; Specialist Schools; Beacon Schools) and operates across a cluster of schools. The recent Extended Schools policy seeks to further develop partnerships involving education, social services, health and other services. Beyond these forms of collaborative arrangements, the *Education Act 2002* provides legislation for schools to operate as federations. A variety of forms of federation are feasible, but full federation will involve several schools working together under a single joint governing body. Most, if not all, of these initiatives include additional funding and it is evident that many NDC partnerships already include schools that are involved in such initiatives. In particular, the EiC programme (which was designed to target urban areas) is frequently a part of the education plans in NDC partnerships.

Main barriers to raising achievement as seen locally

According to those we interviewed for this report, the main barriers to achievement generally fell into two main categories: problems at school level, and problems at the home/environmental level.

At the home level all four partnerships had special concerns for EAL pupils. It was felt that many faced limited opportunities to practice English outside the school and, as a result, tended to be left behind in class. A particular concern in some areas was a lack stimulation in the early years.

All four partnerships also spoke of the parental roles with concern. There are few local role models, in terms of high educational achievement, and many parents do not have any qualifications (see Table 2). As a result, project workers feel that parents are not always well placed to support their children. Overcrowding and poverty exacerbate this:

'Accessibility in the area is extremely poor, as well as the physical outlook of the environment. (...) The perception of crime is extremely high. (...) The other thing is, just basic statutory services don't exist in the location. They are very fragmented. You could go from one part of the borough, or even out of the borough to get services.'
(Project Manager, Newham NDC)

At the school level one of the most obvious challenges is the high turn over of staff in all four localities, which means that schools cannot always provide stability for their pupils. Many school buildings are in a very poor condition, reflecting the poverty of the catchment area and national funding policies (in place for the last decade or so) that rewarded 'popular' schools with full rolls and those in more advantaged areas with greater potential to raise funds independently. In addition schools in all four areas complain of being overstretched and

having too few resources to deal with children who might need more specialised support (e.g. EAL pupils). Many, but not all, schools in the four partnership areas endure poor reputations locally; some are in 'special measures', meaning that their performance has been judged to be a cause for concern and they are being monitored more closely by OFSTED (the schools inspectorate).

A common complaint from many schools is irregular or insufficient contact with parents. In part this is a reflection of the high mobility in some of these areas, including mobility among Traveller and/or asylum seeking families and children. In addition to the obvious issues raised by families moving into and out of the areas, there is also an issue about parents' effective exclusion from an unfamiliar educational system:

'They do not understand the education system and they do not understand the curriculum and the way things work. So it is very difficult for them to say – well this is the right thing for my child and this isn't.' (Education Coordinator, Hackney NDC)

As we noted earlier (Table 3) local schools do not enjoy good relationships with many parents. Even those with a long residence in the area are thought to view the system with suspicion:

'Parents don't feel they have got anything out of the education system, why will their children?' (Education Coordinator, Hackney NDC)

Nature of the interventions

Although all four partnership areas face similar problems, and have identified similar areas of need, they have decided to use NDC resources in very different ways. Different models of project delivery and schemes have been developed focusing on local need and community requirements. In Tower Hamlets most projects are led by community requests/decision making, whilst in Hackney, Southwark and Newham local needs were assessed but projects were essentially proposed and developed by schools and the NDC team itself. This 'top down' model of decision making has led to a very different delivery approach in the partnerships in question.

The differences between the schemes (described below) reflect the potential for a great variety of approaches to the issue of raising achievement. In a report of this size it is not feasible to examine every project in detail: consequently, we focus on the main interventions in each partnership, whilst briefly describing some of the others that are on offer.

Tower Hamlets (Ocean)

The general strategy of the Ocean NDC is to raise achievement by changing the attitudes and practices of schools, parents and children. In the schools, teachers are gaining a better understanding of the local community; at home, parents are seeing their confidence boosted in order to support their children; and the children, in turn, are developing an improved attitude towards learning.

Ocean Maths Project

The Ocean Maths project was originally proposed by primary head teachers who had seen numeracy work done by IMPACT (University of North London). The project is due to run until 2005. The original consultation found that a number of parents had very low levels of literacy

and numeracy, which was having a negative impact on the children's education. Special homework that reinforces the curriculum, and helps build confidence to use mathematical vocabulary, has been written for the children to work through *with* their parents. In the primary schools the homework is bilingual (English and Bengali). The project runs workshops for parents only and workshops for parents and children at the schools. Currently the project is running for pupils in year 1 to year 4 and in year 7 (see Table 7). Ultimately the aim is to run the project from year 1 to year 9 inclusive across five schools. The feeling is that work needs to be targeted to the children's needs – even for those who were doing well, but especially for those who are underachieving. It is open to all, but has so far been most popular among Bangladeshi parents. The project will cost £900, 000 over its lifetime.

Educational Improvement Project (EIP)

The Educational Improvement Project handles the bulk of raising attainment schemes in schools. It is an umbrella project that encompasses many different schemes related to raising achievement. It is currently in the second phase (during the first phase the working groups were put together). The project includes out of school hours activities and is preparing interventions in the fields of literacy, first steps to learning, widening participation, primary/secondary school transition, and enhancing community links. Before the EIP was developed the out of school hours activities took place as a project on its own.

'There was a lot of activities happening, but they were very scattered ... what they wanted was to coordinate all the activities and maximise the resources and the potential.' (Out of School Project Coordinator, Tower Hamlets NDC)

Out of school hours was integrated into the EIP to simplify the administration and organisation of the partnership. The project will cost £1.7 million over 4 years and is jointly funded by the LEA and the NDC.

Other

There is also ***integrated study support***, which is delivered by the St Dunstan Bengali Community resource centre and aims to provide support for pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4. The centre also runs mother tongue classes for the Bengali community. In addition, the St Dunstan Centre runs workshops for parents, informing them about how to deal with the education system by explaining exam results and concepts such as 'key stages'. ***The Ocean Somali home-school liaison project*** is run by the Ocean Somali Community association. It targets the Somali community by working with both parents and pupils, and liaising with school. Although there are only about 10% Somali children on the estate, they seem to be more isolated than the Bangladeshi Community. The project has only recently been put in place and is essentially building up relationships and structures at this stage.

Other education projects, that do not necessarily focus on raising achievement per se, include a school environment project (capital projects such as a nursery and playground improvements). The youth strand of the partnership also provides summer activities for the young people on the estate. Although the work is targeted towards meeting the outcomes that have been set out in the 10-year delivery plan, the coordinators feel that their work has evolved. A lot of that had to do with the local community getting involved.

Hackney (Shoreditch Our Way - SHOW)

The NDC programmes in Hackney are run through the Education Trust, the private not for profit organisation that has replaced the LEA. The aim in doing this is that these projects can be mainstreamed once the NDC funding comes to an end. The projects are well developed at the lower age range, concentrating on primary schools. Little has been done for the secondary schools as it was felt that the majority of pupils attending the local secondary schools were not from the SHOW area. At this stage there is very little in the post-16 range of education schemes.

Reading Recovery (RR)

Reading Recovery started in September 2002 and is the largest single project run by SHOW. It involves the full implementation of trained specialist teachers to meet the needs of the lowest achieving children who have been in schools for 3-5 terms (Key Stage 1) but who are behind in their reading and writing. It is also a very intensive training package for teachers, in which they learn to work strongly as a network as well as learning how to move children on so they learn how to learn. The package enskills children and teachers alike. SHOW is now also piloting a numeracy recovery programme in one school on similar lines. The project allows for these children to be tutored individually for half an hour a day, every day, by a specialised teacher.

'We intervene early and in the shortest time we take those children to work as independent readers and writers (...) to catch up with the majority of the group, although in most instances the children who are already out of the programme are probably the top end of the class in terms of what's been achieved so far in the Reading Recovery programme.' (Reading Recovery Tutor, Hackney NDC)

The Reading Recovery programme is funded for 3 years and costs £1,874,171 of which £1,224,366 is funded by SHOW.

Out of school hours

There are a number of out of schools activities such as dance classes, language classes, sports classes, computer clubs, music and choir sessions that are being delivered in the schools. Sometimes these are delivered by other agencies (such as the wild life club delivered by the London Wildlife Trust) but mostly they are offered through the schools themselves. Some breakfast clubs have also been set up. They are seen as easy to manage with great benefits for pupils' attendance and punctuality. These projects seem to have come about because the schools were interested as opposed to the community requesting them. Most of them are co-funded by the New Opportunities Fund and in one school there is SRB funding.

Home school links project (HSLP)

The HSLP focuses on family learning and links between home and school, as there was low participation of parents and carers in their children's school life. The schools do an analysis of their needs and the home/school support worker can work towards meeting those needs. The schools have the possibility of tailoring their provision although they operate in a common framework. One of the schools, for example, has created a space where parents can drop in for advice every morning. In another school there are music classes for both parents and children. Material for new parents has been developed in several languages and there is a special focus on refugee/asylum seeker children and families, who it is felt need

extra support in understanding the local school system. It is hoped that by strengthening family learning and parental support there will be less disengagement. The coordinator hopes to see the bilingual children given a chance to learn and use their mother tongue for official exams such as GCSEs and to do so with the help of their parents. A separate pilot is planned for this. Each school has two home/school link workers for 2 days a week and the project costs £410,000 over 3 years.

Other

For the early years two nurseries, and child care places for 63, have been set up. There is also a work related learning scheme and a school/business link at the primary school level. 'Because people always say that by the time children are thirteen, fourteen it is too late to think about careers.' (Sally Prentice, Education Coordinator). Most of these programmes have been running for one year. There have also been a few capital projects, which, for example, have focused on improving playgrounds in schools.

The main reason for starting the projects was to bridge the gap in terms of pupil achievement in Shoreditch and the national average.

'In the early years and childcare and to services for under fives, because there is very good research evidence which demonstrates the educational benefits, but also benefits in terms of crime reduction.' (Education Coordinator, Hackney NDC)

Some of the projects are delivered with other agencies, such as the New Opportunities fund or Sure Start.

Southwark (Aylesbury)

The Southwark partnership has developed fewer projects in comparison to Tower Hamlets and Hackney. Again, the focus here was on the early years and primary education, in part because the secondary school on the estate is already in receipt of additional funding. Although a majority of 11-16 year olds on the estate attend the school, they make up less than a third of its total roll. Consequently the NDC contribution to the school is relatively small in terms of its overall budget. The school does not enjoy a positive local reputation: last year only 13% achieved five A*-C GCSE grades (the national rate is above 50%); truancy levels are high; and many parents seem unwilling to send their children there.

Home/School Support Workers (Transition project)

The Home/schools support worker scheme is managed and delivered by the East London's Schools Fund. It arose from a truancy audit carried out by Goldsmiths College which in turn had been commissioned by the SRB. The individual schools are asked to fund 20% of the cost and the NDC pays the rest. The workers visit homes and try to focus on key transition points during the primary years. They work on issues of attendance and punctuality with parents and children.

The link workers also have contacts with the teachers and help parents and schools communicate better. There are 7 HSSW across four schools. The focus here is to help, amongst other things, with the transition between primary and secondary school:

'...Attainment was increasing in primary school but the Aylesbury kids were doing appallingly in secondary schools. So there was obviously something happening that

was happening between the movement from primary to secondary school that was causing concern.’ (Education Coordinator, Southwark NDC).

The project has been running for almost a year and is jointly funded with SRB money. Its total cost is £341,000.

Learning Support Assistants (LSA)

The LSA scheme gives schools money to hire LSAs for their own identified individual needs. The Special Educational Needs Coordinators in the schools identify pupils in need of extra support and match them up with the LSA. There are seven across the four primary schools and five in the secondary school (dealing especially with year 7). The focus on year seven was decided as pupils were having problems engaging in the curriculum and adjusting to the new kind of working. As with the HSSW project described above, therefore, in part this scheme also focuses on transition problems. The schools use the LSA to support areas in which they feel over-stretched. For example, in one primary school the assistants focus on reading, in another they help with English as an additional language. The project has been running for just under 18 months and is entirely funded by the NDC. However schools are expected to provide match funding through training and professional development.

Other

The partnership has also helped set up breakfast clubs and developed a child minding centre in conjunction with the worklessness theme of the NDC and Sure Start. They have funded a nursery at one of the primary schools. The partnership also provides an extension to the local ‘gifted and talented’ scheme at primary level and has started a young people’s research project. In the latter, local researchers find out about how young people view the estate and what they want to see changed. The partnership hopes that in the future this will involve the local community in how the estate is developed.

Newham (West Ham and Plaistow)

The Newham partnership has focused mainly on capital projects and equipment, as opposed to programmes or schemes for specific groups of pupils. In fact, a number of programmes (such as a parental support programme and a study skills scheme) were discontinued after the initial phase; the latter overlapped with what was on offer by the local Education Action Zone (EAZ). However, there are programmes that have been put in place and are still running (discussed below).

Capital projects

‘When I came here the school was in special measures, and part of its problem was the poor state of the environment of the school, and it does have an impact on people’s self esteem, people’s commitment and how they feel about being part of the organisation. (...) You put people in a shoddy environment, you actually get in the end what you pay for. You’re telling them they’re no good and it’s about self fulfilling prophecies as far as I am concerned.’ (Head teacher, Newham)

Projects include, amongst other things, improvements to school buildings and school security such as the fence around Star Primary School, the maths and numeracy learning centre at Eastlea secondary school, the performing arts block at Lister secondary school, and the

upgrading of the Grange Infant School to a primary school (which will host 210 primary school places once finished). This last development is seen as very important by the community as it minimises disruption at the transition stage between infant and primary school.

The allocation of capital projects is more than 50% of the education budget when all approved projects have been taken into account. It amounts to £800,000 for each of the schools in the NDC area and there is LEA match funding on certain projects. However, the NDC does not pick up any maintenance costs, such as roof repairs or cost over-runs.

Teacher retention

This project involves all the primary and secondary schools in the area (this includes a school not physically within the NDC boundary but with many pupils from the NDC catchment area) and was brought about through head teachers meetings and the theme group. The idea is to make equipment available that is going to enable teachers to teach in a more effective way by helping them plan their lessons and widen their curriculum material. This includes laptops for teachers (for example, one primary school was given 13 laptops), ICT suites, and administrators at Eastlea for teachers to be able to focus on teaching as opposed to administrative tasks. There are training programmes available as well. The project costs about £1.5 million.

Other

The partnership has set up a small project relating to story telling delivered through the Children's Centre in Stratford, a mentoring project (which is being run and coordinated by the Newham Education Business Partnership) and which hopes that secondary pupils taking part will themselves become mentors to more junior pupils. There is also a teaching assistants project and a home liaison officer project, both of which are running in their third and final year. At one secondary school students have been involved in redesigning parts of their school while working with *Groundwork*, a local arts organisation. The NDC has funded the start up of SISCO, a high level IT course which allows the students who take it to be trained computer technicians by the time they leave school. In conjunction with Sure Start there is a food access programme that organises the breakfast clubs and a fruit and vegetable co-op, which is funded under the health scheme.

The main aim has been to raise achievement levels to the inner London average and to bring about change with long term benefits for the community in an area of Newham (Canning Town and Plaistow) which had essentially not received as much support from governmental schemes as other areas surrounding it. The projects became active in September 2000.

Aims and objectives

A key aim of all the schemes is to raise achievement (at various Key Stages) by giving the pupils solid foundations to learn upon, increase their confidence, and involve parents in their learning. Better facilities and new learning approaches (with one-on-one attention) helps those students with learning and language difficulties as well as those with poor concentration skills. In none of the cases were any of the NDC projects explicitly aimed at improving SAT scores and league table results as an end in themselves, although it was felt across the board that most schemes would inevitably contribute to better exam results in the long term. Project coordinators, heads and teachers tended to view achievement at a more 'organic/holistic' level without, however, disregarding what individual achievement could do

for the school. It was felt that once schools could offer the children a better, more stable learning environment with individually tailored learning, results would improve. In **Tower Hamlets** the Ocean maths project's main aim is to help both the children and the parents with their mathematics and to show parents how to help their children.

'Not only to increase children's attainment, but also to increase parents understanding of mathematics.' (Tower Hamlets LEA official)

Tower Hamlets has, therefore, tried to develop a 'joined-up' strategy to address confidence and attainment through various packages for pupils at all levels and their families.

Hackney has focused mainly on the younger years. The partnership wants to raise achievement by involving the parents and by using funding for projects that might not have received money through the standards fund. The schools wanted additional teaching staff and the Reading Recovery programme allowed for extra specialist staff, which also relieved some of the pressure on classroom teachers. The Reading Recovery programme has also been seen to help on many other fronts, including children with English as an additional language.

In **Southwark**, once again parental involvement is seen as a key ingredient in raising achievement in schools, as is giving extra help to EAL students and/or those with poor literacy and numeracy skills. The focus on transition is meant to help classes settle down more quickly and to avoid a drop in performance.

Newham is somewhat different to the other NDC areas covered here.

'It goes back to the initial survey, the data within the MORI surveys that were done, about the poor quality environment in some of the schools. And it came back to the education review last January, where we had all the head teachers, community board members, all the residents within that area (...) saying the NDC should make an attempt to address some of these poor quality classroom facilities, buildings within the programme.' (Education Coordinator, Newham NDC).

The logic behind the partnership's focus on capital projects and teacher retention was not only 'to have something concrete to show' at the end of NDC funding, but rather a response to community and school demands. Parents and teachers felt the children would learn better with modern facilities in an improved environment. This logic was extended to teachers who, it was reasoned, would be more likely to remain in a job with good facilities. Teacher recruitment and retention is a major challenge for many schools in London. In Newham, the issue was seen as being so serious that it would have a direct impact on levels of attainment. Consequently, there has been a focus here on capital projects rather than other forms of programme.

Beneficiaries

Many projects adopt a broad and inclusive approach but most aim to target specific groups who currently underachieve, such as white working class boys, African Caribbean boys, Kurdish/Turkish speaking children, and all those for whom English is an additional language. Various projects single out specific age groups or Key Stage cohorts for the intervention. Some have a multi-pronged approach, such as the Ocean maths project, which aims to offer something for children, parents and teachers. One of the Southwark schools, for example, mentioned that although the support was available for all those who needed it, their statistics suggested that those who needed it most were white working class boys. The extra support on offer has also allowed for an autistic child to get help to integrate into one of the primary schools by liaising with the parents.

In some NDC partnerships there is an issue with regard to how far the projects have managed to reach the hardest to help. Most interventions are voluntary and not all children or parents benefit. The main problem with capital projects and teacher retentions schemes, such as the ones in Newham, is that they do not necessarily target individual pupils with problems.

There can also be problems because of the politics of local situations. In one area, for example, although the projects are aimed at all underachieving pupils, there is a feeling that special help is needed for EAL children. However, local rivalries and, in some cases racist competition, means that certain developments are seen as unfeasible. Such problems are sensitive and by no means easily defused: nevertheless, inaction under such circumstances could be seen as colluding with local racism.

In a number of the partnerships it was felt that with regard to the after school activities offered that perhaps the beneficiaries tended to be the more middle class children and that to reach the working class children things had to be held at lunchtime. Such a pattern would certainly fit with the experience of many previous initiatives, where middle class families have been quick to see the benefit of provisions originally intended for less advantaged pupils. Clearly this demonstrates a need for greater monitoring of up-take so that a response is based on sound data.

As for Newham's capital improvements projects, the beneficiaries are not only the pupils and staff at the respective schools but the whole local community who can use those facilities after school hours for community based projects. In this way the investment goes beyond the boundary of simply raising pupil attainment but also offering the option of extending life long learning facilities for all.

Delivery

Delivery varies from partnership to partnership. Many projects are delivered through the schools, some jointly with other organisations such as Sure Start, the New Opportunities Fund, the East London Schools Trust, and Excellence in Cities. Match funding was also offered in finance or in kind by some of the LEAs. Contracting with external agencies has helped develop linkages and networks that also will help mainstreaming at the end of the life of the NDC initiative. The delivery model ranges from the simple – such as Southwark where money was given to schools to hire their own Teaching Assistants, to the more complex, such as Tower Hamlets, where the various schemes and intervention are run through the NDC office but schools are not directly involved in the delivery (apart from offering a location for delivery). In Hackney all NDC programmes are managed through the Learning Trust and tie in with the wider LEA policies. Because of Newham's focus on capital projects, delivery is not as much an issue as in other partnerships. However, for programmes the Newham partnership, like Southwark, tends to work more through the schools as opposed to with specialised delivery agencies.

Reaching the pupils

In Hackney, whilst the Learning Trust runs the Reading Recovery programme and selects and employs the teachers, the schools select the children most in need for the intervention. There are 10.5 full time teachers across seven primary schools. However, if pupils do not attend regularly and parents or carers do not show support, by reading with their children at home, the school will consider discontinuing them from the programme. In Tower Hamlets, all pupils take part in the maths programme if it is run in their year group. However, there appears to be no mechanism to pick up those who do not do the homework or whose

parents do not attend the workshops. In Southwark, the money is given directly to the schools that then recruit their own teaching assistants and select their own pupils in need. The Newham strategy does not target particular groups of pupils and although teacher retention and building improvement should help raise attainment it is less obvious that the benefits will be shared fairly among those who have special difficulties or needs.

Working with parents

The home/school support workers in Southwark work through the East London Schools Fund but support those pupils and families deemed most at risk by the school. In Hackney, link workers go a step further by actively engaging the parents in school life such as after school classes and clubs. The Reading Recovery project also pushes for direct parental involvement as parents make a commitment to the schools to read with their children in the evenings. The most inclusive and 'joined up' programme is the Ocean Mathematics programme, as its multi pronged approach for pupils, parents and teachers directly involves the parents in their children's learning. Both the special parents-only and the children and parents classes offer a translator and individual attention for those who want it, as well as forging closer ties between the schools and the parents.

Working through/ with schools

Schools have taken the projects on board. For instance, the Ocean Maths project depends on teachers working with their pupils towards the aims of the distributed homework. The teachers and heads of the schools interviewed all stated that their staff devoted time and effort towards the implementation of the project and that they were happy with the results as pupils take a greater interest in maths. Southwark delivers its programmes through the schools. In the case of the home/school link workers, the East London Schools Fund is the delivering on the ground but the link workers are placed in schools and work with the families the school selects. In Hackney the head teachers interviewed were delighted with the Reading Recovery programme as it took pressure off their teachers and quickly helped integrate those who struggled back into the classroom. In Newham the heads interviewed felt the NDC was helping them get better facilities and meets their very specific local need.

Working with the Local Authority

In Hackney all NDC programmes are offered through the Learning Trust, which has replaced the LEA. It is hoped that this will lead to the mainstreaming of the projects once the NDC initiative ends. It is also hoped that in this way the projects fit in well with the local education strategies across all schools in the area. In Tower Hamlets the LEA supports the projects and the link person (the head of numeracy) co-manages the Ocean maths project. The contribution is mainly 'in kind' as opposed to extra financing. In Southwark relations between the LEA and the NDC seem to quite distant and little explicit cooperation can be detected. In Newham also there does not seem to be intensive interaction between the LEA and the NDC as most of the projects involve building work as opposed to programme work.

Despite these different approaches the development of all these projects has been based on similar assumptions. The lack of achievement of certain specific groups was identified as a key problem for the schools that did not have the means and resources to catch all those who were effectively 'falling through the net'. The projects offer a series of interventions that, in one way or another, help to improve the individual's ability to get back on track without overstretching existing resources. Key common features are parental involvement, help with literacy and numeracy, working with and through schools, and working in step with the LEA educational delivery plan.

Outcomes and impact

The projects are still in the relatively early stages, with Tower Hamlets and Hackney the more strongly established. Much of what has been achieved so far in the areas is in terms of establishing the project infrastructure. In addition, many of the changes appear to be qualitative: this may reflect the fact that processes have been set in motion whose final measurable effects (in terms of test scores and exam attainment) are not immediately visible. Nevertheless, many projects are already running and delivering on the ground.

Despite this early stage of development, schools report initial outcomes that are very promising. Breakfast clubs are reported to have improved punctuality and attendance; both maths and reading projects are associated with improved standards of attainment and enthusiasm; and better links between home and school are reported very frequently.

In Tower Hamlets there has already been some progress at Key Stage 2, 3 and 4. The patterns are not uniform, however, in many cases there are signs of significant improvements since the project began. In Key Stage 3 and 4 schools have also met the NDC targets. In 2001 75% of the year 6 pupils in the core schools reached level four in English, 65% in mathematics and 85% in science. All three schools exceeded the milestone in science and two out of the three have reached and exceeded the milestones in English and mathematics as well. Two schools have come out of serious weaknesses, another has been awarded a beacon status and a two other schools have been awarded specialist schools status, one for performing arts and the other one for languages.

In Southwark one of the home/school support workers has been focusing on helping parents with the application for secondary school. 'Every child has applied for at least one school. (...) The most is fourteen schools for one child and she's actually got into Roedean' (Head teacher of a Southwark Primary).

In three out of the four partnerships they have found that involving parents in their children's school life has had effects on attendance, pupil enthusiasm and learning. The teachers that we met in Tower Hamlets and Southwark, for example, report that those pupils taking part in various projects display higher confidence in class.

'We've noticed that the parents that have been coming regularly, we've noticed that those children are making much faster progress, a much more steady progress, than the parents who are not able to support their children. (...) They've become much more confident in their speech as well as in their actual work.' (Primary school teacher, Tower Hamlets)

The Reading Recovery programme was piloted in one Hackney primary school prior to NDC implementation. Here a 86% success rate was achieved for pupils to be able to read and write independently. Similar results are now expected for the other 6 primary schools participating.

Prior to the initiative in Newham some schools had up to a 33% staff turn over. Many places could not be filled or were filled by temporary staff. It is estimated that more than 25% of classes had been taught by agency staff between 2000 and 2002 at one time or another. This year one of the secondary schools reports full employment.

It is easy to underestimate the importance of such changes. At a time when there is a national shortage of teachers in certain specialist subjects (such as mathematics) and when London schools face particular difficulty in recruiting, the sense of stability and continuity that is enhanced by having a stable staff is extremely valuable and the sense of progress and achievement is tangible.

One of the primary schools reports Key Stage 2 SATs results having improved from 18% achieving level 4 and above to 62% last year. The student involvement in the design of their schools has also had a great response. There is a sense of ownership and pride in their schools, which has not always existed.

The local education coordinator points to a whole list of diverse improvements which he feels reflect the progress they have made. Below are some indicative outcomes as supplied by Newham NDC.

In 1999 two NDC schools were in special measures and one with serious weaknesses. All three have now lost those designations.

Portway School has achieved significant increases in pupils gaining Key Stage 2 at Level 4+ results across English (68%), from 40%, Maths (84%), from 38%, and Science (93%), from 51% between 1999 and 2002. The NDC's Year three targets were hit for English while in Maths the year 3 and 6 targets were hit and for Science the Year 3, 6 and 10 targets were exceeded. Portway is also closing the gap on London averages in 2001. Portway achieved 62% in English, 58% in Maths and 82.2% in Science compared to London's average of 73%, 69% and 85% respectively and Inner London's average of 69%, 66% and 83% respectively.

Star Primary School has made progressive improvements in the number of pupils achieving Key Stage 2 at Level 4+ across all their key subject areas. In Science this figure has risen from 36% in 1999 to 82% in 2002 exceeding the NDC target for Year 3 (65%) and 6 (73%). However, this figure has slipped from its peak of 81% in 2001, when Star has closed the gap on the London average 85% and inner London average of 83%. Achievements in Maths have continued to rise from 31% in 1999 to 67% in 2002, fractionally above the year 3 target (65%). In English improvements have also been made rising from 28% in 1999 to 65% in 2002, although the % has dropped back from its peak of 69% in 2001.

Curwen has delivered increases of 59% to 66% in Maths, 56% to 71% in Maths and 69% to 81% in Science over 1999 to 2002.

Gainsborough School has struggled to maintain increases in the number of pupils achieving Key Stage 2 at Level 4+. In English there was steady % increase from 46% to 57% from 1999 to 2001, progress towards the 3year target (68%) the London Average (73%) and Inner London Average (69%) was being made. However, the achievement level dropped to 39% in 2002. The % achievement in Maths declined from 52% in 1999 to 33% in 2002, short of NDC 3 year target and the London and Inner London averages (69% and 66%). The % achievements in Science peaked in 2001 (72% from 50% in 1999). The school was on course to meet the NDC Year 3 target and was progressing closing on the London average (85%). However, the % achievement declined in 2002 back to a pre 1999 figure of 50%.

Eastlea School has increased the number of pupils achieving >5 A-C GCSEs by over a third (a 14% rise) since 1999 from 18% to 36% 2002. Eastlea has surpassed the NDC's 3 Years target of 25% and 6 Years target of 30% and has continued to progress towards the London average (48.5% in 2002).

On average the % rate of teacher turnover has fallen by 15%.

The % teacher turnover for Grange school was 30% (2000/1). This decreased to 20% in 2001/2 hitting its 10-year target of 22.5%. At Curwen teacher turnover for the same period decreased from 31% to 19%. Gainsborough's teacher turnover in 2000/1 was 26% this decreased to 13% in 2001/2 a fall of 50%, which is well above its 19.5% year 10 target. Portway's teacher turnover was 24% in 2001 but rose to 28% in 2002 it's year 10 target is 18%. Star's teacher turnover was 33% in 2000/1 and has remained the same in 2001/2. Eastlea's teacher turnover was 23.6% in 2000/1 which has fallen to 13.8% in 2001/2 far exceeding its Year 10 target of 17.7%. Lister's teacher turnover was 28% in 2000/1 but it has risen to 29% in 2001/2.

NDC schools have improved faster than schools in Newham as a whole.

Source: Newham NDC

There have also been some unintended positive outcomes. There are ripple effects of some projects, such as the Ocean maths project, where parents and pupils are working together and this has an effect on homework in other subject areas. In Hackney the home/school link programme has helped schools to work with each other, running joint training days and Heads willing to work together on challenging circumstances.

What works

From an organisational point of view it seems to be essential that the local NDC staff have good knowledge of the local area and a good understanding of what the local needs are. The organisation that delivers projects on the ground is also a key ingredient in the success of the project. Links/Networks with other organisations can widen the scope of NDC work, avoid duplication and help with mainstreaming of projects:

‘What has worked really specifically is actually being able to create a network or linkage between the seven schools (...) which I think has been very, very strong in terms of taking things forward.’ (Reading Recovery Tutor, Hackney NDC)

Involvement of the LEA can also be a helpful factor in terms of efficient delivery:

‘What I think has really worked well, I think is the actual relationship between the LEA itself and the work that we are doing on the Ocean estate. They are really trying very hard to make sure that we complement each other.’ (Tower Hamlets LEA official)

‘The partnership between the Learning Trust and SHOW has been helpful: because of that partnership we’re a central team.’ (Reading Recovery Coordinator, Hackney)

At a project/school level, involving pupils in something they find interesting (after school activities, designing a part of their school) also helps towards the project being adopted by the pupils and their families. A key factor of success in two of the projects has been an improved pupil/teacher ratio (one-on-one in the Reading Recovery programme, small groups in the Ocean Maths Project).

Tower Hamlets has also found that projects tend to work better when the community has requested them. The residents of the Ocean estate have started to ‘own’ the projects. They know and understand the Ocean Maths project and now want something similar for literacy. Schools and parents working in partnership has improved community spirit and is helping to raise attainment as well.

Problems encountered/ Barriers to be overcome

Administration

Staff recruitment and turn over has been an issue with all four partnerships. Tower Hamlets has had major problems recruiting and one consequence has been that some post descriptions and responsibilities have become blurred. There are project coordinators, managers, an education coordinator and advisors but several projects do not have managers nor coordinators (e.g. integrated study support) and someone simply has to take responsibility for the project.

At school level the lack of continuity is also problematic. In Hackney a school is closing and two are having a change of head teacher, which is always a period of uncertainty for any school:

‘...Inhibitors. The huge staff turnover at all levels that our schools face and in particular at the moment our Shoreditch schools.’ (Reading Recovery Coordinator, Hackney NDC)

‘...To recruit people to posts which require a high degree of knowledge and skill to do a very specific curriculum area has been a very, very difficult task to do.’ (Tower Hamlets LEA official)

Relationship between NDC, council/LEA and schools: The relationship between NDCs and the Local Education Authority (LEA) or private companies (where these have assumed local responsibility for education) is of critical importance. It is a tremendous source of strength where the NDC feels that they are taken seriously and can have confidence in the local authority. It can be a serious problem, however, where these factors are not in place.

Clarity/ transparency of where funds go: Where there is confusion over the allocation of funding there is the possibility of frustration, anger and resentment. In one NDC, for example, a primary school received funding for a nursery. Another local primary had requested an extension to their nursery but experienced difficulties in accessing funding. This has caused some ill will and frustration linked to the lack of clarity and transparency in relation to how funds are being allocated and by whom.

Management: The people who establish programmes and initiatives are not necessarily those who run them. Where transitions or changes are necessary it is important that all parties are clear about the reasons for the changes and can move ahead on a positive footing.

Projects starting without the right resources: There is clearly a balance to be struck between, on one hand, delaying projects un-necessarily (there may never be a ‘perfect’ time to begin) and, on the other hand, rushing to begin without essential systems and/or people in place (which can undermine confidence in the project). In Southwark, for example, initial delays were due to the full team of coordinators not being in place. In Tower Hamlets the maths project began with some of the resources not being quite ready. Such challenges may be inevitable in view of the scale of some projects, nevertheless it is essential that the impact of such problems is kept under review and considered carefully.

The Projects

Measuring success is a problem at such an early stage. This is especially pronounced in relation to initiatives that are seeking to change patterns of experience and attainment that have a long history. Raising educational achievement is not a quick-fix process and, in addition, it is not always possible to separately identify the impact of the numerous projects and initiatives that are relevant. Nevertheless, projects will need to develop robust procedures for monitoring impacts, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The latter is especially important. Education is about more than test results alone (important though these are) and the NDCs will need to develop ways of capturing, and learning from, the experiences of all those involved.

‘So I could not say, for instance, that attainment has only been improved since those schools have been involved in the project. I could not say that at all, it would not be true. What I do think though, is the additionality brought by the project, particularly the

work with the parents, has been of enormous benefit and of great value.’ (Tower Hamlets LEA official)

Gender issues: We were told of several instances where it appears that issues around gender equality need to be addressed more explicitly. For example, in one NDC a women-only workshop was held and men complained; however, when a men-only workshop was offered no one turned up. Similar issues will appear unless explicit attention is given to this issue.

Black and Minority Ethnic Inclusion: This is a vital issue for NDC initiatives and is the subject of a separate research report from the education theme team. All NDCs should be aware of their duties under current race relations legislation and it is essential that, difficult though it is, local histories of suspicion and mistrust are addressed. NDCs have a duty to promote racial equality and to oppose racism. In some cases racism takes crude and obvious forms, see for example Table 5 (above). In other cases racism can operate through apparently well-intentioned actions born of patronizing perspectives or a desire to avoid conflict. There are no easy solutions or simple blueprints: on some occasions separate provision will be appropriate, on others, a common approach will be necessary. It is certain that greater sensitivity and awareness is necessary in this field. The hurdles are very real but an awareness of the problem is a good starting point.

The Future:

Mainstreaming

‘You’ve got a lot of people whose expectations have been raised...’ (A Primary Head teacher, Newham).

There is a clear need for debate and clarity around the topic of ‘mainstreaming’. The term surfaces frequently but often in different, or even contradictory, ways. In some discussions, ‘mainstreaming’ refers to taking the lessons learnt from NDC projects and making them available more widely. On other occasions, ‘mainstreaming’ seems to refer to finding alternative sources of funding once the NDC initiative is over. The two are not exclusive but greater clarity would aid the discussion. Either way, it is evident that the NDC initiative is having tangible effects and that these will have consequences beyond the life-span of separate projects. Greater clarity about these issues would be valuable both in the short term, as new projects are designed, and in the longer term, when considering what happens post-NDC.

Conclusions

‘Raising achievement’ is one of the government’s over-riding aims for education: it is also the single most common educational goal across all NDC partnerships. A wide variety of different approaches are being explored and, in this report, we have examined a range of projects undertaken in four NDC areas.

The NDC partnerships are at different stages of development and have adopted markedly different strategies. Some have taken a lead from education professionals while another has started with residents’ views. In each case a range of projects is already under way and some positive signs are clear. Although there is much to be done, and several problems remain to be addressed in the future, it is clear that the projects are genuinely contributing to a new approach to educational achievement and are challenging some deeply held stereotypes about the potential of children and young people in NDC areas.

Key Issues for Partnerships: Raising Educational Achievement

Barriers to progress

- High turn-over of staff.
- Poor condition of school buildings.
- Irregular or insufficient contact between school and parents.
- Limited opportunities to develop English as an additional language.
- Low levels of parental involvement.

Good practice in local interventions

- Using NDC staff with local area knowledge.
- Delivery via networks of organisations widens scope, avoids duplication and aids mainstreaming in the future.
- LEA involvement can help organisationally and with embedding changes.
- Pupil involvement can be a critical factor in generating wider support for interventions.
- Parental involvement as partners rather than objects to be changed.
- Projects tend to be much more successful where initiatives arise out of (or directly address) the expressed needs and desires of the community.

Continuing issues & problems

- General capital projects may meet a perceived general need for improved facilities but they do not specifically target those groups most in need. Care is needed to ensure that benefits are fairly distributed.
- Good administration, by committed people with security of role, is essential to success but often key posts are vacant or filled by a succession of temporary staff.
- There is a pressing need for transparency concerning the allocation of funding. Many problems arise when there is uncertainty about *where* funding has gone, and/or *why* certain funding decisions have been made.
- Projects must give serious attention to how they will measure impact. This is a complex issue, and progress may be slow, but this issue needs consideration throughout the life of each project.
- Equity issues can be extremely difficult but cannot be dodged. Gender and ethnic diversity, in particular, should be monitored and considered in light of equal opportunities legislation. In some areas racism and tensions between local communities remain high. These are immediate problems in their own right, but can also hinder further developments across the NDC partnerships.
- The issue of 'mainstreaming' requires greater clarity and planning. How will the benefits and lessons of NDC projects be sustained and/or broadened?

References & Useful Sources

Dadzie, S. (2000) *Toolkit for Tackling Racism in Schools*. Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham.

Department for Education & Skills (DfES) (2001) *Schools Achieving Success*. London, DfES.

Department for Education & Skills (DfES) (2003) *A New Specialist System*. London, DfES.

Department for Education & Skills (DfES) (2003a) *Youth Cohort Study: The Activities and Experiences of 16 Year Olds: England and Wales*. SFR 04/2003. London, DfES.

Department for Education & Skills (DfES) (2003b) *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils*. DFES/0183/2003. London, DfES.