A Holistic Approach to Early School Leaving and School Retention in Blanchardstown:

Current Issues and Future Steps for Services and Schools

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Glossary of Abbreviations

ADM	Area Development Management
BAP	Blanchardstown Area Partnership
BOND	Blanchardstown Offenders for New Directions
BYIC	Blanchardstown Youth Information Centre
BYS	Blanchardstown Youth Service
CAO	Central Applications Office
CDI	Childhood Development Initiative
CDT	Community Drugs Team
DES	Department of Education and Science
EOP	Educational Opportunities Programme
ESL	Early School Leaving/Leaver
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EWB	Education Welfare Board
EWG	Education Working Group
EWO	Education Welfare Officer
FÁS	Foras Aiseanna Saothair – National Training and Employment Authority
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
FIT	Fastrack to Information Technology
HDip	Higher Diploma
HSCL	Home, School, Community Liaison
HSE	Health Service Executive
ITB	Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown
JEDI	Joint Education Development Initiative
JNS	Junior National School
LDSIP	Local Development Social Inclusion Programme
NS	National School
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NEWB	National Education Welfare Board
NUI	National University of Ireland
NYP	Neighbourhood Youth Project
PESL	Potential Early School Leavers
PIB	Planning Implementation Board
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development Programme
SCP	School Completion Programme
SNS	Senior National School
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TOFE	Together Opportunities for Education
UN	United Nations
US	United States
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
WEB	Working to Enhance Blanchardstown
YI	Youth Initiative

FOREWORD

OCTOBER 2006

The Blanchardstown area has developed and grown beyond all expectations over the past quarter of a century. With that extraordinary growth has come the full gamut of benefits and problems associated with rapid urbanization. In addressing these problems effectively the key is local involvement. Nobody understands the issues and the problems to the same extent as those rooted or based in the area.
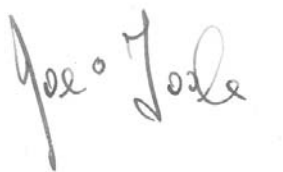
As regards strategizing where and how to anticipate problems, this report goes to the heart of the matter. If we fail young people or allow them be abandoned during their teenage years, then we are certainly storing up huge societal and community problems in the future.

School time for most students can never be even half their waking day and no school on its own can completely counteract or balance the influence of the time outside school. For that reason, the targeting of at-risk children and the development of extracurricular activities are crucially important in giving young people new and different perspectives on life and will prove central in bringing them near to achieving their potential.

There is another reason, an economic reason, why the conclusions of this report need to be taken seriously by the powers on high. Apart from the cost to society, if young people are drawn down further into a life of frustration and under-privilege, there is also a loss to society. Many of those young people who drop out of mainstream education have gifts, talents and capacity which is badly needed for our economic development in that they might add significantly to our national intellectual bank.

Far beyond the Blanchardstown area, the matters considered in this Report can prove a most positive foundation for other groups in other areas addressing similar concerns.

As for me personally, I suppose I should declare an interest here in that way back in "the dark ages" of the late sixties my very first appointment as a teacher was to the primary school in Blanchardstown. At that time, believe it or believe it not, St. Brigid's Boys and Girls schools, each of which had no more than five teachers, constituted the only school campus in the locality and I knew every single person in Blanchardstown. Over the years I have watched the development of the area and watched in particular the growth of First, Second and Third level education. Times have indeed changed and new challenges now present themselves. This Report is a noteworthy and praiseworthy initiative in showing the way forward.

Senator Joe O'Toole

Acknowledgements:

Schools
Our gratitude is extended to the Principals, staff and students of the following schools for generously giving of their time to participate in this research:

Primary Schools
Scoil an Cathair Alainn, National School, Ladyswell, Mulhuddart
Scoil Mhuire Junior National School, Blakestown
Scoil Mhuire Senior National School, Blakestown
St. Patrick's Senior School, Corduff
St. Philip's Junior National School, Mountview
St. Philip's Senior National School, Mountview
Sacred Heart of Jesus, National School, Huntstown
Post-Primary Schools
Blakestown Community School
Riversdale Community College
Hartstown Community School

Services
Our appreciation is also extended to the Co-ordinators and staff of the following services who gave willingly of their time in assisting the research team in the completion of this study.

Blanchardstown Area Partnership (BAP)
Barnardos
Blakestown Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP)
Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative
Blanchardstown Youth Service
BOND (Blanchardstown Offenders New Directions)
EOP – School Completion Programme
TOFE – School Completion Programme
WEB (Working to Enhance Blanchardstown)
Youthreach

The team would like to express our sincere thanks to those ***service-users*** who completed questionnaires and/or who participated in focus groups around their experiences within the following services:

Blanchardstown Early School Leavers Programme
Blakestown Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP)
Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative
BOND
EOP – School Completion Programme
OASIS – Post-Primary
TOFE – School Completion Programme
WEB
Youthreach

Additional Services

Warm thanks are also extended to staff of the following agencies/services who assisted the research team through the provision of any additional data requested.

NEPS
EWB
National Learning Network/BUA Ireland – Disability Support Services
Blanchardstown Traveller Support Group,
Mulhuddart - Corduff CDT
Mountview - Blakestown CDT
Hartstown - Huntstown CDT

We would also like to thank Dr. Killian O'Rourke for his help with the statistical analyses.

Many thanks to Catherine Durkin and Conor Ryan, BAP, for their support throughout.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report examines current interventions and gaps in provision with regard to actual and potential early school leavers from 10 – 17 years mainly in the RAPID areas of Blanchardstown. It seeks to make recommendations as to how services and schools could provide Blanchardstown's youth population with an improved 'continuum of care'. Young people's direct input into the consultation process was obtained through questionnaires given to all 6th classes and 1st year classes in the selected schools. Service users were interviewed from 9 core local services.

Key findings include:
- an extremely high level of satisfaction with the identified local services among service users of both genders with notable reports of gains in help with difficulties in school and gains in quality of life generally from attending the service
- exceptionally high levels of satisfaction with communication between staff and service users
- key strengths of local schools in their approaches to structured transition programmes, proactive preventive approaches to bullying, variety of extracurricular activities and schools being used as a site and resource for adult education
- notable gains have been made in students' intentions to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate in Blanchardstown since 1998, with the support of the services that have been developed over that period of time, in conjunction with the schools
- the need for a coordinated referral strategy between the afterschool projects with wider avenues for referral to prevent those students most at risk from falling through the gaps in service provision
- Nutrition needs of a substantial minority of pupils are not being met. Approximately 18% of the 6th class pupils attending school on a given day across the 4 schools stated that they were either often, very often or every day too hungry to do their work in school. This is a child poverty issue and also highlights the need for more consistent access to breakfast clubs
- a gap regarding drama and afterschool projects across almost all the schools; there is a need to recognise the potential role of drama in developing conflict resolution skills and self-esteem
- a need for increased opportunity for practical skills including cooking skills both in school and in afterschool projects
- a statistically significant increase in perception of being treated unfairly by teachers in secondary school (1st year) compared to primary school (6th class)
- a statistically significant increase in 1st year compared to 6th class responses in those students who are not willing or are not sure if they would tell a teacher about an academic problem

An opportunity exists for Blanchardstown to become a national model of best practice in relation to integration of foreign nationals within schools and the community due to the expanding number of foreign nationals in some schools by as much as 20% each year. It is clear that a State level focus is needed on this new issue of transition and that strategies are needed for involvement of foreign national parents in the schools, for increased language support, for outreach by services to foreign nationals and for representation of large ethnic minority groups in the area on local bodies such as the School Completion Programmes. There is a need to go beyond short programmes or once off events and for a medium and long term strategy for engagement of representatives of foreign nationals in community affairs, including a strategy of developing community leaders that represent the voices of their ethnic groups

The need for interventions at a systemic level to improve student-teacher relations emerges consistently from the accounts of alienation from formal schooling at secondary level of those currently involved in services as alternatives to the formal education system. Suggestions for alternatives to suspension in secondary schools made by a range of local services strongly resonate with recommendations made at a national in-service of School Completion Programme to 'improve the climate for teaching and 'learning in classrooms'. A more holistic strategy must embrace not only extra-school supports and services. It must most centrally embrace

changes to the school climate at secondary level. This is a systemic level issue and is a national issue as well as one local to Blanchardstown.

Recognising the need for a more holistic approach to behavioural issues, for increased family support services and supports for students with emotional and behavioural problems, for improved collaboration between schools and local services and the need for early intervention – particularly regarding speech and language, and emotional support, it is recommended that a community based psychological support service for Blanchardstown be developed to build on existing interventions, in order to focus on early intervention, speech and language needs, systemic level interventions in the school, and family support, including parent peer support. A Management Committee needs to be established in order to develop a detailed and timed implementation plan, including financial plan, for the proposed Psychological Service.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Terms of Reference

■ A key Strategic Objective of Blanchardstown Area Partnership's (BAP) Strategic Implementation Plan (2004-6) is to develop and effectively coordinate appropriate responses to the needs of early school leavers and those at risk of early school leaving in Blanchardstown.

■ Following this Strategic Objective, this Report examines current interventions and gaps with regard to actual and potential early school leavers across an age spectrum of 10 –17 years in the Blanchardstown area.

■ BAP's Youth Planning Implementation Board (PIB) commissioned this broad study to examine the impacts of various interventions throughout Blanchardstown in order to promote:
– a multi-sectoral response to inclusion amongst the various agencies and schools operating in Blanchardstown
– equality, economic and social inclusion for the beneficiaries of programmes

■ The objectives of the study include:
– To examine whether the chosen agencies (i.e. local services and schools) are co-operating effectively with one another
– To examine and highlight evidence of gains (added value) in the share of benefits for the target group of these programmes
– To pinpoint the types of resources required to effectively undertake such work
– To evaluate the impacts of select interventions in terms of greater access, opportunity and outcome to and from education
– To provide a comprehensive description of the chosen interventions operating in Blanchardstown
– To make recommendations as to how the services and schools could operate more effectively in tandem and therefore provide Blanchardstown's youth and adolescent population with an improved 'continuum of care'
– To identify and recommend models of good practice

■ The agencies chosen by BAP's Youth Planning Implementation Board (PIB) for participation in this study are:
– Oasis after-School Project,
– Blanchardstown Youth Service
– Barnardos, Blakestown/Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP), Blanchardstown Offenders for New Directions (BOND)
– Working to Enhance Blanchardstown (WEB)
– Blakestown/Mountview Youth Initiative, School Completion Programme, Together Opportunities for Education (TOFE)
– School Completion Programme, Educational Opportunities Programme (EOP)
– Youthreach

■ The schools chosen by BAP for examination in this study are those within the RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development Programme) areas of Blanchardstown. RAPID currently targets 25 urban centres nationally with greatest concentration of disadvantage for priority funding under the National Development Plan. The four RAPID areas within Blanchardstown are Corduff, Mountview, Blakestown and Mulhuddart[1].

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1 'To date, BAP has mainly aimed its supports at specific target groups who were affected by issues pertaining to social exclusion in Blanchardstown. This 'Blanchardstown wide' perspective on tackling social exclusion made sense when Blanchardstown was a relatively compact area. However, with a population that has rapidly expanded (and is likely to do so over the next 10 years) this strategy needs reappraisal' (BAP Strategic Implementation Plan 2004-6)

■ As well as this targeted approach, a Blanchardstown wide strategy is needed for issues that transfer across all communities in the area:

'While targeting resources at those most in need in these areas is essential to this Implementation Plan, the Partnership will also need to sustain its area wide focus on coordination and influencing for all of the Blanchardstown area. BAP has therefore adopted a strategy of identifying issues and responses for individuals, groups and communities at area level e.g., Corduff, Mulhuddart etc. while also assessing the common issues from all areas which can be advanced by BAP through a Blanchardstown wide strategy'
(BAP Strategic Implementation Plan 2004-6)

For this purpose and in consultation with BAP's Youth Planning Implementation Board (PIB), other schools outside these RAPID areas were included as background material for future recommendations. These schools were Huntstown primary school and Hartstown Community School.

■ This study will also draw on a range of previous research in Blanchardstown to synthesize a range of issues needing attention with regard to early school leaving

■ Other research will also be referred to in order to develop a range of recommendations that will inform planning of Blanchardstown Partnership and local schools and services for the next 3-5 years with regard to prevention of early school leaving

■ It is important to note that the terms of reference were drawn up by the PIB using community development principles of inclusion, participation and feedback etc. These agencies are also part of BAP's Youth Planning Implementation Board and thus have ownership over the research process.

1.2 Early School Leaving and Blanchardstown

■ Any future plans for interventions with regard to early school leaving need to be cognisant of the fact that Blanchardstown is 'one of the fastest growing areas in Ireland today' (LDSIP 2004) with a population increase of 31% between the 1996 and 2002 Census

■ Forkan's (2005) analysis of early school leaving in Blanchardstown found:
– of the 844 students who started second level education in 1995 in 5 schools in Blanchardstown, 30% left school early
– 9% of males, 7% of females had left school by the time they would have sat their Junior Certificate (average ESL 8%; overall retention rate to Junior Certificate 92%)
– Another 24% of males and 20% of females had left school before Leaving Certificate
– Of the 805 students who started second level education in 1996 in the 5 schools, 30% left school early
– 8% of males, 3% of females had left school by the time they would have sat their Junior Certificate (average ESL 6% overall retention rate to Junior Certificate 94%)
– Another 27% of males and 20% of females had left school before Leaving Certificate

It is important to note that Forkan's (2005) figures may understate the level of the problem in RAPID areas of Blanchardstown as only some of those 5 sampled schools serve the RAPID areas of most disadvantage.
BAP Strategic implementation plan (2004-6) refers to 'growing evidence of a deepening of socio-economic marginalisation among many groups, particularly those within the RAPID areas'. Moreover, the figures examined by Forkan (2005) are from 2000, 2001, 2002 and may have changed in the meantime; for example, there has been a significant change with regard to foreign nationals in local schools.
Forkan (2005) also qualifies his results by noting that those who may have left at Junior Certificate to go to apprenticeships are not included in figures for school completion either locally or nationally and 'it is not legitimate to view them as early school leavers' In addition, local figures are not adjusted for deaths, emigration

or movement to private educational establishments etc as are the national statistics.

The dangers of school failure and alienation from the school system have been recognised by research regarding the strong correlation between early school leaving and drug misuse (National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008; Morgan 2001; Downes 2003)

The Combat Poverty Agency policy submission (2003) set a target to reduce the proportion of early school leavers nationally to 10% by 2005. Their annual report (2004) notes that the targets in the National Anti Poverty Strategy and National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion to reduce early school leavers to 85% by 2003 and to 90% by 2006 is 'unlikely' to be met 'although programmes are being put in place to support this objective'.

1.3 Methodology

Service Users

■ A client centred methodology was employed with regard to service users across the 10 services. This consisted of individual interviews with a target number of 6 service users per service

■ The sample of client users in our interviews was chosen on the basis of two of Miles & Huberman's (1994) sampling approaches:

— criterion: all cases that meet some criterion

— logic of maximum variation: documenting diverse variations and identifying important common patterns

■ The criterion used for sampling was that of time i.e., a dateline sampling procedure involving those service users who were attending the service at a given point in time – the time criterion employed was that the service users began attending the service before October 2005. A sampling logic of maximum variation included a request for including 2 service users (within the 6 requested) that were representative of minority groups such as Travellers or foreign nationals, as well as including responses from both genders. If more than 6 service users were available and present at the time of visit of the researcher to the service, a further criterion was applied - those service users who were using the service most recently prior to October 2005 were chosen. This ensured that their views on the service provision related to the current situation pertaining to the service.

■ The interviews were conducted during February-March 2006.

■ This logic of maximum variation approach is cognisant of the commitment in the BAP Strategic implementation plan (2004-6):'Consultations and partnerships with members of target groups identified as most marginalised and their representative organisations are vital in order to ensure accurate needs analysis and identification of appropriate responses to the particular needs of different groups' Priority groups include asylum seekers/refugees, Travellers and migrant workers[2].

It is not being claimed that the chosen sample is homogenous or necessarily typical case i.e., the normal/average client[3]. Nevertheless, it is a legitimate presumption from the dateline sampling procedure that the clients are typical service users.

■ These interviews were in relation to performance indicators developed on the basis of an adaptation of a quantitative framework for contemporary family support analysis by McKeown et al 2001 with regard to the views of service users for Springboard projects in Ireland (see also Downes & Murray 2002). While the

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2 Similarly, Ryan (2004) recommends that BAP target groups such as Travellers 'should be positively targeted where possible'. Quinlan's (1998a) research in Blanchardstown noted that the Early School Leaving project of Blanchardstown Youth Service has had Traveller participation but there were no Travellers on the project at the time of the review. In contrast, although Burtenshaw Kenny Associates (2005) recognised the target group of JEDI in Blanchardstown are 'some of the most vulnerable and socially excluded in the affected communities', their evaluation was silent on participation of Travellers and foreign nationals in JEDI.

3 Two other types of sampling outlined by Miles & Huberman (1994)

questions adopted were largely reproduced verbatim from McKeown et al (2001), it needs to be acknowledged that the much smaller sample size per project and non-random sampling in our study requires caution with regard to any direct comparison with McKeown et al's results.

One project, BOND is a service to a much older client group yet it was requested for inclusion as some of the clients may be viewed as being particularly marginalised.

Permission was not given by OASIS, Barnardos, for interviews with their service users

Service Providers

■ Interviews with representatives from all the service providers also took place during January-March 2006. In addition, representatives from other services were interviewed (NEPS, National Learning Network/BUA Ireland, Blanchardstown Traveller Support Group, BAP, CDTS).

School sample

■ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ireland, espouses the child-centred principle that children and young people have a right to be consulted and to have their voices heard in matters related to their own welfare (see also the National Conjoint Child Health Committee Report 2000, p.30, on direct consultation with young people).

■ The BAP Strategic implementation plan (2004-6) commits to 'supporting and promoting the right and capacity of all groups to fully participate in society by appropriate provisions for consultation and involvement in decision-making and by provision of necessary supports to enable their organisation'[4]. The child-centred principles underlying this research logically flow from this concern with participation and consultation.

■ Young people's direct input into the consultation process was obtained through questionnaires given to all 6th classes in the primary schools (St. Phillips Mountview, Blakestown, St. Patrick's Ladyswell, Corduff, Huntstown and all 1st year classes in the secondary schools (Riversdale College, Blakestown Secondary and Hartstown Community School). This focus on 6th class and 1st year was cognisant of the difficulties of transition from primary to post primary raised in a range of research in Ireland (e.g., O'Brien 2004). Some of the questions were drawn from previous research questionnaires (Downes 2004, 2004a, O'Brien 2004).

Each questionnaire stated that:
– the answers given are private
– they do not go to the police, school, family or friends
– there is no right or wrong answer to any of the questions
– students were not being judged on the basis of their answers
The questionnaires were answered in the classroom in the presence of members of the research team. The questionnaire responses were returned to a sealed envelope. No pupils or students refused to participate.

A key element of the questionnaires was that most of the questions were open questions which allowed for a range of answers so that the students could construct their own representations of both problematic areas and also areas of resilience[5]. While closed questions requiring yes/no answers were sometimes included to ascertain quantitative dimensions to specific issues, the predominantly qualitative approach adopted in the

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4 Following such principles, Quinlan (1998a) employed child and youth centred research on the Early School Leavers project of Blanchardstown Youth Service and Keating's (1999) evaluation of the Fastrack to Information Technology (FIT) initiative in Blanchardstown examined service users views. Burtenshaw Kenny Associates (2005) evaluation of the cross border elements of JEDI did not interview any of the service users and was limited to service providers.

5 The importance of accommodating a strengths based aspect examining protective factors (as well as risk factors) has already been recognised in the Irish context in the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 (see also McKeown et al 2001).

questionnaire seeks to examine the detailed range of perceptions of problematic issues - and to give more voice to individual responses than simply a focus on the average response.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS
— Blakestown Primary n = 70
— Mountview Primary n = 57
— Ladyswell Primary n = 48
— Corduff Primary n = 55

TOTAL PRIMARY (RAPID AREA SCHOOLS) = **230 responses**[6]

SECONDARY SCHOOLS
— Blakestown Secondary n = 88
— Riversdale Secondary n = 74

TOTAL SECONDARY (RAPID AREA SCHOOLS) = **162 responses**[7]

Specifically designed questionnaires were given to all the school principals, including those in the Junior Primary Schools and to Home School Community Liaison Teachers. All 6th class and 1st year teachers in the participating schools were asked to respond to a questionnaire on their needs as teachers and the needs of their pupils.

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6 Plus a further 80 responses from 6th classes in Huntstown Primary School.
7 Plus a further 70 responses from 1st year classes in Hartstown Secondary School.

SECTION 2: BUILDING ON KEY STRENGTHS

2.1 Extremely High Level of Client Satisfaction with Local Services[8]

Consolidated statistics for the services users taken from 9 services across the Blanchardstown area:
— 48 participants
— 22 Males, 26 Females,
— Mean age of 16.1 years.

The following data was compiled on the basis of an adaptation framework for contemporary family support analysis (Mc Keown et al 2001):

How Frequently are the following statements true?	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
I was made to feel welcome by the project	39	9	-	-
I was listened to by the project/club	35	12	1	-
I was understood by the project/club	36	10	2	-
I enjoy coming to the project/club	38	6	4	-

Statement about quality of staff	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Staff in the project/club genuinely care about you	38	8	2	-
Staff in the project/club know how to respect people	41	5	2	-
You are treated fairly by the project/club[9]	37	9	1	-
Staff in the project/club are very good at what they do	43	3	2	-

How has life changed since coming to the project/club	Much better	Better	Same	Worse	Much worse
	26	13	9	-	-

8 See also the RAPID report (2003) which noted that: 'There are relatively high levels of satisfaction with the services provided by local schools in the RAPID areas within Blanchardstown. In Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor, 74.3% of survey respondents felt that the schools were providing a very good, good or alright service whilst only 6% of respondents felt that the schools were providing a poor or very poor service. In Corduff, there are similar levels of satisfaction with the local schools – 82.3% satisfaction rating with the primary school and 74.3% satisfaction with the secondary school'.
9 One service user gave no response to this question

FIGURE 1: ILLUSTRATES HOW LIFE HAS CHANGED SINCE COMING TO THE PROJECT
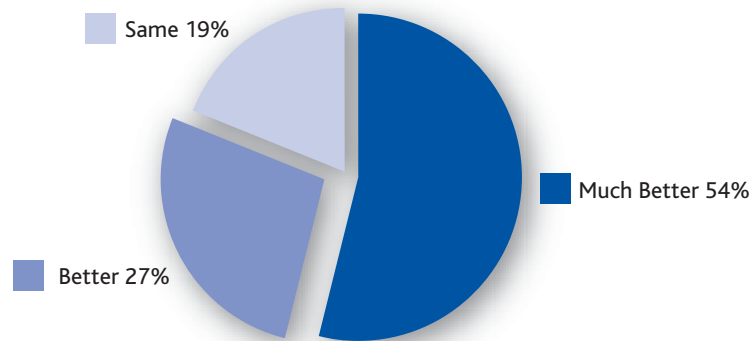
How well do you think the project/club works with young people	Very good	Good	Neither	Bad	Very bad
	39	9	-	-	-

Has the project/club lived up to your expectations	Yes	No
	45	3

Personal Impact of on Participant attending a service	Very good	Good	Neither	Bad	Very bad
Has the project/club been helpful to you	38	10	-	-	-

FIGURE 2: ILLUSTRATES THE PERCEIVED HELPFULNESS OF THE SERVICE PROVIDED
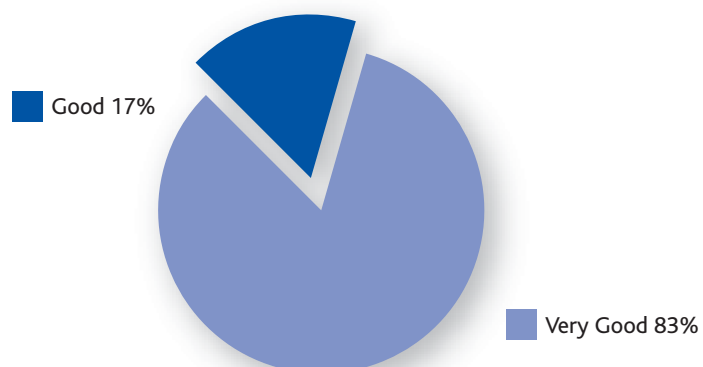
General impact of helpfulness of the project on other areas of life	Very good	Good	Neither	Bad	Very bad
Helpfulness of the project/club with difficulties at home	31	13	4	-	-
Helpfulness of the project/club with difficulties at school	20	24	4	-	-
Helpfulness of the project/club with concerns/worries	20	24	4	-	-
Helpfulness of being able to talk to project staff	20	24	4	-	-

FIGURE 3: HELPFULNESS OF PROJECT WITH SCHOOL WORK

Neither 17%

Good 19%
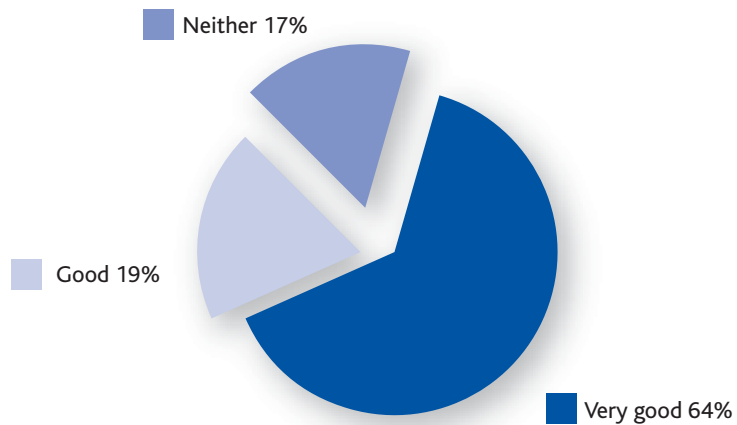
Very good 64%

Staff competencies participants rated	Very good	Good	Neither	Bad	Very bad
Approach of staff team	31	13	4	-	-
Skills of staff team	33	13	2	-	-
Project administration	34	13	1	-	-
Size of staff team	29	17	2	-	-
Physical facilities	25	20	3	-	-
Location of premises	30	16	2	-	-
Facilities and equipment	33	12	3	-	-
Layout of premises	24	23	1	-	-
Size of premises	20	24	4	-	-

— It is evident from the results above that there is an extremely high level of satisfaction with the identified local services among service users

— This extremely high satisfaction level applies to both male and female service users as there was no noticeable gender differences observed

— Significantly, responses indicate gains from attending the services with regard to help with difficulties in school and quality of life generally:

* 40 out of 48 people (83%) stated that the service has helped with difficulties in school

* 39 out of 48 people (81%) stated that their life is either much better or better since attending the service

— 100% of the 48 respondents state that the services they attend have been helpful to them

— There is a strong consensus among respondents that the staff across the services are 'very good' at what they do. 43 out of 48 responses (89%) state that this is always the case, a further 3 responses (6%) state this is often the case. No service user gave a negative response to this question

— Communication between service users and staff is extremely impressive across services with 45 out of 48 service users (93%) stating that it is helpful to talk to project staff and 47 out of 48 service users (97%) stating that they are listened to by project staff either always or often

— 46 out of 48 service users state that they are always or often treated fairly by project staff

— A cautionary note is required regarding employment of McKeown et al's (2001) performance indicators. It is arguable that those potential service users who are most marginalised may be more difficult not only to engage with but also to have satisfaction with the particular service; they may be particularly alienated from the system and also have a range of needs not all of which could be satisfied by an individual service. Any performance indicators like the above need to be interpreted against the backdrop of the ambition of a given service to engage with those most marginalised.

— An important contributory factor to the success of the services is arguably the fact of the relatively low staff turnover noted by the vast majority of services:

> *'stability of people in services'*
>
> *'consistent with staff, most have been with us since the beginning'*
>
> *'No [high turnover of staff], the job demands consistency with the targeted individuals'*
>
> *'little turnover of staff with 2/3 living locally, invaluable to project'*
>
> *'there is very little staff turnover on our project. In my opinion this is largely due to our management who gives us a lot of trust and responsibility in our roles. Also the work is very varied and interesting'*

2.2 Building on Key Strengths

Developing Proactive Approaches to Bullying: Disseminating *within* the School of those Successful Strategies for Prevention and Intervention regarding Bullying

Child centred research across primary schools in Ballyfermot highlighted that pupils perceived bullying to be a major problem and frequently raised this issue in questionnaires even when not directly asked about bullying itself (Downes 2004). A notable minority of pupils drew an explicit link between not attending school and this being due to being bullied (Downes 2004).

The key role of the class teacher regarding bullying was observed in a subsequent study in a primary school in Ballyfermot (Downes 2004a) where the class teacher employed strategies such as an anonymous problem box, role play and circle time to eliminate a bullying problem that had existed in the class the previous year when there were a number of substitute teachers.

In Tallaght, it was reported that 33% of children have been bullied at school, with 8% of these being bullied several times a week within the previous term (CDI 2004).

Interviews with Primary School Principals and Teachers in Blanchardstown highlight a proactive preventive approach occurring with regard to bullying, with two schools also developing a mentoring system:

− 'Bullying is not a significant problem because we have a good pupil teacher ratio…We know all our children well. We place emphasis on the 'positive'. We are beginning a mentoring system which will help children to question their own behaviour and try to help them become self motivated to behave with respect for others'

− 'We have an annual Bullying Awareness Week. Staff aware of potential bullying situations. Vigilance by staff. Attitude from principal and staff that bullying will not be tolerated'

− 'We implement a bullying policy – have anti-bullying week each year. A leaflet is also given to all parents. School is always monitoring and dealing with any incidents'

− Bullying 'not a huge problem but has happened. Mostly happened outside school and not class time though i.e. on road at home. My strategy is no tolerance and children know and accept this, a lot of work done in 'circle time', role plays etc'

− 'bullying is not a major problem in my class. Our class often discuss the problem of bullying especially as it arises a lot in the reader and other material, the school also has an anti-bullying week'

− Bullying 'not really, has happened over the years. SPHE lessons, circle time, role plays'

− Bullying a significant problem? 'Not to my knowledge. I do encourage children to tell always and I assure them that something will be done'

− 'No because children know of the serious consequences. We do a lot of 'circle time' type work on bullying and bullies in which the bully is painted as the coward/weak one'

− 'we have a strong anti-bullying policy, teachers, year heads and counsellors deal with the problem'

■ In response to the question 'How many in your class have been bullied?' the benefits of these strategies were evident in some 6th classes across schools where there were numerous questionnaire responses that there was no bullying taking place in their class.

■ Other features of pupil responses in the questionnaires were that:

− variation in levels of bullying was much more evident across 6th classes in the *same* school than variation across the four schools[10]

− while some 6th classes in a given school consistently revealed that no bullying at all was taking place other 6th classes in the same school indicated high levels of bullying. Sample answers include: '5 that's not fair', 'lots and lots', 'loads of people', '10 people', 'about 14', 'half the class', 'nearly everyone', 'all of the class'

Steps for further progress:

■ This extreme variation in levels of bullying across 6th classes *within* a school suggests that individual teachers are having significant success with SPHE and preventive approaches to bullying. However, this success is not being translated fully across all classes within a school. It would seem that while a whole school approach with regard to bullying may be having some impact, further development of a co-ordinated within school anti-bullying strategy may be needed. This would include more dissemination within the schools and across schools of strategies that are working well for some teachers with regard to prevention and elimination of bullying.

■ To facilitate this dissemination of good practice strategies for prevention and elimination of bullying within the school, it is recommended that a staff member coordinate such a dissemination strategy and act as a support/mentor for other teachers in the school. While this staff member would liaise with the school principal in implementing the whole school anti-bullying policy, (s) he would also serve as an intermediary between the class teacher and the principal. The class teacher may be more likely to approach another colleague – in this role as coordinator - for informal advice on intervention for bullying. For example, at secondary level, Blakestown Community School have developed the good practice of an 'anti-bullying committee', a 'cool-school committee' for bullying.

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10 Similarly in Ballyfermot primary schools, there was enormous variation in levels of bullying across the same class groupings (e.g., 5th class) in the same school – variation that was much more noticeable than that in levels of bullying across different schools (Downes 2004).

■ The findings across primary schools were basically echoed at second level with enormous variation in levels of bullying across classes ranging from none to 'all', '16 in the class and 16 bullied'. Some secondary students also referred to 'peer mediators', another to 'our minder'. A similar need for a key staff member to help co-ordinate a whole school approach to bullying exists in the secondary schools. Given that both primary and second level schools in the RAPID areas of Dublin 15 have extensive experience of co-operation on a range of programmes (language, access, behaviour), it would be useful to adopt a similar approach in regard to bullying with exchanges of good practice, materials, and joint in-service as possible models of co-operation

2.3 Building on Key Strengths

Variety of School Extracurricular Activities and Range of Local Services

Participation in even one extra-curricular school activity is associated with a reduction in rates of early school dropout, particularly for high-risk youth (Mahoney & Cairns 1997). Mahoney (2000) defines participation as one or more years of involvement in the extra-curricular activity and states:

> The participant is attracted to the activity and is likely competent in that area or may even excel. Unlike preventive interventions that attempt to correct academic or social deficits by remedial work, extracurricular activities may foster a positive connection between the individual and school based on the student's interests and motivations. The specific activity pursued may be less important than the act of participation itself (p.503)

Morgan (1998) cites a study by Beacham (1980) which found that over 60% of high school drop-outs were not involved in any extracurricular activities during their high school years — a level which is significantly higher than any estimates of the overall number not participating in such activities. This study arguably has much relevance also to the primary school context

The Educational Disadvantage Subcommittee (2003) has recommended that School Plans address 'key areas' such as:

■ Extra-curricular programmes and connection to youth service provision within the local area

■ Transition from primary to post-primary

It has been argued that these two elements need to be firmly connected to each other so that a plan would exist for continuity between those extracurricular activities at primary level and at secondary level (Downes 2004a).

■ A feature of the OASIS afterschool project is this very continuity between primary and post primary for those students who go on to attend Riversdale Community College

Another strength in the context of Blanchardstown is the variety of extracurricular activities available in at least some of the schools, as well as the commitment of individual teachers to give their time to participate in organising these activities. This is evident from the following responses from schools regarding available extracurricular activities:

'I teach French to 5th class pupils after school — children do not pay. I also do 9 weeks of Spanish with 6th class pupils'

organises homework club 'for many years'

'6ths did robotics course and mentored students in 5th'

'The school's involvement in extracurricular activities promotes a lot of interest in the local community. School teams regularly play in major finals. School choir participates in choral festivals. School tours abroad are a source of development for pupils and parents. Serious links have also been forged with Blanchardstown IT college in the areas of European language, computers and robotics'

Available extracurricular activities in local schools include:

— *'Gaelic games, soccer, olympic handball, basketball, chess, European language classes, English to international pupils, choral activities, homework clubs, breakfast clubs'*
— *'Homework clubs (afterschool): EOP, Barnardos, NYP, European language classes (afterschool), Social/Personal Skills Development for Targeted children (in-school), Access Programme T.C.D and I.T.B'*
— *'Breakfast club, Homework clubs, afterschool sports, foreign language'*
— *'Breakfast clubs, homework clubs'*

It is important that services are also available throughout the summer and also in the evenings. This is recognised, for example, by Blakestown/Mountview Youth Initiative 'Currently the service operates 2 late evenings and during summer months, under review' and Oasis 'During Summer tends to run 'stepping stones' transition programme for 6th class – May/June meetings during summer'. WEB has 'summer programmes run during the summer months- and link in with other youth projects to provide a fun filled busy Summer and reduce the potential for boredom fuelled crime'.

BAP runs the following services throughout the summer or in the evenings:
— 2 day drop in one-to-one career and course guidance for 6th year from local schools immediately after Leaving Certificate and CAO results.
— One-to-one career and course guidance for adults and early school leavers by appointment on selected dates throughout the year. Evenings and occasional Saturdays
— Evening Workshops on study skills e.g., exam techniques for adults
— 1 Week summer courses for primary school teachers in 2001, 2004, and 2005 in collaboration with the two local School Completion Programmes
— Leaving Certificate English as part of the Learning @Work Programme

Steps for further progress:
■ From service providers there is a perception that there are 'more services in Mulhuddart than Corduff', 'geographical gaps – Ladyswell have no NYP (including Drumheath)'
■ While there is some evidence of pupil and student involvement in the arts[11], there is arguably a gap regarding drama across almost all the schools. The role of drama concerning emotional expression and development, as well as in developing self-esteem and conflict resolution skills is a key potential resource for young people in the RAPID schools in Blanchardstown. It is noticeable that the potential of the theatre, Draiocht, to be a strong community resource for the RAPID area schools in Blanchardstown is underdeveloped as no pupil response nor school response referred to involvement of school or afterschool programmes with Draiocht.
■ Drama, as well as other artistic media, can also be part of an integrated approach to developing literacy skills as part of the play/musical etc. Drama helps both with employing culturally relevant materials to improve literacy and with an emphasis on personal expression to overcome fear of failure often associated with literacy issues
■ The good practice example of OASIS regarding continuity in afterschool project participants across primary to secondary needs to be extended to *all* the afterschool projects. Another good practice example of continuity is the NYP which provides intensive in-school, afterschool and summer programmes to children and their families. The span of support ranges from 3rd class in the primary school to first year and includes academic support from a teacher allocated to the project by the DES as well as other relevant services. The NYP also collaborates with the local community school on the transfer programme. In addition both take referrals of students who live in the area but go to school outside the area whether to a special or mainstream school.

11 For example, EOP (Blakestown/Mountview) offers art therapy in St. Philips Mountview and dance classes (Forkan 2005). Dance and drama classes take place at Blakestown Community School. One school principal mentions as a priority 'full time teachers to promote drama, music, visual arts, P.E'. A first year male student mentioned that 'I used to do drama but it's over'.

■ The logic of continuity of involvement in afterschool projects from primary to post primary needs to be more fully extended within, for example, OASIS itself to include the option of continuity in afterschool even if the student is attending a *different* secondary school from that of Riversdale Community College. It is arguable that continuity across primary to secondary is even more important if the student is attending a different school from his/her peers and from those he/she was with in primary school

■ For those with learning difficulties and/or literacy difficulties the National Learning Network/BUA Ireland, located in Blanchardstown itself, is a potentially valuable resource that could be developed with more links with schools.

2.4 Building on Key Strengths

Structured Transition Programmes between Primary and Post-Primary Schools

Another positive feature of schools in the RAPID areas of Blanchardstown is the number of structured transition programmes between primary and post primary schools.

Blanchardstown Area Partnership Annual Report (1999) noted its transfer programme for Travellers involving homework support programmes[12], while Easter transfer workshops are currently run by SCP. Examples of actions undertaken to prevent problems traditionally recognised as arising in the process of transition from primary to post primary include:

— Ladyswell '*Programme in place which includes: pupil and parent visit to 2nd level school, introductory visit. Pupil on 2nd visit 'sits in' on classes. Results of assessment tests discussed with pupil's class teacher. Proposed class placements discussed with primary school teachers*'

— Blakestown primary: Detailed transition programme with 2nd level school coordinated through HSCL

— Mountview: '*Visitation to the 2nd level premises for school tour. School Completion — organise a 2 day induction course in Blakestown C.S. where 60% of our pupils progress to, including those most at risk. Regular contact between schools involved and 6th class teachers, resource, learning support etc*'

— Services also note the 'transition programme by NYP' as well as the need for '*better transfer programmes from Corduff end*'

— Another service noted the involvement of parents in this structured transition programme: '*Schools probably could do more regarding parents but there are good transfer programmes involving parents*'

— OASIS state that '*During Summer tend to run 'stepping stones' transition programme for 6th class — May/June and meetings during Summer*'

2.5 Building on Key Strengths

'Make the school a focal point of community education'

One of the key actions recommended by the Statutory Committee on Educational Disadvantage (2005) is to 'make the school a focal point of community education':

The Educational Disadvantage Committee recognises that the problem of educational disadvantage cannot be solved in mainstream school-based educational programmes alone...the committee proposes a new strategy that places the solutions to educational disadvantage within an inclusive lifelong learning framework.

12 Moreover, the BAP Annual Report (1999) noted its involvement with 4 schools with 60 sixth class pupils in a programme of support to maximise the academic potential of students.

Many of the local schools are being used as a site and resource for adult education. This is a key strength within Blanchardstown, though many schools as well as services note the increasing difficulty in obtaining parental involvement due to the increased availability of part-time work.

In response to a question regarding integration of the school with local adult education approaches, the schools responded as follows:

— Ladyswell: *'Co. Dublin VEC Adult Education classes held in school. Crèche facilities shared. Home School Teachers' courses coordinated with Adult Ed to avoid overlapping'*
— Corduff: *'Home visits, classes for parents, transfer programmes (including infant packs)…parent to parent contact' 'Home visits, classes and courses for parents e.g., craft, sewing, computers, first aid, childcare induction and transfer process. Parent to parent support'*
— Blakestown primary: HSCL courses for adults/parents linked with VEC
— Mountview: Through HSCL Coordinator — reading classes, writing classes, Irish classes etc. Maths for parents
— Riversdale C.C: *'night class offered to adults 2 evenings per week'*
— Blakestown Community School in common with other schools in the RAPID areas runs courses for parents - mainly computer classes funded by the Co. Dublin VEC and *'a new addition of the programme in 2006-2007 is conversational Spanish for adults'*

Nolan et al (2003) found 'much praise' for the adult education courses run in the schools in Corduff, while Blakestown/Mountview Youth Initiative state that they are: 'currently developing this [adult education] service however lack of creche facilities poses a problem'. 'The NYP has a 20 place crèche which is in place since the autumn of 2005. There is extensive use of this by parents who are attending courses, in particular courses run by the Home School Community Liaison teacher in St Philip's Mountview. The Scoil Mhuire school in Blakestown run their own crèche for parents attending their courses'. BAP are involved with Dublin Employment Pact in a pilot project Learning at Work, funded by the DES and FAS, for 17-25 year olds who are in employment but left school after the Junior Certificate[13].

Steps for further progress:
— In addition to the need for crèche facilities to support those parents who wish to avail of adult education courses, other groups/areas regarding strategic planning for intervention regarding adult education are as follows:

Traveller parents and grandparents: Quinlan (1998a) noted that one of the interviewed project workers viewed the 'single most effective initiative in combating early school leaving among Travellers to be the education of Traveller parents'. More recently in Blanchardstown, Forkan (2005) has highlighted the need for support with literacy and numeracy skills for Traveller parents and a pattern of Traveller grandmothers attending adult education classes.

*Ryan (2004a) highlights figures which illustrate the need to give particular emphasis to integrating adult education needs with those of pupils at primary level in the area of *Tyrrelstown:*

At 39.7% Tyrrelstown experienced the highest percentage of its population as having no formal or primary education (as a percentage of population whose education had ceased).

*Foreign nationals with a range of adult education needs (see further section below).

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13 In addition, BAP runs some direct programmes e.g., Millennium Fund for Third Level Students. 130-140 students are supported per annum in the Millennium Fund, a majority of whom are female e.g., 2005-2006, 55 male 81 female.

It is also notable that some service providers suggest that some schools need to have a more open inviting atmosphere for parents:

– Schools need to '*offer a more user friendly approach to working with parents and young people*'
– '*Parents need to feel they are being heard and valued as their child's primary educators'. Need 'inviting, inclusive, consultative environment and space/room for parents currently seem to be used for activities rather than just being available.*'

2.6 Building on Key Strengths

Large Number of Elaborated Responses from Students on Trust and Good Emotional Communication with at least one Parent

The benefits for mental health in having even only one person to confide in is well recognised (Levitt 1991; Antonucci 1990). An important aspect of drug prevention programmes in the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008 is to "seek to strengthen resilience amongst young people in or out of school by fostering positive stable relationships with family or key community figures especially in the early years…" (p.98).

A very noticeable feature of the responses by pupils to the question 'Do you trust and talk well with your parents or brothers/sisters? Why/Why not?' was the extremely large number of elaborated responses emphasising a close relationship of trust with at least one parent.

The predominant theme emerging from responses across the 4 schools was the emphasis on a strong relationship of listening between the pupil and at least one parent. Illustrative responses of this key protective factor for mental health are as follows:

A Relationship of Listening

'*Yes I can trust my dad and talk well with him, because he is really kind and he is my best friend*' 12F
'*I do trust and talk well to my parent and brother because I love them and they love me*' 11M
'*I do trust and talk well with my family because they listen to me and help me*' 12F
'*Yes because they usually say to me if you have anything to say to them just say it*' 12M
'*Yeah, I talk to my ma and trust her a lot and the same with me da but my brother's 19 and he's just so moody so I don't talk to him much*' 11F
'*Yes I talk to everyone in my family because I can trust them*' 11F
'*Yes because we're close*' 12M
'*I talk to my ma I can trust her I can tell her everything*' 12F
'*Yes because they talk to me and trust me*' 12F, 11F
'*Yes I do because my family respect me and trust me*' 11F
'*Yes I do because they listen to me*' F (no age indicated)
'*Yes because they listen to me and they trust me*' 11F
'*Yes because we are all very close together*' 11M
'*Yes I trust my parents because they are always there for me*' 11F
'*Yes we get along and I trust them*' 12M
'*Yes my mom I can tell my mom anything*' 11F
'*Yes I don't get embarrassed when I talk to people*' 11F
'*Yes because you can tell them and they will listen*' 11M
'*Yes and because I can trust them to talk about things and because it would make me feel better*' 12 (no gender indicated)
'*Yes because I get on great with them*' 11F

'Yeah I do because they give me good advice and they love me. I get along well with my family' 13F
'Yes because they trust me' M (no age indicated)
'Yes because I know they will sort it out and they always make me feel better about myself' 12F
'Yes because they give me everything I need' 11F
'Yes I do my parents are very helpful to me' 12F
'Yes because they trust me and won't tell my secrets' 11M
'Yes because they're my parents if I don't tell them any thing they will try to force it out of me but not really my sister' 11M
'Yes because my dad always asks me how do you get on in school' 12M
'Yes I tell my mam everything so that if I have problems she can help' 11F
'Yes I do indeed I do speak well with them' 13M
'Yes because I can tell them anything' 12M
'If I do they will too' 12M
 'Yes they would sit me down and ask me what's wrong' 12M
'Yes they always know what to say' M (no age indicated)
'Yes I could talk to my parents if I had something on my mind' 12F
'Yes because they're always talking to me' 12M
'I do trust and talk well with my family because they are very understanding' 12F

Other themes which emerged where the vast majority of pupils emphasised a very positive relationship with at least one parent, included the parent as in a relation of assumed connection, as a confidante who will keep a secret, as a source of help.

Assumed Connection

'I trust my parents and I know they'll stick beside me every step of the way if I'm in trouble' 12F
'Yes because I trust them and they trust me' 12F
'Yes because my family get along well with each other' 11M
'Yes I trust my mom because she always believes me but I don't really talk to my brother about things' 12M
'Yes I do trust them because I love them' 11F
 'Yes because I know them so well' 11F
'Yes because they are always there for you' 12M
'Yes I trust and talk well with my parents because they're like my best friend' 13M
'Yes because I know they're there for me' 11F
'Yes because I feel comfortable' 12M
'Yes because I trust everyone close to me' 11F
'Yes because I am really close to them' 11F
'Yes because it's good to know that they can believe you' 13F

Source of Help

'Yes because I can trust them because they love me and want to help me' 11F
'Yes because I know the problem will be solved' 11F
'Yes because they help me' 11M
'Yes cause they always look out for me' M (no age indicated)
'Yes because they can do something about it' 12F
'Yes cause my parents could sort it out' F (no age indicated)
'Yes because they're always there when I need help' 13F
'Yes I trust my parents when you grow up you need your parents and they need you' 11M
'I do trust and talk well with my parents because they are reliable' 12M

'Yes I do because they are such a great family' 11F

A Confidante who will keep a Secret

'I talk well with my parents because they won't tell anybody' 11M

'Yes because they're my family and I know that they will never tell anyone what I talk to them about' 11F

'Yes I am able to talk well with my parents if I told them anything they wouldn't tell anyone' 11F

'Yes because they don't say anything' 12M

'Yes because I trust they won't tell anybody what I tell them' 11M

'I trust to talk to my parents because they can keep a secret for me' 12M

'Yes because they can keep a secret' 11M

'Yes I trust all my family they can keep a secret! But I tell them everything' 12M

Respect

'Yes I do that because the rule of God said obey your mother and father and brother and sisters' F (no age indicated)

'Yes because you give them respect' 12 (no gender indicated)

A minority of responses indicated a reluctance to talk openly with parents:

'No I don't talk to them because my family thinks I'm just a little baby' 12F

'No because she is annoying' 12M

'No because they all talk gibberish' 12M

'I do talk well with them but I find it difficult with my dad because he does not live with me' 12M

'I do trust and talk well with my parents. Sometimes I hate them over stupid things' 11M

'I do be afraid to tell my mam because she will go and tell them to stop whatever they are doing' 12F

'They don't care about anyone but themselves every bit of advice they give me gets me hurt or in trouble and they hate me ['I get bullied almost every day in school, my brother bullies me and my sisters annoy me a lot'] 11M

'Brothers and sister yes. Mum and Dad no' M (no age indicated)

'No because I choose not to' 12F

'No because I don't want to' 11F

'No because it is very hard' 11M

'Sometimes because I'm a normal girl but somehow I think my life's messed up so I get angry and go naughty or bold [...keep loving your family because family is where the heart lies]' 12F

'No I don't because they're busy' 11M

'Not really because they always said lie on me so I am not really trust them at all' 12 (no gender indicated).

SECTION 3: KEY ISSUES FOR IMPROVEMENT

3.1 Findings in Blanchardstown

Hunger of a Significant Proportion of Pupils in School

In response to the question: 'How often do you feel too hungry to do your work in school?':
— 43 out of 230 6th class pupils across the 4 schools indicated that this was either often, very often or every day.

In other words:
— approximately 18% of the 6th class pupils attending school on the given day stated that they were either often, very often or every day too hungry to do their work in school
— this figure was notably higher in 3 of the 4 schools where 21%, 25% and 25% of pupils stated that they were either often, very often or every day too hungry to do their work in school.
— The fourth school had a noticeably lower figure though it is still a sizeable proportion of 11%

Of the 43 pupils in total who stated that they were either often, very often or every day too hungry to do their work in school:
— 29 indicated that they were from Ireland and 14 indicated that they were foreign nationals[1]
— 25 indicated that they participated in no afterschool club or extracurricular activity; while18 participated in at least one such activity

It is worth noting that each of these schools has a breakfast club. The question arises as to whether 6th class pupils may feel that these clubs are only for younger pupils.

The high proportion of these pupils who are not attending afterschool clubs suggests that they may not be being targeted for inclusion in breakfast clubs.

Even if these pupils do attend the respective breakfast clubs, these clubs do not take place every day and therefore a response of feeling hungry often or very often may refer to those days when the clubs are not running.

Priority of 'expanded breakfast clubs', another stated 'I think the breakfast clubs are working towards improving the attendance in schools'. This view was echoed by another service provider:
— 'Significant increase in school attendance following introduction of the breakfast club — have found that kids are there even earlier than 8.30 start'.

There is a need to ensure continuity across breakfast clubs so that a regular pattern is established i.e., that they are 4-5 days a week and not 2 days a week. A constructivist approach would emphasise the need for pupils to be active in the preparation of meals. There is a need to develop a strategy of cooking skills for pupils and to maximise parental involvement in the breakfast clubs so that patterns of healthy and regular eating are established in the home.

How often do you feel too hungry to do your School Work?

6th Class Pupils	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
	21%	25%	25%	11%
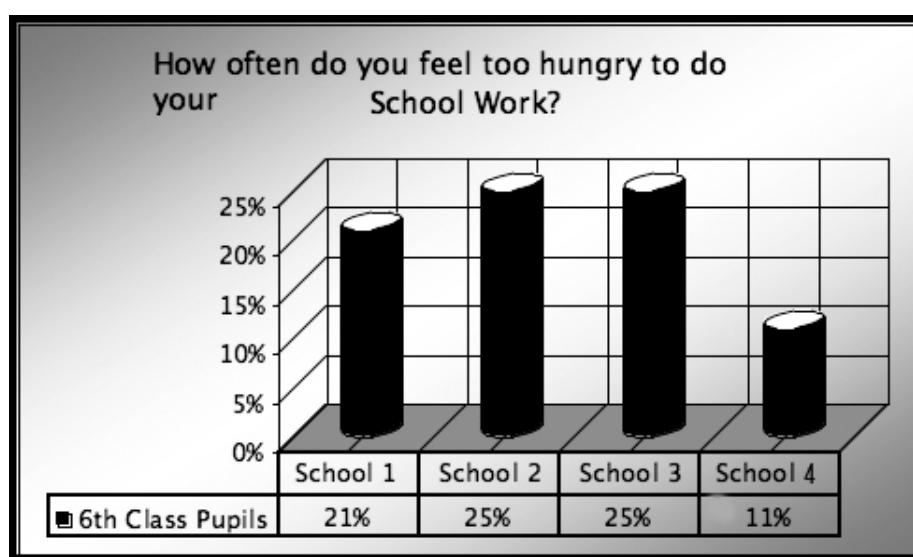
FIGURE 4. Percentage of Pupils who Stated that they were either *Often, Very Often or Every Day* too Hungry to do their Work in School

3.2 Findings in Blanchardstown

Developing Willingness to Stay on at School until Leaving Certificate

In the current study, in response to the question: 'Do you think you want to stay on at school until the Leaving Certificate?' the following responses were received:

Primary

Yes	No	Don't Know	No Answer
196	23	5	6

In other words:
— Approximately 85% of 6th class pupils across the 4 schools stated that they do want to stay on at school until the Leaving Certificate
— Approximately 10 % of 6th class pupils stated that they do not want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate
— The percentage of those who stated they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate was largely consistent across 3 primary schools (85%, 89%, 91%) but was noticeably lower in the fourth primary school (77%)
— 17% of sampled pupils in the fourth primary school stated that they did not want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

Secondary

Yes	No	Don't Know	No Answer
143	12	4	3

In other words:
— Approximately 87% of 1st year students across the 2 schools stated that they do want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate
— Approximately 7% of 1st year students stated that they do not want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate
— Approximately 11% of 1st year students either do *not* want to or *do not know* if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

Quinlan's (1998a) research on early school leaving in Blanchardstown offers a useful point of comparison for these figures. She surveyed 215 first year pupils in all the designated disadvantaged schools in Blanchardstown and found that:

> More than three-quarters of the students believe, or strongly believe, they will have their Leaving Certificate when they leave school while over 20% do not know whether or not they will have their Leaving Certificate when they leave and of that 20%, 5% are very sure they will not have their Leaving Certificate when they leave school

She further found that 'almost 20% of the young respondents said that they would leave school when they had the Junior Certificate with almost 2% of the population indicating their intention to leave school 'as soon as possible'.

Although the questions asked are not directly comparable with Quinlan (1998a), it can be tentatively concluded that:

– a figure of 87% of first year students in 2006 stating that they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate suggests an approximate increase of 10-12% of students intending to stay on compared with the 'more than three quarters' in 1998

– a figure of 11% of 1st year students in 2006 who either do not want to or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate is at least a 9% improvement compared with 'over 20% who do not know whether or not they will have their Leaving Certificate when they leave' in 1998

The positive attitude of a large majority to the idea of staying on until the Leaving Certificate nevertheless needs to recognise:

◼ the frequent disjunction between attitudes and behaviour

◼ the time-scale over which such attitudes need to remain fairly stable

◼ the fact that this is a sample of those currently attending school rather than being regularly absent

◼ increased exposure to risk of substance abuse as students get older, with consequent risks for academic performance

FIGURE 5. THE NUMBER OF PUPILS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL WANTING TO STAY ON UNTIL THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE
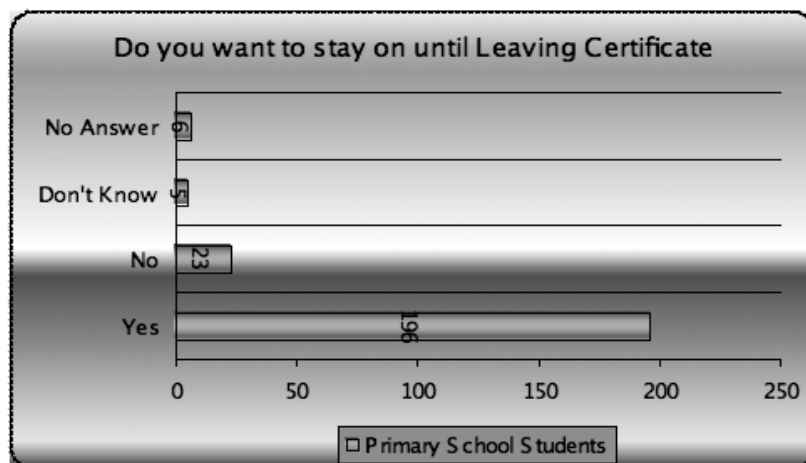
FIGURE 6. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL WANTING TO STAY ON UNTIL THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE
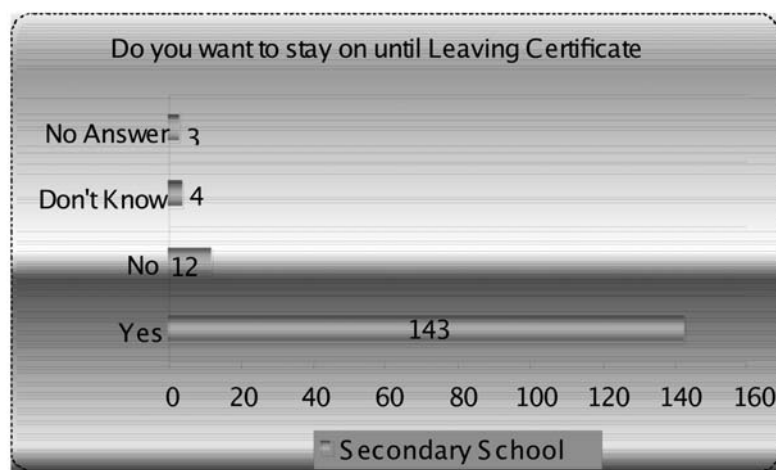
3.3 Findings in Blanchardstown

Need for Improved Targeting of Pupils at Risk of Early School Leaving

Some clear trends emerge from the profile below of those 6th class pupils arguably most at risk of early school leaving, namely, those who state that they do not want or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate:

— a clear majority of them, 56%, perceive that they are being treated fairly in school (17 state they are, 9 state they are not, 4 do not know) 30% perceive that they are not being treated fairly
— an overwhelming majority of them state that they have a relationship of trust and good communication with at least one parent figure (26 Yes, 2 No, 2 Don't Know) which is a key protective factor for mental health
— 4 out of 5 do not attend an afterschool club
— a large majority, 70%, do not attend any extracurricular activity in school (21 out of 30)
■ These figures highlight the need for improved targeting of at risk pupils for participation in additional afterschool clubs and extracurricular activities

■ This is not to suggest that other pupils who are currently attending afterschool clubs or extracurricular activities are not at risk. Their very attendance at these activities may have been an influence on their statements that they want to remain at school until Leaving Certificate

Age/Gender	Trust Parents	Extracurricular Activities	Fairly in School	Afterschool
12M*	Yes	No	No	No
12F	Yes	Yes (Football)	No	Yes
12M	Yes	Yes (Football)	Yes	Yes
13M	Yes	Yes (Football, Hurling)	Sometimes	No
12F	Yes	Yes (Homework Club)	Yes	Yes
M (no aged indicated)	Yes	No	Yes	No
12M	Yes	No	Yes	No
12M	Yes	Yes (Basketball)	No	No
12M	Yes	No	No	No
12M	No	No	Yes	No
11M	About some things	No	Don't Know	No
11M	Yes	No	No	No
12M	Yes	No	Yes	No
12M	Yes	No	Yes	No
12 (no gender indicated)	Yes	No	Yes	No
11 (no gender indicated)	Yes	Yes (Homework Club)	Yes	Yes
11M	Yes	Yes (German)	Yes	No
12M	Yes	No	Yes	No
F* (no age indicated)	Yes	No	No	No
12M	Yes	No	Yes	No
12F	No	Yes (Football and dancing)	Yes	Yes
12M	Yes	No	Depends	Yes
13*(no gender indicated)	No Answer	No	No	No
13F *	Yes	No	No Answer	No
12M	Yes	No	Yes	No
11M*	Yes	No	No	No
11F	Yes	No	Yes	No
12M	Yes	No	No	No
11M	Yes	No	Yes	No
12F	Yes	Yes (Gaelic)	Yes	No
* Foreign National	26/2/2	9/21	17/9/4	6/24

■ All referrals for EOP & TOFE must come through the school completion officer. They come from the principal, teacher and home school liaison officer. The school completion officers make every effort to encourage this target group to attend.

■ Interviewed afterschool project representatives such as those from School Completion Projects have stated that they operate a policy of combining target group children with non-target group children (see also Rourke 1995 on PESL now OASIS). They also state that it is frequently harder to get attendance at afterschool projects from the targeted children. While this is a common problem that afterschool projects may not reach those children who are most at risk[15], the following responses from this at risk group (who state they do not want or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate) indicate a range of activities they would wish to do:

What activities would you like to do after school if it was possible?

12M 'Play football'
12M 'Fishing'
13M 'Fly jets'
M 'Metal work or fixing computers'
11M 'football and basketball'
12M 'football'
12M 'football'
11 'Swimming'
11M 'art'
12M 'play football'
F 'dancing'
12F 'Drama club' would like to do in school
12M 'Computers and science'
12M 'Gardening'
12M 'Fix things'
11M 'Swimming'
12F 'Volleyball, girls' football and handball'

■ Significantly only two of these pupils indicate outright resistance and hostility to engagement in any afterschool project:
− 11M 'nothing because I wouldn't want to stay in school any longer'
− 12M 'Smash the window'

■ The theme of the need to bring in more opportunities for practical skills into the school day also clearly emerges from this group, as they indicate a range of interests in learning some of which the school environment could seek to engage with as part of commitment to a learner-centred approach:
'What would you really like to learn in school that you don't already learn?'

12M 'How to hack into systems'
12F 'lots and lots of things'
12M 'Driving'
13M 'I would like to learn more about art'
12F 'I would like to learn swimming in school'

15 This was also noted by one teacher in a questionnaire response:

M 'Metal work and computer work (more computer work)'
12M 'football'
12M 'football in the school'
12M 'basketball'
12M 'sex education'
11M 'about sweets'
11M 'learn about mechanics and all about cars'
12M 'How to fly an airplane'
12M 'sex education'
11 'swimming'
11M 'I would like to learn to be a wrestler'
F 'swimming'
12M 'home economics'
12F 'German'
12M 'Well, I would like to learn about Ireland'
13F 'Spanish'
12M 'Gardening'
12M 'I would like to learn more English'
11F 'How to cook'
12M 'I would like to learn woodwork'
11M 'Science'

■ There is a need for school to recognise multiple forms of intelligence (e.g., Gardner 1993, see also McDermott et al 2001 on differences between verbal and non-verbal learning). Moreover, some of the service providers echoed the theme of the need for practical skills and learning:
'would like to see local schools become more student focused with greater consideration and attention being given to practical, life and career focused lessons' 'when clients present they look for practical courses, let's be real'

■ One concrete example of an opportunity for at risk pupils to develop practical skills and a sense of responsibility and control within the school environment (see also Glasser 1986; Downes 2004) is if schools were supported financially to develop gardens where plants and vegetables could grow within fenced off areas. Many pupils across a range of schools complained of boredom during lunch and break times – and these times could be used for work in the school garden.

■ Pupils, especially those targeted as being at risk, could be members of committees with responsibility for particular plants and vegetables both during and outside term time, as well as within afterschool projects

■ A SCP (2005) report cites as an example of good practice from the Dublin North Region a social and personal development programme that includes a garden for time out for disruptive students during school time, as well as being available during lunchtime and afterschool. 'Anything grown can be kept or sold. Profits are divided in proportion to the amount of work done'. Also 'there are no qualified experts, so everything is done through trial and error. It benefits the students when something they plant may not grow' as it teaches them the 'value of experimentation'.

Some clear trends emerge from the profile below of those 1st year students arguably most at risk of early school leaving, namely, those who state that they do not want or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate:

— a clear majority, 68%, (13 out of 19) perceive that they are not treated fairly in school

— only 21% (4 out of 19) perceive that they are treated fairly in school

These figures contrast starkly with the comparable at risk group at primary, already after only 1 term at secondary school:

— 21% (Secondary) compared to 56% (Primary) perceive that they are being treated fairly in school

— 68% (Secondary) compared to 30% (Primary) perceive that they are not treated fairly in school.

In other words, after 1 term at secondary school perceptions of being treated fairly are more than half that of the 6th class sample[16], and perceptions of being treated unfairly are more than double the corresponding primary school sample.

It is important to note that:

− Just over a quarter of this sample attend an afterschool club

− Approximately 73% do not participate in an extracurricular activity in school

◼ As with primary school, these figures highlight the need for improved targeting of at risk pupils for participation in afterschool clubs and extracurricular activities as a protective factor against early school leaving

Profile of those secondary pupils who state that they do not want or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

Age/Gender	Trust Parents	Extracurricular Activities	Fairly in School	Afterschool
14M*	Yes	No	Sometimes	No
12M	Yes	No	No	Yes
No age, no gender indicated	Not really	No	No	No
14M	Yes	No	Yes	No
13M	Sometimes	No	No	Yes
13F[17]	Yes	No	No	Yes
14F	Yes	Yes (Gaelic, football, basketball)	No	No
14F*	Yes	No	No	No
12F*	No	No	Yes	No
12M	Yes	No	No	No
13M*	No answer	Yes (football)	No answer	No
13M*	No answer	Yes (football)	No	No
M	Sometimes	No	No	No
13M	Sometimes	Yes (sports club)	No	No
12F	Yes	Yes (club, tell teacher what you want to do)	No	Yes
13M	No	No	No	Sometimes
13F*	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
12F	Yes	No	Yes	No
13M	Yes	No	No	No
* Foreign National	11/3/3/2	5/14	4/13/1/1	5/13/1

16 Of those who state that they do not want or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

17 Does want to stay until Leaving Certificate 'but not in this school...they give you punishment for doing nothing e.g., if you get a question wrong'

The need for a more coordinated referral strategy and wider referral process across afterschool projects

- ■ SCP (2005) notes the need to 'develop a transparent and coherent referral process' for holiday programmes at a local level. This point is also highly relevant to afterschool project referrals
- ■ In Quinlan's (1998a) report on early school leaving in Blanchardstown, one of the interviewed teachers referred to the need for targeting young people identified as potential early school leavers in a 'very uniform approach'
- ■ A co-coordinated strategy is not equivalent to a uniform approach and allows for some flexibility across projects
- ■ In order to prevent those students most at risk from falling through the gaps, there is a clear need for a coordinated referral strategy between the afterschool projects run by the two School Completion Programmes, TOFE and EOP, as well as with the OASIS primary and secondary afterschool programmes and the after school homework project in Corduff Resource Centre, originally funded by BAP, which is also currently based on referrals by the school. This need for a co-ordinated strategy across afterschool services to target those at risk needs to build on current good practice in Blanchardstown through explicitly accommodating:
- − the importance of including social and emotional criteria in the referral process[18]
- − wider avenues for referral than the school (teacher, HSCL) to include a more proactive involvement of parents in the referral process as well as referral from other local agencies[19]; the option of self-referral may also need to be considered through dialogue with students

- ■ Schools in their referral to the SCP need to take account of existing points of contact with other agencies e.g., Barnardos, NYP, BMYI so there are not multiple referrals to different services, or if there are that this is known to all and the most appropriate referral chosen. It may also be the case that it is appropriate that a child or young person is linked to more than one service.

The need for a wider referral process for afterschool services recognises:

that the current process is not reaching a key target group of students who state that they do not want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

- − the need to target at risk withdrawn children. Doll (1996) highlights the danger that the needs of students with internalizing problems e.g. depression, anxiety disorders, somatic disorders, will be under-identified by adults and be overlooked by teachers (see also Downes 2003). The interviewed NEPS psychologist notes that withdrawn children may be equally at risk as children with externalising behaviours:

'quiet ones don't get referred from school, same level of issues going on at home but they bottle it up, just as destructive for a young person'

- ■ A co-coordinated referral strategy and wider referral process will also help develop a key strength across afterschool projects that is evident for example, in the Oasis programme and NYP, namely, that of continuity across primary and secondary level

- ■ This logic of continuity across transition from primary to secondary is followed by OASIS between Corduff and Ladyswell Primary Schools and Riversdale Community College and can be built into the School Completion Programme afterschool projects as well

- ■ It has already been suggested that the logic of continuity of involvement in afterschool projects from

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18 Morgan (1998) refers to McNeal's (1995) attempt to specify whether certain types of extracurricular activities were more influential than others in preventing dropping out. From a database of over 20,000 high-school students, it was found that participation in activities such as sports and fine arts significantly reduced the risk of dropping out, whereas participation in academic or vocational clubs seemed to have less effect. See also Ryan (2002) for children's accounts of benefits to self-esteem and social skills from attendance at a 3rd class homework support programme. This programme ran across 4 local schools between 1998-2003, involving approximately 50 pupils per academic year who attended an after school activities and homework club twice a week. Although this project was very successful it did not secure mainstream funding.
19 See also, for example, WEB which accepts referrals from other agencies, parents, schools and guards.

primary to post-primary needs to be more fully extended within, for example, OASIS itself to include the option of continuity in afterschool even if the student is attending a different secondary school from that of Riversdale Community College. This is of particular relevance for Travellers. As Forkan (2005) states:

> When it comes to transferring from primary to post-primary, the principals agreed that due to the fact that many of the Traveller children are not from the local area, they do not transfer to the local post-primary schools. The possibility of such a transfer is worsened further as many of them would be faced with having to get 2-3 buses to get from their home to school...many of them lose friends from the settled community that they had all the way through primary school

It is arguable that continuity across primary to secondary through attending the same afterschool project with the same friends is even more important if the student, such as a member of the Travelling community, is attending a different school from his/her peers and from those he/she was with in primary school.

3.4 Findings in Blanchardstown

Need to Meet Transport and Other Needs of Travellers to Facilitate their Attendance at Afterschool Projects

- It is unclear how many members of the Travelling Community are present in the profile of the at risk group of pupils in our sample who state that they do not want or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

- Forkan (2005) highlights that a very high proportion of Travellers:
- do not attend afterschool clubs in Blanchardstown,
- have a high drop out rate from school,
- need more tracking from some local schools regarding attendance
- Moreover, no Traveller child attends the Early Start Programme in the area.

- SCP (2005) note that transport may be an issue for many young people with regard to after-school supports. This is particularly pertinent in the Blanchardstown context with regard to Travellers' participation with Forkan (2005) stating that:
  > The lack of appropriate transport is the single biggest challenge associated with the participation of Traveller children in breakfast clubs prior to school or homework clubs after school.

- Transport expenses are provided for a range of projects in Blanchardstown. For example, Ryan (2004) concluded that 'on balance clients indicated that the contribution to travel expenses was the most important individual component of Partnership support' from its 3rd level Bursaries Programme. Moreover, Keating's (1999) evaluation of the Fastrack to Information Technology (FIT) initiative in Blanchardstown noted that participants received childcare and travel payments on a weekly basis.

- A contrast is evident between the emphasis given to transport support for 3rd level Bursaries with the relative neglect to transport support for Travellers participation in local afterschool projects. This is despite the fact that Travellers post-primary education was one of the 7 categories of concern (alongside third level support for students) outlined by BAP's original Education Working Group review (1998).

- It is arguable that a transport fund is also needed to facilitate participation of Travellers in adult education projects centred on their needs and interests – to facilitate participation whether in local school sites,

community based locations and/or the proposed Traveller Resource Centre for Blanchardstown[20].

■ In Quinlan (1998a), one of the interviewed teachers referred to loss of the free bus service for Travellers after primary when they transfer to post primary. This is arguably still an important need for Travellers in the Blanchardstown context.

It is also notable that TOFE SCP has been particularly successful in reaching out to members of the Travelling Community:
'We have 8 students in primary and 10 in secondary who are using the service and 6 students in Wellview Resource Centre who are Travellers. We have two Travelling women to work in the homework class'[21].

In contrast, the EOP SCP has 'very little' Travellers[22] and foreign nationals. It does not take a targeted approach[23] but instead favours 'a whole school approach taken by the programme where appropriate, therefore Travellers and foreign nationals come under this cohort'. One advantage of a more coordinated strategy for referral across TOFE, EOP and OASIS would be for reproducing the strategies bringing success in reaching members of the Travelling community that TOFE has achieved.

■ The BAP Social Inclusion Plan 2000-2006 notes that 'the consultation with Travellers about the design and development of programmes is essential if integration is to become a possibility'. In order to increase participation of Travellers in afterschool clubs, it is essential that Traveller children and their families be consulted regarding afterschool activities that would be potential interests for Travellers – activities that would be also open to all pupils so that Travellers while being targeted are not being singled out for particular afterschool activities.

3.5 Findings in Blanchardstown

Fear of Failure: Sharp Increase in Students who would not tell teachers about problem with schoolwork in Secondary compared to Primary.

Rourke (1995) highlights the positive effects of PESL with regard to the benefit of helping students overcome fear of failure or being ridiculed. Nolan et al (2003) refer to the danger of 'fatalism' at a community level within Corduff that 'nothing can be done'. Fear of failure is an example of fatalism at the level of the student's experience of school (see also international research on fatalism and risk behaviour, Kalichmann et al 2000, Downes 2003).

The responses to the question: 'If you had a problem with your schoolwork would you tell your teachers(s) about it? Why/Why not?'

SECONDARY

YES	NO	MAYBE	N/A
122	27	8	6

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20 See also Forkan (2005) on the need for support with literacy and numeracy skills for Traveller parents and a pattern of Traveller grandmothers attending adult education classes.
21 See also Forkan's (2005) suggestion of an assistant to the Visiting Teacher for Travellers, an assistant who is a member of the Travelling community 'which would further strengthen links with families and young people'.
22 Though Forkan's (2005) report states that 7 Travellers attend the EOP.
23 Forkan (2005) similarly observes that 'the SCP offers nothing extra to Travellers as distinct from other disadvantaged settled children'. BAP funded after school programmes for Travellers from 1999-2001.

■ While a large majority of students (approximately 75%) do feel comfortable in raising a problem with their schoolwork with their teachers, it must be acknowledged that a sizeable minority do not or are not sure if they do (more than 20%)

If you had a problem with your schoolwork would you tell your teachers(s) about it? Why/Why not?

PRIMARY

YES	NO	MAYBE	N/A
210	18	1	1

■ It is of concern that:
— there is a sharp increase in 1st year compared to 6th class responses in those students who are not willing or are not sure if they would tell a teacher about an academic problem — from 8% (Primary) to more than 20% (Secondary)
— there is a sharp decrease in 1st year compared to 6th class responses in those students who are willing to tell a teacher about an academic problem — from approximately 91% (Primary) to 75% (Secondary)
— these differences between primary and secondary level are statistically significant ones

DATA:	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
Y	210	122
N	18	27
M	1	8
NA	1	6

ANALYSIS 1: TAKING M AS NA

Null Hypothesis: No difference between primary/secondary

Alpha: 5% i.e., significance set at 5% chance of incorrectly rejecting null hypothesis (P<0.05)

Test: Chi-Squared

Result: Chi-Square 23.38, DF 2; P-Value < 0.0001

Interpretation: Data very unlikely in the context of the null hypothesis (expected in less than 1/1000 identical experiments), therefore reject null hypothesis

ANALYSIS 2: TAKING M AS Y

Null Hypothesis: No difference between primary/secondary

Alpha: 5% i.e., significance set at 5% chance of incorrectly rejecting null hypothesis (P < 0.05)

Test: Chi-Squared

Result: Chi-Square 13.58, DF 2; P-Value = 0.0011

Interpretation: Data very unlikely in the context of the null hypothesis (expected in 11/1000 identical experiments), therefore reject null hypothesis

ANALYSIS 3: TAKING M AS N

Null Hypothesis: No difference between primary/secondary

Alpha: 5% i.e., significance set at 5% chance of incorrectly rejecting null hypothesis (P < 0.05)

Test: Chi-Squared

Result: Chi-Square 20.82 DF 2; P-Value < 0.0001

Interpretation: Data very unlikely in the context of the null hypothesis (expected in less than 1/1000 identical experiments), therefore reject null hypothesis

■ The effect of this sharp change in communication is evident after one term at secondary school. Concern must be raised as to whether a climate of fear of asking questions to seek academic help may increase in

students after more than one term at secondary school.

The following accounts are given by this sizeable minority of students, as to why they would not tell their teachers about a problem with schoolwork:

'No. The teachers would think I'm not paying attention and would think I'm stupid' 13F
'No because I wouldn't feel comfortable' 13F
'No because you would be called dumb' 13M
'No because I would feel stupid' 13F
'No because I'm too shy' 12M
'No because they'll think I'm stupid' 13M
'No because other people could think you're stupid' 13F
'No because they'd think you're stupid' 13F

'No because they'd probably try and get me moved down' 13F
'No because they will get me in trouble' 13M
'It depends if they're in a good mood or not' 12F
'No because they will row in my face' 12M

'No they don't give two shits they would just say do it we done it before that's what wrecks my head' (no age, gender indicated)
'No because they tell you to just do it' 13M
'I probably would but I don't know if they would help me' 13F
'Yes but they don't do nothing' 14M
'Sometimes they might not be able to help you' 12F

'No I tell my dad or my mum' 15M
'No because I would feel more comfortable telling my ma or da' 13F
'No because the teacher is not my parent' 13F
'No I'd ask my mam to help me with it' 12F
'Yes because they're supposed to teach us how to do it but I'd probably just tell me ma' 13F

	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A.
⊐ Primary School Students	210	18	1	1
■ Secondary School Students	122	27	8	6
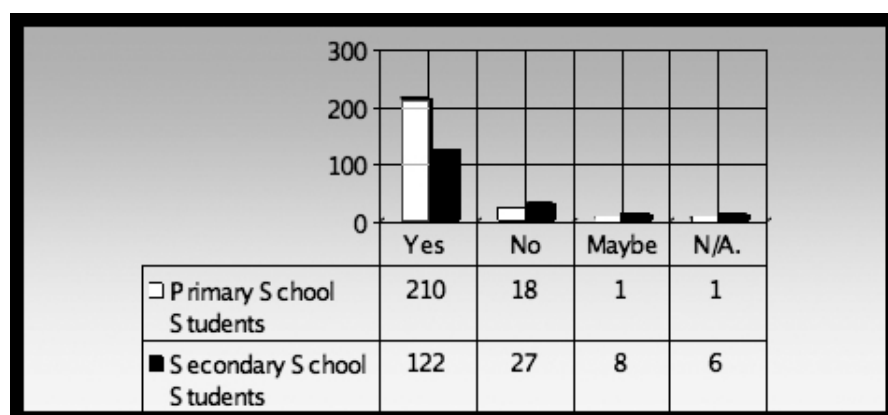
FIGURE 7: ILLUSTRATES HOW MANY STUDENTS WOULD TELL THEIR TEACHER IF THEY HAD A PROBLEM

3.6 Findings in Blanchardstown

Sharp Increase in Students who perceive that they are not treated fairly in Secondary School compared to Primary School

Quinlan (1998a) observed that one of the interviewed teachers in Blanchardstown referred to alienation of young people from an authoritarian educational system. Teacher-student relations were also a pervasive theme in Fingleton's (2003) interviews with eleven early school leavers in the Canal Communities Area of Dublin. These interviews highlight their alienation from the school system as well as the desire of many for further paths to education though not through traditional routes. Forkan (2005) touches on the theme of teacher-student relations in the conclusion of his report in Blanchardstown: 'treat all young people with respect, as this will be reciprocated'. Casby's (1997) interviews with early school leavers in Ballyfermot also noted that:

> More attention must be paid to the process by which a young person comes to leave school early. Early school leavers attribute most significance to factors related to school: relationships with teachers, suspensions and difficulties with curricula (p.6)

US adolescents cite a sense of isolation and lack of personally meaningful relationships at school as equal contributors to academic failure and to their decisions to drop out of school (Institute for Education and Transformation 1992; Wehlage & Rutter 1986). Meier (1992) cites personalized, caring relationships with teachers as a prerequisite for high school-level reform. Using primarily populations deemed to be 'at risk'; research in the US has shown that the students' sense of belonging influences the acceptance of educational values, motivation and commitment to school (Goodenow & Grady 1992; Wehlage et al 1989). The perceptions of school as a personally supportive community are critical to school completion and satisfaction (Fine 1986; Kagan 1990).

Rourke's (1995, p.21) evaluation of the PESL Programme (now OASIS) also highlighted the importance of developing the quality of interaction between teachers and young people, as well as parents:

> 'The PESL programme can only be truly effective if it also impacts on the quality of interaction between the parents/teachers and the young people. Hence the importance of involving parents and engaging the active support of teachers. Unless this happens the programme is unlikely to achieve more than providing the young people with some diversion and alternative activities for a couple of hours each week'. Need for 'a wider package or approach, involving teachers and parents'.

The responses to the question: 'Are you treated fairly by teachers in school? Why/Why not?' were as follows[24]:

PRIMARY: 6th Class

YES	NO	YES BUT	DON'T KNOW/NO ANSWER
170	36	21	3

SECONDARY: 1st Year

YES	NO	YES BUT	DON'T KNOW/NO ANSWER
90	41	21	10

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24 See Appendix A for elaborated responses to this question from primary and secondary students

- Approximately 74% of pupils at primary level (6th class) state that they are treated fairly by teachers in school
- Approximately 55% of students at secondary level (first year) state that they are treated fairly by teachers in school
- Approximately 15% of pupils at primary level (6th class) state that they are not treated fairly by teachers in school
- Approximately 25% of students at secondary level (first year) state that they are not treated fairly by teachers in school

It is worth noting that these differences between 6th class primary and 1st year secondary are statistically significant i.e., there is a statistically significant increase in perception of being treated unfairly by teachers in secondary school compared to primary school.

Data

6th class   n=230   1st year n=162

Y	170 74%	90 56%
N	36 16%	41 25%
Yes But 21	9%	21 13%
DK	3 1%	10 6%

Analysis 1

Yes	170	90
No	36	41
Equivocal	24	31

Null hypothesis: No difference between groups
Test: Chi-Squared test
Alpha: 5%
P-value: P<0.0007 (Chi-square 14.47, 2df)
Result: Reject null hypothesis
Interpretation: If there were truly no difference between the groups and this experiment were performed a large number of times, data like these would be found in less than 7/1000 experiments
i.e. these are very unlikely data under the null hypothesis

Analysis 2

Yes 170	90
"No" 57	62
DK 3	10

Null hypothesis: No difference between groups
Test: Chi-Squared test
Alpha: 5%
P-value: P<0.0002 (Chi-square 17.32, 2df)
Result: Reject null hypothesis

Interpretation: If there were truly no difference between the groups and this experiment were performed a large number of times, data like these would be found in less than 2/1000 experiments i.e. these are very unlikely data under the null hypothesis.[25]

- The issue of perceptions of being treated fairly or otherwise in school needs to move beyond an individualised focus on the individual teacher or student to a systems level analysis (see also Hyland 2003 on the need to focus on change to schools rather than individual teachers)

- It is a systems level problem and improvement of this problem requires a systems level type of intervention, for example, at a national level with regard to teachers of working on their conflict resolution strategies and awareness of educational disadvantage at pre-service and in-service levels (see also Barnardos 2006)

- The focus needs to move beyond attributing 'blame' to teachers or students and to move to examining the systems level problem and to support improvements at a systemic level that will support an increase in skills to facilitate better communication and cooperation between teachers and students at secondary level in particular.

Are you treated fairly by the teachers in school?

	Yes	No	Yes but	Don't know.
☐ 6th Class Students	170	36	21	3
■ 1st Year Students	90	41	21	10
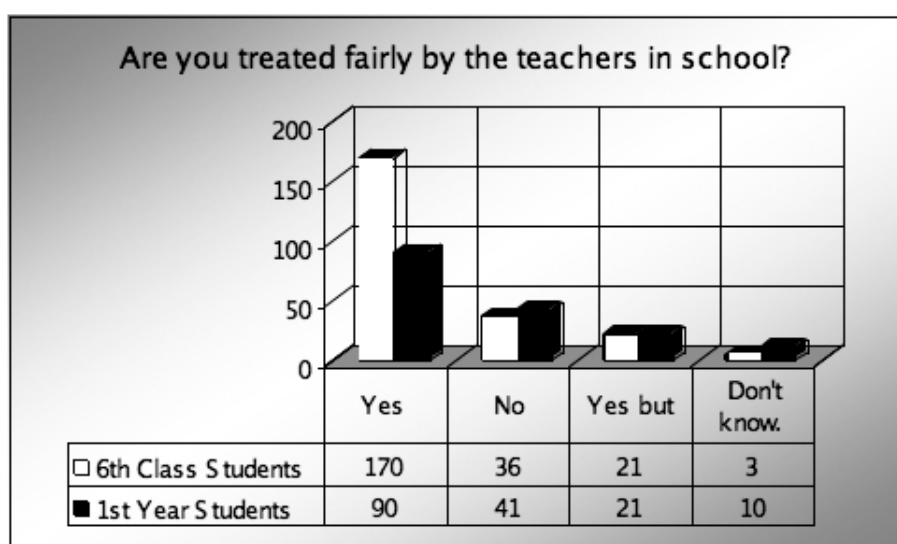
FIGURE 8: ILLUSTRATES HOW MANY STUDENTS THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE TREATED FAIRLY BY THEIR TEACHER

3.7 Findings in Blanchardstown

'Suspensions are a waste of time': A More Holistic Approach to Behavioural Issues

A range of service providers raised the issue of the need for alternative strategies in secondary school to that of suspension, with many referring to the need for a 'time out' room:

- 'we need a time out room in the post primary school as most of our target students hang out in the assembly hall if they have been asked to leave class', there is a need to do 'constructive work' with them
- Need a 'more holistic approach to student behaviour' 'suspensions are a waste of time/something else,

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25 Note that these are classical statistics. Only a Bayesian approach would allow direct comment on this particular experiment as opposed to inferring significance from what would be expected were multiple identical experiments performed which of course is impossible.

some other means of working positively with kids' 'review the suspension theory' 'create a more positive environment'

– *'a more practical approach to bad behaviour'*

– *'Eliminate suspensions and work towards dealing with issues alternatively'*

– *'time out for certain students (e.g., perceived as being at risk) to engage in more tailor built programmes i.e., students with poor attendance records who may also have substance use issues either themselves or within their families or peers'*

– *'more engagement with relevant services/providers, time out and off site education, tailor made programmes, small target group work i.e. substance users'*

– *'develop a model of withdrawal/return' 'creative ways of school retention to Leaving Certificate'*

These points echo somewhat the criticism of 'suspension' noted in Forkan's (2005) research in Blanchardstown:

> 'being suspended and "kicked out of school" was a dream come true...in many cases they were out of school more often than in it, which was exactly what they wanted...It was suggested that instead of suspending an individual, the school should punish them by keeping them in school and making them do the work they should be doing'.

Insight Statistical Consulting (2006) observes 'large differences between classes' with regard to disruptive behaviour in Blanchardstown schools. Quinlan's (1998a) earlier research in Blanchardstown noted that one of the interviewed project workers highlighted cultural differences between teachers 'mostly middle class with very middle class values' and the communities of working class areas, while one of interviewed project workers saw a problem with the inflexible nature of the system, that 'some young people do not feel part of the education system' and 'the education system works for those who can operate within its constraints'

– it is notable that the suggestions for alternatives to suspension in secondary schools made by a range of local services strongly resonate with recommendations made at a national in-service of School Completion Programme to 'improve the climate for teaching and learning in classrooms' included at the 'school systems' level':

– 'requirement for alternative needs based individual curriculum with elements of Youth Work approach'

– 'requirement of a room/area of school devoted to difficult students with professionals delivering extra support in anger management/personal development/core subjects. Time and space sanctioned for this work'

– 'alternatives to suspensions/expulsion/reduced timetables such as restorative justice practices/one to one small group tuition/circle time etc'

– 'more positive rewards and acknowledgement of positive or good behaviour systems for earning awards'

– 'curricular adjustment to involve practical tasks'

■ As noted already with regard to developing opportunities for at risk pupils to develop practical skills, another SCP (2005) report cites as an example of good practice from the Dublin North Region a social and personal development programme that includes a garden for time out for disruptive students during school time, as well as being available during lunchtime and afterschool.

■ Potential concerns from schools may be that a time-out room is 'worthless' as 'if students are merely removed, a situation very rapidly develops where some students will deliberately misbehave, so that they can join their friends in the 'sin-bin' (O'Brien 2006). However, if the students are positively engaged in the time-out room and are involved in individual behavioural contracts with a range of sanctions as well as incentives and emotional supports, the above objection can be overcome. The time-out room is not to do nothing, as a 'sin-bin' implies.

■ One secondary school notes: 'we have withdrawals, sometimes small classes or one to one. This works very well in Junior Cycle but there are insufficient supports in Senior Cycle'

3.8 Findings in Blanchardstown

Increased Family Support Services and Supports for Pupils and Students with Emotional and Behavioural Problems

The following responses from schools and services highlight the need for increased family support services and supports for pupils and students with emotional and behavioural problems:

— Priority services include '*teachers to help pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties*', '*counselling — more hours*', '*total family support where required*'

— NYP and SCP '*both doing well but not getting to enough families*', one of biggest priorities mentioned by one school is the need for '*family support*' services, while another gives priority to an '*adequate counselling service*'.

— '*If we had space, school based counselling would help staff, pupils and particularly parents who would find it far less daunting than outside school counselling*'

— HSCL priority '*in school counselling for children*', stating that there needs to be '*more support for families at risk — counselling services for children and families (very long waiting lists for present services)*'

— Another HSCL top priority is '*in school counselling services*', '*children will attend if it is in school. Parents would be more comfortable and see it more as part of school. Parents are reluctant to take child to outside 'hostile' venue*'

— '*self esteem, self-motivation, emotional problems*'

— '*The Child and Family Centre in South Blanchardstown work very hard but their workload prevents them from dealing quickly with referrals*'. Others also mentioned the long waiting list for this Centre.

— '*BAP used to employ a full time Family Support and Childcare and Lone Parent Workers. All these posts are gone due to funding cutbacks*'

— '*some parents have very high level needs*', '*local community family support services cannot/are not there to support serious family/individual issues*'

— '*links with health services — zero, very disappointing, seems to be a national problem*'

— '*huge gap in family support service particularly those affected by drug use*'

— '*whole family approach needed for Junior School*'

— Schools '*not a parent friendly environment — a 'them' versus 'us' mentality*' '*establish holistic groups for parents giving them ownership*'. Need '*links with parents where the same individual deals with issues of non-attendance and behaviour problems*'

3.9 Findings in Blanchardstown

Need for Improved Collaboration between Schools and Local Services

Previous research in Blanchardstown has highlighted the need for more integration between schools, parents and services. For example, in the context of Corduff, Nolan et al (2003) state:

> 'many respondents recognise the need for schools and parents to work together to provide a comprehensive education for their children. Some respondents suggested a more integrated approach and a wider scope to the concept of education for the youth in the area' (p.38)

Earlier Quinlan (1998a) observed a general sense from interviewed teachers that the projects are generally not very well integrated with the schools in Blanchardstown.

Surveyed school principals and teachers in this study tended to view links with local services as good or very good. With regard to obstacles to partnership between services and schools the following points were made:
– '*To my mind no obstacles exist. Funding for projects is a challenge*'
– '*supervision and security for afterschool events*'
– '*we could do with a more structured approach to consultation between local services and the school*'
– Need '*more visible communication between school and agencies, closer links more apparent to all involved*'.

Examples of cooperation between schools and agencies include the following:
– '*schools involved in the establishment and implementation phase of the NYP and Blakestown and Mountview Youth Initiative, variously Blakestown Community School, Scoil Mhuire , St Philip's, since the 90s ongoing consistent voluntary representation on the management of projects at Board level and work with   capital as well as service phase. Some school, personnel directors of Boards and taking officer responsibility*'
– '*Career guidance personnel from 2 RAPID schools involved closely with planning and implementation of third level promotional event working on a subcommittee with the BYS, and Adult Education Service*'
– '*Local school gave large tract of land for large capital project funded YPFSF/HSE/LDTF to service the needs of youth at risk in the area. Ensured co-operation by the DES, the Trustees etc*'
– '*primary school principals co-operated with NEPS and the HSE on developing responses to behaviour issues*'
– '*representation on Youth PIB, Drug prevention subcommittee by local schools*'
– '*lobbying by local schools for teacher to be on NYP staff a major point of collaboration*'

Nevertheless the following views arose from interviews with service providers regarding the need for improved collaboration between local schools and services:
– 'communication barriers within second level school' 'recognition has improved but could take years'
– '*teachers not really interested in the service as [service providers are] not a teacher – they are not approachable in the main*'
– dialogue with schools '*Yes though things can always get better*'
– need '*real understanding of what [our service] is, reliant on HSCL and teachers understanding and willingness to engage*'
– '*two separate cultures essentially*' need '*workshops/overview to school staff...fewer teachers coming to the service than our staff going to school, little understanding of service*' '*perceived as a threat to school environment*'[26] need '*links with schools to become much more formalised, opportunities for school to tap into the resources of the service*'

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26 Rourke (1995, p.17) referred to some sceptical teachers regarding PESL (now Oasis) who 'believe that informal educational initiatives such as PESL send the wrong messages e.g., 'boys and girls get rewarded for being bad'. To overcome this, Rourke emphasised the need for more communication about the aims of the programme and the need for a more active Steering Committee involving teachers and parents.

- *dialogue with schools 'could be better, we do have a good relationship with the local secondary school' though 'barriers could be broken down'*
- *'schools wait for kid to be at breaking point'*
- *'teachers not trained regarding care and confidentiality'*
- *'some more connection needed' between services and schools*
- *'schools have lots of sway on SCPs'*
- *'recommends integrative training between youth workers and teachers e.g., domestic violence, report writing, suicide/self harm'*
- progress, *'there are more services', 'non-formal education sector network/partnership, SCP is a positive step'*
- schools need to *'offer a more user friendly approach to working with parents and young people, and work more collaboratively with community services'*
- *schools need to change 'The approach to the delivery of the curricula and negative attitudes to young people'. 'It is not always the schools issues it is the system they work within'*
- *'teacher understanding of our services/models very limited. Work is needed with the School Completion Programme, can often be adversaries in relation to youth project and school'*
- *'different objectives (or apparently so) or mission. No parity of esteem'*
- *'confines of timing available and rooms allocated'*
- obstacles to cooperation with school include *'issues in relation to confidentiality'*
- *priority needs for expansion 'a dedicated space in schools, could be used at any time of the day. Facilitate parent-school links. Ability to do one-to-one work in the school, capacity building for the child. Possibility of being in the class to observe — working with not for the teachers. Holistic rather than strictly academic focus'*
- *changes in schools 'openness to/willingness to explore things broader than academic, including social, emotional issues' 'alternatives to whole class approach'*
- *'be child/needs led. Within school there is nobody to go to — no one with time to sit down with if you have a concern/problem regarding either child/adult. Counsellor times are by appointment, build this capacity into school time'*
- *'inflexible education system (times, structure etc)'*
- *schools better accommodate the needs of at risk students by 'greater awareness and communication with outside agencies and through family support'*
- *'parents need to feel they are being heard and valued as their child's primary educators'. Need 'inviting, inclusive, consultative environment and space/room for parents currently seem to be used for activities rather than just being available'*
- *progress 'there are more services', 'non-formal education sector network/partnership, SCP is a positive step'*
- *'Schools have advanced a lot, with resource teachers, Leaving Cert Applied etc'*
- *'time resource' obstacle across services 'protocols regarding disclosure across different agencies and schools, needs led is best'*
- *'would like to see local schools become more student focused with greater consideration and attention being given to practical, life and career focused lessons' 'when clients present they look for practical courses, let's be real'*
- *'different way to working in school'*
- schools need to be *'more student focused and having an increased understanding of the community they work in'*

■ It is of concern that a number of service providers refer to a lack of equality in the communicative relation between their service and the schools, referring for example to 'communication barriers', the need to be 'working with not for the teachers', 'no parity of esteem', 'two separate cultures essentially'

Tett et al's (2001) discussion of collaboration between schools and community agencies in tackling social exclusion contrasts collaboration with simply 'contracting out' interventions and describes collaboration in terms of to 'develop, manage, deliver, fund and evaluate' activities. While both schools and services recognise concrete obstacles to collaboration such as space and time available, it is evident that strategies are needed to improve communication and collaboration between schools and services, while respecting the professional boundaries of each.

Clarity of purpose underlying collaboration on a project is emphasised in the Irish context by the ADM report (1999)[27]:

> Clarity of purpose and a clear understanding of what is being proposed should exist between the relevant partner organisations and also within the participating organisations (e.g., schools, Partnership Companies and community organisation). Hence the need to ensure that all the partner organisations or stakeholders are actively involved at an early stage in planning the project and in agreeing how the project will be organised and delivered. The experience of individual Partnerships would suggest that this initial investment of time and energy is worthwhile (p.41).

27 See also BAP Strategic implementation plan (2004-6) on an integrated strategy 'ensuring that policies and strategies are applied in an integrated manner...'

4.1 Findings in Blanchardstown

Need for More Strategic Planning from Local Services for Communities with High Levels of Foreign Nationals

A recent survey of local schools in Blanchardstown (BAP 2005) with respect to the numbers of foreign national students and their levels of English revealed the following results:

— up to 50-60% of foreign national students at secondary level are estimated to have severe language difficulties

— in the words of one principal 'we do not have the resources to cater for the students who arrive here with no English. Resources should undoubtedly be based on numbers and not have the present limit/cap'

— Some schools have 40-45 different nationalities

— A primary school principal observed their numbers 'increasing steadily in last 2/3 years — much higher numbers enrolled in junior classes, early start programme, next years junior infants etc'

— Another primary school provides figures where over 40% of their pupils are foreign nationals and 25% of these are estimated to have severe language difficulties: 'whilst we have help for the pupils regarding the learning of English, maths is proving a huge difficulty particularly with the terminology associated with the subject'

— Another primary school principal states: 'specialist language kits, assessment materials for oral language would be a great help'

— Another primary school with close to 30% foreign nationals observes that 'the number of foreign nationals increases every year by approximately 20%'

— Another primary school with 33% foreign nationals in the entire school, has 50% foreign nationals in Junior Infants to Second Class, with 80% in Junior Infants itself

40-45 different nationalities attending some local schools is a significantly higher figure than the 24 countries referred to as living in Blanchardstown in the LDSIP (2004) Annual Report.

80% of the Irish Bosnian population live in the Blanchardstown area. This amounts to approximately 1,000 people (O'Regan 1998). Nigerian and Romanian respondents were the largest ethnic groups in the sample of Ryan (2005) on refugees and asylum seekers. A notably high number of pupils from the Congo and Philippines, as well as Romania, Nigeria and Bosnia, were mentioned by some schools in the survey of local schools by BAP (2005).

■ It is of concern that many of the 10 services in our interviewed sample were unable to provide any service user from an ethnic minority background, whether foreign national or a member of the Travelling community

■ The SCP EOP accepts that it has 'very little' Travellers and foreign nationals though stating that it adopts: 'a whole school approach taken by the programme where appropriate, therefore Travellers and foreign nationals come under this cohort'

■ BOND have 1% Travellers and no foreign nationals as service users, and state that they are 'surprised and don't know why they are not presenting, it would be a very positive move'

■ It is notable that in their questionnaire responses, many of the surveyed services' plans for expansion do not explicitly envisage targeting of foreign nationals or Travellers or refer to the need for equality proofing[28].

■ Examples of good practice regarding targeting of foreign nationals and Travellers by local services include that of a) Blanchardstown Youth Service (BYS), b) Blanchardstown Area Partnership (BAP) and c) Youthreach.

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28   See also National Forum Action Plan (Gilligan 2002) on equality proofing

a) The Direct Work Group Plan for 2006 for BYS targets:
— 207 out of 1,141 (18%) people that are foreign nationals for general direct work in groups
— 47 out of 1,141 (4%) people that are Travellers for general direct work in groups
— 75 out of 369 (20%) people that are foreign nationals for sports groups
— 19 out of 369 (5%) people that are Travellers for sports groups
— 81 out of 471 (17%) people that are foreign nationals for out of school groups
— 45 out of 471 (9%) people that are Travellers for out of school groups

Moreover, it notes that 'Development of facilities in Mulhuddart/Huntstown' is a priority need for expansion due to the increasing prevalence of foreign nationals residing in these areas. This targeting of foreign nationals and Travellers needs to be a standard part of each service's strategic planning.

b) Between September 2000 and February 2002, BAP ran a Jobs Club which provided 128 asylum seekers and refugees with practical job seeking skills during the 7 week programmes. Subjects covered included: Computer applications, developing English language, CV and interview preparation, workshops exploring cultural and work practices, health and safety courses. The aim was to assist people to source long-term sustainable employment and to encourage them to avail of all training possibilities (Ryan 2005). In 2005, BAP supported after school English language classes to foreign nationals – 204 young people attended after school language classes in 2005. BAP is collaborating with local schools to develop an 'immersion course for non nationals' which is 'at advanced planning stage'. This initiative was provided in a school-based setting. Due to limited funding, in total, approx. 8 schools were supported. Grants for multi-cultural events and summer programmes with language activities were also supported.

Significant funding received by the Blanchardstown Area Partnership through the European Refugee Fund for the Meitheal project has allowed for an expanded and integrated response to the needs of foreign national children, youth and parents in 2006. In this regard the partnership has been successful with a submission for EUR 321,547 to the European Refugee Fund for a proposal which focuses on 6 themes including language training and communication, culture and the arts and support for isolated adults. This fund has allowed for an expanded service to the education and youth sector and the employment of an outreach worker from one of the new communities which will allow for the greater integration of families and isolated adults.

c) Youthreach has 12% Travellers and 4% Foreign Nationals attending their service in Blanchardstown

■ It is arguable however that involvement of foreign nationals in short 7 week programmes, or in events that are not on an ongoing basis such as the NYP promotion of events such as 'family fun day', 'crossing paths in Blanchardstown' for foreign nationals, is an involvement that needs to be part of:
— a more medium and long term strategy for engagement of representatives of foreign nationals in community affairs, including a strategy of developing community leaders that represent the voices of their ethnic groups
— a strategy which over time will lead to representatives from local ethnic minorities (including more Travellers) being involved in accredited leader training. BYS, for example, provides accredited leader training as incentives for engaging people in adult education services. Corduff CDP is the location of community training for an extra-mural NUI course. Some foreign nationals are attending this course some of whom will become community leaders. A logical extension of such training is outreach programmes targeting representatives from foreign national communities
— a strategy which integrates adult education needs of foreign nationals with the educational needs of their children; this integration will help facilitate increased parental involvement in their children's education (see also the Statutory Committee on Educational Disadvantage report 2005 on the need to integrate primary and secondary education with adult education as part of a lifelong learning strategy)
— a strategy which involves active collaboration with foreign nationals in the planning of short, medium and

long-term interventions targeting the needs of adults and children from their ethnic groups.[29]

The need to involve parents more actively in their children's education is long recognised in the Irish context and has been highlighted in an earlier section of this report concerning building on strengths in Blanchardstown regarding adult education and making the school a focal point of community education. The importance of parental involvement needs to be reiterated with regard to foreign national parents and their children. It underpins the logic of the Home School Community Liaison Scheme and was recognised in the national programme of special measures for schools in disadvantaged areas (1984) and the report of the Irish Department of Education Working Party on the Primary School Curriculum and the Disadvantaged Child (1985). The Irish White Paper on Education 'Charting our Education Future' (1995) reaffirmed the crucial role of parents "in forming the child's learning environment" and pointed to the need for positive attitudes to education and to encourage self-esteem.

In the British context, a practitioner and academic consensus has developed over a large number of years that a lack of dissonance between home and school - and parents' involvement in their education in both settings - is in students' best educational interests (David 1993). While acknowledging the need for some boundaries between school and home contexts from the student's point of view, Edwards & Alldred (2000) state that this prevailing view on the centrality of parental involvement transcends the British context:

Across the political spectrum, parental involvement and home-school partnership are regarded as, variously, enhancing the educational performance of children from deprived socio-economic backgrounds, or as a market mechanism or communitarian approach to improving schools' effectiveness for all children. This orthodoxy is evident not merely in Britain but, given the global nature of the processes of familialisation and institutionalisation, is either entrenched or growing internationally

- ■ It is evident that local services must be resourced to commit dedicated staff to outreach with targeted foreign national groups in the Blanchardstown area. This targeting would not be limited to programmes solely designed for foreign nationals (e.g., English language programmes) but also for programmes that have a wider client group
- ■ This targeting would recognise that different ethnic groups may have different needs, while also recognising that members of the same ethnic group may also have different needs. In other words, foreign nationals (including refugees, asylum seekers) are not to be treated as a homogenous group
- ■ An opportunity exists for Blanchardstown to become a national model of best practice in relation to integration of foreign nationals within schools and the community
- ■ A medium term goal (i.e. over the next 4 years) for local services will be to employ a significant proportion of staff who are from a range of ethnic minorities living in the area.
- ■ BAP needs to set a medium term target of helping to develop a number of community leaders from a range of ethnic minority groups living in Blanchardstown; these accredited community leaders need to be facilitated in developing and participating in a community wide forum to help articulate and resource the changing needs of their groups — and encourage dialogue with other groups in Blanchardstown and beyond
- ■ In consultation with Fingal County Development Board, BAP needs to investigate how to implement - as a short to medium term target on a Fingal wide basis - the employment of researchers from a range of local ethnic minority groups to interview foreign nationals with little English in their native language in order to document their perceptions of their:
- — learning needs
- — emotional stresses
- — difficulties in acclimatisation to school and living in the local community

29 See also BAP's Strategic Plan 2004-2006 which emphasises the need for partnership with members of target groups such as foreign nationals: 'Consultations and partnerships with members of target groups identified as most marginalised and their representative organisations are vital in order to ensure accurate needs analysis and identification of appropriate responses to the particular needs of different groups''

– supports/strengths in acclimatisation to school and living in the local community
– employment needs

This research would examine the different needs of parents, youth, secondary and later primary students across the different ethnic groups. It would also serve as a key point of contact between BAP and ethnic groups to help further facilitate and accelerate a process of developing community leaders from these different groups.

Strategies for the 'new' transition – transition in space - the potential 'acclimatisation shock' of foreign national pupils within school in Ireland

While much focus in research on educational disadvantage tends to focus on transition points in time (e.g., from primary to post primary, from pre-school to primary, from Junior Certificate to Post Junior Certificate), it is abundantly clear that a new focus is needed with regard to transition, namely a transition in space involving:
– the integration of foreign national pupils within schools in Ireland
– voices of parents of foreign national pupils in their children's education

From the following points made by interviewed school principals and teachers, it is evident that schools are making numerous efforts to deal with the large increase of foreign national students, many of whom have weak or little English language skills:

– *'pupils requiring help with English are immediately sent to a teacher who provides this service. Afterschool English classes provided with funding from Blanchardstown Partnership. Pupils are strongly encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and most comply'*

– *'they receive additional help with English. Teachers keep an eye to make sure they adjust socially and our learning support teachers take small groups of children for cooperative games to help them to adjust to a new school if we sense that they feel isolated'*

– *'support teachers in place to ease transition and to help with language difficulties'*

– priority need for *'more language support teachers'*, another emphasises need for *'more funding for ESOL provision for parents'*

– *'E.S.O.L classes for parents, home visits, informal meeting outside school at opening and closing times. Language support classes for children, afterschool as well as in school'*

– *'the promotion through soccer, sport, variety shows, mural painting, talks, of the culture of integration in the hope that we can identify and marry our strengths for the benefit of all'*

– need *'better links with parents of foreign pupils'*, difficulty of *'communication with parents of foreign national parents, different attitude of some foreign national parents regarding discipline'*

– *'40% of parents are foreign nationals – often difficult to know how marginalized they are'*
– *'big communication difficulties with foreign parents'*

– *'having to deal with pupils from 40 different countries. It could be overwhelming'*
– *'half my class are from other countries at this stage'*

– *'if a non-national (i.e. a child with language difficulties) joins class allocate student to help and explain'*

■ It is arguable that all schools in Blanchardstown need to be assisted to develop procedures and fora for representative groups of a range of local ethnic minorities to be engaged in dialogue with the school regarding how best to meet their children's needs

■ School Completion Programme Committee members need to become more inclusive of representatives from sizeable local ethnic minority groups (e.g., from Romania, Nigeria, Bosnia, the Congo etc)

■ The good practice of mentoring between Irish students and foreign nationals, as well as with students from the Travelling Community, which takes place in individual classes needs to be adopted at a systemic level across all schools in Blanchardstown

■ The good practice example from St. Laurence O'Toole Junior Boys School, Sheriff St., Dublin 1 of a 'Literacy Hour of Power' employed in Junior, Senior Infants and First Class every day (See Appendix B) has obvious benefits for both foreign national children with little English and for Irish children in need of improved language development. It is recommended that such a model be introduced across all the RAPID primary schools in Blanchardstown, as well as those other schools with high proportions of foreign national pupils

■ It is arguable that more strategic thinking is needed at a national level with regard to improving 'continuity' within the classroom, as part of a strategy for integrating foreign national pupils as well as pupils with other needs. The following experiences of two interviewed teachers need to be acknowledged:

– 'constant interruptions during class – I have 11 'non national' children in my class as well as 2 children attending special needs and 4 going to resource. With all the comings and goings it is very difficult to get any teaching done'

– biggest difficulty 'System of special education. Out of a class of 22, 14 children leave my room all day every day to go to 10 different teachers. It's a crazy system where nobody knows what anybody else is doing and children are not achieving. Assign 1 resource teacher to 1 class teacher'

■ A medium term strategy needs to be developed in conjunction with the Colleges of Education and institutions running H.Dip courses in secondary teaching to increase access of representatives from ethnic minorities to the teaching profession and to all local schools

■ The BAP Report (2001) on the social, economic and demographic profile of Blanchardstown highlighted that the 'young age profile heightens the demand for social services with additional schools being an obvious requirement'. It is of concern that the 'obvious requirement' for additional schools in 2001 has not yet been met in 2006, a requirement that is now even more obvious given the increasing population of foreign nationals which some schools state expand by 20% every year.

4.2 Findings in Blanchardstown

Voices from Those in Alternative Forms of Education on the Need for Changes to Student-Teacher Interaction in the Formal System: From an Authoritarian Teacher to an Authoritative Relational Teacher

All of those interviewed below attending local services had attended local schools in Blanchardstown. The theme of the need for interventions at a systemic level to improve Student-Teacher relations emerges very clearly and consistently from the accounts of alienation from formal schooling elaborated below:

M (16)
What was your experience of secondary school?
Stupid, it was a crap school.
What was stupid about it?
I hated it the teachers was stupid and there was nothing to do.
What do you mean there was never anything to do?
I mean they never did anything with us like friends of mine did stuff with their schools.

Do you think you are treated fairly in the Youth Service?

Yeah, I do we are definitely.

Was there many people bullied in school?

Yes, by the teachers.

Is there anyone being bullied in the Youth Service?

No definitely not.

Why did you leave school?

It was stupid so I never went in.

What do you like about the Youth Service?

It's great they treat us all the same.

Is there anything you don't like?

No, not that I can think of.

What would you say would make people stay on in school?

Treat them fairly with respect.

What areas of your life do you think you have the power? Where you make decisions?

In here and where I'm from.

Is there any rule that you think is unfair?

Yeah, you're not allowed go outside.

If you had a problem with your work would you speak to a staff member?

Yeah, I do all the time.

F (15)

What was your experience of secondary school?

I didn't really like at all.

What did you not like about it?

I hated the teachers they didn't want you to have an opinion, if you had an opinion they didn't like you and they made that clear.

How was this made clear?

They would pick on you and make out that you were a trouble maker, they'd always make out that you were making trouble.

What did you enjoy about it?

Nothing.

How do you find it at Youthreach?

Really good, the teachers really relate to the students they understand you and they talk to you. You have a laugh while you learn and you don't even notice it's really interesting.

If you had a problem would you speak to someone in Youthreach?

Yes definitely.

If you had the power to change anything in schools what would it be?

The way teachers think that they are bigger than you.

What do you mean when you say bigger?

Better they look down on you like their opinion is more important than yours.

What needs to be done to keep more people in your area in school?

Change this way of thinking.

What in your opinion would make people want to go to school more often?

If you were free to express yourself more not messing like but if you seriously want to disagree and you have a good argument you should be allowed to say it.

In the past did you every stay away from school without permission from your parents?

Yes all the time but me ma knew like that's the gas thing I use to study so that's why me ma looked for somewhere like this because she knew I wanted to learn and know she's delighted.

If you had the power to change anything in Youth Reach what would it be?

Nothing.

Would you say that you are treated fairly in Youth Reach?

Yes.

If you had a problem with the work load could you speak to someone in Youth Reach about it?

Yeah, if I thought they could help.

Is there anything that you don't think we have covered, but you think it's important to mention?

Yes I think it's important to say that I think if schools took an approach that was more like Youth Reach they would get more people to stay.

What could they do more like Youth Reach?

If they were a bit more relaxed and related to the students and explained everything as they went along it would be far more interesting, in my opinion.

M (14)

What was your experience of secondary school?

I only went for a few months I didn't finish first year I hated it.

What did you hate about it?

I hated it because of the stupid rules, if you had the wrong colour shoes they would send you home.

Do you think you were treated fairly in school?

No, sent home for nothing.

Do you think you are treated fairly in the Youth Service?

Yeah, I do we are definitely.

Why did you leave school?

Hassle from the teachers and stress of coming from the junior school I was lost. I hadn't got a clue and they send you home for stupid reasons like no tie, then you fall behind. I hated going in so I stayed at home just lying around.

Did you stay at home with permission from your parents?

Yeah, sometimes and sometimes I mitched in the park.

For how long were you out of school before you got this place?

Ages, then me ma got me a place here.

How long are you here?

About a month.

How do you find Youth Service so far?

It's deadly.

Is there anything you don't like?

No.

If you had a problem with your work would you speak to a staff member?

Yeah, definitely.

M (21)

What was your experience of school?

I didn't like it at all it was totally boring the teachers never stopped hassling me. I hated sitting beside the window every day being told what to do and looking out knowing that I would rather be outside. They just wanted you to work all the time I wasn't interested in that, so I kept messing and eventually I got kicked out. Then I got sent to Laurence O Toole's I was sentenced by the courts for a year.

What was that like?

It was really great I enjoyed it, the staff were very nice they treated everyone the same and they made it very interesting we got to mess with cars in the garage. Everyday they would check with you if you were ok not cos they had to but because they were really interested in you. I got on with them great if you were good then you got out at the weekends I was nearly always out at the weekends. I learned so much I did my junior cert and did really well on it even though I hadn't studied a lot but one of the staff there Bridget she told me that she knew that I could do it and I think that's what made me do well.

What do you think were the major causes of you doing better in St Laurence's then you did in the school system?

The attitude of the staff and the teachers the different way that I was treated in school I was told what to do by someone that wasn't interested in me and made everything boring. In Laurence's it was a different story people were interested in you genuinely they asked you what you liked and then they worked that into the way you learned. Even though I was sentenced there I would have stayed on my own back. Another important thing was the staff never judged your family when I got visits and told them about things that happened when I went home for the weekend they didn't think any less of me.

How does Bond compare to St Laurence's and school?

Well it doesn't compare to the school yeah, it's very like Laurence's the staff are sound you could tell them anything and they wouldn't judge you for it. The training and the classes are the same as well they talk to you and understand you. I live in the residential part of Bond as well and they're sound there.

In your opinion what needs to be done to keep young people in school?

For the teachers to try to make subjects more interesting and less boring 'cos not everyone is into that. And for the teachers to take an interest in the kids ask them how they are and how they are getting on with school then they know. I think that some kids should have key workers like in this place just to bounce things off and to keep all they're shit together that' s how I think kids would stay in school more.

What would you most like to change about the school system?

The teachers' attitudes that's what I'd like to change and for the schools themselves to get more activities and make it more interesting do stuff that people like for one day a week the boys you could do mechanics get an old car and just work on it.

Finally is there anything that you think we haven't covered but you feel needs to be mentioned?

No. Well just to say what I said before to make the teacher more like the staff in places like this but I don't know how you do that.

M (29)

How would you describe your experience of School?

I left early so I think that says it all I lost interest I was hanging around with an older crowd they were well past school so I just lost interest I didn't like the whole system.

What was it that you disliked?

Just been sat in a chair and being spoken at and given all these stupid rules to follow it was crap I just hate that kind of thing. I think if it hadn't of been set up like that they would have kept me interested. Cos after I left I fell into loads of shit drugs and crime anyway I ended up in prison and a few years into my sentence I did me my junior cert and I did really well in it and I got such a buzz from it. I remember thinking I should have stayed in school but do you know what I couldn't have 'cos I can't stand being told what to do. Then I realised that education doesn't have to be like school. I fuckin' love it I get a real buzz from it you know I can't get enough of it.

What are you doing at the moment in terms of education?

I am in the middle of applying to do Sociology in either Trinity or the Liberties. I was telling my key worker a while ago you know when I decided to go straight and now that I have a bit of time under my belt I want to give something back. I was telling him that I was interested in young people and crime and poverty and all that cos I see them hanging around my road drinking and acting the bollocks and I'd love to let them see through my eyes, but you can't cos no one could tell me anything when I was their age, but I'd love to do something like sociology and work in a place like here and talk to them on that level when they're ready. I

never knew that this place existed until my little brother got them to do a visit when I was locked up I firmly believe that if this was here before my last sentence I wouldn't have went back in.

How is Bond for you?

It's me saving grace you know. Like I come here for everything to work to play for support I love. The staff are great you can relate to them they talk to you not at you.

What do you think the schools could do to keep more people in schools?

Talk to them, relates to them ask them what's going on with them then you can look at educating them. Incentives are good that's what young people relate to a reward that's always a good boost especially when you haven't got it. Someone told me a while ago that kids in England and up the North get paid to go to school that's a fuckin' great idea, they get about £30 that's about €45 that's a good night out at the weekend with your mates I'd of stayed in school for that sure that's why I started robbing to keep up with the Jones. If I knew that I had to work hard all week but I could play hard at the weekend I'd of stayed in school it was having nothing to look forward to but someone controlling all week that did my head in.

What would you change about the school system?

Well them things that I said there I like to put them in the system and I'd like to change the techniques like instead of talking at student's I'd have group's discussions and more interactions. Like at the minute I am doing a short course on addiction and its based on the community and everything and one that it affects there are about 15 in the class and its all discussions and group interactions the buzz I get from it it's mad I love it. It's really after getting me going and a good friend of mine is in college and he said that's the way his course is so I mad for it now. I just think if they are doing that in college why can't they do it in schools?

Finally is there anything that you think we haven't covered but you feel needs to be mentioned?

Just what I was saying if teachers talked more to young people and got more involved with them they'd want to learn more cos they'd trust the teacher and then trust that they're giving them the right advice or if they went off the rails they could bring them back you know, talking at kids does no good. And just I think the techniques groups are great 'cos everyone learns something and everyone brings something.

F (19)

What was your experience of secondary school?

It was ok as you know I left early so I didn't like it that much.

How do you find it at Youthreach?

O I love it I really, really do. Just the staff they are so good they treat you like an adult not like being in school like it interests me you know. They take the time to get to know you and they never judge you.

If you had a problem would you speak to someone in Youthreach?

O yeah, definitely not a bother.

If you had the power to change anything in schools what would it be?

Teachers' attitudes make them more interested in their pupils.

If you had the power to change anything in Youth Reach what would it be?

I'd like them to offer more choices with the subjects.

What would you like to learn that you are not already learning?

Advanced book keeping I do basic book keeping but I'd like to do advanced book keeping.

Would you say that you are treated fairly in Youth Reach?

Yeah, definitely.

If you had a problem with the work load could you speak to someone in Youth Reach about it?

Yeah, definitely.

What in your opinion would make people want to go to school more often?

If the schools changed their ways treated people like people.

Was there any rule in school that you found really unfair?

Wearing uniforms.

What in your opinion needs to be done to make students stay in school more?

Make it more modern it was really old fashioned if they caught up with new ways of teaching young people,

like talk to them not at them.

M (17, Member of the Travelling Community)
What was your experience of primary school?
I didn't really like at all.
What did you not like about it?
I didn't really get on with the people.
Which people, the pupils or the teachers?
The other pupils I hated them and they hated me everyday I was fighting cos they'd slag me and then I'd end up fighting, then I went to England.
What was your experience of England like?
I really enjoyed it.
What did you enjoy about it?
The school and the teachers.
Did you notice a difference between the Irish and English schools?
Yeah, the teachers understood the kids more they talked to you more and they seemed more interested in their pupils.
How do you find it at Youthreach?
Brilliant I really get on with everyone and I enjoy coming.
If you had a problem would you speak to someone in Youthreach?
Yeah definitely.
What in your opinion would make people want to go to Youthreach more often?
Nothing everyone comes it's great.
Would you say that you are treated fairly in Youthreach?
Yes.
If you had a problem with the work load could you speak to someone in Youthreach about it?
No I'd sort it out me self unless it was to do with me work.

M (14)
What did you not like about school?
The teachers, not all of them, the ones that were in detention and the ones in the yard.
Do you think you were treated fairly in school?
Sometimes when they felt like it.
Do you think you are treated fairly in the Youth Service?
Yeah.
If you had a problem with your work would you speak to a staff member?
Yeah, I do.
Is there a room that you could go to if you need some peace and quiet and some time to think.
Yeah, you can go in the kitchen to cool off.

4.3 Findings in Blanchardstown

The Need for more Community Representation in the Management Structures and Decision Making Processes of a Range of Local Services

■ Blanchardstown Area Partnership Strategic Implementation Plan (2004-2006)
is committed to community development processes:

'BAP's experience has been that Community Development processes are ultimately successful when groups operating in excluded neighbourhoods and representing excluded groups of people can represent themselves and become part of the decision making process and this principle will continue to underpin BAP's community development strategy'

■ There is a degree of variability across services with regard to the extent that the local services adopt principles of community development such as representation of local people on service management structures and commitment to local capacity building through employment of local people

■ It is arguable that all the local services need to state their commitment to adopting principles of community development

Some examples of good practice regarding community development structures include the TOFE (SCP) which commits to 'employment of locals – very positive' and notes that 'management committee has representatives from local community services, HSCL and parents'

Other examples are that of BOND: 'BOND Board of Management is comprised of local community representatives and representatives from local services' and WEB which has four community representatives 'people who live and work in the areas we work in, i.e., 1 rep from each of the 4 areas'.

School St. Family Resource Centre in the Dublin 8 area is another example of good practice regarding local capacity building in terms of recruitment of local people to the service and ownership by the local community of the service through their representation on its management structure.

4.4 Findings in Blanchardstown

Need for Early Intervention

BAP's Education Working Group (EWG) met for the first occasion in January 1998 (Ryan 2004). The EWG review of educational provision highlighted concern about a range of issues including:
pre-school provision, speech therapy and language development training

A consistent theme emerging from interviews with service providers is the need for increased focus on early intervention, while early intervention is also key to language development:

'Predominance of services for age 12+. Barnardos is more or less the only service which works with younger children. Early intervention is a priority. School Completion Programme has a remit but still tends towards older children'

'no one touches the junior school, no one to link with'

'need for investment in early years'

'not enough early intervention but need adequate services for every level, a continuum of support', 'need more preventative stuff when kids are younger'

'links with health services – zero, very disappointing, seems to be a national problem'

'local community family support services cannot/are not there to support serious family/individual issues'

'Schools should make themselves aware of services that are available in the area and they should utilize these services. If a young person is at risk, it can be seen from an early stage. Call in the troops at the beginning, not when the young person is on the verge of being expelled'

'whole family approach needed for Junior School'

need 'radical interventions for those in the Junior primary schools with poor patterns of attendance as a first step'

need 'early intervention on attendance issues'

'In late 2005 funding was allocated for a Springboard Project in the Corduff/Mulhuddart areas based on a RAPID supported joint proposal from a range of interested community based organisations working in the area. The proposal was for the development of intensive services for a limited number of families and their children...considered to be most at risk. One of the selection criteria for the target families will be school attendance and educational attainment which the project will seek to address ... Barnardos will manage the project and the other agencies and services will form a management advisory committee'

Speech and language therapy is rated as the highest priority by one school in particular. Another states that 'a school based speech/language therapist would be most helpful to us'

■ There is a need to develop parent to parent supports in Blanchardstown with regard to speech and language interventions for their children

Parent to parent support for speech and language intervention has been endorsed recently by Barnardos (2006). Previous programmes in Clondalkin (e.g., A.P.P.L.E1, April 1997-July 1999) involved parents in the treatment of their children, and developed a role for four parent co-workers regarding speech and language interventions (McSkeane 1999). Similarly, according to Mary Fanning, Principal Speech & Language therapist in the Ballymun clinic and Mater child guidance centre (Downes 2004), the view of the parent as co-therapist is a central feature of their intervention models.

In Britain, parental involvement in early intervention programmes for children with developmental difficulties is now in widespread practice (Guralnick 1997). In the words of Glogowska & Campbell (2000):

> Speech and language therapists working with children routinely deliver treatments using parents and carers, transferring skills and knowledge to equip them to deliver therapy at home (p.391-2)

Citing Ward (1994) and Gibbard (1998), they observe that some speech and language therapy services in Britain are now specifically targeting their resources at teaching parents the language facilitation techniques to implement with their children.

Similar developments have also occurred in the US where a movement has occurred from an individualized, isolated service delivery model in the clinic or treatment room to client-based intervention taking place in a wider variety of settings involving not only the clinician and the child but others in the child's environment or social system, i.e., family members and other professionals (Andrews & Andrews 1986). In the words of Kelly (1995) in the US context:

> The impetus for this change has come, at least in part, from our realization and acceptance that others are impacted by and have impact on the child's development. The desired changes in speech, language and fluency behaviors are best served by expanding our treatment teams beyond the clinician-client partnership (p.101)

Kelly (1995) also emphasises the need, if possible, to involve fathers as well as mothers in the child's speech and language development, as for example, she observed that fathers tend to interrupt their child's utterances more than mothers, and produced nearly double the number of words, syllables and morphemes than mothers (of children who both do and do not stutter) in their interactions with their child.

4.5 Findings in Blanchardstown

Part-Time Work and Transition Year as Issues regarding Early School Leaving

Previous research in the Blanchardstown context found that 63% of all second level students in the Blanchardstown area have a part-time job – and a third of this are working over 17 hours per week (BYS & BAP 2000)

Burtenshaw Kenny Associates (2005) noted that JEDI:

> Challenged the perception that career guidance is for young people who have educational qualifications and are interested in progressing to third level education. It made guidance accessible for one hundred and twenty seven young people who are interested in reestablishing their career path. Many of these young people availed of two or more guidance sessions.

Forkan (2005) observed that many young people in Blanchardstown did not know the consequences of early school leaving. His examination of school leaving patterns concluded that a clear majority of students from both cohorts 'left school during the Senior Cycle' and:

> Recommended that consideration be given to the different character of early school leaving when it occurs after a young person has attained a Junior Certificate qualification

The figures provided by Forkan (2005) are as follows:
— of the 844 students who started second level education in 1995 in 5 schools in Blanchardstown, 30% left school early
— 9% of males, 7% of females had left school by the time they would have sat their Junior Certificate (average ESL 8%; overall retention rate to Junior Certificate 92%)
— Another 24% of males and 20% of females had left school before Leaving Certificate
— Of the 805 students who started second level education in 1996 in the 5 schools,
— 30% left school early
— 8% of males, 3% of females had left school by the time they would have sat their Junior Certificate (average ESL 6%; overall retention rate to Junior Certificate 94%)

— Another 27% of males and 20% of females had left school before Leaving Certificate

It is important to emphasise that a decision to leave school after Junior Certificate is the end product of an ongoing process from the beginning of secondary school and arguably earlier. As a process of alienation from the school system, it is important to recognise that leaving the school system after Junior Certificate may share a range of similarities with those who leave school prior to Junior Certificate.

Nevertheless it is arguable that there is a need to develop discussion of a career plan with students as early as possible at secondary level in conjunction with the Career Guidance teacher. This attempt at developing an individual plan for the student at second level:
— seeks to remedy the situation noted by Forkan (2005) that some students do not realise the consequences of early school leaving
— can incorporate issues of the effect of part-time work on the student's study habits and school performance within part of this career plan
— can require the student to officially inform the school of part-time work and hours involved as well as to schedule a meeting with the Career Guidance teacher to work out a plan for study in relation to this work.
— can include planning for time management
— may explore how the work may relate to any of the student's course or project work and be linked to it in some way in Transition Year
— communicates the need for high expectations with regard to the student's learning and future career
The basic approach of such planning is a cognitive-behavioural one where the student sets realistic goals and targets and receives feedback on these targets

Students' perceptions of the relevance and status of transition year may need to be challenged. For example, one of the Youthreach interviewees stated with regard to transition year: "*Transition year? That's only for people that are slow*" (Female, age 15).

5. PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN BLANCHARDSTOWN

5.1. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

BOND

Target Group: Young offenders aged 18-25

Brief Description of Programme:
BOND is a community based initiative that seeks to support the integration into the community of young people involved in offending behaviour and or leaving prison. Participants engage at two levels; at one level they may participate on a structured educational programme which is made up of FETAC modules. Or alternatively participants may engage on a one to one basis.

Aim:
BOND aims to provide each participant with an opportunity to return to learning in an individual and personalised way. BOND believes that doing this it allows the young person the opportunity to develop and learn at a pace that best suits their needs.

Additional Services:
BOND also offers a transitional residential facility. Padua House which provides transitional accommodation for 3-12 months for up to 8 of BOND male participants aged 18-25.

Funding: Main source of funding from the Probation & Welfare Services.
Additional Funding; Stephen's Green Trust, Peter McVerry Trust, Fingal Co. Council and Co. Dublin VEC

Referral Process: Engagement is voluntary self referral common and
referrals come from the judicial systems and community agencies

No of Staff: BOND currently employs 7 full time staff for the day programme. BOND also employs 6 full time staff at the residential programme.

No of services users attending per annum: Circa 70+.

Location: Main programme located in Coolmine Industrial Estate. Residential programme located on the Navan Road.

Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative

Target Group: Young people aged 13-23 and their families.

Brief Description of Programme:
Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative is a community-based project working with young people and their families. It offers young people support and guidance with their educational and emotional needs. The project offers specialised projects, education support, after school groups and counselling. The project also offers a lunch club.

Aim:

Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative aims to support and facilitate young people to stay in school, to reach their educational potential, and to develop the encouraging aspects of their lives. The project also aims to assist and support families to enable them encourage their children to attend and stay on in school.

Additional Services:

Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative also offers a programme for the parents of the young people on the project which includes family support, advocacy and education.

Referral Process: Referrals come from; schools, families and community agencies.

Funding: Main source of funding is from HSE.
Additional Funding: Local Drug Task Force and Pobal

No of Staff: Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative currently employs eight full time staff members.

No of services users attending per annum: Circa 150

Location: Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative programme is located on the Blakestown Road.

Blakestown Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP)

Target Group: Young people aged 9-14 and their families.

Brief Description of Programme:

Blakestown Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project is a community-based initiative. The project offers educational support, after school groups, some life skills work and also a family support programme. The life skills work is carried out both in the project and in the schools. The project also offers a lunch club.

Aim:

The project aims to encourage and enable young people to stay in school, to reach their educational potential, and to develop the positive aspects of their lives. The project also aims to assist and support families to enable them encourage their children to attend and stay on in school.

Additional Services:

Blakestown Mountview NYP also offers a programme for the parents of the young people on the project which includes family support, advocacy and education and community development.

Referral Process: referrals come from; schools, families and community agencies.

Funding: Main source of funding is from Local Drug Task Force administered through the HSE.
Additional Funding: DES.

No of Staff: Blakestown Mountview Neighbour Youth Project currently employs twelve full time staff.

No of services users attending per annum: Circa 40-50

Location: Blakestown Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project is located in the Mountview community.

OASIS

Target Group: 10-16 year olds.

Brief Description of Programme:
This service is jointly provided by Blanchardstown Youth Service and Barnardos.
OASIS works with both primary and secondary students across four schools in two communities. OASIS provides after-school groups and they are also involved in facilitating breakfast clubs.

Aim:
OASIS aims to provide each young person with the support and assistance needed in order to stay in school. The overall aims to encourage and enable the young people they come in contact with to stay in school, to reach their educational potential.

Additional Services:
OASIS (Primary programme) also works in the family home. The overall aim of this aspect of the work is to enable parents support and encourage their children to attend and stay on in school.

Referral Process: referrals come directly from the school.

Funding: Main source of funding is mainstreamed Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund (YPFSF) through the Co. Dublin VEC; drawn down by both Blanchardstown Youth Services and Barnardos.

No of Staff: OASIS currently employs two full time staff members.

No of services users attending per annum: ranging between 24-32

Location: OASIS does not currently have a distinct premises, the work is facilitated at the schools. Each of the staff members has an office at either BYS or Barnardos which is dependent on the service which they are affiliated with.

Blanchardstown Youth Service (BYS) Early School Leaving Programme

Target Group: 12-16 year olds; early school leavers and young travellers.

Brief Description of Programme:
BYS provides a range of community based services in Blanchardstown including services to voluntary youth groups, direct services to young people themselves and provision of a range of youth projects in partnership with either statutory or community organisations. BYS provides the Early School Leavers Programme which is a community-based initiative. The programme seeks to support and assist young people that have left the formal education system. The fundamental ethos of the BYS is to enable young people to involve themselves actively and consciously in their own development and the development of their community. Participants engage in a structured educational programme. Each participant on the programme participates in both Junior Certificate and FETAC modules.

Aim:
BYS Early School Leavers Programme aims to provide each young person with an opportunity to return to learning with a less formal person centred approach. BYS Early School Leavers Programme believes that doing this allows the young person the opportunity to develop and learn at a pace that best suits their needs.

Additional Services:
Summer courses for young people.

Referral Process: referrals come from; schools, families, the Education Welfare Officer and community agencies.

Funding: Main source of funding is mainstreamed LDTF funding through the Co. Dublin VEC.
Additional Funding: BYS, EOP and TOFE

No of Staff: BYS Early School Leavers Programme currently employs one full time staff member, a range of part time teachers as required and a BYS Youth Officer allocates time to the programme

No of services users attending per annum: 20

Location: Main programme located in Blanchardstown Main Street.

Youthreach Programme

Target Group: 16-21; early school leavers, Young mothers and Young travellers.

Brief Description of Programme:
Youth Reach is a community based initiative. It is a follow on programme from BYS Early School Leavers Programme; however it also takes additional referrals. Youth Reach seeks to support and assist young people that have left the formal education system. Their ethos is to enable young people to involve themselves actively and consciously in their own development and the development of their community. Participants engage in a structured educational programme. Each participant on the programme participates in either Leaving Certificate or equivalent VETAC modules.

Aim:
Youth Reach aims to provide each young person with an opportunity to return to learning with a less formal person centred approach. BYS Early School Leavers Programme believes that doing this allows the young person the opportunity to develop and learn at a pace that best suits their needs

Additional Services:
Summer courses for young people.

Funding: Main source of funding from VEC.
Additional Funding: Some E.U. funding (low level and service-initiated)

No of Staff: Youth Reach currently employs 4 full time and 10 part time staff members.

No of services users attending per annum: Ranges from 70-100

Location: Main programme located in Blanchardstown Main Street.

WEB (Working to Enhance Blanchardstown)

Target Group: Young people 12-17 years of age.

Brief Description of Programme:
WEB is a community-based Garda Youth Diversion initiative that offers support and guidance for young people that maybe or may have been involved in offending behaviour. This is a joint venture between the Garda Síochána and Blanchardstown Youth Service and a community based management advisory committee. Participants engage in developmental and educational groups and one-to-one work. It covers the RAPID areas of Blanchardstown.

Aim:
WEB aims to provide each young person with a safe and supportive environment to socialise and have new and pleasant experiences. WEB allows the young person the opportunity to develop and learn at a pace that best suits their needs.

Additional Services: Family Support

Funding: Main sources of funding are the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in addition to mainstreamed and interim LDTF funding.

No of Staff: WEB currently employs three full time staff, two youth officers and one Project Worker with families.

Location: The project has bases in Mountview and Mulhuddart.

EOP School Completion Programme:

Target Group: Young people aged 4-18

Brief Description of Programme:
EOP School Completion Programme is run in the school and is co-ordinated by the school completion officer. The programme seeks to address an imbalance of access to formal education through the use of various interventions; after school homework clubs, learning support and a number of special interest clubs (football dancing drama etc).

Aim:
The primary aim of the EOP School Completion Programme is to seek to retain pupils to completion of senior cycle post primary education. The overall aim is to improve attendance by providing positive experiences of the education system, encouraging creativity, engaging parents more actively in their children's education while enhancing the transfer between home and school and primary and secondary.

Additional Services:
Working with out of school groups, summer programmes etc.

Funding: Dept. Education & Science.

Additional Funding:

No of Staff:

EOP currently employs four full time staff members and three part-time staff members.

No of services users attending per annum: 144 (targeted).

Location: Main programme located in Blakestown Community College.

TOFE Completion Programme:

Target Group: Young people aged 4-18

Brief Description of Programme:
TOFE School Completion Programme is the equivalent programme to EOP however TOFE Serves the Mulhuddart and Corduff area. It is also run in the School and is co-ordinated by the school completion officer. The programme seeks to address the same issues as EOP by employing the same principles and strategies.

Additional Services:
Working with out of school groups, summer programmes etc.

Funding: Department of Education & Science (DES)

Additional Funding: European Social Fund and Dept Social & Family Affairs.

No of Staff: 1 Full-time and approximately 20 sessional staff are currently engaged on the TOFE programme.

No of services users attending per annum: 162 (targeted).

Location: Main programme located in Riversdale Community College.

See appendix C for a brief description of other related afterschool services.

FIGURE 9: LINKS BETWEEN THE SCHOOLS AND THE LOCAL SERVICES IN THE BLANCHARDSTOWN RAPID AREAS.

BAP, Barnardos, Blanchardstown Youth Service, BOND, WEB, Youthreach

OASIS TOFE - SCP

Primary Schools
Scoil an Cáthair Álainn, NS, Ladyswell,
St. Patrick's Senior School, Corduff

Post-Primary School
Riversdale Community College

Primary Schools
Scoil Mhuire, JNS, Blakestown
St. Philip's, JNS, Mountview

Scoil Mhuire, SNS, Blakestown
St. Philip's, SNS, Mountview

Post-Primary School
Blakestown Community School

EOP-SCP

Blakestown Mountview NYP

Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative

5.2 Blanchardstown Area Partnership – Education Support

The partnership in 1998 convened an education-working group comprising local education, youth and community interests, the DES and the private sector. An analysis was undertaken of education and youth needs. Early school leaving and low participation rates at third level were the key issues identified. The partnership was already giving significant support to the PESL (Potential Early School Leaver's) programme which subsequently became the OASIS programme mainstreamed under the DES. However in 1998 a comprehensive programme was embarked on funded by the partnership which included:

· A one day training course for all teachers in the 9 schools in the RAPID areas on the 'Discipline for Learning' Programme
· A third class after school support programme across the 4 primary schools
· An after school homework and activity clubs for traveller children
· An access programme, which provided supervised study and Easter revision courses at second level and after school French and German at primary level. This access programme was subsequently mainstreamed by the Department of Education and Science
· A third level support scheme funded by the partnership, IBM and the County Dublin VEC which provided practical supports to third level students, including travel vouchers, book grants, etc

In addition and representing a holistic approach to educational disadvantage, funding was given by the VEC and BAP toward a men's outreach programme. Funding was also given to research the incidence of offending among young people in the area. This research eventually led to the setting up of a project for ex-prisoners BOND (Blanchard town Offenders for New Directions). Thus a number of the actions undertaken were subsequently mainstreamed by the DES.

5.3 Schools' views on a) the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and b) the Education Welfare Board (EWB)

a) Schools' Views on National Educational Psychologist Service (NEPS)

Established in 1999, NEPS aimed to have 200 full-time psychologists working in primary schools i.e. 1 psychologist per 5,000 pupils. It has now been in service for over six years. NEPS has increased from 43 on establishment to 121 at present (Hanafin, 2006). It provides 1 psychologist per 6000 - 7000 pupils and has set up regional structures throughout Ireland.

Responses from schools with regard to NEPS were as follows:

'individual psychologist is very good but overworked. School under-resourced'

'NEPS psychologist does her best but service is not adequate'

'Our psychologist is always willing to take phone calls and respond positively. It has been a reasonably good service for our school but more contact would benefit all'

'Service provided is excellent, but availability of this service is very inadequate'

'Not enough assessments being done and more follow up needed'

'NEPS does its best with the resources it has, however these fall far short of what is needed. I could name

several children in this year alone who were assessed while in 1st or 2nd class and were not reviewed until 5th or 6th class and in the meantime teachers are forced to try to educate children who really should be in a special school'

'Quality of the service provided is very good. Parents are generally very happy when they are involved in an assessment. The number of assessments available is inadequate for the needs of the child'

'Up to this year we had a psychologist who had an excellent relationship with the school. We are currently without a psychologist and are in urgent need of the service'

'Not adequate. There are still children who need to be assessed but we are only allowed a limited number of assessments annually'

'Not adequate at all. Children who obviously are entitled to much needed support have to wait on a year long list until we can support them'

'Inadequate: Although individual psychologists work hard, they seem to have their hands tied (overload of work). Recommendations often seem inadequate. Cases can slip through the net. Nobody seems to ultimately know what to do with severe cases'

'Inadequate, not everyone recommended is seen, whose decision is it, i.e. NEPS psychologist? Workload seems huge and some slip through the net. No huge support for severe cases and not a lot can be done/recommended by them'

These views strongly resonate with Barnardos (2006) recommendation in their *Make the Grade'* campaign:

Adequately resource the National Educational Psychologist Service to ensure speedy assessments and subsequent availability of supports for the child

b) Schools' Views on the Education Welfare Board (EWB)

A high level of frustration was expressed by schools with the inadequately resourced Education Welfare Board, mandated to monitor school attendance and combat absenteeism under the Education Welfare Act 2000.

The National Education Welfare Board was established primarily to ensure that every child attends school regularly, or otherwise receives an education or participates in training. A school is obliged to report to the NEWB when
- A student's name is removed from the school register for whatever reason.
- A student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
- A student has been absent for 6 days or more cumulatively
- A principal is concerned about a student's attendance.
- It decides to expel a student

Schools comments on the NEWB service were as follows:

'Totally inadequate and unsatisfactory'

'Improving'

'It would be good to have a monthly check with our NEWB officer on children with high absenteeism'

'Seems to be very little response for large amount of work placed on the school'

'EWB seem to be non-existent, I have seen no evidence that they are providing any service whatsoever'

'Not good – not enough staff. More staff to be deployed on the ground – visiting parents. Only get a letter asking them to explain 20+ absences. HSCL has already done all this work'

'Inadequate. EWO is too stretched by workload. More extreme problems getting attention but difficult to give marginal cases enough attention'

'A waste of time – what happens? Already this year I have a child who has missed 50 days!'

'Communication between school and the EWB is practically non-existent'

'Re: attendance (20 days +): A farce. No fines/no real consequences seem to take place. A joke – parents must be laughing at this'

'No real consequence seems to happen to children/families who keep children home and out a lot. It's a farce!!'

Teacher: Need 'Action to be taken by welfare board for too many children falling through the net'

Service Provider: Need for 'tracking system from primary to secondary and beyond when they leave school early, some kids have vanished'

Need better 'attendance tracking system to follow-up young people'

'Consolidate/formalised attendance record – don't get to hear of it until weeks have passed'

'Inadequate – focuses on negative aggressive behaviour – never on quiet students'

'Understaffed – not a comprehensive service'

'NEWB - more officers'

'The service is too thinly stretched in the Dublin 15 area'

6 KEY FINDINGS

Service Provision

■ It can be concluded that there is an extremely high level of satisfaction with the identified local services among service users of both genders with notable reports of gains in help with difficulties in school and gains in quality of life generally from attending the service. There are exceptionally high levels of satisfaction with communication between staff and service users. A contributory factor to these high levels of satisfaction is the low staff turnover across the services.

Service Target Groups

■ It is of concern that many of the 10 services in our interviewed sample were unable to provide any service user from an ethnic minority background, whether foreign national or a member of the Travelling community. Moreover, in their questionnaire responses, many of the surveyed services' plans for expansion do not explicitly envisage targeting of foreign nationals or Travellers, or refer to the need for equality proofing.

■ There is a degree of variability across services with regard to the extent that the local services adopt principles of community development such as representation of local people on service management structures and commitment to local capacity building through employment of local people. It is arguable that all the local services need to state their commitment to adopting principles of community development

Gaps in Services

■ Responses from schools and services highlight the need for increased family support services and supports for pupils and students with emotional and behavioural problems – and the need for increased focus on early intervention, recognising that early intervention is key to language development

■ A contrast is evident between the emphasis given to transport support for 3rd level Bursaries with the relative neglect to transport support for Travellers' participation in local afterschool projects.

■ From service providers there is a perception that there are more services in some areas than others, e.g., 'geographical gaps – Ladyswell have no NYP (including Drumheath)'

■ While there is some evidence of pupil and student involvement in the arts, there is a gap regarding drama and afterschool projects across almost all the schools. There is an underutilisation of the potential of drama for dealing with issues such as conflict resolution skills, as well as developing literacy skills integrated with drama

Need for Increased Collaboration between Services and Schools

■ Approximately 18% of the 6th class pupils attending school on the given day across the 4 schools stated that they were either often, very often or every day too hungry to do their work in school. There is a clear onus on services and schools to intervene in a consistent fashion to deal with this serious problem, a problem of poverty as well as one of education

■ Of those 6th class pupils arguably most at risk of early school leaving, namely, those who state that they do not want or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate:

■ 4 out of 5 do not attend an afterschool club

■ a large majority, 70%, do not attend any extracurricular activity in school (21 out of 30)

■ These figures highlight the need for improved targeting of at risk pupils for participation in additional afterschool clubs and extracurricular activities

■ It is important to observe that other pupils who are currently attending afterschool clubs or extracurricular activities may not now be as much at risk as previously due to the benefits of the afterschool clubs. Their very attendance at these activities may be an influence on their statements that they want to remain at

school until Leaving Certificate

■ In order to prevent those students most at risk from falling through the gaps, there is a clear need for a coordinated referral strategy between the afterschool projects that is sufficiently broad and inclusive

■ A range of service providers raised the issue of the need for alternative strategies in secondary school to that of suspension, with many referring to the need for a 'time out' room

■ It is of concern that a number of service providers refer to a lack of equality in the communicative relation between their service and the schools, referring for example to 'communication barriers', the need to be 'working with not for the teachers', 'no parity of esteem', 'two separate cultures essentially'

■ The logic of continuity of involvement in afterschool projects from primary to post primary needs to be more fully extended

Examples of Successful School Practice

■ Interviews with primary school principals and teachers in Blanchardstown highlight a proactive preventive approach occurring with regard to bullying

■ The extreme variation in levels of bullying across 6th classes within each school suggests that individual teachers are having significant success with SPHE and preventive approaches to bullying. There is a need for this success to be translated more fully across all classes within a school.

■ A positive feature of schools in the RAPID areas of Blanchardstown is the number of structured transition programmes between primary and post primary schools

■ Many of the local schools are being used as a site and resource for adult education. This is a key strength within Blanchardstown

School Climate Factors at Secondary Level: A Key Issue in Early School Leaving

■ It is of concern that:

– there is a sharp increase in 1st year compared to 6th class responses in those students who are not willing or are not sure if they would tell a teacher about an academic problem – from 8% (Primary) to more than 20% (Secondary)

– there is a sharp decrease in 1st year compared to 6th class responses in those students who are willing to tell a teacher about an academic problem – from approximately 91% (Primary) to 75% (Secondary)

– Approximately 55% of students at secondary level (first year) compared to approximately 74% of pupils at primary level (6th class) state that they are treated fairly by teachers in school

– Approximately 25% of students at secondary level (first year) compared to approximately 15% of pupils at primary level (6th class) state that they are not treated fairly by teachers in school

■ These differences between 6th class primary and 1st year secondary are statistically significant i.e., there is a statistically significant increase in perception of being treated unfairly by teachers in secondary school compared to primary school.

■ Some clear trends emerge from the profile of those pupils/students arguably most at risk of early school leaving, namely, those who state that they do not want or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate. Already after only 1 term at secondary school responses from this subgroup of those most at risk indicate that:

– 21% (Secondary) compared to 56% (Primary) perceive that they are being treated fairly in school

– 68% (Secondary) compared to 30% (Primary) perceive that they are not treated fairly in school.

■ In other words, after 1 term at secondary school their perceptions of being treated fairly are more than half that of the corresponding 6th class subgroup, and perceptions of being treated unfairly are more than double the corresponding primary school sample.

■ The theme of the need to bring in more opportunities for practical skills into the school day clearly emerges from this group of at risk pupils and students who state that they do not wish to stay at school until Leaving Certificate.

■ The theme of the need for interventions at a systemic level to improve Student-Teacher relations emerges very clearly and consistently from the accounts of alienation from formal schooling of those currently involved in services as alternatives for the formal education system

Gains in Those Intending to Stay on until Leaving Certificate

■ Approximately 85% of 6th class pupils across the 4 schools stated that they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

■ Approximately 10 % of 6th class pupils stated that they do not want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

■ Approximately 87% of 1st year students across the 2 schools stated that they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

■ Approximately 7% of 1st year students stated that they do not want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate

■ Though the research questions are not directly comparable a figure of 87% of first year students in 2006 stating that they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate suggests an approximate increase of 10-12% of students intending to stay on compared with the 'more than three quarters' in 1998 (Quinlan 1998a)

■ A figure of 11% of 1st year students in 2006 who either do not want to or do not know if they want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate is at least a 9% improvement compared with 'over 20% who do not know whether or not they will have their Leaving Certificate when they leave' in 1998

■ These figures do suggest that notable gains have been made in school retention in Blanchardstown since 1998, with the support of the services that have been developed over that period of time. In order to build on those gains and to further increase those intending to stay until Leaving Certificate, it is clear that a holistic strategy must embrace not only extra-school supports and services. It must most centrally embrace changes to the school climate at secondary level. It is important to emphasise that this is a systemic level issue and is a national issue as well as one local to Blanchardstown.

The Need to Build on the Resource of Parents as Social and Emotional Supports for their Children

■ The extremely large number of elaborated responses from pupils and students emphasising a close relationship of trust with at least one parent highlights a strong relationship of listening between the pupil and at least one parent for a large majority of children.

7 A COMMUNITY BASED PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICE FOR BLANCHARDSTOWN: EARLY INTERVENTION, SYSTEMIC LEVEL INTERVENTIONS IN THE SCHOOL AND FAMILY SUPPORT

This report has identified a range of key issues for future development for local services and schools in Blanchardstown with regard to school retention and prevention of early school leaving. It must be emphasised that most of these issues are strongly interconnected and that there is a need for joined up thinking between them.

There is a need for an integrated and systemic level intervention to occur for the following key issues:

■ Need for Improved Targeting of At Risk Pupils

■ Fear of Failure: Sharp Increase in Students who would not tell teachers about problem with schoolwork in Secondary compared to Primary School

■ Sharp Increase in Students who perceive that they are not treated fairly in Secondary compared to Primary School

■ 'Suspensions are a waste of time': A More Holistic Approach to Behavioural Issues

■ Increased Family Support Services and Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Problems

■ Need for Improved Collaboration between Schools and Local Services

■ Voices from Those in Alternative Forms of Education on the Need for Changes to Student-Teacher Interaction in the Formal System: From an Authoritarian Teacher to an Authoritative Relational Teacher

■ The Need for more Community Representation in the Management Structures and Decision Making Processes of a Range of Local Services

■ Need for Early Intervention — particularly regarding Speech and language, Emotional Support

It is recommended that a Community Based Psychological Support Service for Blanchardstown be developed to focus on early intervention, systemic level interventions in the school and family support, including parent peer support

Collaboration for such a service needs to include Blanchardstown Youth Service, NYP, Barnardos, both School Completion Programmes[31] and School Personnel — as well as building on good practice established for example, by BOND and Youthreach in working with youth who are particularly marginalised.

This section proposes a psychological service for Blanchardstown that is:

– community based.

It is a service that adopts a focus on:

– early intervention

– family support.

It involves:

– school site based work with students at risk of suspension and/or with emotional and behavioural problems

– systemic work at the level of the school with regard to developing teachers' conflict resolution strategies at secondary school in particular (see also Barnardos 2006 on the need for teachers to develop conflict resolution strategies[32])

– other systems level interventions with regard to developing parent to parent mentoring, for example, with regard to facilitating parenting strategies for at risk youth and for speech and language development of younger children.

31 For example, TOFE (SCP) has a fulltime counsellor across 3 schools - Corduff, Ladyswell and Riversdale

32 This is a logical extension which builds on previous good practice developed by BAP such as the 1 week summer course from primary teachers in 2005 co-funded by BAP and the 2 school completion programmes. Involving 39 Local teachers in 2005, a similar 1 week course took place in 2003. Conflict resolution strategies build on though have a wider scope than the successful Discipline for Learning programmes which took place in 1998-99 across 9 schools, 7 primary and 2 second level over 9 days.

This model is to face up to a range of the identified key issues (above) in a holistic way so that an integrated and systemic level intervention occurs. The interventions at a systemic level with regard to teachers and parents are part of a preventative strategy with regard to problems, so that the service adopts a model of both intervention (as treatment) and prevention.

It needs to be recognised that:
— intensive therapeutic work with a child/young person
— family therapy level interventions

are usually to take place outside the school site and in a community based setting. The experience of the Suaimhneas project in South Inner City Dublin observed the difficulty with therapeutic intervention onsite in the school, namely, that pupils could be upset going back into class after raising issues with the counsellor (Morgan & 2005). This difficulty could be overcome if more of the school site based work took place after school hours. However, issues of privacy and also that many students alienated from the school system may not wish to open up in a school-based setting also need to be recognised (Downes 2004). In the psychological service proposed for Ballyfermot (Downes 2004), it was recommended that students be given a choice as to whether they feel more comfortable dealing with issues in a school based or community based context with regard to counselling.

The following statement was noted earlier by a HSCL teacher in our study, namely, that a top priority is 'in school counselling services', and that 'children will attend if it is in school. Parents would be more comfortable and see it more as part of school. Parents are reluctant to take child to outside 'hostile' venue'. This may be the case for some parents and children. However, the opposite may also be the case. It needs to be acknowledge that school may be seen as the 'outside hostile venue' for students (and families) particularly alienated from the school system – and perhaps increasingly so at secondary school level (based on differences between 6th class and 1st year in perceptions of being treated fairly, observed above).

A US nationwide survey of school-based service models and school-linked models involving 90 programmes suggested that the two models are not that different from each other (Shaw et al 1996). In the words of Reeder et al (1997):

> In general, the survey results suggest that the physical location of school health services is of minor importance with regard to the range of services provided and the types of health professionals affiliated with the program...Physical proximity of the clinic to educators does not guarantee that the more traditional educational functions of the school will be integrated with the enhanced health services offered by the clinic

The school could be a pathway for access to psychological help but not its site, while for others the site of the help could be in the school itself. *The debate between school-based or school-linked community services needs to move beyond simply either/or models to a both/and model accommodating the individual needs of the student.*

Some students at risk of suspension at secondary school and displaying disruptive behaviour may not need counselling support and therapeutic intervention. The focus of the service with these students will be on facilitating improved communication between the student and the classroom teacher, together with a systemic level focus on developing the teacher's conflict resolution skills. The service will play a role as mediator between student and teacher. Some students may need more support with for example, literacy issues or other academic needs which may be contributing to their inattention and disruptive behaviour. The psychological service in dialogue with the class teacher could play a role in referral of the student at this stage to support from Bua Ireland and/or afterschool projects in the area.

The concern noted earlier that a 'time-out' room for students displaying disruptive behaviour will become an easy option for students to leave the classroom to be with their friends can be allayed by the involvement of students leaving the classroom in an individual behavioural contract with specific targets – and with a range of consequences, including sanctions - and in a mediation process with the psychology team. Moreover, if a behavioural contract approach is not sufficient to improve the situation as there are a number of deep underlying issues in the student's life, it may be at this stage that referral to the community based team for more intensive counselling support, with the consent of the student, is desirable[33]. This is one option among a menu of options after members of the psychological service team have examined the individual needs of the student. Another option could be for example, involvement of the at risk student in expression of conflict resolution skills through drama, if this resource was available from afterschool projects and/or Draiocht.

This proposed service provides the opportunity for genuine collaboration between BAP, local services and schools so that an integrated service, targeting those pupils/students and families most at risk, can exist. Collaboration for such a service needs to include Blanchardstown Youth Service, NYP, Barnardos, both School Completion Programmes and School Personnel – as well as building on good practice established for example, by BOND and Youthreach in working with youth who are particularly marginalised.

It is of concern that a number of service providers refer to a lack of equality in the communicative relation between their service and the schools, referring for example to 'communication barriers', the need to be 'working with not for the teachers', 'no parity of esteem', 'two separate cultures essentially'. Processes will need to be established to facilitate genuine collaboration between services and schools for this Psychological Support Service.

Genuine collaboration needs to be cognisant of Tett et al's (2001) distinction between simply 'contracting out' interventions in contrast to collaboration as to 'develop, manage, deliver, fund and evaluate' activities. It is extremely important that the services and schools share a common understanding of goals in relation to the proposed psychological service, and that the service is not simply 'contracted out' by the schools to deal with the students displaying disruptive behaviour.

■ Guiding principles for the proposed Community based Psychological Service include the following:

— The debate between school-based versus school-linked or community based models is viewed not as either/or but both/and depending on the specific contextual needs of the child and parent. A complementary community and school based team is provided

— The Head of the project team is community based

— The school and community based team are to work in a relation of collaboration with the schools. Nevertheless issues of confidentiality would require that access to files on individual children and their families be kept separate from the schools[34]

— The school is viewed as a mental health system

— A complementary rather than duplicative role with NEPS

— Developing the factors of resilience and strength within the community and local student body in order to improve the quality of life of children in Blanchardstown

33 It must also be noted by the Psychological Service that just because an antecedent exists of emotional stresses/issues in the student's life, and a consequent exists of disruptive behaviour in class, that this does not necessarily mean that the antecedent factors 'caused' the consequent disruptive behaviours. The relation may in some students with emotionally difficult past experiences be simply correlation rather than cause.
34 Unless consent is provided by the parents to authorise specific individuals from the school to have access to the files

− Emotional and social support interventions are developmental and sustained rather than being once-off events

− The Community Based Psychological Service can provide a referral role for at risk pupils and students to afterschool projects, through dialogue with the new level of coordination and wider process of referrals recommended for TOFE, EOP and Oasis to reach more of the particularly at risk pupils and students

− Facilitating parent to parent support regarding development of speech and language skills for at risk children can build on the strength in Blanchardstown of onsite adult education courses already in the local area.

FIGURE 10. THE PROPOSED MODEL OF COMMUNITY BASED PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Speech &Language Therapist

Parents
Resource/Learning Support/
Home-School/Liaison Teachers

Primary schools

Secondary schools

Childcare Worker

Childcare/Youth Worker

Bullying

Self-Esteem

Self-Esteem

Bullying

Group work

Body Image

Group work

Referrals   Referrals

Peer Support

Individual Work

Individual Work

**Outreach/
Youth Worker(s)**

Community Based Service

Targeted
Families

Administrator

Targeted
Individuals

(Senior Family Therapist)

**(Community
Psychologist/
Head of Team)**

Teacher student
Interaction

Parents

Play Therapist / Child Psychoanalyst

Play Therapist/Child Psychoanalyst

■ Overall aims of the recommended model

— Targeting at risk children in early years of primary school for speech and Language support

— Targeting identified at risk children/youth for emotional and social support

— Providing broader emotional and social support for other children/youth at a group level

— Targeting specific families for therapeutic and practical support

— Facilitating increased coordination between the network of local services and schools

— A key underlying goal of the project is to upgrade the skills of the community and those working in the community, whether at the levels of:

a) parental intervention skills for speech and language or for behavioural problems
b) teachers including learning support/resource/Home-School Liaison teachers skills in applying and facilitating interventions for speech and language, and for students displaying disruptive behaviour
c) teachers for conflict resolution[35]
d) peer support among the students and developing local youth as mentors

— As the referral process is to be needs led, at risk pupils and students from the RAPID area schools as well as the Hartstown and Huntstown schools are within the scope of the service – and the latter schools are also within the scope of the service for the onsite systemic school based work

* A Management Committee needs to be established in order to develop a detailed and timed implementation plan, including financial plan, for the proposed Psychological Service. As ccollaboration for such a service needs to include BAP, Blanchardstown Youth Service, NYP, Barnardos, Blanchardstown Traveller Support Group, Youthreach, both School Completion Programmes and School Personnel, it is recommended that representatives from these, as well as other local services, be included on this management committee. Developing the implementation plan for this needs led, community based, service needs to build on existing practices developed by services in the area, including the possibility of remodeling some practices of services so that they can become part of this proposed service.

■ Outline of the recommended model

A COMMUNITY BASED TEAM AND A SCHOOL BASED TEAM – TWO SUB-SECTIONS OF AN OVERALL JOINT TEAM

School-based team
A) childcare workers (qualification in social care) onsite in primary schools

B) childcare workers (preferably with experience of working with adolescents) or youth workers onsite in secondary schools[36]

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35   In the U.S, assessment of teachers' satisfaction with psychological consultation regarding teachers' interaction with children with emotional/behavioural problems has tended to focus on emotional support and overlook the need of teachers for practical problem-solving suggestions (Athanasiou et al 2002)
36   A suitably qualified childcare worker is preferable to a youth worker for this role, as the former has more training in individual work

C) on-site speech and language therapists

Community based team
D) Family Therapists (ideally systemically trained) (One as overall Head of Team)

E) Community Psychologists (with either counselling or clinical psychology background, with experience at working at community level)

F) Outreach youth workers

G) Play therapists and a child psychotherapist

H) An administrator

Key points regarding the model

— The group work from the childcare/youth workers would serve as a basis for referral of more problematic issues (with parental consent) to the community based team for therapeutic intervention

— Similarly, children/youth with persistent conduct problems would be referred by teachers/principals (with parental consent). However the child/youth could choose whether to have individual counselling on-site or outside the school setting. This element of choice for the child/youth is a vital aspect of the project rather than being an incidental one. The community psychologist (with background in either counselling or clinical psychology) would be engaged in this 1 to 1 counselling whether community or school based

— The flexibility of the complementary model between community and school based interventions takes into account the need to accommodate pupil/student choice, particularly for those most alienated from the school system

— A similar flexibility exists regarding therapeutic support for the child being predominantly an individual focused intervention or a family level intervention. The appropriateness of the level of intervention for a particular case would be a judgement made by the team

— The team's work with parents will obviously need to recognise that many parents are working so that the hours of availability of services would need to include weekends as much as weekdays, evenings as much as mornings (see also Dale 1996 on the contradiction between changing work patterns and the assumption that parents, particularly mothers, are available to meet professionals during working hours).

— As the team plans intervention at both primary and secondary level, this offers the opportunity of long term support, and support with transition from primary to secondary school for identified at-risk students

— The team will need to engage in a process with school representatives to develop an agreed template regarding the necessary continuum of supports for young people attending school according to levels of need. This process will involve an agreed methodology or mechanism for assessing types, intensity, and range of supports and different categories of need. Some young people may need only short or longer term minimal supports. The team will develop agreed evaluation/monitoring templates and strategies against which actions and interventions can be judged.

Tasks of members of the project team

School based team:

A) childcare worker (qualification in social care) onsite in primary schools
B) childcare worker (preferably with experience of working with adolescents) or youth worker onsite in secondary schools

Tasks:

■ The role of the childcare and youth workers will involve group work with someone to one work by the childcare workers

■ Themes of the group work would include bullying, peer support, substance abuse, self-esteem, one focusing on primary school students, one focusing on these themes as well as sexuality, with secondary students

■ The purposes of such work whether at group or individual level will not be counselling as such but health promotion and stress prevention, including emotional and social support to facilitate resilience in the child/youth

■ These two parts of the team will serve as in effect the child/young person's keyworker and act as a school-based contact person for local services working with the child/young person as well as acting a key point for referral of children/youth for counselling/therapy to the community based setting. As these are the people best known to the children/youth in the schools it would be important for them to accompany the child/youth referred to the community setting, for at least initial meetings.[37]

■ They would also work with the Home-School-Liaison teachers and Guidance Counsellors at Secondary level to develop a plan to identify students who could contribute to supporting/mentoring pupils both in late primary and early secondary years.

C) onsite speech and language therapist

Tasks:

■ Working with parents of children with speech and language difficulties to develop the treatment skills of parents. A central assumption of such model is the parent as co-therapist

■ These parents would be of children in early start programmes and up to 1st-2nd class

■ Being available to these parents on an ongoing basis to support their intervention with their child

■ Working with resource teachers and learning support teachers in particular to upskill them regarding speech and language interventions for the children Supervising parents sharing of their speech and language treatment skills with other parents – language intervention skills are especially transferable

■ In exceptional, rare, cases, working directly with individual children.

Community Based Team

D) Family Therapists (ideally systemically trained)

Tasks:

■ Therapeutic intervention with a fixed number of targeted at risk families in the community based setting

■ Working with teachers on teacher/student interaction and conflict resolution

■ Coordinating the strategies and policies of the whole team

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37 The need to do so for older youths may not be so important

E) Community Psychologists

(with either counselling or clinical psychology background, with experience at working at community level)

Tasks:

- 1 to 1 work onsite both with children identified by the school and secondary students requesting help
- 1 to 1 work in with identified children from after school projects
- Mediation work onsite in schools at second level with students displaying behavioural difficulties
- capable of working with HSCL teachers to establish parent peer
- support regarding behaviour management

F) Outreach youth worker

Tasks:

– Developing activities in a community setting to complement the school based groups run in the schools by the childcare/youth workers on themes such as bullying, peer support, substance abuse, sexuality, self-esteem, anger management

– Developing peer support and mentoring programmes involving teenagers in the community

G) Play therapists and a child psychotherapist

Tasks:

– Working in the community based setting frequently on one to one work with younger children identified as in particular need. Employing more non-verbal methods of emotional expression

– Working with the family of the child

H) An administrator

8 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Building on Current Good Practice in Schools with regard to Bullying

The extreme variation in levels of bullying across 6th classes within a school suggests that individual teachers are having significant success with SPHE and preventive approaches to bullying. However, this success is not being translated fully across all classes within a school.

It would seem that while a whole school approach with regard to bullying may be having some impact, further development of a coordinated within school anti-bullying strategy may be needed - including more dissemination within the school of strategies that are working well for some teachers with regard to prevention and elimination of bullying.

To facilitate this dissemination of good practice strategies for prevention and elimination of bullying within the school, it is recommended that a staff member coordinate such dissemination strategy and act as a support/mentor for other teachers in the school at both primary and secondary level. While this staff member would liaise with the school principal in implementing the whole school anti-bullying policy, (s) he would also serve as an intermediary between the class teacher and the principal. The class teacher may be more likely to approach another colleague – in this role as coordinator - for informal advice on intervention for bullying.

8.2 Aspects for Development regarding Extracurricular Activities

There is a need to remedy the 'geographical gaps' regarding services for Ladyswell and Corduff

The role of drama concerning emotional expression and development, as well as in developing self-esteem and conflict resolution skills is a key potential resource for young people in the RAPID schools in Blanchardstown which needs further development across all schools

Drama can also be part of an integrated approach to developing literacy skills through community arts programmes

The good practice example of OASIS and the NYP regarding continuity in afterschool project participants across primary to secondary needs to be extended to all the afterschool projects

The logic of continuity of involvement in afterschool projects from primary to post primary needs to be more fully extended within, for example, Oasis itself to include the option of continuity in afterschool even if the student is attending a different secondary school from the majority. It is arguable that continuity across primary to secondary is even more important if the student is attending a different school from his/her peers and from those he/she was with in primary school

For those with learning difficulties and/or literacy difficulties the centre of BUA Ireland, located in Blanchardstown itself, is a potentially valuable resource that could be developed with more links with schools

8.3 The Need for a Strategy to Prevent Hunger in a Significant Proportion of Pupils - Hunger that is Affecting their Work in School

There is a need to investigate whether later primary pupils are adequately accessing breakfast clubs

There is a need to ensure continuity across breakfast clubs so that a regular pattern is established i.e., that they are 4-5 days a week and not 2 days a week

There is a need to develop a strategy of cooking skills for pupils and to maximise parental involvement in the breakfast clubs so that patterns of healthy and regular eating are established in the home

8.4 The Need for Improved Targeting of At Risk Children for Participation in After School Clubs and Extracurricular Activities

In order to prevent those students most at risk from falling through the gaps, there is a clear need for a coordinated referral strategy between the afterschool projects run by the two School Completion Programmes, TOFE and EOP, as well as with Oasis' primary and secondary afterschool programmes.

This need for a coordinated strategy across afterschool services to target those at risk needs to build on current good practice in Blanchardstown through explicitly accommodating:
- the importance of including social and emotional criteria in the referral process
- wider avenues for referral than the school (teacher, HSCL) to include a more proactive involvement of parents in the referral process as well as referral from other local agencies; the option of self-referral may also need to be considered through dialogue with students

The need for a wider referral process for afterschool services recognises:
- that the current process is not reaching a key target group of students who state that they do not want to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate
- the need to target at risk withdrawn children.

One concrete example of an opportunity for at risk pupils to develop practical skills and a sense of responsibility and control within the school environment is if schools were supported financially to develop gardens where plants and vegetables could grow within fenced off areas. Many pupils across a range of schools complained of boredom during lunch and break times — and these times could be used for work in the school garden.

Pupils, especially those targeted as being at risk, could be members of committees
with responsibility for particular plants and vegetables both during and outside term time, as well as within afterschool projects

A SCP (2005) report cites as an example of good practice from the Dublin North Region a social and personal development programme that includes a garden for time out for disruptive students during school time, as well as being available during lunchtime and afterschool. 'Anything grown can be kept or sold. Profits are divided in proportion to the amount of work done'. Also 'there are no qualified experts, so everything is done through trial and error. It benefits the students when something they plant may not grow' as it teaches them the 'value of experimentation'

The need to bring in more opportunities for practical skills into the school day requires further strategic thought across schools and services with a view to targeting at risk children

8.5 The Need for Investment in a Strategy to Ensure a Higher Participation of Travellers in Afterschool Projects

One advantage of a more co-coordinated strategy for referral across TOFE, EOP and OASIS would be for disseminating the strategies bringing success in reaching members of the Travelling community that have already been achieved.

Clear targets need to be set across afterschool projects in order to increase participation of Travellers in afterschool clubs

It is essential that Traveller children and their families be consulted regarding afterschool activities that would be potential interests for Travellers – activities that would be also open to all pupils so that Travellers while being targeted are not being singled out for particular afterschool activities

Forkan's (2005) finding that the lack of appropriate transport is the single biggest challenge associated with the participation of Traveller children in breakfast clubs prior to school or homework clubs after school requires that a dedicated transport fund be established to facilitate Travellers attendance at afterschool projects

A proportion of this transport fund is also needed to facilitate participation of Travellers in adult education projects centred on their needs and interests, including for support with literacy and numeracy skills for Traveller parents and grandparents – to facilitate participation whether in local school sites, community based locations and/or the proposed Traveller Resource Centre for Blanchardstown.

Extension of the logic of continuity of involvement in afterschool projects from primary to post primary to include the option of continuity in afterschool even if the student is attending a different secondary school from the majority is of particular relevance for Travellers as many Travellers do not transfer to the local post-primary schools – and there is a need for opportunities for them to maintain contact with friends made at primary school.

8.6 The Need to Invest in School Supports at a Systemic Level in order to Improve School Climate at Secondary Level

It is of concern that there is a statistically significant increase in 1st year compared to 6th class responses in those students who are not willing or are not sure if they would tell a teacher about an academic problem and a statistically significant decrease in 1st year compared to 6th class responses in those students who are willing to tell a teacher about an academic problem

It is also of concern that there is a statistically significant increase in perception of being treated unfairly by teachers in secondary school (1st year) compared to primary school (6th class).

The issue of perceptions of being treated fairly or otherwise in school needs to move beyond an individualised focus on the individual teacher or student to a systems level analysis. It is a systems level problem.

Improvement of this problem requires a systems level type of intervention, for example, at a national level with regard to teachers of working on their conflict resolution strategies and awareness of educational disadvantage at pre-service and in-service levels – and at a local level through the proposed Community Based Psychological Support Service for Blanchardstown

It is recommended that secondary school plans for the coming school year put in place a range of strategies to tackle this problem at a system level in the school

The Statutory Committee on Educational Disadvantage (2005) recognise the need to change the mainstream and not just the margins.

The focus needs to move beyond attributing 'blame' to teachers or students and to move to examining the systems level problem and to support improvements at a systemic level of the school climate - that will support an increase in skills to facilitate better communication and cooperation between teachers and students at secondary level in particular.

8.7 The Need to Develop Alternative Strategies to Suspension

Suggestions for alternatives to suspension in secondary schools made by a range of local services strongly resonate with recommendations made at a national in-service of School Completion Programme to 'improve the climate for teaching and learning in classrooms' included at the 'school systems' level':
- 'requirement for alternative needs based individual curriculum with elements of youth work approach'
- 'requirement of a room/area of school devoted to difficult students with professionals delivering extra
- support in anger management/personal development/core subjects. Time and space sanctioned for this work'
- 'alternatives to suspensions/expulsion/reduced timetables such as restorative justice practices/one to one small group tuition/circle time etc'
- 'more positive rewards and acknowledgement of positive or good behaviour systems for earning awards'
- 'curricular adjustment to involve practical tasks'

A SCP (2005) report cites as an example of good practice from the Dublin North Region a social and personal development programme that includes a garden for time out for disruptive students during school time, as well as being available during lunchtime and after school – a model which may be transferable to schools in Blanchardstown

Potential concerns from schools may be that a time-out room is 'worthless' as 'if students are merely removed, a situation very rapidly develops where some students will deliberately misbehave, so that they can join their friends in the 'sin-bin'.

However, if the students are positively engaged in the time-out room and are involved in individual behavioural contracts with a range of sanctions as well as incentives and emotional supports, the above objection can be overcome. The time-out room is not to do nothing, as a 'sin-bin' implies.

8.8 Implementing Cognitive-Behavioural Strategies regarding Student Attitudes to Transition Year and Involvement in Part-Time Work

There is a need to develop discussion of a career plan with students as early as possible at secondary level in conjunction with the Career Guidance teacher. This attempt at developing an individual plan for the student at second level:

- seeks to remedy the situation noted by Forkan (2005) that some students do not realise the consequences of early school leaving

- can incorporate issues of the effect of part-time work on the student's study habits and school performance within part of this career plan

- can require the student to officially inform the school of part-time work and hours involved as well as to schedule a meeting with the Career Guidance teacher to work out a plan for study in relation to this work.

- can include planning for time management

may explore how the work may relate to any of the pupils course or project work and be linked to it in some way in Transition Year

- communicates the need for high expectations with regard to the student's learning and future career

The basic approach of such planning is a cognitive-behavioural one where the student sets realistic goals and targets and receives feedback on these targets

Students' perceptions of the relevance and status of transition year may need to be challenged. A constructivist approach of consulting with students about how transition year can be developed and made more relevant to their lives is to be recommended

9 Strategic Planning to Develop Models of Best Practice for Integration of Foreign Nationals within Schools, Services and the Wider Community in Blanchardstown

An opportunity exists for Blanchardstown to become a national model of best practice in relation to integration of foreign nationals within schools and the community

It is of concern that many of the 10 services in our interviewed sample were unable to provide any service user from an ethnic minority background, whether foreign national or a member of the Travelling community

It is notable that in their questionnaire responses, many of the surveyed services' plans for expansion do not explicitly envisage targeting of foreign nationals or Travellers

Clear targets need to be set across all services for participation of foreign nationals and Travellers following the good practice of for example, BYS

There is a need to go beyond short programmes or once off events to integrate them into a more medium and long term strategy for engagement of representatives of foreign nationals in community affairs, including a strategy of developing community leaders that represent the voices of their ethnic groups

Such a strategy will over time lead to representatives from local ethnic minorities (including more Travellers) being involved in accredited leader training. BYS, for example, provides accredited leader training as incentives for engaging people in adult education services. A logical extension of such training is outreach programmes targeting representatives from foreign national communities

There is need for a strategy which integrates adult education needs of foreign nationals with the educational needs of their children; this integration will help facilitate increased parental involvement in their children's education

This strategy must involve active collaboration with foreign nationals in the planning of short, medium and long-term interventions targeting the needs of adults and children from their ethnic groups

It is evident that local services must be resourced to commit dedicated staff to outreach with targeted foreign national groups in the Blanchardstown area. This targeting would not be limited to programmes solely designed for foreign nationals (e.g., English language programmes) but also for programmes that have a wider client group

This targeting would recognise that different ethnic groups may have different needs, while also recognising that members of the same ethnic group may also have different needs. In other words, foreign nationals (including refugees, asylum seekers) are not to be treated as a homogenous group
A medium term goal (i.e. over the next 4 years) for local services will be to employ a significant proportion of staff who are from a range of ethnic minorities living in the area

BAP needs to set a medium term target of helping to develop a number of community leaders from a range of ethnic minority groups living in Blanchardstown. These accredited community leaders need to be facilitated in developing and participating in a community wide forum to help articulate and resource the changing needs of their groups – and encourage dialogue with other groups in Blanchardstown and beyond

A short-term target for BAP is to employ researchers from a range of local ethnic minority groups to interview foreign nationals with little English in their native language in order to document their perceptions of their:
- learning needs
- emotional stresses
- difficulties in acclimatisation to school and living in the local community
- supports/strengths in acclimatisation to school and living in the local community
- employment needs
This research would examine the different needs of parents, youth, secondary and later primary students across the different ethnic groups. It would also serve as a key point of contact between BAP and ethnic groups to help further facilitate and accelerate a process of developing community leaders from these different groups.

All schools in Blanchardstown need to be assisted to develop procedures and fora for representative groups of a range of local ethnic minorities to be engaged in dialogue with the school regarding how best to meet their children's needs

School Completion Programme Committee members need to become more inclusive of representatives from sizeable local ethnic minority groups (e.g., from Romania, Nigeria, Bosnia, the Congo etc)
The good practice of mentoring between Irish students and foreign nationals, as well as with students from the Travelling Community, which takes place in individual classes needs to be adopted at a systemic level across all schools in Blanchardstown

The good practice example from St. Laurence O'Toole Junior Boys School, Sheriff St., Dublin 1 of a 'Literacy Hour of Power' employed in Junior, Senior Infants and First Class every day (See Appendix C) has obvious benefits for both foreign national children with little English and for Irish children in need of improved language development. It is recommended that such a model be introduced across all the RAPID primary schools in Blanchardstown, as well as those other schools with high proportions of foreign national pupils

It is arguable that more strategic thinking is needed at a national level with regard to improving 'continuity' within the classroom, as part of a strategy for integrating foreign national pupils as well as pupils with other needs.

A medium term strategy needs to be developed in conjunction with the Colleges of Education and institutions running H.Dip courses in Secondary Teaching to increase access of representatives from ethnic minorities to the teaching profession and to all local schools
It is of concern that the 'obvious requirement' for additional schools in the BAP report 2001 has not yet been met in 2006, a requirement that is now even more obvious given the increasing population of foreign nationals which some schools state expand by 20% every year.

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APPENDIX A: 'Are you treated fairly by teachers in school? Why/Why not?'

Sample Responses:

PRIMARY
Fairness as a Relation of Warmth
'Yes because my teacher is always nice to me' 11M
'Yes by most of them some are nice' 12F
'Yes they're real nice' 12F
'Yes she's very kind' 11F
'I am treated fairly as we get to do great things in school with teachers' 12M
'Yes we get many fun things' F (no age indicated)
'Yes I am because my teacher is caring and really kind' 12F
'Yes because they treat you nice' 13F
'Yes I am, the teachers in my school are very nice' 11F
'Yes my teacher is kind and nice to me and she is a fun teacher' 11M
'Yes because they are really nice' 11F
'Yes they're all pretty nice' 11F
'Yes because he helps everyoe' 12M
'Yes they are good' 11M
'The teachers are nice' 12F
'Yes. The teachers make me want to go to school more often' F (no age indicated)
'Yes all the teachers are really nice' 11F

Fairness as a Source of Help
'Yes because they help me' 12M, 11M
'Yes because when I don't understand the work she will explain' 12 (no gender indicated)
'Yes. Teachers listen to me and if someone is bullying me the teachers will do something' 12M
'Yes everyone is treated fairly because there are no bad teachers in the school' 12M
'Yes I am cause the teachers always treat us fairly' 11F

Fairness as Being Treated the Same as Everyone Else
'I am treated the same as everybody' 12F
'Yes it is also the same as everybody else' F (no gender indicated)
'Yes I am treated the same way as everyone else' 11M
'Yes she treats everybody the same way' 12M
'I think so because everybody is as important as every other child' 12F
'Yes because it doesn't matter if you are from another country or if you are Irish that you should be treated different' 11F
'Yes because teachers treat everybody fairly' 12F
'Yes but so is every pupil in the school' 11M
'Yes we are treated the same' 11M
'Yes because they treat every one the same' 12F
'Yes because my teacher doesn't pick on anyone in particular' 12F
'Yes because they never forget anyone' 12M
'Yes because if they do one thing for another pupil, they would do it for everyone else' 12F

Fairness as Part of being a Good Teacher

'Yes I am treated fairly by teachers in school because they teach me well' 12M

'Yes because they're good teachers' 12F

'Yes. Because they teach you' 11F

'Yes because every teacher in this school is competent and treats everyone fairly' 12M

Fairness as a Reciprocal Relation

'Yes I am because if we're good to them they're good to us' 12 (no gender indicated)

'Yeah because I'm not the sort of person who gets in trouble' 11F

'Yes because they are good teachers'11F

'Yes we are because of the rules' 11M

'Yes because I work hard' F (no age indicated)

'Yes I do because I am a good student' 12M

'Yes because they don't shout at me a lot' 12M

'Yes because some of them are not mean' 12M

'Yes I treat him fairly and he treats me fairly' 12M

A rights based perspective

'Yes because teachers have to treat you fairly' 12F

'Yes because it's their job' 11M

'Yes because the rule is that we should all be treated fairly and the teachers follow that rule' 11F

'Yes because they did school already' 12F

'Yes I am treated fairly by teachers because they are learn to do that' 11F

Fairness as Giving Responsibility

'Yes because they sometimes pick me to do jobs' 12M

Yes but...

'Yes but I think they are too strict with the rules' 12F

'Yes but when they shout they make you feel like you committed a murder' 12M

'Yes and no because they can be nasty and nice' 12F

'alrightly' 12M

'Yeah I am. They treat me fairly but sometimes when you get into trouble they don't really let you explain' 13F

'I think yes but my teacher has his favourite' 12F

'Yes it's their job to learn you and my teacher is a fair teacher but not to all of us' 11F

'Yes. If you known by teachers by trouble matters in that sake no' 12M

Sometimes

'Sometimes because she feels like it' 12F

'Yes some teachers are sound but some are real narky' 12M

'Sometimes. Sometimes she don't believe me' M (no age indicated)

'Kind of but some teachers hate me they don't believe me only other people' 12F

'50% good 50% bad. Bad is because they are shouting. Good because they are learning us' 11F

'Some teachers are prejudice. They do not treat pupils fairly. And when somebody has been bullied they let the bully go scot free'11M

'Sometimes day should not give there opinion if day do not see' 12M

No

'No cause they give out and I hate teachers' 12F

'Not mine he never leaves me alone' [What would make you go to school more often ? 'If I knew I wasn't going into school to get treated badly by my teacher'] M (no age indicated)

'No sometimes I'm just not treated fairly' 11F

'No. Cause some people in the class gets to go on more jobs than other people and never gets given out to even if they do something wrong' 12F

'No because some are mean, does not let you on trips' 12F

'No because she says that we will caught out at secondary school' 12M

'Not really' 12M

'No when ever body talk I get give out to' 12M

'No because I'm bold' 11M

'No if I was bad one day I get treated like I was a disease even if I try to be good the next day' 11M

'No because he is a moan' 12F

'No they always give out for no reason' 11M

'No because I would always try to answer a question but because I'm at the back of the class I don't get picked' 11M

'No they say I can't read but I just get nervous. I feel happy then sometimes the teachers put me down saying that I can't read...I wish the teachers would back off a bit' 11F

'No I have some kind of dyslexia for learning' M (no age indicated)

'No because some teachers are bad' 11M

'No some are bad' 12M

'No she always blames everything on me' 11M

'No teachers only like the girls' 12M

'trust me you don't want me to answer that' 12M

SECONDARY

Sample Responses

Are you treated fairly by teachers in school ? Why/Why not ?

'Yes because they always do good for me' 12M

'Yes because I'm no different than any other student' 13M

'Yes all the teachers are very nice and I get along with them all'

'Yes because it's not right to treat others different' 12F

'Yes I am treated fairly. If the teacher shouts at me it's not that I am treated unfairly it is because I must have done something wrong and they only want me to learn and do good in school' 12F

'Yes we all get treated equally' 12M

'Yes because teachers are fair and just want to help' 13F

'Yes because teachers aren't to treat you bad' 12M

'Yes because it's their job' 13M

'I think so' 13M

'Yes absolutely' 13M

'Yes they help me out' 13F

'Yes because I treat them well' 13M

'Yes they treat me the same as everyone else in my class' 12F

'I am being treated fairly enough. I'm treated fairly because I don't cause hassle in my class. Fair enough if I get

punishment work I'd do it no problem' 13F

'Yes all the teachers treat everyone the same' 12F

'Yes all the teachers are fair' (no age, gender indicated)

'Yes because I never give cheeks back and arguing with them' 13F

'Yes every one is treated with the same respect as everyone, some just don't honour their respect' 12F

'Yes because if I do a bad thing I get in trouble and if anyone else did they would get in the same situation' 12M

'Yes because my tutor said why can the rest not be like me' 12M

'Yes because I am always quiet' 12M

'Yes because they just teach you and if you're bold you know you're bold' 13F

'Yes because I don't mess that often' 13F

'Yes the teachers are very good in school' 13M

'Yeah I think they're sound' 12F

'Yes because they listen' 12M

'Yes they are kind' 13F

'Yes cause they help us' 13M

'Yes because they are all nice teachers' 14M

'Yes but they are not all the time fair'13M

'some teachers because some are unfairly' 13F

'Not all the time but most of it' 12F

'Yes hopefully they don't hate me' 12F

'Yes because they like me and I am quiet I don't get in trouble at school' 12F

'I think so, I don't feel like they are picking on me' 12F

'Yes because they are nice' 12M

'Yes because every is equal' 13M

'Yes because they don't pick on you' 13M

'Yes if you're good in class the teachers will be good to you' 13F

'Yes I think I am even though I don't get on with every teacher' 13F

'Yes because none of the teachers pick on me' 13M

'If you treat your teachers fairly then you'll be treated fairly'12M

'Yes I don't get in trouble a lot so the teachers think I am good' 13M

'Yes because they don't really shout' 13M

'Say so they don't take any crap or messing because they're really strict teachers' 12M

'Well yes and no' 13F

'Most of the times' 14M

'Most of the teachers treat us fairly' 13M

'Yes but not by some teachers' 13F

'Sometimes, the stricter teachers can be a bit overboard on punishment' 12F

'No because I don't do much to get shouted at. Why can't we have a laugh with our mates sometimes in class?' 13M

'Sometimes. In X the teacher usually picks on me' 12F

'I don't think so especially by Ms...' 13M

'Some teachers I don't like because they pick on our class' 13M

'Some of them' 13F

'No because they tell you to shut up if you talk' 13F

'No because they don't like me' 13M

'No because some teachers pick on you' M (no age indicated)

'No some are being racist to me' 13M

'Not really' Would go to school 'if there were different teachers' 13F

'No because some teachers are sexist' 13F

'No they blame me on everything' M (no age indicated)

'No because they blame me for nothing' 12M

'No half of them hate me for no reason !' 12M

'No one teacher in particular always moans at me' 13M

'No not really' 13F

'No I've been descended to many times. Some teachers give me the looks and pick on me for nothing I hate this school it's a kip...you try to be in it for 1 day and you will see what I mean' M (no age indicated)

'No because they give you a punishment for doing nothing e.g., if you get a question wrong. They treat foreign kids better' 13F

'No because they treat foreign people better' 13F

'No because they think they own you and give you punishment for nothing' 14F

'No because I always get blamed on something I don't do' 13M

'No because if there is someone else talking they would look at me' 13M

'No ! Mr. X is evil ! I hate Ms. Y' 12F

'Some teachers because some teachers pick on me' 12M

'No because I am on the wrong side of them so they pick on me' 13M

'Sometimes and sometimes not' 12F

'No some are real mean and would give a detention for no reason. The teachers are big nark heads' 13M

'Only one I don't get fairly treated by. He always blames me on everything' 12M

'I'm not sure about that. I hardly open my mouth cause I'm scared I'd be scald (sic) at' 13F

'By most of them yes but by others no' 13M

'No because they're too narky' 13M

APPENDIX B:

Literacy Hour in Saint Laurence O Tooles' Junior Boys' School, Sheriff St., Dublin

The Literacy hour in our school is an intensive programme of daily instruction The main focus is on reading books and writing stories every day. It is referred to affectionately, by the pupils as Our Hour of Power and is based on the Reading Recovery lesson, modified to be used in a classroom setting. It was started last year with Senior Infants and has now been extended to First Class and Junior Infants.

It has the following aims:

1   To raise the literacy levels of pupils in the school.
2   Provide the children with a set of strategies needed to become fluent and confident readers.
3   Through daily instruction using suitable continuous texts and interesting graded storybooks to give the children a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
4   To help the pupils become confident and competent writers by writing their own stories daily.
5   To help them become independent readers and writers by encouraging self correction whenever possible.
6   To develop the pupils language, knowledge and creativity.

Firstly the children were tested using the **Observation Survey [Clay1993]** in the following areas **Letter Recognition, Concepts about Print, Hearing and recording sounds in words, Written Vocabulary** and a **Word Test.** On the basis of these results the Senior Infants were placed into four groups, with six in each group. The Literacy Hour has four main parts, based on the four aspects of the Reading Recovery lesson; **rereading yesterday's book, letter identification** and **making and breaking words, writing a story** and **reading the new book.** Each part lasts about 10 minutes. The children have a folder with their old book, new book and a writing copy. They move from area to area as the bell rings. Four trained personnel are needed, one for each

area.

The New Book

The four groups read a new book daily. The introduction to the new book, by the teacher, is most important as it supports the child in the new reading and introduces new vocabulary and difficult language structures. Each pupil then reads in turn being encouraged to use meaning, visual and structure and to cross check. The teacher, in a positive way, uses cues and prompts to encourage the children.eg.Does that look right, sound right ,make sense? What word might fit in there? The pupils have started to prompt each other in a similar way! The benefit of this method is that the teacher and pupils become partners in the learning process.

The needs of the group change from time to time and the teacher has to adapt her focus to these changes. For example, to begin with, the children read for meaning, they may not have one to one correspondence and need to point to individual words. They need to be taught to use visual information, use the picture, look at the word and say the first sound and to cross check. Later the focus may be on fluency, using eyes instead of finger, reading quickly with intonation and attending to the punctuation. The pupils bring the new book home to read with their parents and the next day it becomes the old book.

The Old Book

The reading of the old book is the third reading of this book, so the group are more familiar with it. As the children read they are encouraged to use all the cues and to cross check. They try to find known 'chunks' in words they don't know. The teacher may ask them questions about the story to check comprehension and consolidate new vocabulary and structures.

Letter I.D and Making and Breaking words

A magnetic board and brightly coloured letters are use in this area. Letter games are played to teach letter names and sounds. The pupils then make and break familiar words. This teaches an understanding of how letters make up words, how words can be taken apart letter by letter, or in clusters and added to. The pupils might practice onset and rhyme or compound words or break difficult words into syllables and make them again.

Writing

In the writing part of the daily lesson the children are required to pay attention to letter detail, letter order, sound sequences, letter sequences and the links between messages in oral language and messages in printed language. It is particularly important that the children learn to hear the sounds in words they want to write and find appropriate ways to write these sounds down. At first, in Senior Infants, the stories are short and a lot of attention is paid to letter formation. The children write in blank copies at first. Each day one member of the group tells his story and his sentence or sentences are written down by the group. Sound boxes are used to sound out words on the practise page and high frequency words are brought to fluency. Other, less -used words are given by the teacher. The children are encouraged to leave a space between words and start sentences with capital letters and end in a full stop. They are encouraged to monitor their own writing and self- correct whenever possible. They are asked to re- read their stories in a speaking voice. At the beginning of senior infants the pupils sentences are written on card by the teacher or an assistant and cut up. They then have to remake them placing the words in the right order. These words are put in an envelope and brought home to be remade.

The literacy hour has really created a very positive climate for learning in our school, by enabling the children to become active learners, who routinely monitor and review their own reading and writing. It has fostered the children's independent processing strategies. It has fostered liaison and a sense of partnership between all those involved in the children's learning, including pupils teachers parents and carers. The pupils have made huge strides in reading and writing going from level one, at the beginning of Senior Infants to level twenty four at the moment in first class. No child in the class reads below level sixteen! Their use of language and their vocabulary have also improved greatly .They love to read library books and seem to be able to pick books appropriate to their ability. Also, because the Literacy Hour demands concentration and organisation, these skills have improved greatly too .The parents are very supportive and books that are read each night are always brought back the next day! The children take great pride in their reading achievements and discipline problems are rarely an issue. Most of all the Literacy Hour has given the children confidence in themselves and their ability to learn, which I am sure will stand to them in the future!

APPENDIX C:

Mary Moore   St Laurence O' Tooles' Junior Boys School

BYS operate a Traveller Homework Club in St. Patrick's senior National School twice weekly during school term. The purpose of this group is to encourage a positive attitude towards the school environment and to improve their academic achievement in school by providing homework support. It also aims to be a stepping stone for participants into other mainstream youth programmes and projects. In any one year 15 young Travellers participate in this programme.

Mulhuddart Community Youth Project operates two afterschool groups in Mulhuddart Community Centre during school terms. It is targeted at 5th and 6th class pupils in Ladyswell National School. Thirty participants are recruited in September in association with the TOFE Co-ordinator. The programme involves homework support, a light snack and developmental activities and programmes. In addition, as a continuation of the JEDI programme which finished in 2005, MCYP offers more intensive educational support to a small number of young people who are either clearly out of school or at risk of leaving early. The focus of this work is support and encouragement to the participants to successfully complete state exams and progress on to other educational opportunities.

Huntstown Community Youth Project   and Blakestown Youth Project both operate   a group for young people in relation to providing extra support in preparation for state exams. This group is very targeted at particular young people who require and look for this intervention. As well as educational support the groups offer space for the participants to discuss any issues, hopes and fears they may have.

Models of Good Practice: Improving attendance - School A

This school's attendance rates have improved considerably over the past number of years. A positive whole school approach with a range of supports, services and incentives designed to improve attendance are outlined below.

1   Teacher post
Senior teacher post (A post) is appointed with responsibility for following up on attendance on a daily basis. Each day all class teachers forward the list of absent pupils. Teacher rings to notify of absence. Parents have come to accept that this is her role and that a call will be made if a child is absent. This is a supportive and understanding role yet focussed on the key value of attendance.

2   Breakfast
An open breakfast club is run 5 days per week and attracts 70-80 pupils a day from 3rd to 6th class. A mix of paid and volunteer staff most of whom are local and known to the children staff the club. One of the volunteers is a trained chef.
The club is open from 8.15 a.m. every day. Very attractive and high quality food is served ranging from continental breakfast (wide range of fruits) to hot breakfasts. Teachers drop in. A survey among the children found that there are improved relationships; they make new friends, it is considered a good start to the day.

3   Lunch
Hot lunches are prepared every day. Each class has a hot lunch at least one every fortnight. Sandwiches are served to the other classes

4   School committee
A 12-member committee (6 sixth class and 6 fifth class pupils) meet 3-4 times per year. One of their responsibilities is to make recommendations on the breakfast and lunch clubs, ascertain the attitudes of the

other pupils, what their preferences are etc and any improvements they suggest.

5   After School supports

The school is also linked to a programme, which aims to support children to remain in school and runs after schools and summer programmes for 20 pupils in 5th and 6th class. This support continues when they progress to second level Barnardos facilitates this. In addition the school belongs to a School Completion Programme cluster. The local community Centre offers homework and activity support to pupils in the school from 4th class. After school French is offered to 5th and 6th classes as part of an access programme in 6 local schools both primary and second level

6   Assemblies

Assemblies are held once every two weeks and a large assembly is held at the end of term. Some examples of the format are a follows:

- Good news regarding sport
- Student of the week in every class
- Fortnightly, term and year prizes for attendance bronze, silver, gold, plaque (for full attendance)

Transfer Programme – from two primary schools in Blanchardstown to the second level school

Transfer from 6th class to second level

November

- Open night for parents/guardians of 6th class students. At this meeting a transfer pack is given to parents which includes: information on the school; leaflets on healthy eating and bullying as drawn up by the local education committee; school calendar for the year; information on school uniform typical school day, book rental scheme; detailed information on the school social, personal and health education Junior cycle programme; leaflet on part-time work, school attendance and working with the school
- Morning tour of Community School for 6th class students.

Spring

- Students take an assessment that has been preceded by a visit (to their school) and chat with the Home School Liaison Co-ordinator to explain the purpose and structure of the test.
- A profiling meeting is held between 6th class teachers and 1st year teachers.

May

- Information night on subject choices for parents.
- Subject choice forms distributed to incoming 6th class pupils.

June

- Book lists are made available.
- Information given on book rental scheme.

August

- Induction day. This 1-day induction for 2 groups of new first year
- 3 youth organisations and school jointly organise this.

September

■ 1st day of term, a settling in day. Each first class spends the morning with their tutor. Subject teachers and year heads visit. PE teachers visit to reinforce the PE attire which will be required.

■ Letter to parents from class tutor explaining his/her role, also how parents can make appointments to see tutors.

■ 3 Home School Liaison Co-ordinators cross check regarding all children and ascertain whether all have transferred to 1st year, A check is also made with schools outside the area.

■ Follow up where transfer has not taken place.

■ After school homework support in first term for students linked to special project funded by the HSE for students aged 9-13, delivered by teacher seconded to this project by DES. Ongoing support thereafter in mixed homework clubs in second and third year.

■ Parents/tutor afternoon for parents of 1st years early in the first term

■ Meetings can be arranged with tutor by appointment through the year

APPENDIX D:

6TH CLASS PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

a) The answers you give are private; no one knows who wrote them. They do not go to your school, your family, your friends or the police.

b) There is no right or wrong answer. We are not trying to judge you

Age: Male/Female

1) Where are you from?

2) Do you like living where you are living? Why/Why not?

3) If you had a younger sister or brother, what would be the 3 most important pieces of advice/help you would give to her/him?

4) Do you trust and talk well with your parents or brothers/sisters? Why/Why not?

5) In what areas of your life do you feel you are in control, that you have the power?

6) Do you usually feel happy or unhappy? Why?

7) Do you like reading books ? Why/Why not?

8) Do you think you want to stay on at school until the Leaving Certificate ? Why/Why not?

9) If you had the power, what would you change in your school?

10) What would you really like to learn in school that you don't already learn?

11) How many in your class have been bullied?

12) If you had a problem with your schoolwork would you tell your teacher(s) about it ? Why/Why not?

13) Are you treated fairly by teachers in school? Why/Why not?

14) If you had the possibility not to go to school, would you? Why?

15) If you have ever been absent from school without telling your family, what were your reasons for this?

16) What would make you want to go to school more often?

17) What activities do you do in the school building after school is over?

18) What activities would you like to do after school if it was possible?

19) When you do your best, how is this noticed at school?

20) Is there any school rule which you feel is the most unfair? Why?

21) Does anyone help you with your homework? Who?

22) Do you go to an afterschool club? If yes, where and how helpful is it?

23) Do you take part in a student council? Why/Why not?

24) Is there a room in your school where anyone can go if they just want some peace and quiet, some time to think ? Do you think it would be a good idea if there was a room like this?

25) Would you talk to an adult working in the school about your problems ? Why/Why not?

26) Describe how you spend your free time most weekends...

27) How often do you feel too hungry to do your work in school?
Please circle one of these answers - NEVER, RARELY, SOMETIMES, OFTEN, VERY OFTEN, EVERY DAY

1ST YEAR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

c) The answers you give are private; no one knows who wrote them. They do not go to your school, your family, your friends or the police

d) There is no right or wrong answer. We are not trying to judge you

Age: Male/Female

1) Where do you live?

2) Do you like living where you are living? Why/Why not?

3) If you had a younger sister or brother, what would be the 3 most important pieces of advice/help you would give to her/him?

4) Do you trust and talk well with your parents or brothers/sisters? Why/Why not?

5) In what areas of your life do you feel you are in control, that you have the power?

6) Do you usually feel happy or unhappy? Why?

7) Do you like reading books? Why/Why not?

8) Do you think you want to stay on at school until the Leaving Certificate? Why/Why not?

9) If you had the power, what would you change in your school?

10) What would you really like to learn in school that you don't already learn?

11) How many in your class have been bullied?

12) If you had a problem with your schoolwork would you tell your teacher(s) about it? Why/Why not?

13) Are you treated fairly by teachers in school? Why/Why not?

14) If you did not have to go to school would you still go? Why/Why not?

15) If you have ever been absent from school without telling your family, what were your reasons for this?

16) What would make you want to go to school more often?

17) What activities do you do in the school building after school is over?

18) What activities would you like to do after school if it was possible?

19) When you do your best, how is this noticed at school?

20) What level of Maths are you taking? Please circle one: FOUNDATION,   PASS,   HONOURS

21) What level of English are you taking? Honours,   Pass,   Foundation

22) How much advice on what subjects to take/choose have you received so far from Career Guidance? Please explain

23) Is there any school rule which you feel is the most unfair? Why?

24) How do you find the schoolwork so far ? Would you say that it is:
VERY EASY,   EASY,   MANAGING,   HARD,   VERY HARD.   Please circle one.

25) In your view are you coping with the schoolwork: Please circle one.
BETTER THAN PRIMARY
AS WELL AS PRIMARY
A LITTLE LESS WELL THAN PRIMARY
A LOT LESS WELL THAN PRIMARY
NEVER LIKED SCHOOL WORK

26) Does anyone help you with your homework? Who?

27) Do you go to an afterschool club ? If yes, where and how helpful is it?

28) What would you say that you find the most difficult about the work in secondary school so far?

29) What needs to be done to keep more students in school in your area?

30) Do you take part in a student council? Why/Why not?

31) Is there a room in your school where anyone can go if they just want some peace and quiet, some time to think? Do you think it would be a good idea if there was a room like this?

32) Would you talk to an adult working in the school about your problems? Why/Why not?

33) Describe how you spend your free time most weekends...

34) Have you ever had a hangover in school? If so, how often in the past two years?

35) How often do you feel too hungry to do your work in school?
Please circle one of these answers - NEVER,   RARELY,   SOMETIMES,   OFTEN,   VERY OFTEN,   EVERY DAY

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Please rank (in descending order) the 5 most important services you would like to see established in your particular school

2) Are you involved in the facilitation/organization of any extracurricular activities for children/young people available in your particular school? If yes, please outline.

3) What supports are available to your school for children in each of the following areas. Please indicate what supports you feel are needed in these areas:
Speech/Language Needs:
Intellectual/Learning Needs:
Literacy/Numeracy Needs:
Psychological/Emotional Needs:
Behavioural/Physical Needs:

4) Is bullying a significant problem in your class? Why/Why not? What strategy on bullying, if any, do you employ in your classroom?

5) What are the obstacles to and/or supports needed for the establishment of a parental programme to improve the reading levels of at risk children in your class?

6) How adequate do you find the service provided by the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)? Please explain

7) How adequate do you find the service provided by the Education Welfare Board (EWB)? Please explain

8) What are the benefits and obstacles regarding establishment of a Student's Council in later primary classes ?

9) Do you have any peer mentoring/support programmes operating in your class? If yes, please give details

10) What do you view as the main obstacles, if any, to implementation of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme in your class?

11) What strategies do you employ to engage with more marginalized parents?

12) What strategies do you employ to engage with children at risk of early school leaving generally?

13) What strategies do you employ with regard to the acclimatisation of foreign national or refugee pupils' in their transition to your class?

14) Are there any examples of good practice in your class/school for working with pupils who fall behind the rest of the class - models that could potentially be transferable to other schools?

15) What are the biggest difficulties facing a teacher in your school?

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Please rank (in descending order) the 5 most important services/issues you would like to see established/addressed in your particular school.

2) Are you involved in the facilitation/organization of any extracurricular activities for children/young people available in your particular school? If yes, please outline.

3) What supports are available to your school for children in each of the following areas. Please indicate what supports you feel are needed in these areas:
   Speech/Language Needs:
   Psychological/Emotional Needs:
   Literacy/Numeracy Needs:
   Intellectual/Learning Needs:
   Behavioural/Physical Needs:

4) In your opinion, what are the advantages and/or disadvantages, if any, to the streaming of students at second-level?

5) Is bullying a significant problem in your class? Why/Why not? What strategy on bullying, if any, do you employ in your classroom?

6) What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to and/or opportunities regarding the involvement of parents in their child's secondary education?

7) How adequate do you find the service provided by the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)? Please explain

8) How adequate do you find the service provided by the Education Welfare Board (EWB)? Please explain

9) What, in your opinion, are the benefits and obstacles regarding establishment of a Student's Council in your school?

10) Do you have any peer mentoring/support programmes operating in your class? If yes, please give details

11) In your opinion, what are the advantages and/or disadvantages, if any, attached to afterschool clubs for children/young people?

12) What strategies do you employ to engage with more marginalized parents?

13) What strategies do you employ to engage with children at risk of early school leaving generally?

14) What strategies do you employ with regard to the acclimatisation of foreign national or refugee pupils' in their transition to your class?

15) Are there any examples of good practice in your class/school for working with pupils who fall behind the rest of the class - models that could potentially be transferable to other schools?

16) Are there any examples of good practice in relation to disciplinary strategies which you employ in your class - strategies that could potentially be transferable to other classes/schools?

17) What are the biggest difficulties facing a teacher in your school?

18) What would you have liked to have received more of in your pre-service education to become a secondary school teacher that would help you to teach in a designated disadvantaged area?

19) What, in your opinion, is most needed in terms of in-service support for secondary teachers working in a school serving an area designated disadvantaged?

QUESTIONNAIRE – HSCL TEACHER - PRIMARY

1) Please rank (in descending order) the 5 most important services you would like to see established in your particular school

2) Are you involved in the facilitation/organization of any extracurricular activities for children/young people available in your particular school? If yes, please outline.

3) What supports are available to your school for children in each of the following areas. Please indicate what supports you feel are needed in these areas:
Speech/Language Needs:
Intellectual/Learning Needs:
Literacy/Numeracy Needs:
Psychological/Emotional Needs:
Behavioural/Physical Needs:

4) In your role as HSCL teacher do you have any links, formal or informal, with services in the community? If yes, please indicate which ones and how you would rate the strength/quality of these links.
Child Services:
Youth Services:
Family Support Services:
Other: Please outline.

5) What is your view on the advantages and obstacles to school based counselling services in your school ?

6) Is bullying a significant problem in your school? Why/Why not?

7) What are the obstacles to and/or supports needed for the establishment of a parental programme to improve the reading levels of at risk children?

8) How adequate do you find the service provided by the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)? Please explain

9) How adequate do you find the service provided by the Education Welfare Board (EWB) ? Please explain

10) What are the benefits and obstacles regarding establishment of a Student's Council in later primary classes?

11) Do you have any peer mentoring/support programmes operating in your school? If yes, please give details

12) What do you view as the main obstacles, if any, to implementation of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme in your school?

13) What strategies do you employ to engage with more marginalized parents?

14) What strategies do you employ to engage with children at risk of early school leaving generally?

15) What strategies do you employ with regard to the acclimatisation of foreign national or refugee pupils' in their transition to your class?

16) Are there any examples of good practice that you engage in for working with pupils who fall behind the rest of the class - models that could potentially be transferable to other schools?

17) What are the biggest difficulties facing a teacher in your school?

18) In what ways, if any, do you perceive the role of the HSCL teacher to have changed in recent years.

19) Please indicate what supports you feel are needed in relation to HSCL in your school/community.

QUESTIONNAIRE – HSCL TEACHER - SECONDARY

1) Please rank (in descending order) the 5 most important services you would like to see established in your particular school

2) Are you involved in the facilitation/organization of any extracurricular activities for children/young people available in your particular school? If yes, please outline.

3) What supports are available to your school for students in each of the following areas. Please indicate what supports you feel are needed in these areas:
Speech/Language Needs:
Psychological/Emotional Needs:
Literacy/Numeracy Needs:
Intellectual/Learning Needs:
Behavioural/Physical Needs:
Other: Please outline:

4) In your role as HSCL teacher do you have any links, formal or informal, with services in the community? If yes, please indicate which ones and how you would rate the strength/quality of these links.
Child Services:
Youth Services:
Family Support Services:
Other: Please outline.

5) What is your view on the advantages and obstacles to school-based counselling services in your school?

6) Is bullying a significant problem in your school? Why/Why not?

7) In your opinion, what are the advantages and/or disadvantages, if any, to the streaming of students at second-level?

8) What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to and/or opportunities regarding the involvement of parents in their child's secondary education?

9) How adequate do you find the service provided by the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)? Please explain

10) How adequate do you find the service provided by the Education Welfare Board (EWB)? Please explain

11) What are the benefits and obstacles regarding establishment of a Student's Council at secondary level?

12) Do you have any peer mentoring/support programmes operating in your school? If yes, please give details

13) What strategies do you employ to engage with more marginalized parents?

14) What strategies do you employ to engage with children at risk of early school leaving generally?

15) What strategies do you employ with regard to the acclimatisation of foreign national or refugee pupils' in their transition to your class?

16) Are there any examples of good practice that you engage in for working with pupils who fall behind the rest of the class - models that could potentially be transferable to other schools?

17) What are the biggest difficulties facing a teacher in your school?

18) In what ways, if any, do you perceive the role of the HSCL teacher to have changed in recent years?

19) Please indicate what supports you feel are needed in relation to HSCL in your school/community.

PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Please rank (in descending order) the 5 most important services you would like to see established in your particular school

2) What extracurricular activities are available in your school?

3) Does your school have any links, formal or informal, with services in the community? If yes, please indicate which ones and how you would rate the strength/quality of these links.
   Child Services:
   Youth Services:
   Family Support Services:
   Other: Please outline.

4) What supports are available to your school for children in each of the following areas. Please indicate what supports you feel are needed in these areas:
   Speech/Language Needs:
   Intellectual/Learning Needs:
   Literacy/Numeracy Needs:
   Psychological/Emotional Needs:
   Behavioural/Physical Needs:

5) What is your view on the advantages and obstacles to school based counselling services in your school ?

6) What is your whole school strategy, if any, on bullying? Is bullying a significant problem in your school? Why/Why not?

7) How adequate do you find the service provided by the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)? Please explain

8) How adequate do you find the service provided by the Education Welfare Board (EWB)? Please explain

9) What are the benefits and obstacles regarding establishment of a Student's Council in later primary classes?

10) What do you view as the main obstacles, if any, to implementation of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme in your school?

11) What strategies do you employ to engage with more marginalized parents?

12) What strategies do you employ to engage with children at risk of early school leaving generally?

13) Is your school in the School Completion Programme? If yes, how effective is this programme in your opinion?

14) What obstacles exist to making use of the school premises after school hours ?

15) What strategies do you employ with regard to the acclimatisation of foreign national or refugee pupils' in their transition to your school?

16) What strategies do you employ with regard to pupils' transition to secondary school?

17) Are there any examples of your school's practice that could serve as good practice that is potentially transferable to other schools?

18) Are there any examples of good practice in your school for working with pupils who fall behind the rest of the class - models that could potentially be transferable to other schools?

19) Is your school integrated with local Adult Education approaches in any way? If yes, please give details

20) What are the biggest difficulties facing a teacher in your school?

21) What challenges/obstacles exist, if any, to increased partnership between your school and local services in the community for children and young people?

22) How, in your opinion, might school and non-formal education initiatives be best integrated in your community?

SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Please rank (in descending order) the 5 most important services you would like to see established in your particular school

2) What extracurricular activities are available in your school?

3) Does your school have any links, formal or informal, with services in the community? If yes, please indicate which ones and how you would rate the strength/quality of these links.
Child Services:
Youth Services:
Family Support Services:
Other: Please outline.

4) What supports are available to your school for children in each of the following areas. Please indicate what supports you feel are needed in these areas:
Speech/Language Needs:
Intellectual/Learning Needs:
Literacy/Numeracy Needs:

Psychological/Emotional Needs:
Behavioural/Physical Needs:

5) What is your view on the advantages and obstacles to school based counselling services in your school?

6) What is your whole school strategy, if any, on bullying ? Is bullying a significant problem in your school? Why/Why not?

7) How adequate do you find the service provided by the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)? Please explain

8) How adequate do you find the service provided by the Education Welfare Board (EWB)? Please explain

9) What are the benefits and obstacles regarding establishment of a Student's Council in later primary classes?

10) What do you view as the main obstacles, if any, to implementation of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme in your school?

11) What strategies do you employ to engage with more marginalized parents?

12) What strategies do you employ to engage with children at risk of early school leaving generally?

13) Is your school in the School Completion Programme? If yes, how effective is this programme in your opinion?

14) What obstacles exist to making use of the school premises after school hours?

15) What strategies do you employ with regard to the acclimatisation of foreign national or refugee pupils' in their transition to your school?

16) What strategies do you employ with regard to pupils' transition to secondary school?

17) Are there any examples of your school's practice that could serve as good practice that is potentially transferable to other schools?

18) Are there any examples of good practice in your school for working with pupils who fall behind the rest of the class - models that could potentially be transferable to other schools?

19) Is your school integrated with local Adult Education approaches in any way? If yes, please give details

20) What are the biggest difficulties facing a teacher in your school?

21) Are there any examples of good practice in your school for working with pupils who fall behind the rest of the class - models that could potentially be transferable to other schools?

22) What challenges/obstacles exist, if any, to increased partnership between your school and local services in the community for children and young people?

23) How, in your opinion, might school and non-formal education initiatives be best integrated in your community?

SERVICE PROVIDER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME OF ORGANISATION:

1) What are your sources of funding?

2) Is your funding provided as a) core funding b) programme funding or c) community strand? [core = for the whole service and long-term, programme = for each particular programme in your service, community strand = shortterm and largely unstable]

3) How many staff do you employ and what are their roles?

4) How many service users do you have annually?

5) Is there a high turnover of staff for your service? Why/Why not?

6) Are you happy with the space in your building for your service? What other infrastructure needs are not being met, if any?

7) What is the age profile of your client group?

8) What is the gender profile of your actual clients and your target group?

9) What type of work does your service engage in: Please circle as many as are appropriate: INDIVIDUAL, GROUP, FAMILY, COMMUNITY WORK

10) What strategies, if any, do you provide for outreach to potential service users? How do local people find out about your service?

11) What procedures exist (e.g., regarding recruitment, Board of Management) to facilitate ownership of your service by the local community?

12) Are you satisfied with the existing level of dialogue/partnership between your service and schools? Why/Why not ?

13) What obstacles exist, if any, to increased partnership between your service and local schools?

14) Do you take referrals from local schools?

15) Are any of your services available after 8pm, at weekends or during the Summer months?

16) Do you have a waiting list and what procedures govern giving priority to particular clients?

17) What incentives do you provide for engaging people in adult education services (if you provide them)?

18) What are your priority needs for expansion of your service?

19) What gaps do you perceive in the area for a) support services generally and b) supports targeting children at risk of school nonattendance and early school leaving?

20) Are there any good practice examples from your service which could be transferable to other services?

21) What are the 5 priority needs/problems of your clients?

22) What changes, if any, would you like to see take place in local schools?

23) How in your opinion can local schools better accommodate the needs of at risk pupils/students?

24) How in your opinion can local schools extend parental involvement in their children's education?

25) What progress do you see occurring in the area compared to 5 years ago?
What deterioration do you see occurring in the area compared to 5 years ago?

26) Would your service be interested in engaging in preventive approaches in partnership with schools to target at risk pupils? What other supports would be needed for this?

27) What are the distinctive features of working in this area compared to other areas?

28) What percentage of your service users are a) members of the Travelling community or b) foreign nationals?

29) Are you satisfied with the existing level of dialogue/partnership between your service and other local service? Why/Why not?

30) What obstacles exist, if any, to increased partnership between your service and other local services?

SERVICE USER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Age: Male/Female:

I was made to feel welcome by the project/service/club   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

I was listened to by the project/service/club   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

I was understood by the project/service/club   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

I enjoy coming to the project/service/club   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

The project gave me help just when I needed it most   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

The project/service/club gave me good advice   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

The project/service/club is always there to support you   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

The project/service/club has been a big help to me   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

The project/service/club has been a big help to my family   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

How has life change since coming to the project
MUCH BETTER   BETTER   SAME   WORSE   MUCH WORSE

Staff in the project/service/club genuinely care about you   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

Staff in the project know how to respect people   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

You are treated fairly project/service/club   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

Staff in the project are very good at what they do   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

Is the project/service/club respected amongst your friends   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

Is the project/service/club respected in your community   ALWAYS OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

How does the project/service/club compare with other services you have attended.

Activities participated in at project	MUCH BETTER	BETTER	SAME	WORSE	MUCH WORSE
Individual work	MUCH BETTER	BETTER	SAME	WORSE	MUCH WORSE
Group work	MUCH BETTER	BETTER	SAME	WORSE	MUCH WORSE
Family work	MUCH BETTER	BETTER	SAME	WORSE	MUCH WORSE
Drop-In	MUCH BETTER	BETTER	SAME	WORSE	MUCH WORSE

How well do you think the project/service/club works with young people

VERY GOOD   GOOD   NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD   BAD   VERY BAD

How would you rate the project staff on the following:

Approach of the staff team	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER	BAD	VERY BAD
Skills of staff team	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER	BAD	VERY BAD
Project Administration	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER	BAD	VERY BAD
Size of staff team	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER	BAD	VERY BAD
Physical Facilities	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER	BAD	VERY BAD
Location of Premises	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER	BAD	VERY BAD
Facilities and Equipment	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER	BAD	VERY BAD
Layout of Premises	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER	BAD	VERY BAD
Size of Premises	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER	BAD	VERY BAD

Has the Project lived up to your expectations?   YES   NO

Has the project been helpful to you

VERY GOOD   GOOD   NEITHER   BAD   VERY BAD

Helpfulness of the project with difficulties at home

VERY GOOD   GOOD   NEITHER   BAD   VERY BAD

Helpfulness of the project with difficulties at school

VERY GOOD   GOOD   NEITHER   BAD   VERY BAD

Helpfulness of the project with other concerns/worries

VERY GOOD   GOOD   NEITHER   BAD   VERY BAD

Enjoyment of activities/sessions at the project

VERY GOOD   GOOD   NEITHER   BAD   VERY BAD

Involvement in activities after school e.g. football

VERY GOOD   GOOD   NEITHER   BAD   VERY BAD

Helpfulness of being able to talk to project staff

VERY GOOD   GOOD   NEITHER   BAD   VERY BAD

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