

A Strategy for Cumbria's Primary Schools

Introduction

1.1 Vision for Cumbria

In Cumbria, the best for every child, young person and their family is our vision underpinned by the outcomes of Every Child Matters, enabling children and young people to be healthy; to stay safe; to enjoy and achieve; to make a positive contribution; and to achieve economic well-being.

Our mission is to achieve this vision and it will be effective when we:

- Create opportunities for all children, young people and their families and those working with them and for them to be actively involved in developing and participating in children's services.
- Find new ways of working and sharing available resources to meet the needs of children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity.
- Invest in a highly skilled and integrated workforce to deliver the expectations of children, young people and their families.
- Commission services to secure improved outcomes through evidence based practice for children, young people and their families.

Cumbria's strategy for learning is based upon the concept of:

- Services fit for purpose, to address need and make a difference.
- Locality focus/working together to deliver at community level.

1.2 The Context of Cumbria

In many ways Cumbria represents the features of most Shire Counties. It has a mixed population of affluent residents as well as many low income families. However, in Cumbria these two communities largely occupy very different areas of the county leading to polarization, and affluent and poorer areas.

The polarisation of Cumbria's population is partly due to a mass of land lying above 300 metres, which separates the north from the south of the County, as well as the east from the west. There is a larger proportion of population in the 'deep rural' or 'super sparse' areas than any other county. There is also a band of urban developments along the coastline which suffer from long-term economic decline.

There is also, however, hidden poverty and need in the rural areas.

The geographical isolation of some towns and villages has resulted in some communities within them becoming introspective, with strong local identities. The extended family, whilst offering support, can hinder progression, and can curb aspirations toward life outside their neighbourhood, or even to a more prosperous life within it, leading to an increased dichotomy between the deprived and more affluent areas within each town and village.

The provision of services to such diverse and often remote communities, facing either rural or urban deprivation and intermingled with areas of affluence, is a challenge for all service delivery, especially as they often do not 'fit' with national models. Accessibility is often limited by a lack of adequate transport and currently a lack of knowledge about services available.

Recognising these issues, the Local Authority has developed a network of Key Service Centres (KSC) in order to promote a continued pattern of development for sustainable communities across the county. All main services will be provided within each KSC, with information points and good transport links to the outlying areas. One of the key criteria used to identify a town as a KSC is the location of a secondary school with its corresponding primary schools.

By 2010, each KSC will have at least one Children's Centre. The footprint around that centre will correspond to a Cluster of Extended Schools. Children's Services will link the Primary Strategy with these developments, to ensure a holistic approach to provision supporting children and their families across the age groups, and especially through the transition points which many families find challenging.

Integrating parenting support with extended community and family learning services will help break the cycle of disadvantage for children and young people aged 0-19 and beyond. The recent opening of the University of Cumbria builds on the pre-existing Higher Education network and contributes to this agenda, as students who have been unwilling to travel outside Cumbria now have increased opportunities to enter Higher Education within the county.

1.3 The Opportunities and the Challenges

The model of 'learning centres' will promote collaboration across schools, and provide a footbridge into wider Children's Services. It will result in better progression routes for all children, no matter where they live, and address a number of issues in addition to those raised above. These include surplus spaces due to the shrinking population; and the difficulty of teacher recruitment and retention in the most deprived areas. Learning centres will allow for changes to the leadership role in schools and provide the opportunity to develop a different combination of skills in each area to respond to the diverse demands of our divergent communities.

1.4 Extended and Community Services

All schools in Cumbria are working to deliver the Extended Services agenda either by directly offering, or providing access to, a core offer of services that will increase and widen the opportunities available to all children, young people and their families within their community. This core offer includes childcare; parenting support; a varied menu of study support activities; community access; and swift and easy referral to specialist support services. All these activities may either be provided directly by the school, or off site, by working in partnership with other providers within the local community.

In terms of Cumbria schools providing access to the full core offer, 58% of schools (excluding secondary schools) offer access to childcare provision either on site or at a neighbouring location; similarly, 61% of schools offer a varied menu of study support activities; 62% swift and easy referral; 56% parenting support and 58% community access (TDA, 7/11/07). These figures slightly overstate the reality of the situation, as in some instances the accommodation that is currently being used is less than ideal and is not conducive for engaging with children, young people, families and the wider community.

The Starting Point

2.1 Standards

Cumbria is justifiably proud of the standards of attainment achieved by schools in the primary sector and is determined to build on these successes to secure continuous improvement.

- Results at KS1 are above the national average, but have not significantly improved over the past few years.
- At KS2, results are outstanding. Cumbria is rated 1 against its statistical neighbours in every measure other than higher attaining girls in mathematics.
- At both KS1 and KS2 there is a gender issue with girls consistently out-performing boys in English. However, this gap is narrowing.
- There are issues at Foundation Stage in communication, language, literacy and personal development where performance is below average.
- Cumbria has a high proportion of successful schools with currently 152 'good' and 25 'outstanding' in their Ofsted inspections. 26 schools are, however, currently performing below floor targets.

Cumbria County Council recognises also that children in the County's primary schools already benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, receive excellent pastoral care and enjoy a wealth of enrichment activities. These positive experiences are highly commended by external regulators such as Ofsted and it is these excellent practices that we intend to build upon in the delivery of the strategy.

2.2 Every Child Matters (ECM)

Deprivation

A significant number of primary schools within the County have pupil populations that reflect the 20% most deprived super output areas in England; these schools tend to be located in the major centres of population. 13.6% of the Authority's primary age pupils are eligible for free school meals which is low compared with the national average. Again, eligibility for free meals is, inevitably, not evenly spread and the highest concentrations are in Barrow, Carlisle and the west coast. Even within these areas, there are huge variations with, for example, a range of below 2% to almost 74% in Barrow. In the rural areas, percentages tend to be much lower but, again, there are large variations with some schools having no eligible pupils while a few have numbers approaching 30%.

The Cumbria Children's Plan places clusters of schools at the centre of delivering universal and targeted services to all children, to vulnerable children and to families. The establishment of multi-agency teams at community level is still under development.

Healthy Eating/Healthy Schools

Of the Authority's 279 primary schools, 198 have facilities that allow them to cook meals on their own premises. The remaining 81 schools are dining centres that have meals brought in either from other schools or from elsewhere. These may in some instances be multi-purpose spaces. Cumbria County Council has worked in partnership with the Primary Care Trust to develop health initiatives in schools. At the present time 161 primary schools have healthy schools accreditation.

Indoor/outdoor sports areas and the provision of play areas

All schools currently have access to outdoor play areas, but, in some instances these are either very small, or not suited to the delivery of formal sport. Several schools do not have secure play areas easily accessible to nursery/reception children. Just under 10% of schools have no school hall, although some of these have access to off-site facilities.

Provision for SEN/disabilities

Cumbria was one of the first authorities to embrace the spirit of the 1981 Education Act. As a consequence of this, we now have only 5 special schools and very few of our pupils with SEN are accommodated in these schools (currently only 154 pupils of primary school age). The special schools that do remain have all been the subject of extensive remodelling and extension in the last decade, are of good quality, and fit for purpose.

The Authority's approach to SEN/disabilities is that as many pupils as possible are accommodated in the mainstream primary schools chosen by their parents. Over the years, a high proportion of primary schools have been adapted to allow them to cope with a wide range of disability. Where the needs of individual children are such that they need more specialist provision this is, wherever possible, dealt with in a network of mainstream schools with more specialist facilities and staff expertise. Only following consideration of these options are pupils placed in special schools. A very small number of pupils (currently 15) are educated in very specialist facilities outside the County.

The network of resourced mainstream schools currently totals 21, soon to increase to 24; of the 21 operational schools, 13 are in the primary sector. Before 2002, this network was developed on a pragmatic basis and, on occasions, via initiatives taken by individuals rather than as a result of an adherence to an agreed strategic rationale. As a consequence of this, some provision was with hindsight made in the wrong locality and/or in the wrong type of school. Additionally, there are significant gaps in current provision. Key areas for development in the primary sector are:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder provision in North Copeland and South Lakes;
- Provision for Severe Learning Difficulties in South Allerdale;
- Provision for pupils with physical/medical difficulties and Severe Learning Difficulties in North Copeland.

2.3 Diversity, Choice and Responsiveness

Cumbria currently has 279 primary schools providing 42,384 places. The current roll is 35,431; this is projected to fall to 34,043 over the next five years.

Only 38 primary schools have a number on roll equal to, or greater than, the maximum school capacity. The majority have some surplus places. There are currently 20 schools with more than 25% surplus places; this number is expected to rise to around 35 over the next five years.

The smallest school has a capacity of 57 and a roll of 16. The largest has a capacity of 414 and a roll of 413.

There are currently 219 all-through primary schools and 60 separate infant/junior schools. 19 schools have foundation status, 77 voluntary aided status, 50 voluntary controlled status and 133 are community schools. A significant number of Cumbria's small rural schools have C of E voluntary aided or voluntary controlled status. At this stage, Cumbria has no academies with primary age pupils, although we are currently developing 4 academies for the secondary age range. Cumbria has also recently facilitated the establishment of a 9-18 cross-authority boundary trust school.

In addition to the 279 primary schools, Cumbria has 6 nursery schools providing places for 421 pupils and the primary schools themselves provide nursery places for 2,419 pupils. There are 5 special schools spread across the County with a total roll of 445; 154 of these pupils are of primary age.

2.4 Buildings

Generally speaking, all school buildings are in either good or reasonable condition. Maintenance costs are, however, relatively high, partly as a consequence of the large number of establishments and the relatively high costs of construction and maintenance generally found across Cumbria. High levels of resources have been committed to dealing with condition over the past ten years. Despite this, the maintenance backlog for primary schools is currently estimated to be around £50m and, as a consequence of very high local levels of building cost inflation, this figure is rising. The backlog cost per m² varies between £34 and £383; the backlog cost per pupil varies enormously. The variation in the cost per pupil stems not from the fact that some schools are in much poorer condition than others but, rather, from the fact that costs per pupil are much higher in very small schools. Improved management of the school estates and closer monitoring of the services provided by our strategic partner will be fundamental to addressing this issue in the future.

A very large number of suitability issues have been dealt with in recent years. Despite this, most schools have at least some suitability problems. 27 schools currently have no hall (although some of these have access to off-site facilities) and 69 have no separate heads room/staffroom. All schools have access to on-site external play areas, but, in some instances, these are very small.

A small number of schools (less than half a dozen) serve very isolated rural communities with significant travel times to the next nearest school – these schools each tend to have less than 50 pupils on roll and, in some cases, only around 25. A significant number of other rural or semi-rural schools are much less isolated but still have relatively low numbers on roll. At the other end of the spectrum, 25 schools have more than 250 pupils on roll. Small schools have a higher than average cost per pupil in revenue terms. This is not to say, however, either that the alternatives for pupils who attend these schools would be cheaper or that these schools do not provide value for money and fulfil an important and wider function at the heart of their communities. There is also evidence which shows that small peer groups are beneficial to children and that achievement and well-being are of a high standard in small schools.

2.5 ICT Provision

A wide range of ICT equipment is currently available in schools. Individual schools are responsible for the ongoing development and procurement of their ICT infrastructure. Guidance and support are provided by the LA. This allows moderation of the effectiveness of practice and product and targeted training to develop staff

capacity to support the raising of standards.

Some schools have very good ICT provision and are using this effectively. However, the strategic planning of ICT development has not happened and good practice and good provision is patchy.

The most strategically planned provision for ICT in the LA is that of connectivity. There is a well planned and resilient infrastructure across the LA and connects over 99% of schools safely and quickly to the internet as well as providing many other services. These services include internet filtering and email addresses for all staff, pupils and governors as required and support for video conferencing, teaching content and remote access to school systems for teachers from home.

The LA also works closely with its strategic partner to provide and support a suitable Management Information system to support school leaders in effective management.

The LA recognises that ICT is not a static subject. It constantly develops at an exponential speed and any schools being built or remodelled to meet the needs of future learners will need to be able to accommodate technologies that may not yet be available or indeed invented yet. Our aspiration is to provide schools with an accessible and flexible infrastructure that can support future technological advances whilst also meeting the needs of today.

Cumbria's Vision

3.1 The Vision: Enhancing Lives Through Learning

Outcomes

In considering school organisation, raising attainment is the LA's highest priority because this is the key to improving the life chances of young people and giving them choices in the future. These chances must be for all. The LA's vision is for an inclusive education system where barriers are removed to enable every learner to achieve to their fullest potential. To achieve this the LA subscribes fully to the Every Child Matters agenda which by delivering the outcomes and aims, will enable every child to learn and thrive. Schools will deliver a relevant and wide-ranging curriculum with appropriate and exciting learning opportunities for each and every child. The curriculum will be driven by the needs of the learners. This will lead to improved rates of progression and increased participation in learning providing Cumbria with a well-educated, well-trained workforce and economic success.

- Attainment, achievement and standards for all children and young people will be raised to the highest levels
- All children and young people will have access to the highest quality provision and learning opportunities
- Children's and young people's personal development and well-being will be assured
- Participation in learning post 16 and post 19 will be maximised
- Young people as they progress to adulthood will make a full contribution both socially and economically
- Buildings and facilities will be first class and fit for purpose

Objectives

The objectives of the LA are to:

- achieve transformational change which will lead to radical improvements in performance outcomes
- reduce the number of surplus places in both primary and secondary schools
- create an education system which delivers value for money and the efficient and effective use of all educational resources
- secure delivery of the five Every Child Matters outcomes
- establish a culture of collaboration to enhance the capacity of our schools to improve and to enable wide partnership working including with other providers
- embrace the extended schools initiative enabling schools to better serve their communities and to encourage adult learning
- ensure that a wider range of academic, vocational and work-based learning is available for young people in every locality
- ensure that children and young people grow, develop and learn so that they are capable socially and economically throughout their lives

An Entitlement for Learners to the Highest Quality Education

Educational provision should be based on an entitlement for all learners which will apply in all phases and sectors, including special schools.

- High quality teaching that is creative and inspiring
- An engaging programme of learning which reflects different learning styles and provides learners with the tools for future learning : thinking, enquiring, reasoning, flexibility and creativity
- A broad and balanced curriculum which caters for a learner's interests, aptitudes and particular needs, ensuring progression in learning and which leads to outcomes which they value and are valued by wider society
- Curriculum flexibility which facilitates personalised learning and meets the needs of the gifted and talented as well as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- A play-based curriculum for Foundation Stage
- Effective personal, social and health education including sex and relationships education and attention to alcohol and drug abuse
- Opportunities to develop self confidence, curiosity, enterprise and financial skills and to develop the facility to work co-operatively, communicate effectively and to use information and critical judgement to solve problems
- Impartial and high quality information advice and guidance which enables learners to make informed choices including an understanding of career options and to learn through work, about work and for work
- Enrichment opportunities and extended services to contribute to learners' enjoyment, achievement and creativity and to develop understanding of their rights and responsibilities and those of others and to play a full and active role in a future, global, sustainable society
- Preparation for subsequent stages of education
- High quality and timely personal and academic guidance and support
- Being healthy and stay safe
- Accommodation that is fit for purpose and equipped to the highest possible standards and with access to new technology so that the entitlement is technology rich

Schools for the Future

Our aspiration is to take the opportunity which re-organisation can bring to give schools improved buildings, facilities and information technology. We want buildings which inspire and motivate learners and are appropriate for the future. They should offer, where possible, extended services for pupils and the wider community, with exciting new designs and systematic planning for modernisation. Ideally, schools will have excellent specialist, sport and social facilities, together with state of the art ICT infrastructure. Disability access and good security are also essential.

Guiding Principles

4.1 The future pattern of primary school provision in Cumbria will be driven by 8 underlying strategic principles:

Principle 1. Giving Priority to Learners

- Learners should be able to access a broad range of extra-curricular activities within their communities.
- School organisation in Cumbria will be driven by the needs and aspirations of its learners.
- Schools are required to facilitate and promote personalised learning for all their learners.
- Strategic provision of schools in Cumbria will actively support the integrated Children and Young People's Plan.
- School learning and experiential environments will raise individuals' aspirations, self-esteem and achievements.
- All learners and teachers will have access to high quality ICT systems to improve learning, teaching and achievement, and enable distance learning and enhanced communication.

Principle 2. Inclusive Planning

- Planning for primary school organisation in Cumbria will include all learners and providers for foundation stage to 11 years as part of the life long learning strategy.
- Strategic and specialist resources/provision will be planned and provided at area/district/county level according to the nature of the resources/provision.

Principle 3. Serving the Community

- There is a DCSF presumption against the closure of rural schools that is supported by Cumbria County Council. This is not to say that no rural school should close in the future and this strategy should cement the role of primary schools within both rural and urban communities but rather, that there must be compelling arguments and the exploration of alternatives if this is to happen.
- Schools should be at the heart of wider community learning.
- As far as possible, children, young people and adults will be able to access learning, actually, and/or virtually, in the heart of their community.
- Any organisation of schools will reflect local need.
- Geographically remote areas will be identified, with a desire to maintain a learning site in these locations providing there is a reasonable demand.
- Re-organisation will take place with full consultation with local communities.
- A 'school' should be conceived of as a learning site which children can attend from 8.00am – 6.00 pm and beyond.
- All schools are within extended schools' clusters.
- Clusters of schools should be empowered to work together to secure enrichment of provision for all.

Principle 4. Diversity and Parental Choice

- Cumbria remains committed to diversity of provision and wishes parents, as far as possible, to be able to choose between a range of effective primary schools.
- Cumbria recognises the need to plan all learning provision strategically; acknowledges autonomy of schools; and will work with communities, partners and schools to achieve diversity and choice.
- Both church and secular provision should be maintained.
- Where a new school is required, statutory requirements of competition will be observed.

Principle 5. Buildings and Environments Fit for Purpose

- The buildings, in which learning takes place, will have a positive effect on learning outcomes.
- Behaviour, achievement and attitudes will be improved, along with teachers' performance and job satisfaction, when in conducive learning environments. These factors contribute significantly to school effectiveness.
- Buildings identified to be required as Primary Learning Sites, will therefore be provided as attractive, welcoming and comfortable.
- Buildings will be suitable for the pedagogy of the 21st century, with flexible spaces and fully integrated ICT provision throughout.
- Buildings will be as sustainable as possible within the resources available.

Principle 6. Efficiency and Viability

- The LA is required to make efficient provision for school places.
- Any assessment of efficiency must take account of surplus pupil places, financial efficiency (both Capital and Revenue) and educational standards.
- All schools should be sustainable and viable.
- There is a preference for all through Primary Schools (3/4-11), although any changes to current arrangements would only take place with the support of the communities that the schools serve.
- Flexible management arrangements, collaborations, formal Federations, Trusts and clusters of small schools may be models to promote efficiency and viability.
- Opportunities for co-located services will be explored and promoted in order both to reduce surplus places and share costs and to facilitate better local access to a wider range of public services.

Principle 7. Effective ICT

- ICT provision will be developed both as a discrete subject and as a tool to support the raising of standards of attainment and achievement.
- ICT provision will be developed to support effective and efficient school management.
- ICT provision will be developed to meet the priorities identified in the Harnessing Technology document.
- The LA will provide integrated connectivity for information services using MIS systems and a virtual learning environment through a shared platform.
- There will be integrated online personal learning space including support for children, learners and staff.
- Virtual learning platforms will be used to encourage and sustain collaborative working and to highlight good practice, share resources and raise standards.
- Leadership will be developed in the strategic and day to day management of ICT so that it becomes a tool to aid learning and raise standards through the use of the BECTA self review framework.
- High quality resources will be developed and procured to facilitate the mobility and personalisation of learning. This will be supported by a high quality infrastructure that is resilient and provides high bandwidth.

Principle 8. Effective Leadership

- Effective leadership is the key component in achieving school improvement.
- Cumbria LA will grow and develop different models of leadership to match the diversity of provision and support trusts, federations, collaborations, networks and partnerships.
- Cumbria LA will lead innovative practice through strong partnership with schools to build leadership capacity; ensure succession planning and meet the challenges of recruitment and retention of school leaders.
- Cumbria LA will work in partnership with external agencies, including NCSL, to further develop leadership of schools.
- School leaders will not have a greater teaching load than 0.5.

4.2 The future pattern of school provision in Cumbria will recognise that the diversity of Cumbria requires a range of different models for primary phase education. The range of models will be driven by 9 basic concepts:

- All models should provide for equality of outcomes for all children and for the personalisation of curriculum and learning;
- Geographically strategic schools, even though very small, will be retained. This is of paramount importance within isolated rural areas where the school is the focal point and at the heart of the community. There is hard evidence to show that small schools are among the most effective in the country in terms of education and social well-being: Ofsted says that teaching and learning in small schools is good.
- Small schools in areas where there is comparatively easy access to other provision and where there are compelling educational arguments such as falling standards and a declining school roll with little prospect of regeneration, combined with the resignation/retirement of a head teacher should be subject to a review process.
- Strategic planning for primary phase organisation must be aligned with Extended Schools/Children's Centre planning;
- Retained schools must have the capacity to be able to deliver all areas of the curriculum, which may involve provision through collaborative arrangements
- Every effort will be made to combine local services within spare capacity, thus maximising opportunities and minimising closures;
- The target is to reduce surplus places across the county to 10% overall. In aiming to deliver on this target it will be important to take account of any anticipated upturn in the pupil population and the full range of relevant factors impacting upon each local situation.
- Every child should have an identified "key worker" in any model;
- No reorganisation should take place without transparent and open communication with schools, governing bodies and the wider community about the practicalities of closure/amalgamation of schools. The consultation process will be rigorous and allow opportunity for genuine, meaningful and timely engagement. This will enable local people, in both formal and informal groups, and local committees, to work with the Local Authority to shape the future of learning within their own communities.

4.3 With the above in mind, four models have been developed to be considered in consultation with the communities that the schools serve.

Although the Models set out below may, in some instances, seem more appropriate in some geographical settings than in others, there is a wish to see them used flexibly and with local community support. There may also be other models of delivery that emerge through further debate and as time progresses and learning and

teaching practices evolve.

All schools should:

- Be able to provide an ideal breadth/balance of curriculum;
- Be able to provide for the full range of ECM outcomes;
- Be able to provide/be a centre for Extended Schools;
- Be able to withstand turbulence in areas such as staffing;
- Be sufficiently large to allow for distributed leadership;
- Be able to address disadvantage and low achievement and, consequently, improve outcomes for pupils through sustainability, the management of change and the personalisation of learning.

The diverse geographical contexts within Cumbria will present challenges and the above may only be achievable where schools are working in collaboration with others. ICT, as an enabling tool, may help to deliver these aims.

Model 1:

Where urban areas are sufficiently large to support this model, schools should be a minimum of one form of entry.

In addition, although this will not have application everywhere, consideration may be given to the concept of separate primary and secondary schools on the same campus.

Model 2:

All through schools that:

- Would have many of the advantages of Model 1;
- Would reduce the negative impact of KS2/3 transition on pupil outcomes;
- Would have the potential to become all age academies or, following the model that is being developed in the Alston area, trusts.

Model 3:

Very small primary schools that:

- Need to be retained because of the unreasonable travel to learn times that would result from closing them.

It is particularly important that these few schools are part of a hub arrangement as outlined below and are not left to attempt to stand on their own. This, along with a continuing review of provision should ensure the sustainability of these schools.

Model 4:

Schools that are likely to be below one form of entry but rather larger than the very small capacities necessary in isolated rural settings. There needs to be an appropriate balance between the educational and organisation optimum and a requirement to establish, protect and enhance sustainable communities both rural and urban. Co-operation with other schools will be key.

4.4 Across all of these models, we would wish to see “hub and spoke” arrangements developed for the co-ordination of Children’s Service including schools:

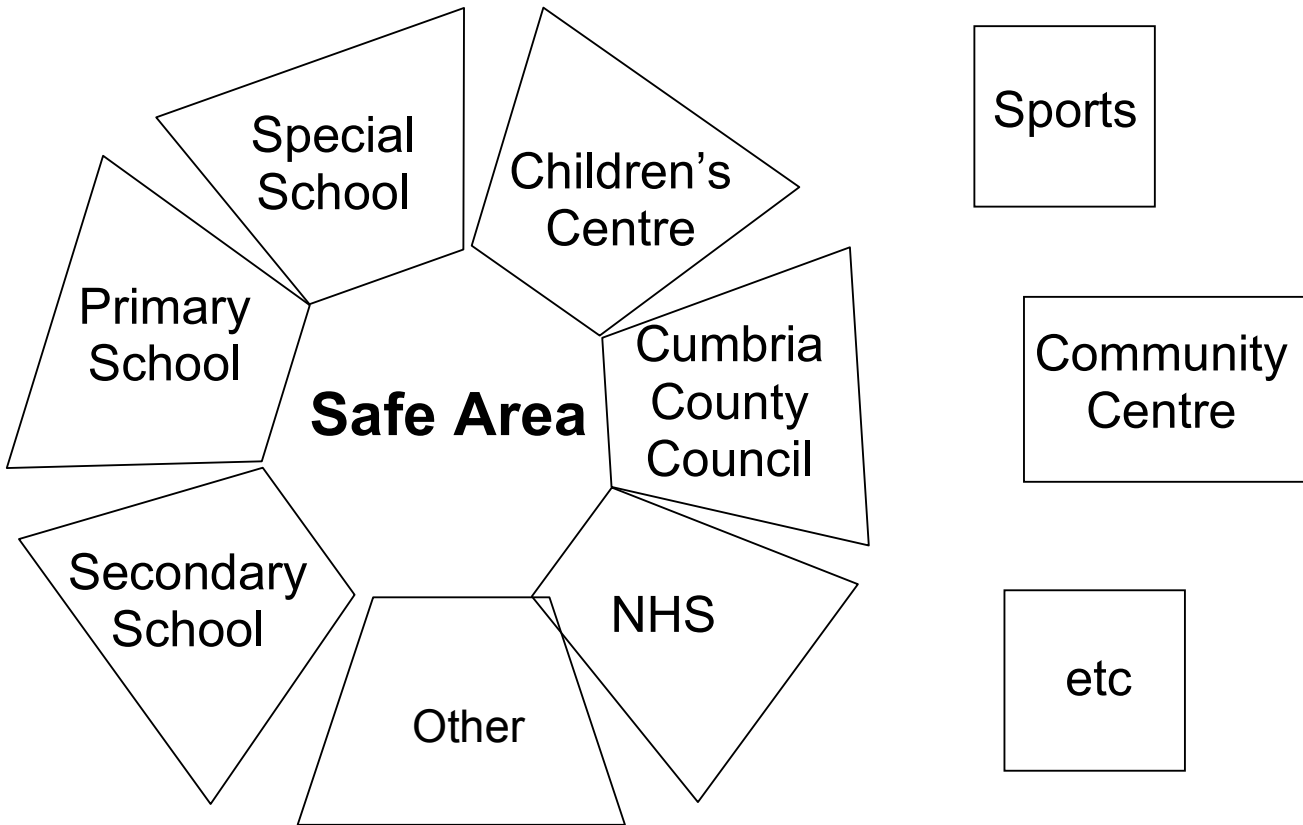
- Be able to provide specialist expertise across schools and the full spectrum of need.
- Be able to provide breadth/balance of curriculum.
- Be able to provide for full range of ECM outcomes.
- Be able to provide/be a centre for ES links with existing ES clusters.
- Through ‘shared’ staffing, be better able to withstand turbulence.
- Lend themselves to Trust/Federation development.
- Allow for more effective development of E-learning and use of ICT for school management.
- Increase opportunities for broad links with industry, and vocational opportunities.
- Increase potential for use of school buildings outside class/term times.
- Allow the development of community use of facilities that could contribute to outcomes for young people.
- Consider all primary schools.
- Address both rural and urban disadvantage and low achievement.
- Allow for provision of alternatives at an early stage to avoid exclusion and disaffection.
- Allow special schools to be a ‘hub’ and provide expertise/act as a resource for others.
- Lend themselves to a range of models of leadership, management and governance.

4.5 The Hub and Spoke Model

- In an ideal world all services would be available to all users at their nearest point of delivery within their own locality.
- In a diverse county like Cumbria maintenance of levels of service at every local level is not practical or affordable. To overcome this problem the county’s aim is to provide a hub and spoke model for service delivery.
- This model of delivery is based upon the premise that groups of institutions working together are able to deliver all services within a community if not, as in an ideal world, in the immediate locality.
- This hub and spoke model identifies key areas of need within an area and is then able to signpost other users to the necessary service which is well within their geographic reach if not directly in their own locality. It links several smaller providers to a larger central provider: ‘the hub’. This central hub is able to provide the majority of services to end-users but even so may have to signpost users to a service within another member of the group: ‘the spoke’. In some geographical areas, the model may vary to be one of interlinking spoke arrangements with each spoke functioning as an equal partner.
- In encouraging the development of hub and spoke arrangements, the aim is to build on existing collaborative arrangements where these are working effectively. It is recognised that the most effective collaborations will not always be with the nearest schools, denominational schools might for example, wish to develop collaboration with other faith schools.
- Operating in this manner ensures that all services are available within a reasonable distance of all users if not available within their own locality.
- Health service partners within Cumbria are committed to this model and within their proposed Public Health Strategy state:
Children leaving school need to have the mental and physical skills to carry themselves through everyday threats, and school teachers should have the skills to support them.

There are already many schools engaged in collaborative working across Cumbria and it is these exemplary practices that we intend to build upon through the development of this model.

Diagrammatically the model may appear as below:



These facilities may be co-located as a campus development or may continue as discrete provisions that are linked to serve local communities with integrated service arrangements.

What the vision will deliver

5.1 Standards

This Strategy will enable better delivery of primary education and raise standards by:

1. Enabling the Authority to develop e-learning strategies to encourage communication between and within schools through the establishment of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
2. Providing a reliable and resilient infrastructure both inside the school and outside. This will enable reliable and fast connections to the internet. It will allow schools to access and share information such as video files, video conferencing and data files.
3. Enhancing good teaching and supporting learning by the use of interactive presentation devices such as interactive whiteboards, plasma screens, and visualisers linked to fast and well supported computers which will enable teachers and learners to access the world of knowledge and use this to accelerate learning.

4. Sharing good practice through the use of ICT.
5. Providing computers to allow unhindered access to learning by both staff and pupils, using laptops, palm tops or other mobile devices.
6. Providing for learners and staff adequate electronic storage for all resources and software. This may be done through a broadband e-portfolio (an electronic locker in the sky), to allow pupils to access work at home and schools to share resources.
7. Supporting schools in the delivery of twenty-first-century learning through school buildings that are fit for purpose.
8. Rationalising school numbers and sizes to ensure that better curriculum models can be delivered to improve the quality of education through review and consultation to address the issue of surplus places.
9. Improving the working environment for both staff and pupils to develop an increased sense of pride and purpose in schools.
10. Enabling a smooth curricular and pastoral transition from the primary to the secondary phase for every child, to reduce the negative impact of change and the associated dip in pupils' progress.
11. Enabling the Authority to target resources in foundation stage at schools that serve the 20% most disadvantaged children to enable facilities to be better developed to deliver the CLLD development programme.

The following targets will be achieved by 2011:

- No school will remain below the floor target for English or Mathematics for longer than two years.
- The numbers of children achieving level 4+ in English and Mathematics will rise by 3%.
- The gap between boys' and girls' attainment in English at key stage 2 will reduce by 3%.
- The gap between the 20% most deprived children and their peers will reduce in the foundation stage profile in CLLD and PSHE in key stages 1 and 2
- Attendance rates will increase by 1% across the County.
- Cumbria will consistently achieve at above average levels of attainment.
- CVA in all key stages will be above national averages.

5.2 Every Child Matters

This Strategy will enable better delivery of the ECM outcomes by:

1. Joining up funding streams as outlined in the Vision, in order to make maximum impact.
2. Providing the 149 schools that do not currently provide the full core offer with opportunities to do so via either on-site or off-site facilities.

- Cumbria has set stringent targets to reduce alcohol consumption in young people and focuses in its planning on the need to prevent smoking-related illness. Programmes delivered through PSHE will support this.
3. Improving access to quality outdoor play provision, particularly for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and especially in schools serving the 20% most deprived children. All early years facilities will be provided with secure play areas. Through the hub and spoke arrangements outlined elsewhere, all schools will have access to both indoor and outdoor sports facilities that enable them to deliver the full PE curriculum.
 4. Enhancing the LA's current approach to SEN provision. The Strategy and the associated additional funding will, however, both facilitate more strategic decisions and speed up implementation as follows:
 - All new schools, and any school that is significantly remodelled, will have full disabled access including access for visual and hearing impairment. Such schools will also be provided with assisted toilet/changing facilities in order to allow them to admit as wide a range of pupils with SEN/disabilities as possible. In principle, this should reduce the need for specially resourced mainstream schools; in practice, however, the low incidence/high impact nature of some complex needs means, that in some schools, it is unlikely that the kind of skills required could be developed and retained.
 - The network of mainstream schools providing more specialist SEN facilities will be expanded so that increasingly localised access is available. These facilities will be strategically located, bearing in mind in this process the hub and spoke arrangements that are to be developed.
 - Specialist advice/support will be available to mainstream schools with the five existing special schools acting as hubs for this process.
 5. Enabling all children to have access to healthy, nutritional food in appropriate surroundings. All schools will be accredited healthy schools.
 6. Improving access to community services. The Authority is clear about the impact that school buildings have in local communities. In looking at any potential school reorganisation, consideration will be given to the opportunities that this might present for improved access to community services. This will not only form an integral part of the school review process, but will, in addition, form part of the countywide strategic property review and review of customer access points that are being undertaken in conjunction with district councils, health, police and the voluntary sector.

5.3 Diversity, Choice and Responsiveness

This Strategy will enable the provision of more diversity, choice and responsiveness by:

1. Using the hub and spoke arrangements outlined in the principles/models which lend themselves to federations and to the creation of trusts and collaborative arrangements. This may mean a change in governance. The creation of all-age schools in some areas may open up potential opportunities for all-age academies.
2. Recognising both the need for a range of different models of provision and a need to ensure diversity and choice. In any school reorganisation proposals, the popularity and success of individual schools will be factors that are considered in proposing/agreeing solutions.

3. Reducing surplus places over the 15 year period of the Strategy, to 3,404 (10%). This represents a reduction of 4,937 places compared with the current situation. This will be achieved by reducing the number of schools, by encouraging self-financing community use of parts of school buildings and, as part of the building work arising out of this strategy, by reducing the amount of accommodation at some retained schools.
4. Continuing to work with the established Local Partnership Groups in developing potential solutions for each geographical area. In 2006, the Authority embarked upon a review of the current pattern of school provision. To date, most of the effort has been concentrated on secondary provision in various parts of the county and primary provision in a small number of urban areas. This process now needs to gain momentum, particularly in the primary sector.

5.4 Buildings

This Strategy will enable the provision of fit for purpose learning sites by:

1. Exploring options and opportunities for transformational building change.
2. Working with partners to maximise the vision.
3. Harnessing all capital opportunities.
4. Rebuilding or, in a limited number of instances, taking out of use, at least the 5% worst conditions schools.
5. Significantly improving or, in a limited number of instances, taking out of use at least another 45% of schools.
6. Working with the remaining schools in order to ensure that the use of devolved formula capital contributes to the delivery of the Strategy.
7. Reducing the maintenance backlog to £20m.
8. Reorganising, where appropriate, single phase (junior, and infant, nursery and first) schools to form primary schools.
9. Expanding the network of mainstream schools providing strategic SEN facilities in such a way that increasingly localised access is available and that, in planning these additions account is taken of the hub/spoke arrangements that are to be put in place more generally.
10. Ensuring that all primary schools have access to facilities that allow them to deliver the full core offer.
11. Developing an agreed framework for each area.

Implementation

6.1 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Cumbria County Council, as the Commissioner of Services, has overall responsibility for preparing, implementing and evaluating the Primary Strategy for Change. The Director of Children's Services and the Portfolio Holder have been directly involved in the development of the Strategy. The final version of the Strategy has been approved by Cabinet and is subject to approval also by County Council (on 26 June 2008).

In the drafting and development of the Strategy, consultation has taken place with:

- Local Partnership Groups
- Diocesan Authorities
- Members
- Schools
- Cumbria Association of Secondary Heads
- Primary Heads Association
- Governors
- Parents
- School Councils
- Potential new school providers

Individual projects for 2009/10 and 2010/11 have been chosen on the basis that they will have a significant impact on educational standards, they are based in schools that have a secure future and they involve no formal school organisational change. Individual projects for 2011/12 onwards will be chosen on the basis of their impact in maximising educational standards and minimising surplus places.

Each individual project will have a set of Key Performance Indicators attached to it. Ongoing evaluation will take place in order to establish actual impact against these indicators and the nature and content of subsequent projects will be adjusted in the light of this. Benchmarking and communication networks will be established with other rural authorities in order to share and learn from good practice.

6.2 Achieving Educational Transformation

Finance

Capital funds from all available sources will be joined together in order to ensure that programmes stemming from the Strategy have the maximum possible impact. In addition to funding sources such as the Primary Programme, Modernisation, School Places, Schools Access Initiative, Devolved Formula Capital, Children's Centres, Extended Schools, LCVAP and the Authority's own internal resources, the Authority will attempt to maximise opportunities to utilise funds available to external partner agencies.

Cumbria has a high proportion (25%) of voluntary aided primary schools. For many of these schools, the 10% statutory contribution is an obstacle, particularly in relation to major capital developments. There are ongoing discussions with the diocesan authorities about how best to deal with this issue; there are, however, no easy answers to this issue either locally or nationally.

Wherever a significant capital development is planned, the Authority will seek a formal commitment from the relevant governing body that the school premises and the associated ICT provision will be adequately maintained over the course of the following 20-25 years.

Procurement

Cumbria currently has a strategic partner that provides full professional services for most projects procured directly by the Authority; the existing contractual arrangements will be subject to review/re-tendering early in the lifetime of this Strategy. There are also framework contracts with three building contractors that again are currently being reviewed. Most recent building projects have been procured utilising these two contractual arrangements.

Voluntary Aided school projects have tended to be dealt with by individual school governing bodies in consultation with the appropriate diocesan authority.

Building Schools for the Future is not due to start in Cumbria in the immediate future and, consequently, no attempt has been made to establish a Local Education Partnership (LEP). The Authority is about to procure a range of academies and these schemes are being dealt with via the Partnerships for Schools National Framework.

With all this in mind, the intention is to use existing framework arrangements for remodelling / extension / refurbishment projects, and to enter into new design/build framework arrangements for new-build schools. Voluntary aided schools will be encouraged to use this framework.

It is intended that ICT will be secured via a new ICT framework contract.

Design

Within the Authority's current strategic partner, groups of architects, quantity surveyors, engineers and project managers have built up considerable expertise in designing and delivering major schools projects. These same individuals have, similarly, gained experience in delivering projects for a range of other authorities both in other parts of England and in Scotland. This experience stands them in good stead to help with the design, delivery and procurement of projects arising out of this Strategy.

The Authority has available to it the DCSF Exemplar Designs, DCSF Design Guides and Building Bulletins and designs and feedback for a range of primary school projects undertaken by other authorities. In addition, it has been the practice with recent secondary school projects, to arrange for design team members to visit a range of recently completed projects of a similar nature elsewhere in the country in order to provide them with inspiration and to learn from good, and indeed less good, practice; it is intended to extend this arrangement to significant primary school developments.

Throughout the design process for individual projects, the Authority will continue its existing practice of consulting with pupils via the School Council, with staff, with parents and with the wider community. Staff and governor representatives will continue to be key members of all design teams as with voluntary aided projects along with representatives of the relevant diocesan authority.

Design Quality Indicators will be established for all major projects and external accredited facilitators will be used to run workshops for each stage. The Authority has, for many years, sought the views of building occupiers following the completion of each project, too little attention has been given, however, to a formal evaluation at a rather later stage (1-2 years after completion) and it is intended to remedy this situation. A design champion will also be appointed for each major scheme.

The aim for any new school will be to achieve a BREEAM “very good” rating. Consideration will be given to the cost-effective use of small scale renewables for all major schemes.

Cumbria is currently seeking to establish a network of customer service outlets for the delivery of/access to a wide range of services provided by the County Council, the District Councils, Health, Police and a range of voluntary organisations. Opportunities will be sought to link these developments with the outcome of the Primary Strategy and associated school review process.

Capacity to Deliver

Cumbria is in the process of establishing a new planning and buildings function within the Children’s Services Directorate. This function is led by a Head of Service post (second tier level) and the post-holder took up her appointment in April. Below this will be three third tier posts (Capital Policy and Planning, Capital Procurement and Implementation and Transition). There will be two Policy and Planning Officers responsible to the Capital Policy and Planning Manager, together with a range of data, research and administrative support staff. Responsible to the Capital Procurement and Implementation Manager will be four Senior Project Development Officers, a Project Development Officer and administrative support staff.

Until the new structure is fully operational, existing consultancy arrangements will continue to operate.

In addition to the officer structure, Cumbria has, for the purposes of its current ongoing review process established a School Organisation Forum and five Local Partnership Groups. As indicated earlier, these consultative bodies will continue to be key to the development of potential solutions for each geographical area which will, after the receipt of feedback from stakeholders, then be evaluated by the relevant County Council Local Committee which will make recommendations prior to consideration by the Authority’s Cabinet.

Initial Investment Priorities

7.1 Initial investment priorities for 2009/10 and 2010/11

The selection of the individual schemes has been based on a range of factors:

- Projects arising out of the current formal consultative processes will be well on the way to completion by 2009/10.
- No further school reviews will be sufficiently far advanced by April 2008 to commit funds to their implementation at that point (although, had the commitment not had to be made in June 2008, they could have been funded in 2009/10 or 2010/11).
- On this basis, given the fact that projects must be set out in detail by 10 June 2008, those projects to be undertaken during 2009/10 and 2010/11 need to involve no formal school organisation change.
- Projects selected for 2009/10 and 2010/11 need: to take into account levels of deprivation; to have a significant impact on standards; to move the Every Child Matters agenda forward; to be based in schools that have a secure future.

Glossary of Terms/Acronyms

8.1

KSC	-	Key Service Centre
TDA	-	Training & Development Agency
KS	-	Key Stage
KS1	-	Key Stage 1 (Children aged 5-7 years)
KS2	-	Key Stage 2 (Children aged 7-11 years)
SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
ICT	-	Information & Communications Technology
LA	-	Local Authority
CLEO	-	Cumbria and Lancashire Education Online
C of E	-	Church of England
VLE	-	Virtual Learning Environment
NCSL	-	National College of School Leadership
ECM	-	Every Child Matters
ES	-	Extended Schools
CLLD	-	Communication, Language & Literacy Development
PSHE	-	Personal, Social and Health Education
LCVAP	-	Local Education Partnership
DCSF	-	Department for Children, Schools and Families
BREEM	-	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method