



Executive
29th May 2007

**Report from the Director of
Children and Families**

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Extending Access to Services for Families and
Communities in and through Schools**

Forward Plan Ref: C&F06/07-018

1.0 Summary

This paper provides an up-date on progress of extending access to services for families and communities in and through schools, since the 'Extended Schools Strategy' report was presented to the Executive on the 10th April 2006 and the report 'Community Access to Schools' was presented to the Executive committee on 9th October 2006.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress made to date
- 2.2 To approve a pilot community access initiative for discussion with schools, which aims to encourage schools to further open their facilities
- 2.3 To agree to receiving a further report outlining the financial implications of the community access initiative, following discussion with schools.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 In June 2005 the Government published a prospectus 'Extended Schools: Access to opportunities and services for all' which set out the core offer of extended services that the Government wanted all children to be able to access through schools by 2010. The Extended Schools prospectus makes it clear that the delivery of the core offer will be a key component in ensuring that the Every Child Matters outcomes are secured for as many children as possible.
- 3.2 The five components of the core offer are:
 - i. Childcare
 - ii. Menu of Activities

- iii. Parenting Support
- iv. Swift and Easy Referral
- v. Community Access

3.3 **Brent Strategy**

In July 2006 Brent published its Extended Services Strategy 'Developing Neighbourhood Learning Communities'. The strategy aims to provide access to this 'core offer' through Neighbourhood Learning Communities. We believe this will contribute to:

- Improving attainment and well-being in schools and communities;
- Encourage greater parental involvement in supporting children's learning;
- Contribute to the regeneration of communities;
- Enhance and support community cohesion;
- Protect and support vulnerable groups.

3.4 **Neighbourhood Learning Communities**



Neighbourhood Learning Communities are geographical areas, based on the Primary Care Trust five localities. These localities incorporate between 15 – 18 schools and embrace a multi agency approach in identifying and developing services and activities for children and families.

3.5 Many Brent localities host a large number of high quality community and voluntary services, and combined with a number of statutory services and schools, this potentially provides Brent residents with a rich menu of services. The challenge for this agenda is to support children and families access these services and for the Children and Families department to identify gaps in provision and ensure the most vulnerable children are benefiting.

3.6 **Multi-Agency Support**

In order to support this locality-based multi-agency approach to service development, officers from the Children's Partnerships Team and School Improvement Service have facilitated a number of multi-agency workshops.

3.7 The first set of workshops took place in the summer term (2006) and invited representatives from schools, a wide range of statutory services, and voluntary and community organisations. Five workshops took place, one for each locality, and they provided attendees an opportunity to:

- see the links between the 'Every Child Matters' agenda and extended services
- develop a good understanding of the extended services 'core offer'
- recognise there are benefits for each organisation
- provide an opportunity to share good practice
- get to know partners working within each locality
- discuss priorities within the locality

3.8 A second set of workshops were offered in the autumn term 2006 where locality-based multi-agency groups created action plans in order to take their ideas forward. These workshops engaged with representatives from:

- over 40 schools
- 5 children's centres
- 21 Brent Council teams
- Primary Care Trust colleagues from School Nursing, Smoking Cessation and Health Promotion
- 18 voluntary and community organisations
- others including Police, London Fire Brigade and Housing Trusts.

3.9 **Neighbourhood Co-ordinators**

Three Neighbourhood Co-ordinators have been appointed who are in a position to offer further capacity to schools. Following consultation with schools it was viewed that these roles should be appointed centrally within the Children and Families department, and the funding allocated to schools to be used to support direct delivery of services. Therefore team structures have been reconfigured to develop three Neighbourhood Co-ordinator roles within the Children's Partnerships Team using existing budgets.

3.10 Their roles are to:

- provide strategic support to clusters of schools and children centres;
- promote collaborative and partnership working across schools, children centres and agencies to develop clear signposting arrangements;
- identify existing universal and preventative services, good practice and gaps in provision;
- support the introduction of the common assessment framework;
- establish and support locality-based forums for children, young people and parents;
- contribute to capacity building of local voluntary and community organisations;
- work in partnership with key stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the impact of services.

3.11 The Neighbourhood Co-ordinators are developing an in-depth knowledge of the localities within Brent, and provide advice and support to headteachers and local partners. They support headteacher cluster meetings, audit current school provision and liaise with community partners on behalf of schools in order to develop new and further provision. They will work closely with the Integrated Services programme pilot, currently based in Harlesden and Kingsbury, to ensure a rich and accessible menu of services is developed across the borough.

3.12 **Funding Officer**

A further addition to the team is a Funding Officer appointed through LAA Stretch Target funding. The purpose of this post is to submit funding applications on behalf of schools and children's centres. The funding will increase the menu of activities and services available as part of the Extended Services core offer, and applications will support collaborative bids, either between schools or schools working in partnership with other statutory, voluntary or community agencies.

3.13 **Targets**

The Government has set targets for the number of schools providing access to the core offer. By 2008 it is expected that half of all primary schools and one third of secondary schools will provide access to the core offer, and by 2010 it is expected that all schools will provide access to the core offer.

3.14 In Brent it has been agreed to 'stretch' these targets to:

	Number of Primary Schools providing access to the core offer (includes nursery and special)	Number of Secondary Schools providing access to the core offer (includes special)
2006	15 schools in total	
2007	24	8
2008	34	11
2009	55	16
2010	68	16

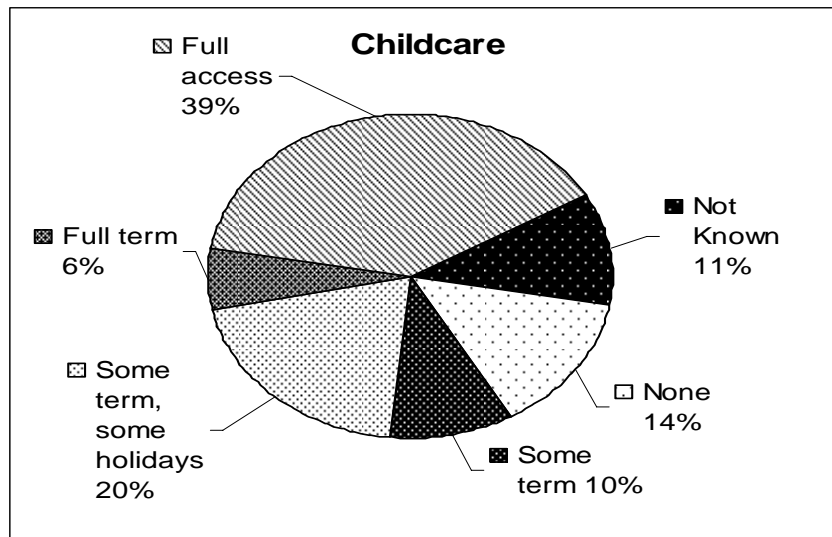
We have successfully met the 2006 target and are on track to meet our 2007 target.

3.15 **Current Picture:**

The following information is based on schools that have either returned their self-assessment audits or have met with the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator to discuss current provision. 66 schools (11 secondary, 48 primary, 4 children's centres / nursery and 3 special schools) have shared information on current provision so far.

3.16 **Childcare**

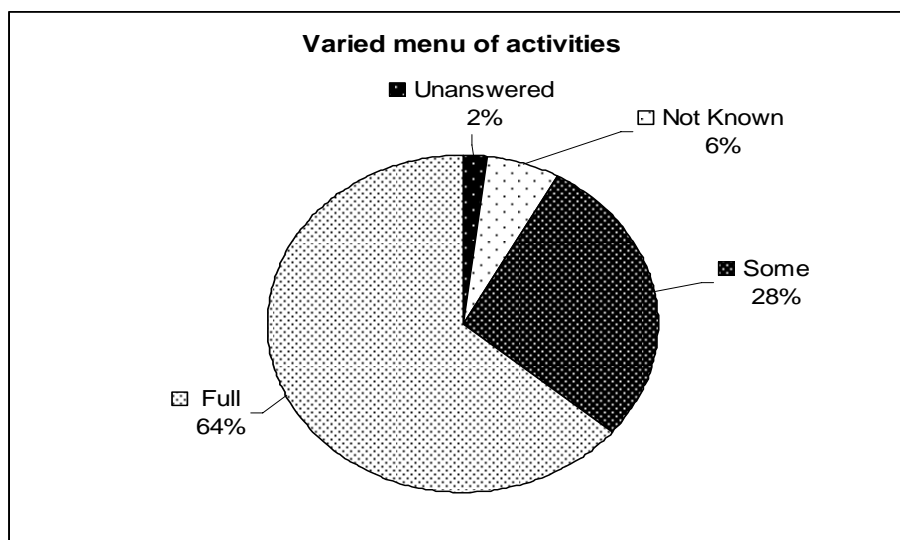
It is expected that accessible, affordable and high quality childcare will be available for primary aged pupils from 8am – 6pm, for 48 weeks of the year, unless otherwise specified through community consultation. This does not apply to secondary aged students.



3.17 The audit shows that 75% of schools are currently providing some level of childcare, either on the school site or have transport arrangements in place for off-site provision. Looking across the borough we know that after-school provision is more available than holiday care, which in turn is greater than pre-school care. In addition to the school audit results we also know that there is generally good coverage of childminders throughout Brent, apart from a few geographical pockets. The challenge is to provide affordable childcare for 48 weeks of the year and increase the number of places available for children with disabilities. Currently there are very limited places, especially during the holidays. Plans are in place to use funding from the General Sure Start Grant to contribute to the current funding levels and increase the number of weeks available to parents, both in specialist and mainstream settings.

3.18 **Menu of Activities**

It is expected that pupils will have access to a varied menu of activities offered beyond school hours which includes homework clubs and study support, sport (at least two hours a week for those who want it), music tuition, dance and drama, arts and crafts, special interest clubs such as chess and first aid courses, visits to museums and galleries, learning a foreign language, volunteering, business and enterprise activities.

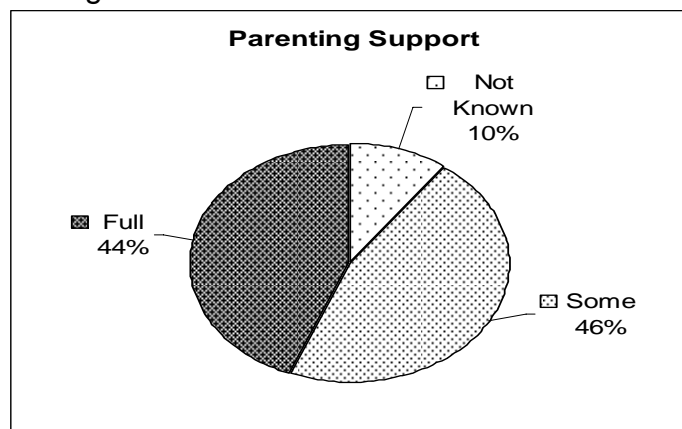


3.19 Most schools are providing some activities out of school hours. The Neighbourhood Co-ordinators are working with schools to increase the menu on offer, both on schools sites and to increase signposting arrangements. Some of the activities, whilst high quality and beneficial, rely on the goodwill of teaching staff or have taken place as a result of 'pump priming' money. Further support will be offered to schools to explore sustainability strategies.

3.20 **Parenting Support**

The parenting support offer is defined as:

- information sessions at transition times
- information about nationally and locally available sources of information, advice and support
- access to parenting groups using structured, evidence-based parenting programmes
- family learning sessions

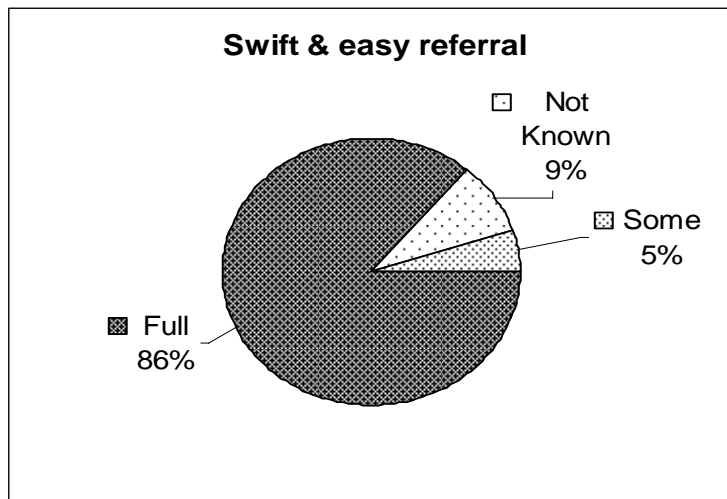


3.21 Schools are currently providing a wide range of parenting support. We know at least 89% of schools are providing some level of parenting support, often through information evenings, newsletters, family learning sessions, coffee mornings, parent surgeries and transition support. A significant gap in parenting support across all localities is the provision of structured, evidence-based parenting programmes. Many schools have recognised this gap and are using Extended Schools funding to increase this provision. The Children's Fund 07-08 allocation will also seek to increase the availability of structured, evidence-based parenting programmes. In addition Brent LA has received a small amount of funding from the 'Parenting Grant', which will be used to:

- set up a think tank group to audit current provision and undertake needs analysis
- write a parenting strategy
- centrally commission a number of parenting programmes

3.22 **Swift and Easy referral**

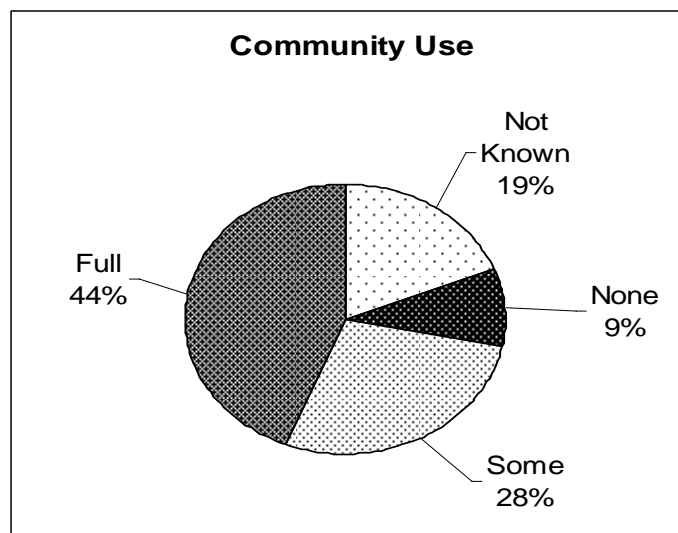
Schools are expected to have identified somebody within the school to have clear responsibility for liaising with intervention services and have clear pathways to ensure support from a wide range of agencies is accessible to young people and parents. For schools in the Integrated Services Programme pilot, there is an expectation that they show commitment to using the Common Assessment Framework.



3.23 All school audits have identified a member of staff responsible for liaising with intervention services. Piloting the common assessment framework and the role of the lead professional in Kingsbury and Harlesden has significantly contributed to meeting these requirements. This pilot has enabled a large number of children with additional needs to receive packages of support, including services in children’s health, social care, early years, youth and community learning, and educational interventions. The individual packages of support are delivered in conjunction with Brent voluntary and community sector organisations thus building voluntary sector capacity and more importantly ensuring that services are tailored to meet the diverse and cultural needs of children and families referred to the programme. The Integrated Services Programme intends to be extended to Kilburn locality from September 07, increasing the number of schools being able to use the Common Assessment Framework to provide swift and easy referral routes. The Kilburn pilot will also develop a multi-agency panel as well as a multi-agency practitioner forum, both of which will include practitioners from the statutory, voluntary and community sector.

3.24 **Community Use**

It is expected that where schools have facilities suitable for use by the wider community, it should look to open these up, where possible, to meet the wider community needs. This includes access to arts, sports or IT facilities and access to adult education programmes.



- 3.25 Currently 72% schools have indicated they provide some level of community access. However, a small number of community groups have stated that costs can be high when renting school facilities. Where school buildings do not have the ability to 'zone' different areas or only have space for one community function, schools often have to open up the whole school and this can result in higher costs for caretaker time, heating, lighting etc. Other community groups have raised concerns that schools are reluctant to let their classroom and schools have reported theft and vandalism has occurred in the past, leading to a reluctance to open up parts of the school. However, as seen from the audits a high number of schools are providing some level of community access and the Neighbourhood Co-ordinators are encouraging schools to develop a letting policy and market their facilities to local groups
- 3.26 The Overview Task Group 'Community Access to Schools' recognised the links between community access to schools and extended services, and suggested a number of recommendations in their report to the Executive in October 2006 to further support this work. These included:
- Re-alignment of Neighbourhood Learning Communities to ensure even and geographically sound cluster arrangements
 - Co-ordinators to identify and map partners, working closely with the community
 - Schools to develop lettings policies that include concessionary and free lets
 - Schools market their facilities
 - Capital funding supports modifications to schools building for better access to facilities
 - Steering group established in each cluster, with local community and voluntary representation
 - Children, young people and the wider community are consulted
 - School facilities are used to celebrate significant events at a local level
 - Other sources of funding are explored to make existing facilities more widely available
 - Access to community facilities in schools to be measured and monitored
- 3.27 As outlined above many of the recommendations have now been put into place through the development of the Extended Services Strategy, the Integrated Services pilots, and are reflected in the job descriptions for the Neighbourhood Co-ordinators.
- 3.28 The clusters are geographically based and aligned to Primary Care Trust localities. Neighbourhood Co-ordinators are mapping extended provision within each locality. This information will be available to residents and will offer an overview of facilities which are available for community lettings. The Sports Service has also undertaken an audit of sports facilities that are available to the public (see appendix). This has shown that where such facilities are available for hire they vary widely in terms of type and quality of facilities. Any lettings and charging policies will need to reflect this difference. The Neighbourhood Co-ordinator team will work with the Sports Service to support school governing bodies to develop appropriate lettings and charging policies.

- 3.29 Wherever possible, where there are planned remodelling and major refurbishment schemes, schools are encouraged to include measures to enhance community access to the building facilities. The Asset Management Service Plan continues to support schools particularly in developing school development plans and master plans in advance of major capital investment either under Building Schools for the Future or the recently announced Primary Capital Programme. Such plans would incorporate elements aimed at enhancing community use and access. Other sources of funding are being explored through the Funding Officer role, which includes working with local voluntary and community groups to develop services and activities in schools, as well as increasing the use of school buildings and grounds for local families.
- 3.30 In response to the Executive decision from the 'Community Access' report for officers to explore the associated costs for ensuring school buildings are available for public use, officers are currently contacting schools to enquire about available facilities and caretaking costs. The aim would be for one school in each ward to participate in a scheme where caretaking costs for three hours a week, for one year, were met from Council resources. This would enable schools premises to be hired to community and voluntary organisations at a subsidised rate. If a number of schools indicate an interest in participating in such a scheme, a fuller report will be presented to the Executive, which would include financial implications for the Council.
- 3.31 The team will also be issuing a comprehensive guidance booklet to all schools outlining a range of legislative requirements as well as good practice advice. This will be issued to schools in July 2007. Regular twilight sessions for schools and multi-agency partners are being held throughout the year focusing on a range of topics that requires more in-depth discussion, for example Ofsted requirements, funding and sustainability, governance and inclusion.
- 3.32 Next steps
The Neighbourhood Co-ordinators will continue to provide strategic and operational support to clusters and individual schools to increase the number of schools providing access to the 'full' core offer. In order to achieve this Neighbourhood Co-ordinators will aim to:
- increase numbers of structured evidence-based parenting support programmes
 - develop clear signposting arrangements between schools and local community providers
 - work closely with Early Years and Play Service to increase availability of wraparound childcare
 - work closely with Sports Service and local community and voluntary groups to increase access to school facilities
 - work closely with the Integrated Services Team to support schools in using the Common Assessment Framework
 - support schools in developing sustainability strategies

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 Funding available to support the Extended Services Strategy is within the Standards

Fund: Grant 106 (now part of LAA):

Total grant 2006 – 2008: £709,686

	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008
Allocated to clusters	£275,000 (£55,000 per cluster)	£285,000 (£57,000 per cluster)
Centrally retained	£79,843	£69,843
Total	£354,843	£354,843

4.2 Cluster allocations are being used to deliver direct services in line with the 'core offer', for example breakfast clubs, after-school activities, and parenting support workshops. The centrally retained amount is funding one Neighbourhood Co-ordinator. As the DfES has only outlined the funding allocation to 2008, the Strategy will be reviewed during 2007/2008 when the financial position beyond that year will be clearer.

4.3 Additional funding has been made available from the General Sure Start Grant 06-08: capital £778,375 and revenue £610,272. The funding is being used to:

- increase the number of childcare places, specifically targeting children with disabilities
- increase availability of parenting support, specifically targeting Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units
- contribute to costs for Children's Centre co-located with primary schools

4.4 By virtue of section 50 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the governing body of a school with a delegated budget may deploy the resources provided through the school's budget share as it thinks fit, subject only to restrictions as may be imposed by the maintaining LEA's scheme for financing schools, and to the overriding requirement that the budget share is spent only "for any purposes of the school". The DfES publication 'Planning and Funding' (2006) states 'purposes of the schools' can be construed as embracing all activities that bring an education benefit to pupils at the school, or to pupils registered at other mainstream schools. Therefore schools can use their delegated budgets to support or subsidise extended activities that bring an educational benefit to children, but not to support extended activities that are solely community facilities such as sports activities for the local community. In addition, maintained nursery schools are able to fund community activities, including childcare from their delegated budget.

4.5 Schools have the flexibility to spend their School Standards Grant on community facilities to support extended services that are not eligible for funding through their main delegated budget. The Dedicated School Grant also enables schools to develop a more personalised programme of study support. Schools will be able to use this money to develop study support opportunities.

4.6 Governing bodies must also consult and take into account advice from their local authority on any plans to provide extended activities under their community facilities power, as the scheme for financing local schools may place some restrictions or prohibitions on the activities to be developed. Such prohibitions or restrictions will have been designed to ensure that the financial interests of the local authority are protected, and could include (for example) requiring the governing body to obtain indemnity insurance for risks associated with the activity in question.

4.7 The DfES believe it is likely that charging will be the main source of ongoing funding for many extended services that are delivered using the schools' power to provide community facilities. As this service cannot be subsidised from the delegated budget, income from charging must be sufficient to cover any appropriate apportionment of, for example:

- Heating and lighting
- Water
- Equipment and materials
- Refreshments
- Staffing
- Cleaning
- Maintenance
- Wear and tear
- Programme management and administrative support
- Site management, e.g. locking and unlocking premises
- Security

Each school will need to develop its own charging policy to reflect the quantity and quality of their facilities, and to ensure all costs are covered.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 Schools providing activities direct must comply with the law, as follows:

- a. Every school governing body must devise and publish a charging and fee remission policy, in consultation with parents. A school cannot make any charges to parents unless this policy is in place. (The relevant regulations are summarised in the *Guide to the Law for School Governors* and in *Guidance on Charging for School Activities*.)
- b. School governing bodies have powers to provide any facilities or services that further any charitable purpose for pupils, their families and for people who live and work in the local community. This includes childcare.
- c. Any profits made by a school from providing facilities or services must be reinvested in the school or in the service.
- d. Schools may use their delegated budgets to subsidise a child's access to chargeable extended activities, where they consider that the activities are provided for the purposes of the school, because they are of educational benefit to the child.
- e. Schools may not charge for: any study support activities provided during the school day, except for music tuition, or for provision before or after the school day which delivers the National Curriculum or prepares a child for a public examination.

- f. Schools may lawfully charge for other study support (for example, additional sport, drama and music clubs, holiday activities, visits, and additional courses, such as first aid), following consultation.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The Extended Services Strategy seeks to redress issues of equality to ensure that the needs of vulnerable children and young people are equally considered.
- 6.2 The Strategy reflects the Children & Families Department's equalities action plan, developed to support the six strategic priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan and considers all six standards of the Equalities Standards for Local Government.

7.0 Staffing

- 7.1 The expectation within the Extended Services Strategy is that services do not necessarily have to be delivered by school staff. Advice on staffing issues will be covered in the guidance to be issued to all schools.

8.0 Accommodation Implications

- 8.1 The governing body controls the use of school premises both during and outside school hours. The exception is where a trust deed allows a person other than the governing body to control the use of the premises, or if a transfer of control agreement has been made.

Background Papers (essential)

- i) Extended Schools: Access to opportunities and services for all – A Prospectus (DfES 2005)
- ii) Planning and funding extended schools: a guide for schools, local authorities and their partners organisations (DfES 2006)
- iii) Brent Extended Services Strategy: Developing Neighbourhood Learning Communities (July 2006)

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