

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Lifelong Learning Committee – 31 October 2012

EVALUATION OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)

ABSTRACT

This report updates the Committee on the evaluation of the impact of the Parental Involvement Strategy which was launched in May 2009.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1.1 Notes the outcome of the evaluations of the Parental Involvement Strategy which have been undertaken; and
- 1.2 Instructs the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to continue to monitor the progress being made through appropriate evaluation mechanisms as required.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act) 2006 set out the legislative requirements for the establishment of Parent Councils. This legislation also included a statutory duty for all Local Authorities to produce a Parental Involvement Strategy. The guidance that accompanied the Act made it clear that the intention was to support parental involvement in a much wider sense, not only the representation of parents, but also in the building of home/school partnerships and the involvement of parents to support their child's learning at home.
- 2.2 There are three main levels of engagement described in the Act:
 - Learning at Home
 - Home/School Partnership
 - Parental Representation
- 2.3 In February 2007, the Lifelong Learning Committee was informed of the progress made in implementing the commencement orders of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 (Report 07/167 refers). This report outlined the requirements of the legislation which stipulated the duty placed on Local Authorities to produce a draft strategy for parental involvement.
- 2.4 A Parental Involvement Strategy Group made up of parents, school staff and Education and Children's Services staff, with additional involvement from young people and representatives from voluntary agencies, worked together to develop a strategy to support and improve parental involvement in Perth and Kinross.

- 2.5 In May 2009, the Lifelong Learning Committee agreed the Parental Involvement Strategy and approved its implementation (Report 09/252 refers). This report agreed that an update on the progress of the implementation of the strategy would be reported back to Lifelong Learning Committee.
- 2.6 In March 2011, the Lifelong Learning Committee was informed of the progress made in implementing the Parental Involvement Strategy (Report 11/132 refers). This provided a detailed report on the launch of the strategy, outlined examples and activities of supporting learning at home, supporting home/school partnerships, parental representation, providing an effective complaints system and monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.
- 2.7 The Parental Involvement Strategy links to the Communication and Consultation Policy which is part of the Perth and Kinross Council Education and Children's Services Policy Framework. In addition, the strategy also complements the Parenting Strategy for Perth and Kinross (2008 – 2012), which outlines support for parenting provided by the Council, the NHS and Voluntary Agencies (Report 08/398 refers) and the Corporate Parenting Initiative which is part of the Looked After Children Strategy.

It should be noted that the Perth and Kinross Parenting Strategy is currently being refreshed and revised in terms of building on the impact of work in this area to date; and also in light of the emerging information available in relation to the soon to be published National Parenting Strategy. It is anticipated that our refreshed and revised Parenting Strategy will be published by March 2013.

3 PROGRESS AND EVALUATION

- 3.1 The Parental Involvement Strategy was developed to provide a supportive framework in which all parents can engage meaningfully in the education of their children and in the wider life of the school. The way to better parental involvement in a young person's education lies through increased engagement with parents and their families.
- 3.2 The key aspects of the Parental Involvement Strategy are outlined below along with the evaluation results undertaken:

3.2.1 Supporting Learning at Home

Effective communication and a shared sense of responsibility are essential for schools and parents to work together effectively. The following developments are helping to raise parents' awareness of current initiatives and providing information and advice on supporting their child's learning at home.

School Websites

In addition to the Parental Involvement information pages on the Perth and Kinross Council website, schools are using their own websites to make information available to parents.

All primary and secondary school websites were sampled to ascertain the level of content which provides parents and carers with access to information about their child's learning.

All fully developed websites have pages for individual classes to illustrate children's work and learning. Newsletters are available to give parents the choice of accessing these both electronically or by pupil post. Almost all have a dedicated section for parents.

The most effective websites provide parents with access to school policies and guidelines. Many provide parents with links to national sites such as Education Scotland. In order that this good practice can continue and that it can be shared more widely, a short-life working group has been established by the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy Group whose aim is to establish on-line self-help materials and good practice exemplars in relation to developing and sustaining a school website. Membership of this group is made up of colleagues from Corporate Business Change and Information Technology, Education Services, schools and Design and Print.

Glow

Schools are increasingly using Glow to communicate and share their work with parents and wider communities. As of July 2012, 5,906 parents have a Glow login. Parental use of Glow in Perth and Kinross is the second highest nationally in comparison to other local authorities.

Parents will also be accessing Glow when they are supporting their children to log in from home. There are 23,720 pupil accounts in use.

A pilot is currently underway to introduce a Parent Blog on Glow. This site will enable parents to debate current educational developments and documents. It is not a forum for commenting on individual schools. Fossoway Primary School is operating a technical test which will run until Friday 2 November 2012, with the page going live for all parents in January 2013.

Parent Council Survey

All Parent Council Chairpersons were sent a survey, the week commencing 20 August 2012 with a closing date of 14 September 2012. They were given an option to submit a collated version on behalf of their Parent Council or individual responses from Parent Council Members. The total number of responses received was 20 (23.53% response rate) and these show that the majority of parents who responded were positive about their role in being able to support their child's learning. The results of the survey are shown at Appendix 1.

Whilst the response numbers were relatively small in number, the spread of responses was representative of the membership of the Parent Council Chairpersons group.

Supporting Home/School Partnerships

Effective home/school partnerships are essential to ensure that children obtain the most out of their school and education.

Extended Learning and Achievement Visits

Between January 2011 and June 2012, Education and Children's Services undertook 30 learning and extended learning and achievement visits. Teams of quality improvement officers, education development officers and, where possible, associate and peer assessors evaluated the work of primary, secondary and early years establishments.

Parent focus groups are included in each visit. Appendix 2 outlines the questions which are used to form the agenda for discussion with parents.

During the course of the meetings with groups of parents two improvement areas were identified; communication generally and homework specifically. In both cases, there was no consensus shared by any of the parent groups on either issue; for instance some felt they were inundated with information and others would have liked more. The same viewpoints were reflected in relation to homework.

Where there were very specific individual issues raised, these were dealt with in the most appropriate manner and did not therefore feature as part of a school-wide report. Education and Children's Services will continue to seek the views of parents as an on-going part of such visits to schools as they provide a valuable source of information about what parents see as important to them in supporting their children and the school more generally.

3.2.2 Parental Representation

The strategy provides a framework for ensuring that parents have the opportunity to express their views and have these taken into account on matters affecting the education of their child.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate Parental Feedback

From 1 January 2011 to 30 June 2012 HMI undertook 16 inspections in; 3 partner provider nurseries, 11 primary schools (7 of these include a nursery class), 1 secondary school and 1 all-through school (which includes a nursery class). Prior to each inspection, a random sample of parents are asked to feedback against a list of statements (attached as Appendix 3).

From the 16 inspections undertaken, questionnaires were issued for 24 establishments as schools with nursery classes are classed as 2 establishments and issued with both questionnaires. Where there are fewer than 10 responses to the questionnaires, results are not published. Results from 16 out of the 24 establishment questionnaires have been published.

In 7 out of 10 published results for primary/secondary schools and, in 5 out of 6 published results for pre-school, most parents (over 80%) agree/strongly agree that the nursery/school keeps me well informed about my child's progress

In relation to Q11: the nursery/school takes my views into account, most pre-school parents (over 70%) in all 6 published results and in 7 out of 10 schools the majority of parents (over 60%) agree/strongly agree with this statement

Parent groups are also part of the inspection process allowing inspectors to speak directly with parents about their involvement. Inspectors and headteachers discuss parent responses as part of the inspection process. This information is also used by the Quality Improvement Team to share effective strategies and address areas of concern.

Parents can access this additional inspection information on the Education Scotland website or by following the link below when the inspection letter is published. Education and Children's Services also facilitates public meetings to give parents the opportunity to discuss the inspection findings.

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/index.asp>)

Parent Councils

Examples of how Education and Children's Services continues to encourage and support Parent Councils include:

- 85 Parent Councils have been established in Perth and Kinross (previously 63 School Boards). Ongoing support is given as required, including funding, to support the operation of Parent Councils.
- Twice yearly Parent Council Chairpersons' meetings and regular Parent Council Focus Group meetings – agenda items are agreed and current topics e.g. budget information and Child Exploitation Online Protection (CEOP) are discussed.
- Consultation opportunities on school and authority issues.
- There is a Perth and Kinross Parent Representative on the National Parent Forum.
- Parents are trained in Fair Selection procedures and participate in the recruitment and appointment of promoted posts. To date, there has been a very positive involvement by parents in almost all senior management posts.

4 CONSULTATION

The Head of Democratic Services, Head of Finance, Head of Legal Services, Head of Human Resources and Parent Councils have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Funding to support the continued implementation of the Parental Involvement Strategy will continue to be met from within the Education and Children's Services revenue budget.

6 COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012

6.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2012 lays out five objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. They are as follows:-

- (i) A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
- (ii) Healthy, Caring Communities
- (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
- (iv) Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens
- (v) Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities

This report relates to the objectives Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens and Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities.

6.2 The report also links to the Education and Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the following key policy area:

- Communication and Consultation

7 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.

The procedure presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (Eq1A) with the following outcome:

- i) Assessed as **relevant** and action taken to reduce or remove the following negative impacts is as follows:
 - Services developed and delivered through the Strategy continue to be promoted in ways which ensure equality of access, including, where appropriate, the use of alternative languages and formats for information.

8 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

9 CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Parental Involvement Strategy is now well embedded within Perth and Kinross. Good progress has been made to date in raising awareness of the Strategy and supporting parents and schools to continually explore and develop ways to work together in continuing to implement the three main levels of engagement.

JOHN FYFFE
Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)

Note: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

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- Appendix 1 Parent Council Survey Results
- Appendix 2 Summary of Extended Learning and Achievement Visits
- Appendix 3 HMI Parental Statements

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion only, a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting The Communications Manager
E-mail: ecsgeneralenquiries@pkc.gov.uk



Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573

Parent Council Survey Results – September 2012

Parent Councils were asked their views on the following statements:

1. I can access information from a range of sources that helps me understand the expectations and roles of parental involvement in Perth & Kinross Council e.g. PKC Parental Involvement webpage. [PKC Parental Involvement web page](#)

| Value | Count | Percent |
|----------|-------|---------|
| Agree | 15 | 75% |
| Disagree | 5 | 25% |

2. I believe that Perth & Kinross Council gives a high priority to building relationships and creating mutual trust and respect between parents and staff.

| Value | Count | Percent |
|----------|-------|---------|
| Agree | 13 | 68.4% |
| Disagree | 6 | 31.6% |

The next set of statements focus on communication between school and home:

3. There are clear and effective channels of communication established so schools and parents can respond quickly to emerging issues.

| Value | Count | Percent |
|----------|-------|---------|
| Agree | 17 | 85.0% |
| Disagree | 3 | 15.0% |

Parents receive information and have opportunities to find out how they can support their children's learning at home.

| Value | Count | Percent |
|----------|-------|---------|
| Agree | 19 | 95.0% |
| Disagree | 1 | 5.0% |

Parent Councils and Parent Teacher Associations are fully supported to play a valuable role in building good relationships in the school and the wider community.

| Value | Count | Percent |
|----------|-------|---------|
| Agree | 15 | 75.0% |
| Disagree | 5 | 25.0% |

4. Perth & Kinross Council / schools provide information for parents on current developments in the curriculum and assessment.

| Value | Count | Percent |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Agree | 15 | 75% |
| Disagree | 5 | 25% |

5. Education and Children's Services staff and schools work together to support parents who are unsure of procedures and next steps for themselves or their children.

| Value | Count | Percent |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Agree | 13 | 72.2% |
| Disagree | 5 | 27.8% |

Summary of Extended Learning and Achievement Visits

The questions below form the agenda for discussion:

- In your opinion, is *** Primary School a good school? Can you provide some information as to how you have come to that judgement?
- How does *** Primary School help you to be actively involved in your child's educational experience?
- Do you think that your child is encouraged and helped to realise his/her potential? If so, how?
- Schools within Perth and Kinross are expected to keep their work under review and to have priorities for development each session. Are you clear about the development priorities identified for *** Primary School in this current session?
- If you have any concerns/complaints, are you clear about ways of raising these and do you have confidence that you will be listened to and that you will receive a response within a reasonable amount of time?
- Is *** Primary School well led? Can you give any examples of situations which have helped form your opinion?

HMI Parental Statements

Primary and Secondary Schools

1. The school helps my child to be more confident
2. My child enjoys learning at school
3. My child's learning is progressing well
4. My child is encouraged and stretched to work to the best of their ability
5. The school keeps me well informed about my child's progress
6. My child feels safe at school
7. My child is treated fairly at school
8. I feel staff really know my child as an individual and support them well
9. My child benefits from school clubs and activities provided outside the classroom
10. The school asks for my views
11. The school takes my views into account
12. The school is well led
13. Overall, I am happy with the school

Nursery / Partner Provision

1. The nursery helps my child to be more confident
2. My child enjoys the learning experiences at the nursery
3. My child's learning is progressing well
4. My child finds most learning activities stimulating and challenging
5. The nursery keeps me well informed about my child's progress
6. My child feels safe in the nursery
7. My child is treated fairly in the nursery
8. I feel staff really know my child as an individual and support him or her well
9. Staff work in partnership with me to care for and educate my child
10. The nursery asks for my views
11. The nursery takes my views into account
12. The nursery is well led
13. Overall, I am happy with the care and education my child gets in the nursery
14. The nursery has good arrangements for children starting nursery, moving between stages and starting school

