

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Tuesday January 19 2010
7.00 pm
Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

Supplemental Agenda No.2

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Southwark Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee Executive Interview - January 19 2010

Questions to Councillor Stanton:

Question 14

How is the Council ensuring a smooth transfer of all post 16 education from the Learning and Skills Council to Southwark Education?

Answer

In 2007, we pre-empted the transfer by creating the 14-19 Partnership team to take over these functions.

In 2008/9, we took part in a full 'dry run' of the further education commissioning process, creating a shadow commissioning plan. The lessons learnt from that experience have fed into plans for this year's commissioning process which we are leading. The LSC has been fully supportive of our plans.

Question 15

How is the Council coordinating all the many agencies offering post 16 work experience and placements; and how is the Council ensuring good quality placements and teaching?

Answer

We have our own team, the Southwark Education Business Alliance, which provides work experience placements for the borough's institutions. It is now the main provider since Trident, a national provider went out of business in June 2009.

However, schools and colleges can purchase work experience placements from any provider they choose. If a school or college chooses to purchase work experience placements from another provider we will encourage them to ensure that the provider meets the National Standard for Work Experience by providing information and advice.

Question 16

Is the Leader satisfied with the progress of the Southwark BSF programme? Have any financial problems arisen due to the current economic climate?

Answer

I am pleased with the progress of the BSF programme. There have been challenges as the programme has moved out of the procurement phase and there have been delays to some of the pre-construction target milestones for the second wave of projects. However, these delays have been associated with the necessary review and approval processes that ensure designs meet our aspirations, and that they remain value for money.

We still expect that the overall programme will continue to run broadly to schedule, with Phase 2 projects due to start on site as planned in Summer 2010.

Phase 1 BSF projects, St Michael's Catholic School and Tuke Special School, are on site and are progressing on programme and within their budgets.

Planning of phase 3 of the BSF programme is well progressed and is expected to be approved by Partnerships for School's by the end of the financial year.

Question 17

What remedial measures are now in place to ensure that KS 2 English and Maths results improve in those Primary Schools where results have not been as good as the previous year?

Answer

The majority of schools have seen increases in results in recent years, allowing us to post our best ever results at Key Stage 2 this year placing us in the second quartile nationally for the first time. However, where results in individual schools are lower than last year, schools receive intensive support from our Achievement Team to identify the causes, and to improve results. There is very strong evidence that where the Achievement Team provides intensive support for schools there is rapid improvement over and above improvement rates in non supported schools.

The 2009 tracking data from four schools predicted a fall in results related to identified cohort factors. These schools were already in receipt of intensive Local Authority support and will continue to receive intensive support from our Achievement Team. Predictions for 2010 show improvement.

Several more schools (7) returned maths and English results that were not as good as in 2008. These decreases were unexpected, and occurred in schools which had been judged to be 'good' by Ofsted. Three of these schools are now in receipt of higher levels of council support which means that they are subject to termly monitoring and we scrutinise their tracking data. Three of the schools have provided convincing evidence that the dip in results was cohort related and that there will be a significant improvement in 2010. The other school has been brought into a National programme that focuses on writing which is where the need has been identified.

There is now only one primary school in Southwark that has been identified by the DCFS as 'hard to shift' in terms of standards and we expect this particular school to return significantly improved results above floor targets in 2010.

Question 18

What does the Executive member see as the biggest challenges to the department over the next 24 months for Southwark primary schools?

Answer

- Increasing rolls
- Potential for post general election funding cuts to school budgets

Question 19

In light of the continuing financial crisis and the number of homes being repossessed, can the Executive member/s;

- i. Advise what impact this has had on the education of children whose families have had their homes repossessed?
- ii. Advise what safeguards are in place particularly for those children who have had to be withdrawn or transferred to other schools within or outside of the

- borough to ensure that any detrimental effects on their education are minimised?
- iii. Confirm that every effort is being made to ensure that any necessary advice and assistance is being offered for these families? – and confirm what advice and assistance is being offered.
 - iv. Advise how families access this advice/assistance, - i.e., are they contacted independently after repossession, or do families have to find out about such assistance themselves?

Answer

Where a school is made aware of a problem which is likely to impact upon the wellbeing of a student, they will provide individual support to that student if necessary. Where a child changes schools, it is the duty of the receiving school to contact the previous school within 10 working days to ensure that records are exchanged, so as to minimise the impact on the child of the transfer.

Where we become aware that a family may be facing repossession, we will arrange an appointment with the family to discuss the options available to them to firstly try and prevent their homelessness, and where this is not possible look to secure suitable alternative accommodation for them. Once possession proceedings have been actioned, the Courts will normally sign-post families to the Council or to the voluntary advice agencies throughout the borough so that households can access appropriate advice and assistance.

Question 20

Though very welcome, please explain what contribution the expansion of St Anthony's RC Primary School will make towards helping address under-capacity in the East Dulwich area?

Answer

The proposal to expand St. Anthony's from 1.5 to 2FE will provide 15 additional places in Dulwich each year, increasing the total from 315 to 420 when complete. It is a popular school with more than 80 first preference applications for 45 places. In 2009/10 89% of applications came from Southwark residents.

An analysis has been undertaken of the first preference applications in the last two school years at St. Anthony's. Of the unsuccessful applications, 23 in 2008/9 and 17 in 2009/10 received a place at another Southwark voluntary school, with 17 in 2008/09 and 19 in 2009/10 offered a Southwark community primary. The remainder (9 in 2008/9 and 7 in 2009/10) took up places in other boroughs, were withdrawn or went to an independent school.

On this evidence there is a case for expansion as the additional places would mostly be allocated to Southwark residents, freeing up spaces in other local schools to help meet the additional demand. However, the situation will be kept under review depending on the pattern of applications in future years.

Question 21

Do you think there is a need to address the incongruity of children living just outside that year's catchment area of their nearest school, who end up because of distance from their remaining choices, only being accepted into the 4th, 5th or sometimes even 6th choice?

Answer

None of our community primary schools operate formal catchment areas. Instead, oversubscription criteria dictate how places are filled where a school has more applications than places. The so called double distance criteria allows priority to be given to families that want to choose their closest Southwark community primary school over those who had a choice of an alternative Southwark community primary school nearer to their home.

Although this rule is still in place for 2010 admissions, we are consulting on removing it from the 2011 admissions process. This will make the process more straightforward, and as Southwark has 42 community primary schools spread across the borough, should still enable most families to apply to a school fairly close to their home.

Question 22

Do you have any views about the inconsistent level of Sports Provision across Southwark Schools?

Answer

The provision which schools make for physical activity and sport is the responsibility of the headteacher and governing body, regulated through Ofsted.

Schools in Southwark are supported through the Healthy Schools Programme, School Sports Coordinators (provided through Bacon's and HGAED), PRO-ACTIVE Southwark and the Community Sport and Physical Activity Network, (CSPAN) and a range of partners to deliver and further develop their offer of sport and PE provision. Council officers are working with partners to develop a framework for the coordination and delivery of the 5 Hour Offer which should improve uptake by schools. The external support available includes:

- the Schools Sport Partnerships Competition Manager, funded by Youth Sport Trust, to support all schools with a comprehensive competitive sports framework
- the School Sport Associations which are also active in linking schools inside and outside Southwark to London wide competitive opportunities
- LBS Southwark Community Games, programme across 50 schools per week, and a series of competitions through the year.

EMA Projects 2009/10

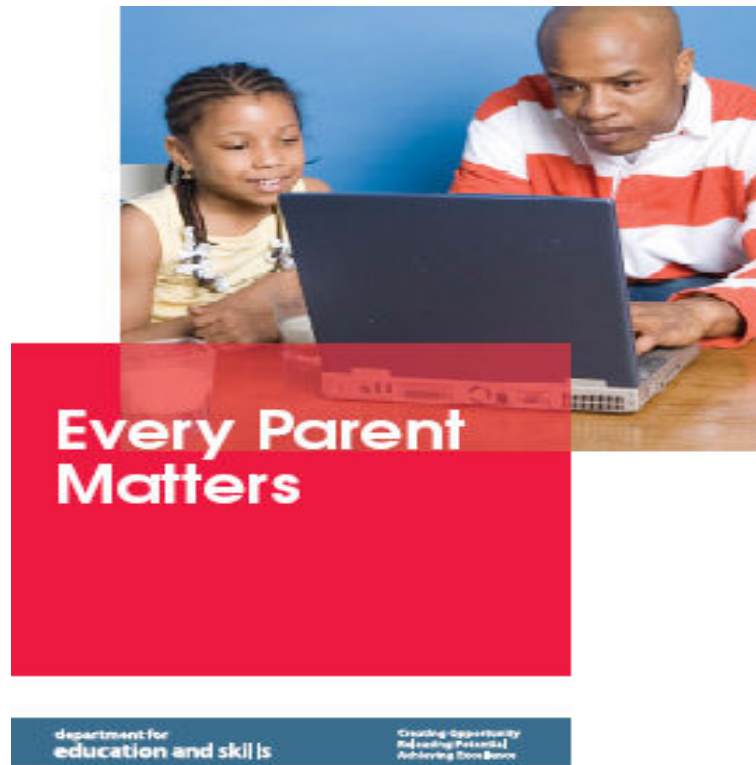
Engaging parents of pupils at risk of underachievement

Action research on developing effective partnerships between parents and school.

Here are some of the key policy developments since the green paper *Every Child Matters, 2004*, let's focus on those most relevant to Southwark

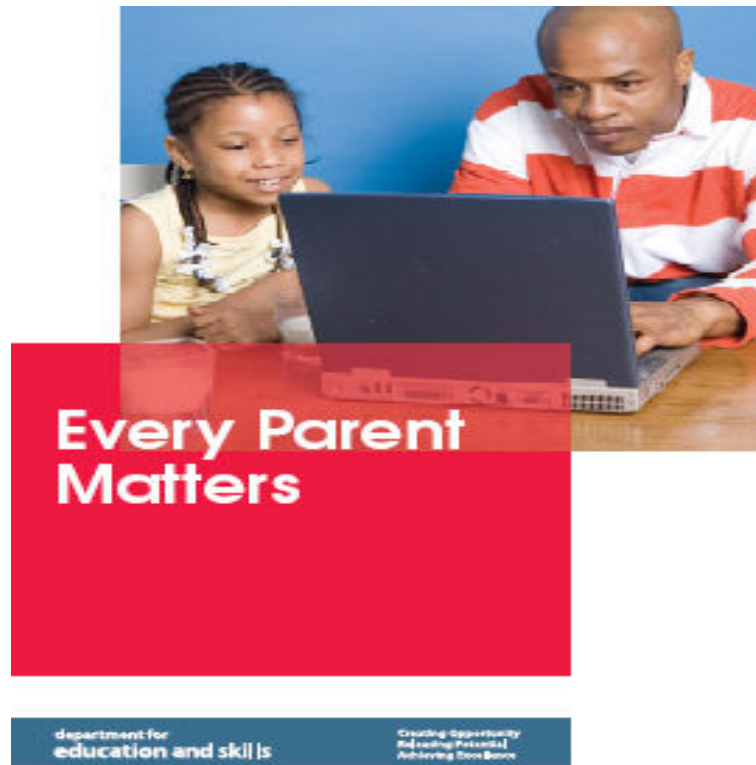
- Developing a local parenting strategy (Parenting Education & Support Forum, 2005)
- Parenting Support: Guidance for Local Authorities in England (DFES, 2006)
- The Children's Plan: Building brighter futures (DCSF, 2007)
- Every Parent Matters (DFES, 2007)
- Aiming High for Children, Supporting Families (HM Treasury and DFES, 2007)
- Building Brighter Futures: Next Steps for the Children's Workforce (DCSF, 2008)
- Think family: Improving the life choices of children at risk (29/01/08)

Every Parent Matters, 2007



- In the early years, parental aspirations and encouragement have a significant impact on children's cognitive development and literacy and numeracy skills.
- Parental involvement in a child's schooling between the ages of 7 and 16 is a more powerful force than family background, size of family and level of parental education

Every Parent Matters, 2007 cont



- Educational failure is increased by lack of parental interest in schooling
- In particular, a father's interest in a child's schooling is strongly linked to educational outcomes for the child.

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The Children's Plan, 2007

*Families are the bedrock of society and the place for nurturing happy capable and resilient children. To help every parent do the best for their child, we will fund: two expert parenting advisers per LA; a school based **Parent Support Adviser**; create a Parents Panel and strengthen intensive support to the neediest families.”*



The role of the Parent Support Adviser

The Children's Plan also established the new function of **Parent Support Adviser (PSA)** funded by the Training and Development Agency (TDA), following a pilot which was rolled out nationally for a further three years in 2008.

Southwark took the decision in 2008 to devolve this funding to schools via the CLAN structure and is now in the process of auditing how schools interpreted the remit, identifying gaps in provision and new developments.

The role of the Parent Support Adviser

The core duties and responsibilities of PSAs were defined by the TDA to provide parenting support and information; encourage parents to engage with their child's learning and to improve attendance and reduce exclusions.

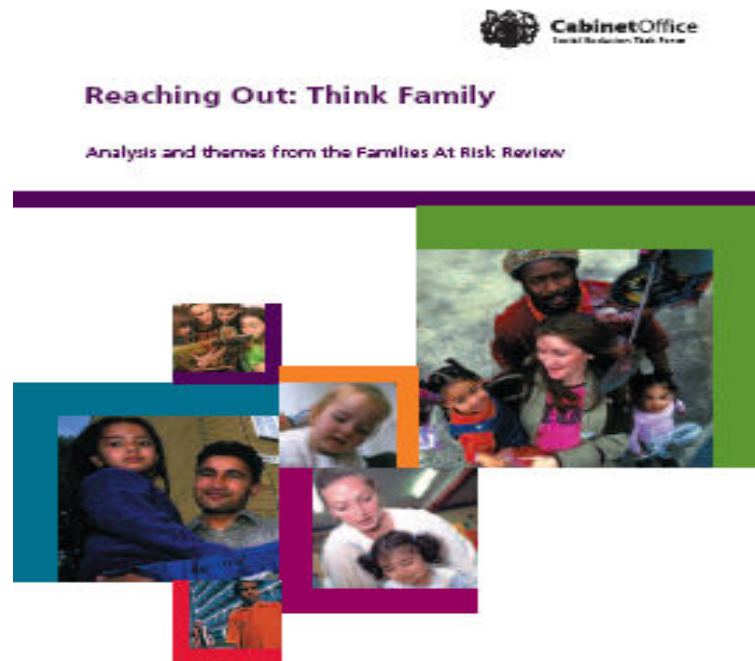
PSAs are key strategy to achieve the government's goal that all schools should provide the 'full core offer' of extended services by 2010. These include parenting support and community access to a varied menu of activities.

Judging the effectiveness of the PSAs

In its evaluation of the second year of the original PSA pilot, the TDA identified the following features of *effectiveness and impact* by which to judge the work of PSAs in schools.

1. Contribution to school improvement
 - a. Helping schools with multi-agency working.
 - b. Meeting in full the parenting support element of the extended school core offer – expected to be met by all schools in 2010
 - c. Gathering and distributing the views of parents/carers.
2. Empowering parents and raising expectations.
3. Building capacity for parenting support.

Think Family, 2008



- Growing up in a family with multiple problems puts children at a higher risk of adverse outcomes.
- If we are to reach out to families at risk we need to identify and exploit opportunities to build the capacity of systems and service to 'think family'
- Tailored, flexible and holistic services that work with the whole family can turn lives around dramatically.

Do Parents Know They Matter

Parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people *through supporting their learning in the home rather* (parental engagement) than supporting activities in the school (parental involvement). **It is their support of learning in the home environment that makes the maximum difference to achievement.'** (p5)

Research Report DCSF-RW004

Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement Do Parents Know They Matter?

A research project commissioned by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

*Professor Alma Harris and Dr Janet Goodall
University of Warwick*

department for
children, schools and families

Alan Milburn's Social Mobility Report: Fairer Access to the Professions

This report found that parental interest has four times more influence on attainment by age 16 than does socio-economic background.

**Unleashing
Aspiration**
Summary and
recommendations
of the full report

The Panel on
Fair Access to
the Professions

15

Latest DEMOS report on parenting as character building

- What matters most the report concludes is that character capabilities – application, self-regulation and empathy – makes a vital contribution to life chances, mobility and opportunity.
- Confident, skilful parents adopting a 'tough love' approach to parenting, balancing warmth with discipline, seem to be the most effective in terms of generating these key character capabilities.

"Parents are the principal architects of a fairer society..."

BUILDING CHARACTER

Jen Lexmond
Richard Reeves

DEMOS

How are we addressing these issues in Southwark? - 1

First Parenting Support Strategy (2007-10) commissioned by Young Southwark; from 2010 onwards strategy will be encompassed within the new CYPP currently out to consultation.

Parent Commissioner appointed Ragnhild Banton who oversees the borough's strategy working to the Parenting Board which is chaired by Gwen Kennedy, AD, Nursing.

Two Lead Parenting Practitioners appointed who are based in the YOT and Children's Services.

Parenting programmes and parent support functions are delivered by a number of teams within Children's Services and our partners in settings across the borough.

How is the focus of parenting work changing in Southwark?

- Sharper focus in the new CYPP – top priorities emerging:
 - Think Family in action
 - Raising the Bar in terms of the quality of provision and access
 - Achieving wellbeing of young people 'at risk'
 - Stronger family-based approach to safeguarding
- Increasing our work with fathers and men with children.
- Working more closely with Adult Services
- Building on and disseminating more systematically the good practice in the borough – OPM review of parenting services commissioned by Young Southwark to inform new CYPP.

What is the contribution of schools to this changing agenda in Southwark?

New projects:

- Parents and Partners in Early Learning Project run by Kate Miranda
- Family Information Services

New pathfinder collaborations:

- Schools in the Peckham CLAN now share an identify as 'Peckham Schools' which is on pupils' uniforms and part of school logos embracing the localities policy and joint commissioning opportunities.

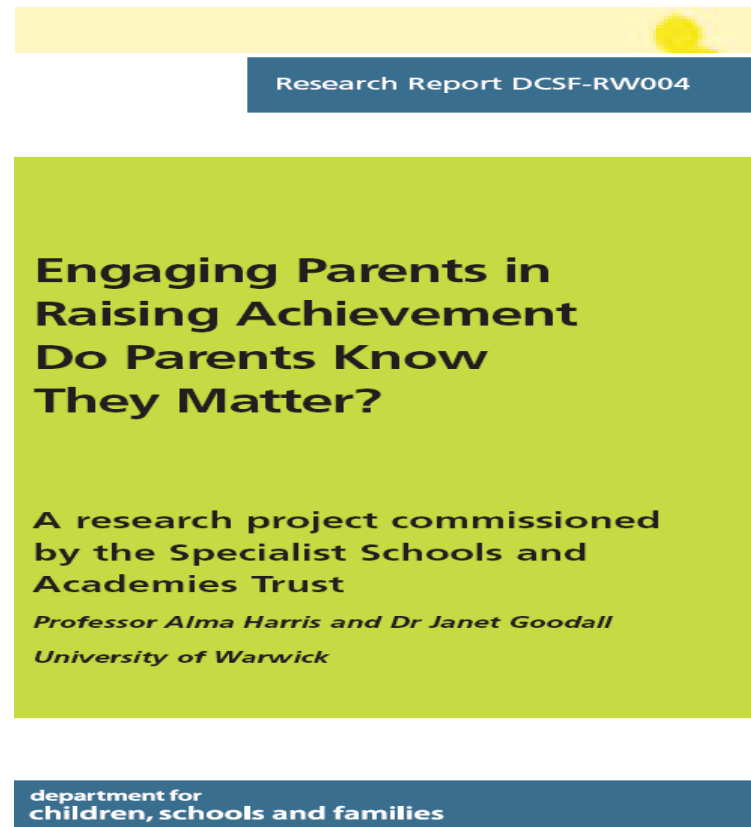
New funding options:

- Think Family grant from DCSF; Parent Support Advisers funded by TDA

Issues and challenges for schools

- changing the paradigm

If we accept the conclusion of the recent research by Prof Alma Harris et al that parental engagement with children's learning at home is key.



And we accept Desforges and Abouchaar's positive behaviours for effective parental engagement:

- The provision of secure and stable environment
- Intellectual stimulation
- Parent-child discussion
- Good models of social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment and good citizenship
- Contact with schools to share information
- Participation in school events
- Participation in the work of the school
- Participation in school governance

The question then is:

**How do we build confidence,
knowledge and awareness in
homes where the above features
are less present?**

How do we address sensitivities about what a learning environment in a working class home might look like?

What are the activities schools could stimulate in partnership with other agencies: the YOT, Community Sports team, health workers, PSAs which would be located closer to pupils' homes?

If the real accelerator to pupil achievement is the support given to parents to promote learning in the home,

then the school designed interventions to make that happen are completely different to those currently deployed

which are much more focussed on the school rather than the home.

What next? Some proposals

- Work with a small group of schools on designing an action-orientated parental engagement strategy focussing on children at risk of underachievement in Southwark.
- Conduct an evaluation of existing parental involvement strategies to assess their impact on pupils' achievement and the extent to which they are leading to better parental engagement with the child's learning at home.
- Produce some artefacts and tools
- Introduce schools to some of the interesting work with fathers which is being trialled by the YOT as a stimulus for designing new approaches.
- Build on the work being done in early years on parents as partners.