

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 15 June 2010	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Parental Engagement Review	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Scrutiny Sub-Committee Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-committee	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet considers the comments of the Strategic director of children's services in response to the recommendations of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-committee (scrutiny report attached as appendix 1)

BACKGROUND

2. The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-committee undertook a review of parental engagement in primary schools. The primary aim of this report is to suggest further areas for investigation and investment. It is hoped this will compliment the investment Southwark already has made in parental engagement and the action research project currently being led by external consultant, Dr Jan McKenley.
3. The sub-committee's report was considered by overview & scrutiny committee at its meeting on 8 March 2010.
4. The response from the Strategic director of children's services to scrutiny's recommendations is set out below.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Comments from the Strategic Director of Children's Services

5. Scrutiny's investigation into this area is very welcome. Officers consider the better involvement of parents in their children's education to be key to delivering further gains in achievement by our primary schools.

Recommendations	Officer response
1. That the council support and encourage parents in their role as informal educators.	This is supported strongly and will be secured through expanding the work of our ethnic minority achievement (narrow the gap) strategy, Children's Services have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identified existing good practice in schools. Analysis has shown a range of strategies and approaches are being used to support parental involvement and engagement and

	<p>these examples will be disseminated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> invited schools to contribute to the Local Authority policy on parental support and to conduct their own action research projects.
<p>2. Fathers and male carers of children have a vital role in children's education and this should be promoted and encouraged.</p>	<p>Promotion of the very important role of fathers and male carers in supporting children's learning will be highlighted in all relevant work.</p> <p>The example highlighted of Kintore Way Nursery School where the children were encouraged to send personalised invitations to a significant male in their lives to attend regular play themed events, resulting in approximately a hundred fathers and carers being involved and benefitting from engaging in their children's education, along with similar examples, will be shared as good practice to schools across the Borough.</p>
<p>3. That family support is particularly targeted at transition times.</p>	<p>Our Parenting Programme provides a full explanation and details of support available to families and particularly highlights the needs of vulnerable children. It is recognised that managing the transition from nursery or home to primary school, and later from primary to secondary education, is an important time for a child to be supported as they adjust to their new setting. We will evidence our work on parenting programmes and stress these issues in our work with partners.</p>
<p>4. That the council promotes parenting courses that increase and develop parents' skills</p>	<p>We will gear our parenting courses to increase and develop parents' skills and respond to headteachers' requests for support in this area through providing a guidance document and supporting professional development which summarises key research and highlights effective practice, this would support implementation of the Parenting Strategy.</p>

6 The following areas are part of our mainstream work programme to enhance the contribution of parents in their children's learning:

- Extension work to embed key messages from Southwark's Parents as Partners in Early Learning programme through the development of Parent mentors, parent workshops and courses on supporting early learning and children's use of schemas
- Extension work to embed the key messages on parent partnerships from Southwark's Every Child A Talker (ECAT) and the Social & Emotional Aspects of Development (SEAD) programmes with parent mentors, early years settings, children's centres and schools
- Advanced training using the National Children's Bureau Parents and Early Learning approved training
- Developments from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) research this year into the Home Learning Environment (which is based with 20 early years settings in Southwark.)

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-committee /Overview & Scrutiny Committee - minutes and reports	Scrutiny Team Tooley Street London SE1 2TZ	Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny project manager Tel: 020 7525 0514

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	(Scrutiny report)

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	
Report Author	Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Project Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	04 June 2010	
Key Decision?	No	
Consultation with other officers / directorates / Cabinet member		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Strategic director of communities, law & governance	No	
Strategic director of children's service	Yes	