

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



Every Parent Matters

department for
education and skills

Creating Opportunity
Including Parents
Achieving Good Results

- 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



Every Parent
Matters

department for
education and skills

Creating Opportunity
Releasing Potential
Achieving Good Schools

- 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.

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



Reaching Out: Think Family

Analysis and themes from the Families At Risk Review



- 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

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.

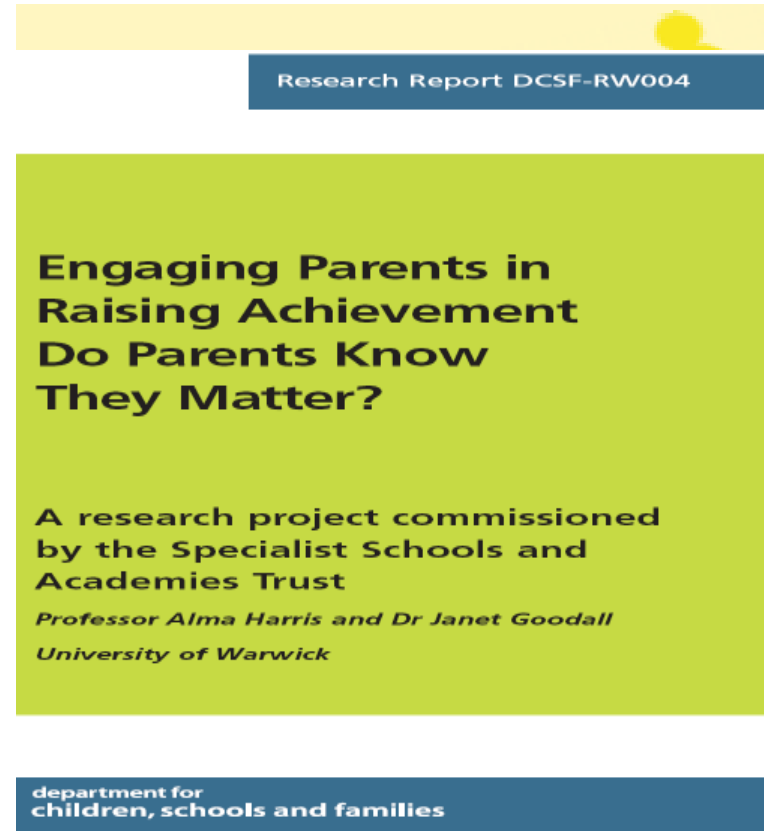
New funding options:

- 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.